



Nordic Countries Host WORLD HEREFORD Conference, Tours

20 Americans attend the 15th annual conference and related tours.

Hereford leaders from around the globe met in Copenhagen, Denmark, June 29-July 1 for the 15th World Hereford Conference. The Hereford societies in the four Nordic countries — Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark — hosted the conference as well as pre- and post-tours.

Representing the American Hereford Association (AHA) at the meetings and tour were Craig Huffhines, AHA executive vice president; Stacy Sanders, AHA director of records; and Lee Haygood, AHA Board member. Also attending the conference and

tour were the two 2008 OXO World Traveler Ambassador Scholarship winners — Stacia Berry, Cheyenne, Wyo., and Shellie Moore Collins, Chattanooga, Okla.

The OXO World Traveler Scholarship Program was developed by Linda Matasovic Swiercinsky and her sister, the late Marilyn Matasovic, in memory of their parents, John and Estelle Matasovic. The travel scholarship is funded

through the Hereford Youth Foundation of America (HYFA) and financially supports Hereford youth to participate in the World Hereford Conference, hosted every four years. (See the “World Traveler Ambassador perspectives” on Pages 120 and 121.)

Jan Wills, World Hereford Council secretary general, says every four years the World Hereford Council meets to discuss genetic

Jon Beever, University of Illinois animal geneticist, talked about how DNA can be used to identify genetic markers. He shared information about his research during the World Hereford Conference on July 1.



During the conference, Craig Huffhines, AHA executive vice president, gave an AHA update to the Council as well as presented information about the Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) program. Huffhines was a member of a marketing and branding panel that discussed opportunities and challenges regarding branding Hereford beef.



Danish countryside.



The final stop on the post-conference tour was Skjatvet Farm at Gan, Norway.



The U.S. delegation on the post-conference tour. Pictured (l to r) are: Craig and Mary Jon Huffhines, Lee and Jacqui Haygood, Dennis and Mary Schock, Roy and June Stewart, Shellie and Colby Collins, and Stacy and Susan Sanders.

progress and other breed issues. The World Hereford Council was formed in 1951 to protect the purity of the breed.

“The World Hereford Conference provides the opportunity for international exchange of ideas from animal genomics, marketing and international trade,” Huffhines explains. More than 20 countries are represented in the World Hereford Council, and they each bring their own issues and challenges for discussion.

“This year, Dr. Jon Beever from the U.S. gave an enlightening talk on the new molecular technology used to manage genetic defects,” Huffhines says. “We have been working hard in the U.S. in developing this technology that has a global relevance.”

The common discussion during the conference was the continued global increase in energy cost. “Oil and gas cost increases have put a strain on input costs in all corners of the globe,”

Huffhines says. “Hereford breeders around the world are working diligently to reduce cost and become more efficient. Feed efficiency, which is a trait very difficult to measure, is being researched not just in the U.S. but also in Australia, Canada and Norway. Reports from all over the world are documenting the advantages Hereford cattle have over other breeds in reducing feed inputs.”

As part of the conference, representatives from Argentina, Canada, Uruguay and the AHA worked out the timeline for the first Pan-American Genetic Evaluation.

Sanders says the plan is for the researchers to conduct some follow-up research, and then there will be a test run sometime this fall with the target of doing an actual run next summer for the Fall 2009 genetic evaluation.

“This will allow Herefords from each country to be compared head to head,” Huffhines says.

Sanders says the evaluation not only will help U.S. breeders to market their genetics to other countries but will also allow Americans the chance to

find and sample new genetics from other countries.

As a follow-up to the 14th World Hereford Conference, which focused on a global evaluation, Hans Graser from the Animal Genetics Breeding Unit (AGBU) in Armidale, Australia, gave



Following the conference, the World Hereford Show took pace at Herning, Jutland, in connection with the Danish National Show, which is one of the largest shows in Europe. Pictured here is a class being judged. Collins explains that in Denmark the showmen continue to parade their animals in a circle around the judge until they are placed.



