

# Fitting the Mold

2009 Herdsman of the Year Sarah Stream achieves lifelong goal.

by Tosha Powell



In the fall of 2001, when Sarah Stream was searching for a new addition to her primarily Angus showstring, little did she know one Hereford heifer would become the foundation of her career as a Hereford junior.

Eight years later, Sarah would end her junior career in Tulsa, Okla., as Herdsman of the Year.

“To me, herdsmanship is something that has little to do with the actual show,” Sarah says. “It is the breeding, feeding, everyday extra effort in the show barn and how you manage your operation long before you get to the show. Once we all get together at the show, everyone can see what goes on at each individual farm by the way the cattle are handled and presented.”



Showing cattle is a family activity for the Streams.

Sarah says the honor is more special than any other she’s received throughout her junior career because her peers — other junior members — voted for the award.

### Adding some color

Sarah’s father started his herd with a purchase of a few Angus cows, simply because he wanted his little girls to grow up on a farm and be around animals. Sarah and her sister, Lisa, started showing those home-raised Angus heifers at local shows. As the years went by, they started becoming involved with more and more shows, as well as Iowa Junior Beef Breeds Association. In that association, there is a point race each summer, and the girls soon realized that more points could be achieved if they showed multiple breeds.

Sarah recalls how that special Hereford heifer came to her and how the Hereford industry became a passion of hers. “I stumbled upon a Hereford heifer at a club calf sale and fell in love with her,” she says. “My family made the decision to purchase her, and it was the best decision yet. She was very successful in her show career, and her first calf was

also a successful show heifer. In fact, that first calf of hers still to this day stands in our donor pen.”

Sarah made the decision to keep the numbers low and the quality very high in her Hereford herd, since the Hereford division of Stream Cattle Co. is her responsibility.

“When we diversified our showstring and started putting those ‘off-breed’ females back into our herd, Lisa and I started to look further into the future and began to have dreams of one day having our own show calf sale,” Sarah says. “We began to focus our efforts toward that goal, only buying show heifers that we thought would make many great show calves down the road. We wanted to keep them sound and functional, with a cool look that would win and bring those big smiles to our customers’ faces that only purple can achieve.”

### Becoming a leader

At her first Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) in Tunica, Miss., Sarah realized how much fun Hereford people have and soon fell in love with the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA).

“It’s funny, because I had always heard people say that Hereford people are more fun but never really believed

it until I experienced a week with whom I didn't know at the time would soon become my 'Hereford family.' I say without reservation that the reason I became involved in the leadership aspect of the Hereford breed is because of the people that make it up."

Throughout that week in Tunica, Sarah paid close attention to the maroon jackets running around the showring. On their way home from Mississippi, Sarah told her mother she would one day be on the junior board.

"At my first JNHE, I saw the junior board as friendly faces that were seeking out every opportunity to become friends with each of the juniors in Tunica," Sarah says. "I had never seen such a hardworking, happy bunch of people that were leading their peers by example, being a mentor to each one of them, and making the contests and programs run like clockwork. I immediately knew that I wanted to be a part of that."

Five years later, being a member of the junior board is no longer a goal of Sarah's, but a memory.

"I'm sure people had their doubts, that I seemed like a 'jock' or just some newcomer that thought a lot of myself when I began to get heavily involved with the NJHA," she says. "The way I see it, the cattle industry is bigger than some people realize, and I think the breed associations need to be familiar with one another, while always trying to be the best. That is what makes this industry so successful, is the knowledge base, the people that make it up, and open minds willing to take risks to make the best better."

### A friendly face

Sarah's fun-loving personality and leadership qualities have made her many friends within the Hereford industry and show circuit. Tom and Tammy Boatman recognized qualities in Sarah that reminded them a lot of their employer, the late Wesley Rakestraw, persuading them to honor Sarah at the 2008 JNHE with the first Wesley Rakestraw Hereford Enthusiast Award. From the time of their first meeting, Sarah and the Boatmans created a personal bond which later

led to Sarah completing an internship on their ranch.

"Sarah's dad was a little worried about sending his daughter down to Georgia for an entire summer, but she worked really hard to get it approved," Tammy says.

She compliments Sarah's help around the farm. She says it was exactly the kind of help they needed — especially when they decided to have their very first show clinic for their buyers.

"Sarah was such an essential part of our show clinic this summer," Tammy says. "She's knowledgeable about looking at an animal and knowing where it needs to be. She fell right in with our program. Our show clinic was more about feed; daily care (rinsing, brushing, blowing); herd health; clipping and fitting. Sarah did a great demonstration on the daily care."

Other breeders acknowledge Sarah's personality and call her "dedicated," "hard-working," and a "joy to be around."

"She definitely fits the mold of a great herdsman," Tammy says. "We are just so proud of her."

### Future plans

Although she won't be attending the JNHE as a showman or board member any more, Sarah will be no stranger to Hereford youth. Planning to stay involved with her Hereford family, she will continue to raise show stock and provide quality show heifers for Hereford youth.

"Lisa and I still have that same dream that we had a decade ago and will continue striving to produce the best show cattle the Midwest has to offer. I am especially excited about the potential that my Herefords have, and I am looking forward to seeing what they will do," Sarah says.



Sara exhibited a division champion in both the owned polled and bred-and-owned shows and a reserve division in the owned horned show.

She has accepted a position at Farm Bureau in her hometown. "It is the type of job like most of what I have done in my life: you get just as much out of it as you put into it," she says. "I think this is a good place for me to start, and I look forward to the flexibility of my position and being able to go to shows and be close to home where I can play a very active role in our cattle operation."

Above all, Sarah remains grateful to her peers for honoring her with the Herdsman of the Year Award.

"I have looked up to and respected those that have won this prestigious honor in the past, and I am very humbled and honored to call myself Herdsman and join the ranks of those that have been there before me." **HW**



Sharing in Sara's excitement of being named herdsman of the year were her parents and sister, Lisa, as well as Tom, Tammy, Kendall and Kade Boatman of JWR Land and Cattle Co.