



In addition to being named Herdsman of the Year, Roxane Gebhardt was named reserve champion senior showman.



Lots of hours and work go into preparing cattle for the showing.



Roxane has always looked up to her older sister, Erica Boyer, for advice with cattle and life.

## Time to Shine

*Roxane Gebhart is rewarded for years of hard work and service with the 2010 Herdsman of the Year Award.*

by Sara Gugelmeyer

Roxane Gebhart is no stranger to hard work. She loves cattle and all that being a herdsman entails. But, other noble commitments have vied for her time as well — service to the membership and the country through the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board of directors and the Air National Guard. This Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) in Indianapolis, her final year as an exhibitor, was her time to shine as a cattlegirl. She was chosen the Herdsman of the Year and reserve champion senior showman.

### Growing up Hereford

“Cattle events and chores have always been a part of my life all throughout growing up,” Roxane says. Her parents, Richard and Susan, and older sister, Erica, are active in the Hereford world raising registered Herefords at Beacon Hill Ranch, which has been in Susan’s family for generations. The ranch near Claremore, Okla., allowed Erica to start showing Herefords in 4-H, FFA and the NJHA. Roxane, who started showing at age 7, was more than willing to tag along and follow in her big sister’s footsteps.

Roxane’s fitting skills developed early as well. “I have always held an interest in fitting and clipping my own calves,” she says. “I started out by learning on the off-show side and front legs. From there I watched people at shows that I liked the way that they fit. I would watch their techniques and look at what products they were using. I still continue to watch those that I admire.”

Roxane says she has always looked up to her sister for advice. “My older sister has always been my mentor in many aspects, but most definitely in cattle. By watching my sister, I learned the true meaning of working to the bone and burning the midnight oil. My competitiveness and determination can be attributed to her as well.”

Also, longtime family friend Brian Courtney has helped Roxane along the way. “Brian taught me many technical skills such as showmanship, clipping, fitting, sportsmanship and hair working,” Roxane says. “Brian has helped me up the ante for years.”

### Everyday work

Show day might be the most exciting part of being a herdsman, but is not necessarily her favorite part, Roxane says. “My favorite part of showing calves is everything that comes before show day. I like to research old and new bulls and matings that have been successful. I love the everyday work in my show barn. It is so rewarding to get in the clipping room before you go to the show and have a calf standing there that has good hair because you made her/him have good hair,” she says.

At home Roxane sticks to a routine with her show calves and provides them the best feed possible.



Roxane has always been interested in fitting her own calves and learning the newest techniques to prepare them for the showing.

“Good feed can make the world of a difference in a calf,” she says. “But, cattle love routines, so don’t just research and get good feed; put your tools to use. Make a routine for the whole day that includes your feeding, rinsing, working hair, tying in and letting out times. Stick to your routine and your calves will eat well and perform.”

Roxane admits that it can be hard to stick to a routine with so many other activities in a young showman’s life. Her commitments to the NJHA board, which she retired from in 2009, and the Oklahoma Air National Guard have certainly caused her to push the limit at times. “At home I always have an outlined schedule that my calves are on, so I would always plan accordingly if I had a conference call or fund-raising calls to make.”

She also recognized when she just couldn’t do it all and asked her family for help. “When I was at a show while I was on the board, I always wished I could be at the bed with the calves more, but I realized that there is only so much time in the day and the benefits of being on the board were worth it. My family made it possible for me to do both.

## What Makes a Good Herdsman?

“In my opinion, a good herdsman is a cattleman. It doesn’t matter if you are the best fitter, showman or feeder if you can’t get cattle bred, raised and managed right. I think that good cattlemen are developed through many years and experiences. A good herdsman has a foundation of good management practices that start from the day the calf hits the ground all the way to a mature cow. Herdsmen acquire current knowledge through cattle conventions, articles revealing new studies and by talking with their fellow breeders. Herdsmen continue to strive for perfection not only in the showing but, more importantly, in the pasture.”

— Roxane Gebhart, 2010 Herdsman of the Year

I am very fortunate to have a sister that is just as crazy about showing calves as me and parents that are more than willing to haul me and my sister around and help in any way that they can.”

### Lifelong goal achieved

At Roxane’s last year to show at the JNHE she definitely ended on a high note, having accomplished a lifelong goal. “I can remember always writing down herdsman on any of my goals when I would go to a leadership camp or seminar,” she says. “I have always looked up to and admired those that were nominated in previous years as well as this year. I’m so proud to be in their company and humbled by their acknowledgment of my program.”

Roxane graduated with a bachelor’s degree from Oklahoma State University and will begin the paralegal program this fall at the University of Tulsa. Although her junior career is over, she plans to continue to help with the family operation and is thankful to those who have helped her along the way. “Thank you to my family,” she says. “Thank you to all of the breeders, families and businesses that lend their finances and hard work to help fund and enable the junior program.”

Roxane has achieved her goal, but ever the role model, she encourages other juniors to strive for success as well. “The only place



Roxane has honed her fitting skills through practice and learning from others.

success comes before work is in the dictionary,” Roxane says. “If you do your work at home and in the pasture, you will see results in the showing. Don’t get discouraged by not getting the place in class you wanted; just keep pushing, and eventually you will get the place you wanted and respect for your perseverance and determination. Follow through with your plans; keep your head up; and keep learning and watching those who continually experience success.” **HW**

**Editor’s Note:** For more on Roxane’s commitment to service in the Air National Guard, read “Guarding America” in the September 2009 Hereford World.