



Bielema Crowned National Polled Hereford Queen



Lindsay Bielema of Ada, Mich., was crowned the 2008 National Polled Hereford Queen during the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver.

Bielema competed against nine other state queens for the 34th national title, which was announced prior to the selection of the grand champion polled Hereford bull Jan. 19. Bielema was also selected as Miss Congeniality.

The queen program is administered by the National Organization of Poll-ettes. Donors and sponsors, some of which have been with the queen program since its inception in 1974, allow it to continue and flourish.

Candidates are evaluated on their Hereford involvement, behavior, attitude, appearance and interaction with producers, as well as on their résumés and interviews, explains program chair Betsy Beck.

“Lindsay is thoughtful, considerate and dedicated,” Beck says. “She has a wonderful personality, a strong knowledge of the Hereford breed, and did a wonderful job during the show.”

Bielema will represent the breed and its breeders at shows, sales and other events throughout the U.S. “The national queen is not only the ambassador for the Hereford breed but also a positive role model for the youth involved in the industry,” she says. “Stemming from the positive experience that I have had with the Hereford industry and its dedication to the youth of our society, I have a passion for reaching out and recruiting more youth to show Hereford cattle. I want to be a positive role model that allows the Hereford industry to be a place

where the ‘youth of today’ are shaped into the ‘leaders of tomorrow.’”

Seven years ago the Bielema family moved to a farm. That move led to their involvement with Hereford cattle. Soon after they moved, they raised a bottle baby, a Hereford calf named Buttercup. “We haven’t looked back since,” she says. “Raising Hereford cattle has given my family another opportunity to spend time together and strengthen our relationships with one another.”

Bielema joined the Michigan Junior Hereford Association (MJHA) and the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) four years ago. She is currently the MJHA secretary/treasurer.

She says she is excited to have the opportunity to promote the Hereford breed as well as encourage NJHA involvement and the opportunities available for Hereford youth such as the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE). She attended the JNHE in 2005, 2006 and 2007, participating in the showmanship contest, judging contest and Hereford Bowl.

Bielema has also been active in school and community leadership activities, including the East Kent Beef 4-H Club, Kent County Beef Developmental Committee, Kent County Fair Board and Ada Christian Reformed Church.

Bielema is a junior at Calvin College, studying to become a physician’s assistant. After graduation she plans to attend graduate school to complete her studies.

Denelle Billman, Newcomerstown, Ohio, was named first runner-up. Her interest in the Hereford business began seven years ago.

“My involvement with the Hereford cattle industry has been such a learning and growing experience,” Billman says. “I have made new friends, learned responsibility and hard work do have positive results and that my family and friends are behind me all the way.”



Hereford royalty honored at the 2008 NWSS (pictured, l to r) are: Amber Schmidt, Pipestone, Minn., 2007 National Polled Hereford Queen; Lindsay Bielema, Ada, Mich., 2008 National Polled Hereford Queen; Denelle Billman, Newcomerstown, Ohio, first runner-up; and Shelly Patton, Danielsville, Ga., second runner-up.



As a seven-year member of the Ohio Buckeye Junior Hereford Association, Billman has served in numerous leadership positions including second vice president and two years as news reporter. She also participates in the Ohio BEST (Beef Exhibitor Show Total) program. In 2007 she received the all breeds bred-and-owned champion steer award with a Hereford steer. She won the Ohio BEST champion Hereford heifer award in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2007.

Billman graduated from Buckeye Career Center in June 2007. She is planning to attend Kent State University and major in ultrasound technology.

Shelly Patton, Danielsville, Ga., was selected as the second runner-up. She proudly explains that on her first birthday her parents gave her a polled Hereford heifer and have done so every year since.

“My parents wisely involved me at a young and impressionable age,” she says. “Their goal was to involve me at an early age in the decisions associated with farming and the consequences of good and bad decisions. As a result, I have been able to accumulate a sizeable herd, a good income and a future in the Hereford industry. Hard work and perseverance certainly does pay dividends.”

Patton has attended four JNHEs participating in numerous contests and activities each year. She also participated in the Program for Reaching Individuals Determined to Excel (PRIDE) Convention in 2005 and 2006. Growing up she has been active in FFA, 4-H and Georgia Junior Cattlemen’s Association serving in numerous leadership roles.

Patton is currently a senior at Madison County High School. She plans to major in animal science and pre-veterinary medicine and minor in agricultural education. She wants to specialize in beef reproduction with an emphasis on embryo transfer and cloning. Following vet school, she hopes to return to the family farm and manage the beef unit and open a beef reproduction clinic. **HW**