

# Hall of Fame, Merit Inductees Recognized

**D**oug Bennett and Pat Wilson were inducted into the Hereford Hall of Fame Nov. 3, 2008, in Kansas City during the American Hereford Association (AHA) Annual Meeting. The Hall of Fame honor recognizes breeders who've dynamically influenced the direction and advancement of the Hereford breed.

Also during the Annual Meeting, Jon Beever and Larry Cundiff were honored with the Hereford Hall of Merit Award. Hall of Merit inductees aren't necessarily Hereford breeders but have, in their own ways, greatly influenced the Hereford breed and cattle industry.

## Doug Bennett

Doug Bennett, Echo, Ore., has been a Hereford breeder for more than 40 years. Born into the purebred Shorthorn business, he got his start in the Hereford business after graduating from Washington State College in 1960 when he began managing Lehn Bros. Herefords. He spent three years at Lehn Bros. before going back to school.

After earning his master's, Doug stayed in the Hereford business, working as manager of Stone Hereford Ranch. In 1970 he partnered with his brother, Don, and Howard Stone on a ranch called High Meadows Cattle Co. near Wallowa, Ore. The trio developed a top-notch herd before selling in 1976. In the same year, Doug managed a record-setting dispersal sale for Stone Hereford Ranch.



Doug and Don then purchased Stone Hereford Ranch and developed it into Oregon Hereford Ranch.

In 1979 Doug headed south to Texas to partner with Sam Friedman and develop Lone Star Hereford Ranch. He returned to Oregon in 1998 to Oregon Hereford Ranch where he started a backgrounding operation. Then last March, Doug began selling part of his Hereford herd and says he is now "semi-retired."

Doug has been a longtime leader in not only the Hereford industry but the entire cattle industry as well. "His accomplishments at Stone Hereford Ranch, Lone Star Hereford Ranch and Oregon Hereford Ranch are legendary," says Dale Venhuizen of Churchill Cattle Co., Manhattan, Mont.

Doug has also benefited the industry through serving in various leadership roles. He has served on the AHA Board, as president

and director of the Oregon, Washington, N. Idaho Hereford Association (OWNI), as president of the Breed Improvement Federation (BIF) and as executive committee member of the Texas Hereford Association.

Jack Evans, EE Ranches, Winona, Miss., says of Doug, "Whether managing the cow herd, feeding, fitting and showing Denver champions, or handling merchandising and production sales, Doug Bennett is one of our greatest all-around cattlemen."

Doug and his wife Gladys have four children: Doug Jr., Susan, Randy and Mitch; 12 grandchildren; one great-grandchild and three more on the way.

## Pat Wilson

Pat Wilson, Frostproof, Fla., started his Hereford seedstock operation, Crooked Lake Ranch, in the 1960s and continued to produce top-quality cattle until his death Oct. 14, 2008. He began his program by purchasing a group of cattle from the R.W. Jones (RWJ Polled Herefords) program, a well-known performance-based operation. He purchased outcross bulls over the years, but his herd is still predominately linebred Victor Domino.

In the past 40 years, Pat never hosted a production sale and has been able to retain the top cattle from each calf crop to constantly improve. A firm believer in performance testing, Pat also used his commercial cattle operation to evaluate his seedstock breeding program.

Pat and his wife, Patricia, were honored in 1973 with the Beef Improvement Federation's (BIF) Commercial Producer of the Year Award, just the second producer ever to be honored with that recognition.

Pat did not exhibit his cattle in the showing but, rather, used performance testing to evaluate



**Doug Bennett**, Echo, Ore., was inducted into the Hereford Hall of Fame. Pictured (l to r) are: Bill King, 2009 AHA president; Doug and Gladys Bennett, and Susan and Joe Parks, Nash, Okla.

his cattle. Thomas “Fred” Stokes observes that, “The Crooked Lake herd consistently achieves exceptional performance on grass alone in the inhospitable climate of central Florida.”

Bob Crane of Rock Hollow Farm, Alachua, Fla., is another fellow cattleman who believed strongly in Pat’s ability. He says, “Pat Wilson’s cattle have stood the test of time. Many times, he has forsaken immediate profit for the long-term best interests of his herd of cattle. He has never been detoured by short-term fads or fancies.”

Pat also dedicated time to serving the industry by supporting state and national Hereford associations, as well as county, state and national beef associations.

Mark Cooper of Cooper Hereford Ranch, Willow Creek, Mont., says, “Pat has been a good friend and inspiration to me and many other livestock producers across America, and he has been a very influential voice for the American producer.”

James Bennett, a 2007 Hereford Hall of Fame inductee says, “Pat Wilson’s breeding program, influence and service as a Hereford breeder make him most deserving to receive this honor.”



