

# Passion and Dedication



## *Cameron Curry was honored with the 2013 Herdsman of the Year title.*

by *Sara Gugelmeyer*

Oklahoma (JHAO). He has served it in many leadership roles from director to president.

In the fall of 2010, he started a new chapter in his life, attending Connors State College at Warner, Okla. There, he was on the livestock judging team and worked at the college's beef center.

He added to his cattle-care knowledge as the intern at Kiamichi Link Ranch, Antlers, Okla., during the summer of 2012. While working there, he did whatever needed doing from fixing fence to halter-breaking sale calves.

He transferred to Oklahoma State University in the fall of 2012, where he will wrap up his bachelor's of science degree with a major in agribusiness and minor in agriculture economics.

### **In the ring**

All the while he's been improving his own herd and preparing his own calves for the show and sale rings.

**R**aised in the Hereford business, Cameron Curry, McAlester, Okla., is just what a herdsman should be. Kind and courteous to others, respected by his peers, successful in the showing and hardworking, not just at the show but year-round.

That's why he was recognized by other juniors at the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) as the 2013 Herdsman of the Year and now wears the coveted belt buckle with pride. And, he says, passion and dedication are what got him where he is today.

Born to Curtis and Donna Curry of Curry Hereford Ranch, Cameron has been in the business his whole life. "My parents and grandparents have always had Hereford cattle. I am proud to be a third-generation breeder," he says.

In fact, he says, his biggest supporters are his grandparents, Ted and Janice Curry and Al and Annahue Wood.

Like so many ranch-raised kids, Cameron got his start early. "I remember going to regional and national shows when I was very little watching and helping my uncle Steven, and maybe playing in the dirt," he says.

Then when Cameron's older sister turned 7, it was with great excitement that he got to tag along with her. He, too, finally turned 7 and got to show his own calf. That year, 1999, he went to Tulsa, the first of what would add up to 14 junior nationals attended.

That first year of showing and even before, Cameron watched his dad and uncle Steven and learned from them and others. "I started pulling legs when I was 13 and by the time I was 15, I was clipping our cattle, with a lot of advice. By the time I was 17, my family fully entrusted me with all of the feeding, clipping and fitting duties. I am proud to say that because of my interest in cattle, I have learned to feed, vaccinate, halter break, groom and fit and clip calves for a marketing environment. I watch and learn from the best in the business and apply concepts to our operation," he says.

Cameron says he also received a lot of encouragement and support from Sam and Rhonda Eck, Putnam, Okla. He has also been committed to his state Hereford organization, the Junior Hereford Association of

## **Top five tips from the Herdsman of the Year**

- Don't ever be afraid to make mistakes.
- You will never get better without trying.
- Even if you don't succeed the first time, never stop, never give up.
- Learn from all criticism, the good and the bad.
- Be patient with your parents.





He's had quite a bit of success. He showed the 2012 regional horned show heifer of the year and has exhibited many division winners at the National Western Stock Show in Denver.

This year's JNHE was an amazing one for Cameron. In addition to being named 2013 Herdsman of the Year, he was also a member of the third-place team fitting team and second-place senior livestock judging team. He was also named Oklahoma's outstanding state member for the third time. And he was named reserve champion senior showman, another coveted honor.

When asked why he enjoys showing, Cameron says with a smile, "It's fun and competitive. Raising high-quality cattle is a challenge and it is my passion to raise the best."

Obviously others took notice of his passion and dedication. A committee of adult national advisors handpicks a group of six juniors to be "finalists" in the herdsman of the year competition. Then JNHE participants, Cameron's peers, voted him the winner.

### A true mentor

Sam and Rhonda Eck's son, Nick, was one of those participants that voted for Cameron. Nick has looked up to Cameron his whole life and says that Cameron definitely deserves this honor.

He credits Cameron for not only being a great friend but also giving out fitting advice to make Nick and his cattle look their best. What's more is that Nick says Cameron is always willing to help anyone in addition to working hard on his own cattle.

The nature of the award makes it extra special, Cameron says.

### A true honor

"This award is truly the greatest honor I have ever received, mainly because I have been recognized by my peers. Being nominated as herdsman was the honor, being chosen herdsman of the year capitalizes how my peers feel about me. I feel very blessed to be involved in this association on a state and national level," he says.



Cameron attended his first junior national in Tulsa, Okla., in 1999 and hasn't missed once since.



Showing is a family affair for the Currys. Pictured (l to r) are: Curtis, Staci, Cameron and Donna.

It's a lifelong goal he accomplished. "From the time I learned what a herdsman was, I wanted to be that man," Cameron says. "An advisor once told me that a herdsman was the person that can be trusted with high-quality calves and be entrusted in their hands to perform at high-quality levels, from feeding to grooming and fitting to showing and displaying."

Right now, he doesn't know exactly what he'll be doing after college, but he says one thing is certain — his future will include owning and operating his own branch of Curry Hereford Ranch. **HW**



Helping younger Hereford youth has always been a priority. Here he is helping Kylin Oakes in pre-peeewe showmanship.