



Cole Fischer is a professional bull rider as well as the leader of his family's Hereford operation.

## One bull rider from Missouri is aiming to make his name known beyond the bucking chutes.

by Kayla M. Wilkins

Driving down a winding two-lane highway leaving Jefferson City, Mo., looking across rolling hills on the right-hand side, those passing by have seen a consistent sight of a small farm with a few cows for the last six generations.

The view of a large, red barn behind a brick home with a century farm sign out front has not changed a bit over the years. However, there is more than what is seen from the blacktop.

What was just a small hobby herd a mere year and a half ago has since transformed into a new, progressive Hereford operation spearheaded by Cole Fischer on a quest for excellence in producing Hereford seedstock.

### Circle F Herefords

Although Hereford production is new to the scene for the Fischer family, the land Circle F Herefords sits on today is rich in history. The property has been in the Fischer family for more than a century and has always housed small-scale agriculture production. Juanita Fischer, Cole's grandmother, reflects on her childhood on the same ground where her kids played as children and where her grandkids have even grown up.

She remembers when she was a young girl and she and her three sisters watched their dad grow crops and raise chickens and pigs to provide for their family. Because of those cherished memories, Juanita has only one request for the land she has grown so fond of over the years.

"I want to see that century sign continuing to grow in numbers and stay in the family," she says.

As the years pressed on, the focus of the farm changed but still preserved its agriculture roots. Her father sold off many acres, and when Juanita married, she and her husband, Emil, raised their family on the property, maintaining a small herd of Hereford-influenced cattle. Curt Fischer, Juanita and Emil's son, grew up helping his dad cut hay and feed the calves for fun, first sparking his excitement for agriculture.

Once Curt grew up, like many, he left home to pursue his own dream of opening an auto-body business in the nearby town of Lohman. After many years of success, his oldest son suggested they expand the business into Jefferson City.

Without hesitation, Curt jumped on the opportunity to

move back, grow his business and help his parents maintain their small farm. Little did he know, Curt's son, Cole, would soon take interest in drastically changing their hobby herd for the better.

The excitement for Hereford cattle runs deep for the Fischers, as they have always been partial to the breed, beginning with Emil years ago.

"I always thought that in a green pasture, red and white cows were beautiful," he says. "The colors just went together like I think they should."

Although the Fischers always had Hereford-influenced cattle, Cole decided to start this new venture about a year and a half ago. In contrast to many producers, prior to raising registered Herefords, Cole had little to no experience in the registered or commercial cattle industries. He grew up in rural areas, but just a short time ago, the idea of making breeding decisions based on expected progeny differences (EPDs), exhibiting in breed shows and artificially inseminating cows was foreign.

Cole says he can't help being excited about the future of Circle F Herefords, but he also has other dreams on his radar during this walk of life.

### Making a name

In addition to managing their developing herd, Cole is a professional bull rider, traveling the country with goals of shiny belt buckles and big checks on his mind. Cole recalls the first time he hopped on a bull about three years ago and notes he lasted only a second, but the challenge of the sport inspires him to keep pushing forward, never allowing him the opportunity to look back.

"It is the challenge," Cole says. "You can ride a really good bull and then tomorrow fall off one that is not very good. On the day-to-day, you just don't know what is going to happen and that keeps me going."

The desire to be the best at bull riding translates over to his Hereford operation. In fact, it was bull riding that first spurred him into the journey with Hereford cattle.

Cole has had much recognition in the sport, but he soon found his career cannot last forever. After getting hurt about a year and half ago, the time at home shed light on his passion for raising Hereford cattle on a more serious level.

# New Faces in an Age-Old Industry



Although Cole Fischer runs the Hereford operation, keeping things in order is a family affair. The Fischer family — Emil, Juanita, Curt and Cole — is pictured here.

He says, much like bull riding, getting serious about cattle production came with a hefty learning curve.

"I figured all you had to do was fill out some paperwork and there it would be," he explains. "That is not what it was, it is a lot more work than that."

Even with the workload adding to his busy rodeo schedule, Cole says the cattle business is worth every penny and every minute spent.

"It is not work if you love it," he says with a grin.

However, Cole has to sometimes call on the family for help in his endeavor. He is gone up to five days each week during peak rodeo season, so the operation becomes a family affair. Curt says it is with much help from Juanita and Emil that they are able to run their operation to its upmost potential.

He explains in his support for his son's dreams, he has also personally experienced a piece of the learning curve Cole described. He recalls their first show last fall in Kentucky.

"I didn't know all the ins and outs of registered stuff until Cole and I took some to Kentucky this past fall," Curt says.

He learned how to set up calves in the ring and various other tricks many first-timers may not be aware of. He explains they learned an immense amount in those couple of days alone.

Even with being rookies to the showing, Circle F Herefords made quite the showing at Kentucky, placing cattle in the top three in class and taking reserve female of the show.

With the first couple of shows under their belt, Curt and Cole both agree they are ready for more to come and look forward to traveling to Texas in the coming months to exhibit their cattle. Cole says they have come a long way in a very short time by focusing on profit indexes and utilizing help from industry leaders and only hope to continue the upward trend.

"Now we have built a solid foundation we can go off of," Cole says.

