



“My family never really pushed me to start showing cattle,” Mark says. “It’s something I decided on my own. Everyone is passionate about something — whether it is basketball or football, etc. My passion is cattle.”

Just as a basketball player spends hours shooting free throws to improve, Mark spends an equal amount of time and energy working with his cattle. For Mark, success at the show starts at home for months before he enters the showing.

“This summer he spent every day in the barn but two, and those days he asked me to come in and rinse ‘em — because he likes to rinse them twice a day,” explains brother Matt. “Mark

works harder than anyone I know, and he takes it more seriously than most. He’s also very eager to help anyone who asks.”

This year Mark and his family exhibited 10 head at the JNHE. Throughout the week, he also mentored his 9-year-old nephew, Jake. Mark helped Jake fit his heifers and get them ready back at home as well.

“Mark has a passion for raising Hereford cattle and focusing his energy on being successful in pursuit of reaching high goals, both personally and those that involve his cattle,” says Chris Stephens, past American Hereford Association junior activities director. “Many young people today could learn from his positive attitude and work ethic. I am proud to call him a friend for whom I have the utmost respect and look forward to watching him achieve future success.”

A showmanship judge looks for the best qualities in a showman, and not particularly the quality of cattle. However, it’s still very important to have the cattle looking their best. That’s the talent of a true “showman.”

This year’s senior showmanship judges were Kyle Perez, Nara Visa, N.M., and Shane Werk, Burton, Kan. Perez says he looked for a senior showman who showed the ability to



## Top Hand

*Mark Sims is selected as champion senior showman.*

by *Tosha Powell*

“Deserving” is the word that came to mind of family, friends and peers as Mark Sims of Elgin, Okla., was named top senior showman at the 2009 Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) July 8 in Tulsa, Okla.

“He’s seriously the hardest working person I know,” says Mark’s sister, Catie. “He deserves everything he gets. He’s so passionate about Herefords and showing. It’s unbelievable how much work he puts into it. He always strives to be better each year. It was really the icing on the cake this year for him to win senior showmanship.”

Mark topped the field of 97 seniors, who had to prove themselves not only in the showing but also under the fire of questions and at the fitting chute.

Showing cattle is definitely a family affair for the Sims family, including Mark’s parents, Eddie and Ruth Sims; brother, Matt; and sister, Catie, but Mark says it was his choice to get so involved. He says that showing cattle has become his passion.



The top 10 senior finalists had to demonstrate their abilities in the ring, at the chute and on the microphone.

stay calm and collected and that had class and style, along with the drive to win.

“Mark had his heifer in great condition before she ever got to this show,” Perez says. “He proved he’s got the ability to take a line of cattle from start to finish. You’ve got to be more than just a showman in this competition; you have to be the top hand and know what you are doing behind the ring.”

Before he gets to a show, Mark determines what needs to take place in order to be the best in the showing.

“A lot of people can take a heifer and walk it into a show profile, but a true showman can take his heifer’s bad qualities and try to hide them,” Mark says.

The top 10 senior showmen are asked to fit their heifers while being judged during the finals competition round.

“The fitting aspect fits in because when you get to this age, you should know how to fit cattle,” Mark says. “You need to know their flaws and weaknesses along with their good qualities and know how to make them look their best.”

This year’s senior finals was a tough one to judge, but Mark is no stranger to the winner’s circle in the showmanship competition. He won intermediate showmanship his first year in the division and was named reserve senior showman in 2008.

“Showmanship is more your true ability and not so much the cattle,” Mark says. “It shows more about you as a person, shows off your hard work. But, when it was down to me and Sarah (Stream), I was a little nervous. But, I thought to myself, I’ve made it this far. I was so happy. It’s something I’ve worked really hard at.”

When judges Perez and Werk gave the final nod, it was to Mark.

“I was kind of surprised! I knew I had a good chance, but I didn’t know if this was the year,” Mark says. “There were a lot of good kids in there to compete with. However, this is an accomplished goal of mine.”

Only 18 years old, Mark will be able to compete at the JNHE for three more years and continue to demonstrate his abilities as a “top hand.” **HW**



### Three helpful tips for showing success

Mark Sims, Elgin, Okla., won top senior showmanship honors at the 2009 Junior National Hereford Expo in Tulsa, Okla. Success in the showing is generally focused on the cattle exhibited. However, the showmanship competition focuses on the other end of the halter — the exhibitor. The following are a few tips from this year’s winner on how to be successful in the showing.

- **Patience is the key.** “You can’t get frustrated when your heifer won’t set up right,” Mark says. “Take your time and reset and try again.”
- **Know the livestock you are showing.** “The best quality of a good showman is being able to showcase your heifer’s best qualities while hiding her bad features,” he says. “The only way to know this is to work with your heifer at home and really get to know her.”
- **Practice, practice, practice.** “Knowing what to do in the showing, whether it be leading your heifer, watching the judge or setting up her show stance, sets a good showman apart from a great showman,” Mark says. “Spending time at home with your heifer and practicing can improve your qualities in the showing.” **HW**



The work at home paid off for the Sims family and crew as they enjoyed a successful JNHE. Along with senior champion showman honors, Mark took home numerous other awards including grand champion cow-calf pair, reserve grand champion bred-and-owned bull, two division wins and multiple class honors.