

CK Ranch, Dudley Bros., Upstream Ranch Presented Inaugural Hereford Heritage Awards

Fiscal year 2013 has been a record-setting year in many ways for the Hereford breed, and the inaugural Hereford Heritage Award is a continuation of the trend. For the first time ever, a breeder has registered 10,000 head total. Better yet, in this year alone, three ranches have achieved that level.

This achievement prompted the American Hereford Association (AHA) to create an award to commemorate such a milestone. CK Ranch, Brookville, Kan.; Dudley Bros., Comanche, Texas; and Upstream Ranch, Taylor, Neb., are the recipients of this award commemorating their unprecedented level of commitment to the Hereford breed. They were recognized during AHA's Annual Meeting Nov. 1 in Kansas City, Mo.

CK Ranch

CK Ranch is located in the Smoky Hills region of Saline and Ellsworth Counties of central Kansas. Jack and Donna Vanier and their son, John, own the ranch and the cow herd. Ray and Mary Negus manage the ranch.

The ranch includes approximately 15,000 acres of native pastures and 1,000 acres of tillable crop ground. The Vanier family has owned the land since 1933, when the 5,600-acre Root Ranch was purchased.

CK Ranch was first stocked with steers, but in the 1950s the ranch managed 2,000 registered cows and registered approximately 1,200 calves each year. Currently the CK commercial herd consists of 600 Hereford and Red Angus cows, and 175 registered Hereford cows make up the seedstock herd.

The primary purpose of the commercial cows is to serve as a testing
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CK Ranch, Brookville, Kan., was presented the Heritage Award for registering its 10,000th calf in 2013. Pictured (seated, l to r) are: Jack and Donna Vanier, Brookville, Kan. Standing (l to r) are: Dale Micheli, recently retired AHA director, Ft. Bridger, Wyo.; Cliff Copeland, recently retired AHA president, Nara Visa, N.M.; Bob Krause, Manhattan, Kan.; Marty Vanier, Manhattan, Kan.; Mary Vanier, Manhattan, Kan.; John Vanier, Salina, Kan.; Marty Lueck, recently retired AHA director, Mountain Grove, Mo.; and Craig Huffhines, AHA executive vice president.



Dudley Bros., Comanche, Texas, was presented the Heritage Award for registering its 10,000th calf in 2013. Pictured (standing l to r) are: Dale Micheli, recently retired AHA director, Ft. Bridger, Wyo.; Cliff Copeland, recently retired AHA president, Nara Visa, N.M.; Ginger and John Dudley, Comanche, Texas; Craig Huffhines, AHA executive vice president; and Marty Lueck, recently retired AHA director, Mountain Grove, Mo.

herd to prove Hereford and Red Angus genetics. CK Ranch uses premium programs to collect data and to improve traits in the commercial herd. The ranch has participated in the AHA National Reference Sire Program and the Hereford Verified program.

Dudley Bros.

Established in 1925, Dudley Bros. was originally a mercantile and ranching partnership by brothers, Gail, Tom and Eltos Dudley but is operated today by Gail's sons, John, Jim and T.J., and Eltos's sons, Tom, Ray and Harry.

Dudley Bros. is a family owned and operated registered and commercial Hereford enterprise, headquartered in Comanche County, Texas. Dudley Bros. has been in the registered Hereford business since 1938 and is known for producing practical and adaptable commercially oriented bulls and females that work well throughout all the regions of Texas and the surrounding states.

Dudley Bros. holds a production sale each year in October at the ranch headquarters two miles southwest of Comanche with an

offering of 125 2-year-old bulls. Females are normally sold private treaty in the late spring. Dudley Bros.' herd bull battery includes individuals that represent the best in horned beef Hereford genetics, and the ranch adds several young prospects each year from top ranches across the U.S.

The Dudley's are also known for producing top quality and practical registered Quarter Horses, and Dudley Bros. is an iconic name among the annals of Texas ranching history.

Upstream Ranch

Alfred Meeks and Sons originated in 1937 in Dalhart, Texas, when Alfred Meeks bought some heifers from his father, JD Meeks. In 1955 Alfred and his wife, Mildred, and their son and daughter-in-law, Ferrall and Gloria, purchased Upstream Ranch near Taylor in the Sandhills of Nebraska.

Today the ranch is managed by Alfred's grandson, Brent, and his wife, Robin, and owned with Mildred, who still lives on the ranch. Brent and Robin have two children — Marshall and Carlee. Alfred succumbed to cancer in

1991, and Ferrall and Gloria were tragically lost in a car accident in 1994. Brent and Robin have carried on the tradition of the Upstream Ranch name.

Upstream Ranch raises 1,000 head of registered calves each year, with half calving in the spring and half in the fall. The Meeks are known for their intensive AI (artificial insemination) and ET (embryo transfer) programs. Upstream hosted its first production sale at the ranch in 1978, which has continued annually on the first Saturday of February. The ranch's main focus is the production of stout, rugged range bulls for commercial cattlemen.

Genetically, Upstream Ranch is trying to produce cattle with balanced-trait selection. The Meeks are constantly striving for the proper balance of calving ease, growth, maternal, fertility and carcass traits. They are advocates of using expected progeny differences (EPDs) and ultrasound but also make sure their cattle excel in phenotype and temperament. Structural soundness and disposition are critical. **HW**

Upstream Ranch, Taylor, Neb., was presented the Heritage Award for registering its 10,000th calf in 2013. Pictured (l to r) are: Dale Micheli, recently retired AHA director, Ft. Bridger, Wyo.; Cliff Copeland, recently retired AHA president, Nara Visa, N.M.; Carlee and Robin Meeks, Taylor, Neb.; Marty Lueck, recently retired AHA director, Mountain Grove, Mo.; and Craig Huffhines, AHA executive vice president.