He attributes much of their growth to mentors within the industry and other producers, one of which is Joe Rickabaugh, director of field staff for the American Hereford Association (AHA). Cole says it has been with Joe's advice they have come much closer to bringing superior genetics into their herd. Cole notes he now more accurately understands how making better breeding decisions is crucial not



Circle F Herefords strives to produce high-quality Hereford females.

only to improve their herd but also to aid in improving the breed.

Cole looks to families that have been in the industry for years. He says Amy Phillips of Triple H Acres and Doss Hereford Farm have helped him tremendously.

"That is where I want to be," he says. "I want people to look at us and know we have a good thing going."

For Curt and Cole, looking beyond now has aided in fueling their desire to improve and expand their herd.

#### Legacy in the making

Cole recalls memories from his childhood helping his grandfather and dad bale hay and feed cows. He says it is important to him that he plays his cards right to provide the same childhood he had for his kids one day.

He jokingly explains kids are a far away idea for him now but it is something he thinks about and another driving force behind improving their herd. According to Cole, he gets to wake up each day to a job he absolutely loves and has grown a deep passion for.

"I enjoy going out and messing with the cows and with the babies," he explains. "It doesn't get any better."

Beyond enjoying the growing herd, a primary focus for the entire Fischer family is to keep an

open mind to learn all they can to make their small operation shine amongst the best one day.

"We are just going to work as hard as we can and keep going up," Cole says. "I think we are on the right path."

Curt notes the many changes that have developed over the short year and half they have been actively breeding cattle for a superior product. He says he has been dedicated to supporting Cole in his dream to improve their program by implementing premium cattle and utilizing profit indexes and newer technologies.

As Circle F Herefords continues to grow and Cole continues to discover more about the cattle industry each day, it brings great joy to his grandparents. From their perspective, they see their family farm not only maintaining but flourishing into something new and all at the hands of their son and grandson.

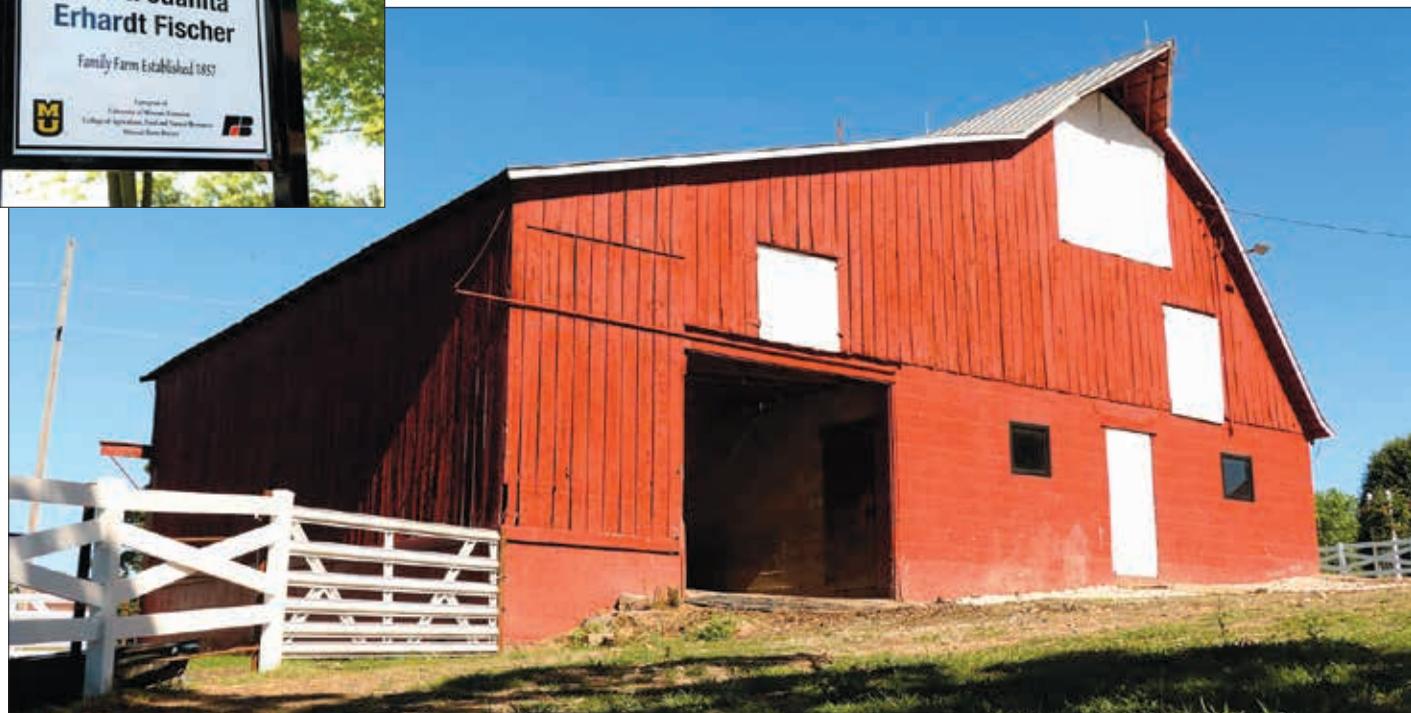
"It is a blessing to me that Curt and Cole are taking over," Emil explains. "It is the greatest thing that could happen as far as I am concerned." **HW**



Although its the farm has been in the family for six generations, Circle F Herefords only became serious about Hereford genetics a year and a half ago.



Circle F Herefords is a century farm in Jefferson City, Mo.



This barn was one of the original structures built on the Fischer property more than 60 years ago.