

Giving a Helping Hand



Nebraska Junior Hereford Association advisors Kurt and Hally Ziegler were named 2009 Advisors of the Year.

by **Jami Gillig**

A huge surprise awaited Kurt and Hally Ziegler when they arrived at the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) in Tulsa. The Nebraska Junior Hereford Association junior board members were hopeful that their nominees for Advisor of the Year would be selected. It wasn't until Friday evening that Kurt and Hally were announced as the 2009 Advisors of the Year.

Although both Kurt and Hally grew up raising cattle and were heavily involved in 4-H, they are relative newcomers to the National Junior

Hereford Association (NJHA). Kurt has a custom feeding operation and assists other farmers and ranchers with day jobs around Bloomfield, Neb. Hally is a production supervisor at Michael Foods. They have three children, Ashley, Madie and Wiley.

As a family they also enjoy 4-H and church activities. Hally has been a Sunday school teacher, and both are involved with church activities such as dinners and gatherings. Both Kurt and Hally are leaders for the Knox County Knockouts 4-H Club.

Selecting Herefords

When Kurt and Hally went to purchase a Hereford bull at an Upstream Ranch sale nine years ago, they would have never guessed what awaited them. At that sale their oldest daughter, Ashley, fell in love with a Hereford heifer and was able to talk her parents into purchasing her.

"Herefords have such a great disposition," Kurt says. "Before the purchase at Upstream, we had a set of 700 Hereford feeder steers, and they were easy to manage. Ashley really fell in love with that set of steers."

The Zieglers then attended the 2002 JNHE in Sioux Falls, S.D. "We had no idea what to expect,"

remembers Hally. "Although we didn't show we met some great people, watched others compete and decided that we should try to go to Tunica."

When the 2003 JNHE in Tunica, Miss., rolled around, the Ziegler family was impressed with the organization and appreciated how great the other Hereford kids and parents were to them.

"The Nebraska juniors are a pretty tight group of kids," Hally says. "They were outstanding and immediately let Ashley join their group. It's like we are one huge family."

From then on the Ziegler family was hooked on Herefords. Ashley has grown her own herd to 15 head of registered Hereford cows. Like so many other Hereford families, the JNHE is now their yearly vacation.

"We feel our kids will come out of the NJHA with a greater sense of responsibility, not only for themselves but to others around them as well," says Hally. "Along with that we feel they will have a better understanding and appreciation for such a great breed of cattle that will enable them to improve and expand their own herds."

Helping hand

Kaci Nelson, Burwell, Neb., president of the Nebraska Junior Hereford Association, wrote in the nomination application for the award that even before Kurt and Hally were selected to serve as advisors, they were already asking how they could help.

"A helping hand is simply a miracle. That is exactly what Kurt and Hally seem like to our association — simply a miracle of kindness and dedication," Nelson notes. "If it is going to get a bucket of water, holding a calf while an exhibitor is putting on their number or just a kind word to lift someone up — they are there. All the little things that a person can do mean a lot to someone needing help."

When asked in 2006 to serve as one of three sets of advisors for the Nebraska Junior Hereford Association, Kurt and Hally were honored.

"You could tell that the junior

Kurt and Hally share a laugh and smile with Nebraska junior member, Katie Nolles. Nolles stalled with the Ziegler family during the JNHE.



board knew what was going on and what the job entailed,” says Kurt. “We were happy to fill the position and have the opportunity to work with such great kids.”

Some of the obvious reasons for their selection to be advisors were their friendly, helpful attitudes and love of the breed.

“Going to shows is a passion for the family; however, helping the junior members is of even greater importance,” adds Nelson.

That is certainly the case with Nebraska junior member Katie Nolles, Bassett, Neb. She has developed a special friendship with the Zieglers. Nolles and her family traveled and stalled with the Ziegler family during the 2009 JNHE.

“Kurt and Hally are like my second set of parents, and I really look up to them,” says Nolles. “If my parents aren’t there, they check on me and help me keep my stalls clean. They have also helped me learn the ropes. They have shown me how to fit and have given me showmanship tips.”

The Zieglers make it a habit to go above and beyond — not only when helping junior members but also when making every Nebraska junior event a success.

“During meetings Kurt and Hally are there to listen and give suggestions or ideas of different things we could do within our organization to help make it stronger and stay organized,” Nelson says. “When preparing for the Nebraska state show, they immediately asked what we wanted them to be in charge of. Seeing as their daughter, Ashley, is the vice president of our organization, they were in charge of the entries and the program, which is a very important task.”

Kurt and Hally have completed a three-year term as advisors and were just asked to serve another three years.

“One of the greatest rewards of being an advisor is to be able to work with these great kids and watch them grow into responsible



Hally wishes Nebraska junior Grady McMahon good luck before heading to the showing. The Zieglers are known for their friendly, helpful attitudes.

and caring adults,” Kurt says. “They put forth such an effort to succeed, and it is a great feeling to know you were with them along the way.”

Smiling faces

It seemed like every Nebraska Junior Hereford Association member had a huge smile on his face when the Zieglers received their award. That may be because smiles are contagious and Kurt and Hally never seem to be short of them.

“You can always count on Kurt to get a smile on your face in a busy and stressful situation, and that little relief of comfort can help a person through a busy day,” Nelson says.

Kelsie Musil, Wilbur, Neb., agrees, “The Zieglers are a really good family. They are always friendly and helpful. I’m so happy they got this award.”

With smiles on their faces, Kurt and Hally commented that they were both surprised and honored. “It is just a really great feeling to know the kids appreciate us and that they feel we are worthy of such a great award,” Hally says.

Kurt also adds, “This is not a one man show. The kids, parents and other advisors do so much. We all work together, which makes the jobs a lot easier to get done. We’ve enjoyed being advisors and look forward to many more junior nationals.”

Past National Junior Hereford Association President Roger Morgan, Burwell, Neb., summed up why Kurt and Hally received this prestigious award.

“The Zieglers have done everything that is asked of an advisor and do it well. In my mind Kurt and Hally are very deserving of this award. Not only do they have a love for the Hereford breed, they also are very youth oriented. That is why they are this year’s Advisors of the Year.” **HW**



The JNHE has become the family vacation for the Ziegler family. Pictured are Madie, Hally, Kurt, Wiley and Ashley.