A line-up of the division champions during the World Hereford Show as the judge is preparing to pick the champion bull.

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OXO World Traveler Ambassador Perspective:

Expectations

Great expectations is the best way to describe what I was anticipating from the OXO World Traveler Ambassador experience. The Nordic (or Scandic) country of Denmark did not let me down!

My husband, Colby, accompanied me on the trip, which for us started out in Copenhagen on June 29.

The first afternoon and the next morning of our trip, we had open to tour and sightsee the capital city of Denmark — Copenhagen. During that time, it was very apparent that the Danish people are environmentally friendly. Most people either walk or ride bikes, and they recycle a great deal of their waste. I was surprised how clean the air was in Copenhagen, especially for its size.

We enjoyed viewing the ancient architecture tied right into modern design. It's the type of history we are unfamiliar with in such a "new" country like the U.S.

The opening ceremonies of the 15th World Hereford Conference were that afternoon. Each country's delegates were ushered in by the ancient sound of Viking horns. It started off with introductions from the secretary and chairman of the conference, along with all of the country delegates.

I enjoyed the information provided during the sessions and especially the country reports, when each country detailed what they are doing and what is working for them.

The next day began with several speakers and discussion about government subsidies. It was interesting to note that other countries have very similar problems as we do, to different degrees, and that most everyone is looking to China to see what kind of impact it will have on the rest of the world. Countries are looking to China for trade opportunities and to see its effect on fuel consumption.

Other highlights of the conference and country reports included:

- Bill Gallagher, Gallagher Industries president, explained how New Zealand has not had any government subsidies since 1985.
- Uruguay has launched a branded beef program labeled Estancia that is being marketed in the Southwestern U.S. and California.
- South Africa has improved its registration numbers with its breeding-up program.

At the end of the second day of conference, everyone went to eat together. I enjoyed the opportunity to visit with people from other countries and to get a more in-depth perspective on their operations and ways of life. The conference ended with an invitation to attend the 2012 16th World Hereford Conference in Calgary, Canada.

Following the conference, we participated in the post-conference tours. We traveled to herds west and north of Copenhagen. First we took a harbor tour around Copenhagen and then departed to Woodland Herefords. At Woodland Herefords, we were able to view three different breeders' cattle.

We started the next day with a tour of the birthplace of Hans Christian Anderson, the poet and writer, then headed north to Trudsgaard Polled Herefords for our next tour stop. We had another excellent meal and were able to view one of the larger studs/herds.

Friday, July 4, we attended the World Hereford Show in Herning, Denmark. The Danish have a more laid-back approach to showing than we in the U.S., but it is essentially the same concept. The event included cattle, horse, sheep, swine and farm shows. It was very interesting to see the different breeds and types of animals that they utilize for production, as well as how they prefer their animals. Some breeds are much larger than our version of them, and some are the opposite. It was exciting to see the Hereford champion bull named the supreme champion of the show.

After the show, we were invited to toast the champion in the barn with champagne and with the honored guest, the Prince of Denmark. Following the show, we attended an evening banquet. It was entertaining: there were a few more country speeches and gift presentations, the Danish closed their silent heifer auction, and there was eating, singing and dancing for all to enjoy.

This ended our weeklong whirlwind trip. It was definitely a very enjoyable and enlightening experience, one that I am very grateful to have been given the opportunity to have been a part of and will never forget. I encourage any juniors, past or present, who are eligible for the OXO scholarship to apply. It is truly a once in a lifetime experience that should not be overlooked. The contacts that are made and the opportunity to broaden your horizons by traveling to a different country are a priceless experience. Many thanks to OXO Hereford Ranches and the Matasovic family for sponsoring the scholarship.



Shellie and Colby Collins

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an update on the research regarding the possibility of a multi-country evaluation, which allows for genetic correlation between countries.

Sanders says a global evaluation is possible, but there are some limiting factors in computing power because of the amount of data. "At this time, it is impractical to do a multi-trait evaluation among all countries, but we could do some single trait comparisons," he says. "That is not our end goal, but it could get us started."