## Jon Beever

Jon Beever, Urbana, Ill., has been working with the AHA for four years researching genetic abnormalities. In 2008

Beever established a test for idiopathic epilepsy (IE), a genetic defect in Hereford cattle after years of studying the patterns of inheritance and then isolating the actual recessive gene that causes the condition.

Beever is a molecular geneticist and associate professor at the University of Illinois. He earned his bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees from the University of Illinois in 1986, 1989 and 1996, respectively, all in animal sciences. After earning his doctorate, he remained at the University of Illinois as a professor and researcher. His research emphasis has been on identifying genetic markers in animals, mostly cattle and swine, for diseases as well as economically important traits.

He has received more than 20 grants to further his research and has authored or coauthored 73 journal articles and more than 75 abstracts pertaining to research.

Many of the grants received were for a project Beever is working on with other scientists at the University of Illinois called the Livestock Genome Sequencing Initiative. This project was started about five years ago and is the first step in mapping and sequencing cattle and swine genomes.

In addition to discovering the genetic defect IE for the AHA, Beever worked to identify and develop a test to screen for the molecular defect causing Spider Lamb Syndrome in sheep and the genetic defect causing Tibial Hemimelia in bovines, among others. He is currently working on identifying the genetic defect called “Curly Calf Syndrome” for the American Angus Association.

Beever has done all this as well as teaching classes and advising undergraduate and graduate students.

He has also served on the board of directors for the Illinois Beef Association and the Illinois Partners for Agricultural Literacy.

Beever’s dedication to helping the AHA and the beef industry deal with genetic abnormalities is much appreciated by AHA staff and cattlemen everywhere. Director of Breed Improvement

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**Pat Wilson** was posthumously inducted into the Hereford Hall of Fame. Pictured (front row, l to r) are: Bill King, 2009 AHA president; Jinx Chaney, Biloxi, Miss.; Max Henry and Patricia Wilson, Lake Wales, Fla.; Coot Wilson, Frostproof, Fla.; and Wil Blaylock, Cullman, Ala. Back row (l to r) are: Clay and Heather Wilson, Lake Wales, Fla.; Wilson and Missy Blaylock and Chesley and Claire Peyton Bowman, Cullman, Ala.; Charlie, Cindy and Seddon Henry, Lake Wales, Fla.; and Mary Ruth, Caleb and Jacob Wilson, Frostproof, Fla.

and Chief Operating Officer Jack Ward says, "His expertise in the area of molecular genetics has changed attitudes of cattlemen throughout the industry and has allowed breeders to make genetic improvement without the worries of incorporating genetic issues."

Beever and his wife Stephanie live near Urbana. They have three children: Erin, 11; Taylor, 17; and Zachary, 19. Since 1981, Beever has maintained a herd of about 40 purebred Hereford cows.

### Larry Cundiff

Larry Cundiff has conducted genetic and breeding research that has contributed to significant changes in breeding systems and genetic improvement programs used in U.S. beef production. He directed a project that demonstrated the benefits of heterosis from systematic crossing of Herefords, Angus and Shorthorns increased output per cow about 23%. These results



contributed significantly to widespread use of crossbred cows in U.S. beef herds.

Cundiff received his bachelor's degree in animal science in 1961 at Kansas State University and his master's and doctorate at Oklahoma State University in 1964 and 1966, respectively.

From 1965 to 1967, he was assistant professor of animal science at the University of Kentucky. In 1967 Cundiff joined the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) of USDA as regional coordinator of beef cattle breeding research conducted by ARS and 11 land grant universities in the north central U.S. In 1976 he was appointed research leader of the Genetics and Breeding Research Unit at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (USMARC).

From 1975 until his retirement in 2007, he served as leader of a Germplasm Evaluation Program in which 36 breeds of cattle were characterized for a comprehensive series of traits of importance in beef production.

Cundiff has served as chairman of the BIF committee on genetic prediction and as the ARS, USDA representative on the BIF board of directors. He has received the BIF Service Award and BIF Pioneer Award, American Society of Animal Science Animal Breeding Award and Fellow Award, USDA-ARS Northern Plains Area Outstanding Scientist of the Year Award, USDA Superior Service Award and the American Polled Hereford Association Hall of Merit Award. Cundiff was recognized by *BEEF* magazine in 1989 as part of "25 who made a difference" and in 2004 as part of the "top 40" for contributions to the beef industry.

Ward says, "Dr. Cundiff's work has allowed us to compare EPDs (expected progeny differences) across breeds and has shown the effects of crossbreeding. Also, the AHA used his work to help in the development of the \$indexes. He has been and continues to be a true friend of the beef industry." **HW**