

Levi Landers

Life as a cattleman out west means working sunrise to sunset, driving the wide-open range and believing in your land and your cattle; but more importantly, it is a way of life. These people depend on good cattle and dedicated field representatives like Levi Landers, American Hereford Association (AHA) field representative, to make their Hereford operations succeed. Levi's dedication, loyalty and sincerity identify him as a true cattleman.

In one year's time, Levi has become the face of the Hereford breed at shows, sales and association meetings across the north central region. It is his goal to communicate with breeders, informing them of new policy decisions made by the AHA Board of Directors. Levi works as a liaison between the AHA and breeders.

Levi originates from "Big Sky Country," where his family's cow-calf operation is located in Miles City, Mont. He is no stranger to the whiteface breed, as his family has raised registered Herefords for 20 years, hosting an annual bull sale each year. Levi's parents wanted the ranch to be a learning experience, so they provided Levi with a couple of cows. By the time he graduated high school, his cow numbers had grown enough to pay for his college education.

Levi participated in 4-H and FFA, exhibiting hogs and steers at the county fair and competing in judging contests.

Livestock judging became a strong interest for Levi; with practice and dedication, he became very competitive. As a 4-H member, he was selected to represent Montana at the Agribition livestock judging contest.

Livestock judging led Levi to Casper College. The team proved to be very successful, winning five out of the seven national contests. After completing junior college, he continued his education and livestock judging career at Oklahoma Panhandle State University. Levi was a member of



the 1993 livestock judging team, placing third in the national contest in Louisville, Ky.

Levi was dedicated to making the cattle industry his career and lifestyle. After college graduation, he moved to Meade, Kan., to manage a preconditioning feedyard,

with his wife, Julie. For two years they worked with Meade County Feeders, providing them with started cattle. Besides backgrounding the steers, Levi and Julie were responsible for growing all of the feed and soliciting new customers for the operation.

Then for four years, Levi was a fieldman for the *Western Ag Reporter*. His territory consisted of Nebraska, Wyoming and Colorado. During this time he worked the ring at nearly 60 sales each year, solicited advertisements and traveled to commercial herds. At *Western Ag Reporter* he made connections with producers, many of whom he is still in contact with today. The skills Levi learned at *Western Ag Reporter* proved to be valuable when he became employed at the AHA in October 2008.

The early work experience that Levi obtained in the beef industry made him an ideal fit at the AHA. Levi works closely with breeders in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska and Kansas. Managing a region heavily populated with Herefords keeps Levi living out of a suitcase and putting thousands of miles on the odometer, by traveling to production sales and visiting members' herds.

Jerry Delaney, Delaney Herefords, Lake Benton, Minn., says, "What I admire Levi most for is his knowledge and ability to market Hereford cattle. I have witnessed him take a personal interest in the breeders in his territory. I am fortunate to have Levi representing my area."

Public relations is a big portion of Levi's job. As an AHA representative, Levi is devoted to the members of the Association. Levi's job consists of more than just going through pastures and

selling Hereford cattle. He attends several state association meetings, assisting in organizational planning. These events give Levi a chance to update members about available AHA services and upcoming *Hereford World* advertising deadlines.

Joe Rickabaugh, AHA director of field management and seedstock marketing, says, "Levi has been a great addition to the AHA fieldmen team and has made his mark in a very short time. He is professional, works hard for the breeders in his area and does a great job on sale day as a ringman. We are fortunate to have someone of his caliber with AHA."

The opportunity to tour Hereford ranches is what Levi takes pleasure in the most. He enjoys stops where it is evident the whole family is part of the operation. Levi says it is important for every family member to have a specific role and contribute his or her talent to the ranch. "I admire viewing operations that have children just as involved as the parents, that can describe to you every cow's pedigree. It thrills me to witness the energy and passion that young people have for the Hereford industry," Levi says.

The increase in Hereford registrations is the biggest improvement Levi has seen in the past year. Commercial producers from the north central region specifically have an incredible amount of interest in Hereford genetics. He feels this is due to the aggressive advertising campaigns documenting black baldie cattle, which target these producers. Levi says, "I am looking forward to seeing the growth in registrations over the next year. This is an exciting time to be Hereford breeders."

Aside from the long hours spent traveling to and from ranches and sales, Levi is a committed husband and father. He and his wife, Julie, reside in Ord, Neb., where they raise their four boys: Cage, 8; Casey, 6; Tanner, 4; and Ty, 4. Levi treasures every opportunity he has to spend with his sons. Cage is very active in wrestling and football while Casey, Tanner and Ty look forward to riding horses and working cattle. **HW**