



Retiring board members Jack Evans and Lavette Teeter at the Hereford Young Guns Conference in August.



In April the AHA Board of Directors had its spring meeting in California and visited Harris Feeding Co. Pictured here Board members are looking at Hereford-sired steers in the Harris heterosis project prior to harvest.

Serving the Breed

This month we thank three Hereford breeders for their leadership on the AHA Board.

by **Angie Stump Denton**

Each year three Hereford breeders are elected to serve a four-year term on the American Hereford Association (AHA) Board of Directors. The Directors devote hours of time and energy to the AHA during their tenure on the Board. In 2003 AHA Annual Meeting delegates selected Jack Evans, Steve Folkman and Lavette Teeter to serve on the Board. As they retire this month, we reflect on their tenure as Board members.

Retiring from his year as AHA president, Jack Evans from, Winona, Miss., manages EE Ranches Inc.'s Mississippi division. Associated with the Hereford industry for 37 years, he says he has a lifetime of "real-world" cattle-industry education.

EE's Mississippi division sells 135 bulls each year private treaty and primarily to commercial producers. Evans says EE bulls are designed to be problem-free, balanced-trait cattle that meet the rigid standard of today's industry.

Cheryl, his wife of 40 years, also helps on the ranch and is an active member of the American Hereford Women (AHW) currently



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serving on the AHW board as vice president. The couple has three children — Julie, Jeff and Jay — and five grandchildren.

Known for his hunting stories, Steve Folkman, Ixonia, Wis., got his start in the beef industry participating in 4-H. Through the years the Folkman family's C&L Hereford Ranch grew to 125 registered cows and now includes 40 cows, about 25 registered and 15 commercial females used as recipients. Folkman also is a managing partner in his family's Bobcat Equipment franchise in Milwaukee.

Folkman says his breeding goals are simple. "We want to produce cattle that are good performers in our environment, include carcass merit above breed average. Females that have excellent udders and cattle that phenotypically have some eye appeal. We try and wrap these goals all up in utilizing and developing strong cow families."

Steve and his wife, Jill, have been married for 17 years and have four children: Nicole, 12; Curtis, 11; Alison, 10; and Austin, 7.

Known as the spokesman for the Eastern U.S., Lavette Teeter is owner of Will-Via Polled Hereford Farm, Mooresville, N.C. Will-Via was started in 1938 by Lavette's father, W.L. Teeter.

At one time the Will-Via herd included 150 registered polled Herefords and 80 commercial cows. Today Teeter and his farm manager of 35 years are in the process of reducing herd size. "Maybe two part-timers may make one decent farmhand," Teeter says with a smile. "We seem not to be able to get as much done as we did earlier in life."

His wife, of 44 years, Brenda, is active in the National Organization of Poll-ettes (NOP) serving on the NOP board. They have three children — Charles Jr., Kerry and Monica — and five granddaughters.

"We appreciate all that Jack, Steve and Lavette have done for the Hereford breed," says Craig Huffhines, AHA executive vice president. "During their tenure on the Board they met

challenges and problems head on and worked aggressively to leave projects in place that will have long-term positive effects on the Hereford industry."

Following the plan

In April 2005 the AHA Board developed a Strategic Plan, since that time the Board and staff has worked to accomplish those strategies. "I think the staff gets the most credit here," Evans says. "The Board helped develop the plan, but the staff has done a tremendous job of implementing it."

Teeter agrees saying he is proud of AHA's accomplishment toward meeting its strategic goals and that progress is being made on all fronts.

Marketing and communications

This past year Folkman has been chairman of the marketing committee. Teeter was a member of the committee and Evans participated throughout the year in the committee meetings. The three have taken the lead encouraging aggressive marketing and communication efforts.

"Some say our breed and breeders have a reputation as being slow to change and somewhat laid back," Evans says.

"But our committee members, with a little push, can become extremely aggressive and futuristic in their thinking. The 2006-07 ad campaign, "The Power of Black... Only Better," is an example of that thinking."

Improved communications with state associations and the membership has been a focus during their tenure. "We need better direct communication with our members and especially with less-than-50 cow herd members and new members," Teeter says. "They really need to be made aware of AHA's direction and how they fit in."

Overcoming obstacles

Every job comes with its challenges and serving on the AHA Board of Directors is no different.

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— **Lavette Teeter**



Evans says the two biggest challenges he's faced as a Board member were: 1) Being patient; and 2) Working within financial restraints. "The advertising budget is the best example," he explains. "Doing the very most with the funds available was the challenge."

Folkman agrees saying, "One of the biggest challenges has been to work within the budgets to try and fund as many of the programs as possible to increase the marketability of our product while still operating our Association."

Serving on the Board with other Hereford breeders from around the country can be a learning experience. Teeter says during his tenure one of the challenges has been, "To learn and then appreciate the different ways Hereford breeders operate and market their cattle in the Northwest and Southwest areas of this country."

Looking to the future

Looking forward Folkman says two AHA programs are critical to the future of the Association. "Our junior program is second to none. They will be future leaders both within and out of the industry," he says. "The second is our performance programs. These are at the center of improving and enhancing our cattle so that we as members have the tools to better our product."

"We need to continue as individual breeders to utilize the tools available to us to continue to improve our product — Hereford cattle," Folkman says. "Our staff and Board need to continue to put in place things to help contribute to the success of our members."

Evans encourages breeders to continue balanced-trait selection. "We need to be careful that we remain a balanced-trait breed," Evans says. "The popular idea in today's industry is to concentrate on carcass merit only. Single-trait emphasis could have long-lasting negative effects."

Evans says the CHB program will offer the most opportunities for members. "Right now all parts of the puzzle are not in place, but I will assure all Hereford breeders that our CHB program will become a much bigger part of our future," he says.

Teeter agrees saying, "I still believe the future of Certified Hereford Beef® holds the greatest opportunity for AHA. CHB has the potential to affect all Hereford breeders. I know it is not moving forward as fast as I would like to see but it is moving and, when the current plans are completed, I feel sure our breeders will be pleased."

He continues saying, "We as Hereford breeders need to make progress with our cattle in carcass yield and grade. We have to go through too

many cattle to meet our retail demand for Choice beef."

Folkman summarizes the last four years saying, "As an Association we have continued to

provide and enhance programs our members can use to improve their product thus adding to their bottom line." **HW**

Looking back

During the last four years American Hereford Association (AHA) Board members Jack Evans, Steve Folkman and Lavette Teeter have seen a lot of changes in the beef and Hereford industries. Below are each director's responses when asked: "What do you consider to be the most important accomplishments the Association has achieved during your tenure as a director and officer?"

Evans:

- 1) Implementing one of the most aggressive advertising campaigns the industry has ever seen.
- 2) Encouraging the Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) LLC board to take whatever steps necessary to take Certified Hereford Beef® to the 'next level.'
- 3) Establishing on-going research projects that will have lasting positive effects on the future of the Hereford industry, such as Harris Ranch, Amana Farms, Circle A and University of Missouri.

Folkman:

- 1) Developing the \$ Profit Index based on practical real-world data.
- 2) Implementing a multi-punched marketing campaign that has utilized a powerfully aggressive message and continuing to enhance the message with proven real-world research projects.
- 3) Enhancing existing programs and adding new ones while still maintaining a solid financial operating atmosphere and to the credit of the staff we've done this with our Strategic Plan in mind.

Teeter:

- 1) Maintaining financial stability.
- 2) Implementing the Non-Certificate AI Sire program.
- 3) Developing a broader scope marketing and advertising program.
- 4) Increasing profitability of Hereford Publications Inc. **HW**