Dennis Schock, Shafer Ranch, Sherman, Texas, and his wife attended the conference and pre- and post-tours. "I enjoyed hearing the country reports," Schock says. "It was exciting to hear demand for Hereford cattle is good in all countries and most countries have, or are working on developing, a Hereford beef product to market to consumers."

Before and following the conference, producers had a chance to experience Nordic hospitality on tours through Finland, Sweden and Norway. Visitors had a chance to see old historic capitals — Stockholm, Oslo, Helsinki and Copenhagen — lots of countryside and, of course, numerous herds.

"The highlight of our trip was the opportunity to see the different operations and how they do things," Schock says. "One real interesting thing was the management practices. In almost all of the countries we visited, on Oct. 15 the cows are brought into a barn and are locked in the barn until April 15. There were a few free stall set-ups where the cows can go outside if they want to, but they said most of the time the cows chose to stay in the barn," Schock says.

Make plans now to attend the 16th World Hereford Conference, which will be in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, July 10-15, 2012. **HW**

— Shellie Moore Collins



In Nordic countries, most cattle are in barns for six months of the year. Because of this, barn space becomes a limiting factor for producers wanting to increase herd size. Pictured here are cattle on feed. Cattle are finished either on grass or in confinement operations as pictured here.



Similar to those in the U.S., bulls are put on feeding tests to measure feed efficiency. This testing facility was at Staur Farm, which is a government-owned research center much like an Extension experiment center in the U.S.



During the tour, participants had a chance to visit with and to share ideas with breeders from other countries. Pictured is Haygood with David Phelan from Australia.



Huffhines with Jan Wills, World Hereford Council secretary general.



Collins says while in Copenhagen, she enjoyed the opportunity to see ancient architecture tied right into modern design, something that's not as common in the U.S. Pictured here is the capitol building in Copenhagen, where the Prince and his family live.



Pre-conference tour participants look at a group of cows on display at Origo Herefords in Sweden.

OXO World Traveler Ambassador Perspective:

Cattle, Culture and Camaraderie

The World Hereford Conference was truly a life changing experience. I enjoyed the cattle, culture and camaraderie shared on this adventure. I am grateful to have received the OXO World Traveler Scholarship, as it allowed me to meet new Hereford breeders from around the world, to experience a new culture and to enjoy part of my heritage.

I traveled to the event with my two sisters — Jessie and Amy. We attended the pre-conference tours prior to the conference.

Finland offered wonderful hospitality, impressive heritage and solid cattle. It was interesting to compare trends in our breed and what they look like in a different part of the world. It was exciting for me to learn that one of the ranches in Finland was using genetics from our ranch. It helped me to realize what a tight-knit community Hereford breeders can be around the world.

I really appreciated Sweden, as my ancestors are Swedish, so it meant a lot to be in that country. Lennart, the president of the Swedish Hereford Association, was a great leader for our group. He offered good perspective that was easy to understand and answered all of our questions about subsidies, society and the sights!

My sisters and I were honored to serve as committee judges for the national showmanship contest. Although the process is different from how we show at home, the showmen were hard working, knowledgeable and kind. The national show in Sweden



Stacia, Jessie and Amy Berry

offered many great cattle. I appreciate the effort that the producers went to in order to present a show just for the tour.

The World Hereford Conference in Denmark was an amazing gathering of all nationalities united by a common bond of

Hereford cattle. My sisters and I were able to present to the World Hereford Council on youth issues around the world. We reached a consensus that the future is bright for the Hereford industry, and the U.S. was commended for the work done in youth development. My sisters and I were thankful for the experiences we had to draw from through years of involvement with the National Junior Hereford Association.

Following the conference, my sisters and I spent five days visiting distant relatives and going to the see our family's farm prior to their migration to the U.S. It was such a wonderful opportunity to see our family heritage.

Our travels provided new friends from all around the world, a greater appreciation for the Hereford breed and enthusiasm for the next meeting four years from now. I would encourage youth and adults alike to participate in and support the World Hereford Conference 2012 in Canada.

— Stacia Berry