



# Herefords, Feed, Seed and More

*The Hunt family has found success managing their Hereford herd as well as a large feed, seed and fertilizer business serving producers in the Southeast.*

by Angie Stump Denton



Godfrey's offers both bulk and sack feed. Bulk feed is delivered to the producer, and bag feed is marketed through 50 stores. Godfrey's also sells seed, herbicide and fertilizer, as well as general agricultural related products.

Hands-on experience and in-depth knowledge of the products they sell have helped the Hunt family find success in both the Hereford business and the feed and seed business.

Whitey Hunt and his son, Weyman, are the fifth and sixth generation to manage Godfrey's, a feed and seed enterprise, and Innisfail Farm, a registered Hereford operation located in Madison, Ga. Whitey's brother, Candler, has also been a partner in both enterprises for 40 years.

The father and son agree the firsthand knowledge they get from utilizing the products they sell on their farm gives them credibility when they talk to their customers. "When you can tell a customer this is what we do on our farm, it is a little more convincing," Weyman says. "The farm and the feed store go hand-in-hand, one benefits the other."

## **In the beginning**

In the late 1870s J.E. Godfrey, Whitey and Candler's great-great-grandfather, purchased the property where the feed mill and store is located. It was originally a cotton warehouse that also sold fertilizer and coal.

Through the years, Godfrey's has changed its services to reflect the changing needs of the agriculture industry. In the 1930s the family added feed, and in the late 1960s, they stopped selling coal and warehousing cotton.

Godfrey's current products and services include:

- Feed — both bagged and custom-blended — small or large quantities
- Seed
- Fertilizer — product and application — including nitrogen and lime
- Herbicides — product and application
- Fencing supplies and service
- Lawn care supplies
- Pet food
- Animal health supplies — vaccines, medicines, vitamins
- Shavings and horse bedding

Godfrey's sells products into five states, including South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia. The feed mill can produce 300 tons per day.

### The farm, Herefords

In the 1870s J.E. Godfrey also purchased the farmland where the Innisfail cow herd is managed today. It was originally purchased to grow cotton.

Whitey's grandfather purchased the family's first Herefords in the 1950s. After Whitey graduated from college and returned to the family farm, he says, he experimented with different breeds, but after those trials, Hereford remained his breed of choice.



Godfrey's has been a family-owned business for six generations, starting with J.E. Godfrey and continuing today with Whitey Hunt, Candler Hunt and Weyman Hunt. Weyman (left) and Whitey (right) say the education they get from using their products allows them to give customers firsthand knowledge about something that works.

"Herefords have been good to me," Whitey says. "We like the temperament of the cattle and the people in the breed."

Today the Innisfail herd totals about 125 registered Hereford cows. The Hunts have a fall-calving program with calves born from September to the middle of November.

Whitey explains the cow herd is somewhat linebred for balanced traits including carcass traits.

He also will not tolerate bad udders. "If a female has a bad udder they have to go," he says.

The Hunts use artificial insemination (AI) and embryo transfer (ET) to continue to improve

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—Weyman Hunt



Innisfail replacement females are developed and bred to start calving in early September.

their herd. As they expand their ET program, the Hunts are working with a cooperator who has a herd in Missouri. He places the eggs, calves out the cows and manages the calves until they are about five months old when they are then shipped to Innisfail.

### Marketing

For the last four years, the Hunt family has participated in the Bull Power program. "It is the best thing we ever did," Whitey says. "It gave us more exposure for our Hereford bulls."

The Bull Power program is an annual multi-breed test that ends with an auction the first Friday in November. The Hunts typically send 10-12 bulls a year to the test.

"In this part of the country cattlemen are not very Hereford friendly," Weyman says. "Through this program we've been able to build confidence in the genetics and performance of our Hereford bulls, which has in return helped us sell about 20 bulls a year off the farm private treaty."

Another way Innisfail genetics are put to the test is through the Georgia Pride Program. For eight years, Whitey has sent about 30 steer calves to a feedlot in Iowa where feedlot and carcass data are collected. This past year 70% of the calves graded Choice or better.

Participating in the Georgia Pride Program has allowed the Hunts to monitor the performance of their genetics in the feedlot and on the rail.

Whitey says a key to marketing success for both entities is customer service. "Be honest with your customers, provide good service and make them money," he explains, "and they'll come back."

### The future

With the sixth generation now at the helm and the



Whitey says he never stops learning. An animal science graduate of the University of Georgia, he is a self-taught animal nutritionist.

seventh generation getting their start in the Hereford business, Godfrey's and Innisfail Farm are set to continue to thrive for many more generations to come.

Weyman and his wife, Ashley, have three boys. Their oldest recently got his first Hereford heifers and will begin his career as a Hereford showman this summer.

Weyman and Whitey agree they are excited about the future of the

Hereford business. They say they have witnessed a new optimism about the Hereford breed as well as an increase in demand. "Through a lot of hard work, Hereford breeders have developed cattle that really excel and have gained the respect of the industry today," Weyman says. "We believe Hereford cattle have a bright future." **HW**



According to Weyman, they take extra steps at the feed plant to ensure superior nutrition for their customers as well as for their own cattle, like the heifers pictured above. This includes steam rolling corn to increase palatability and digestibility. Godfrey's computerized microsystem can measure and add precise quantities of extra ingredients such as vitamins, minerals and medicine.