

## Mick Welch

Whiteface cattle continue to have a lasting effect on today's cattlemen. They're docile and maternal, and carcass traits have made them an appealing breed.

Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) LLC provides consumers with a product that is tender, bursting with flavor and consistent in every bite. This month's featured staff member started his own herd after being employed by CHB LLC. Then he learned firsthand the benefits of being a member of the American Hereford Association (AHA).

Mick Welch, CHB LLC vice president of food service sales, has contributed to the breed inside and outside the office. Mick spends about 75% of his time on the road and the rest of his time at the AHA headquarters in Kansas City, Mo., promoting CHB® while raising Herefords as a family hobby.

Originating from Levasy, Mo., Mick has always been involved in some aspect of agriculture. As a youth Mick worked on a number of crop and cattle operations. Mick says, "Growing up, I felt it was important to make agriculture a hands-on experience so someday I could perform the task by myself."

After attending high school at Ft. Osage in Independence, Mo., Mick was fortunate to start working at Boyle's Famous Corned Beef Co. This is where Mick established his meat industry career. The owner, Robert Boyle, took a special interest in Mick, allowing him to gain a more in-depth education in beef management training. While working at Boyle's, Mick says he learned that the meat industry was a tough business and it took special people to understand and work in this profession. After starting



out at the bottom of the totem pole as a meat packer, he worked his way to the top as a national sales manager.

After working for 20 years at Boyle's, he transferred to L&C Meats as a sales manager. This new position allowed for more time to raise a family.

Mick gained a lot of respect from the individuals that made a positive influence on his career development. He says he cannot thank Boyle enough for the doors of opportunity that were opened while working under him. "He is hands-down one of the smartest men I have ever met, and he encouraged me toward a similar career," Mick says.

With hard work and determination, Mick worked to fill his boss' shoes and would not be where he is today without Boyle's encouragement.

As he grew up, Mick valued the lifelong lessons gained from his mother, LaRue. She taught him the importance of being strong in faith and staying true to values.

Mick says he was intrigued after hearing about the open CHB LLC position from a dear friend at the Kansas Beef Council and decided to apply. In January 2007, Mick was hired to build and manage the food service sector of CHB LLC.

Mick is responsible for developing sales in the foodservice industry for CHB LLC. Throughout the day, he spends time talking on the phone to foodservice distributors across the country. He creates CHB promotions for food sales teams and consumers.

Mick says reliable foodservice distributors are difficult to find. It takes time and commitment to build a foodservice company into a solid business that carries the CHB meat line.

Mick says he uses various selling points to attract his customers but finds the most successful one is the solid Hereford history and what Herefords can bring to the table. He visits his customers yearly while working on a new potential client base weekly. The cold-call selling technique is used in areas where CHB is not yet represented. Mick says he feels fortunate to have built a strong network of people who want to help grow this program by offering a desirable product to others.

"I'm excited to be part of the Hereford breed," Mick says. He has a positive outlook on the future of Hereford cattle and CHB.

According to his co-workers, Mick's friendly, pleasant personality makes him a joy to have in the office. Mary Ellen Hummel, AHA administrative executive assistant, works with Mick and compliments Mick's work ethic. "Mick is one of the hardest working employees in the building," she says. "He's one of the first to arrive in the morning and one of the last to lock it up. He is doing an excellent job of promoting CHB and growing the foodservice part of the business. One of his best assets is his sense of humor. You can't be around Mick very long without laughing or at least smiling."

Mick says he treasures the knowledge he has gained at AHA about the historic legacy of the Hereford breed.

It is difficult for Mick to define just a few breeders who have impacted his career. He says that this Association has the best members any breed could ask for. "Each one of the ranchers or farmers I have had the opportunity to visit with have influenced me to the point that I now own Herefords and have become a member of the AHA," he says.

The small herd established at Mick's home has become a full-time hobby. The long evenings Mick spends "playing" with his cows have become a time of mind renewal and rejuvenation, he says. In spring 2009, Mick and his neighbor Phil started buying registered Hereford cattle. Currently they maintain 17 purebred Herefords and are expecting nine calves in 2010. Mick says he feels privileged to be part of the breed and to contribute to the Hereford legacy.

Aside from the long hours spent promoting CHB at the office and caring for his small Hereford herd, Mick is a dedicated husband and father. He and his wife, Juanita, have been married for 36 years and were blessed with two boys, Brandon and Brian. Brandon lives in Kansas City, Mo., and delivers for UPS. Brian works for a heating and air conditioning company in Independence, Mo.

Juanita and Mick enjoy traveling to the warm tropical climate of Hawaii to vacation and escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Mick also treats himself to a few ski trips throughout the year. **HW**