

# Walker Elected AHA President

Eric Walker of Morrison, Tenn., was announced as the new president of the American Hereford Association (AHA) during the Annual Membership Meeting Nov. 1 in Kansas City, Mo.

In 1981 Eric purchased his first registered Hereford, and now, 33 years later, he owns

and manages a herd of 125 registered Hereford cows along with his wife, Rhonda; son, Cody; and stepson, Casey.

"It will be a great honor and privilege to serve as AHA president," Eric says. "We have a great team of board members and staff who go above and beyond to make this Association successful. We are all enjoying some great times in the cattle industry. The Hereford breed is positioned to move forward and hopefully take more market share with its ability to add heterosis and efficiency to a crossbreeding program. We as breeders must continue to keep producing only the best genetics that work in the environment they are selected for."

Eric's farm has hosted 18 production sales since 1986, and Walker genetics have been sold in 37 states, as well as Canada, Mexico and the United Kingdom.

The Walker cow herd utilizes approximately 500 acres of his total 1,100-acre farming operation. The remaining 600 acres are used for the production of shade and ornamental trees and shrubs that supply products for Walker Nursery Co. Eric is the sole proprietor of Walker Nursery Co., and he sells and markets his products to the landscape and retail green industry, shipping to 35 different states.

Eric says, as with most organizations, increasing membership is a top priority. "I would also like to see an upward trend in registrations and transfers, and we can never have too much data and performance statistics," he adds. "I hope to see all the research and performance projects we have going on continue to provide information that will help breeders produce cattle that are needed in the beef industry."



Eric is a member of the Middle and East Tennessee Hereford Associations, as well as a member of the Tennessee and Warren County Cattlemen's Associations. He has been a director and president of the Tennessee Polled Hereford Association. He is also a past president of the Tennessee Nursery and Landscape Association

and currently serves as secretary for the Regional Planning Commission Board for the town of Morrison.

"AHA has been blessed with outstanding leadership and I hope to continue that tradition to the best of my ability. The Hereford breed has been good to me and serving on the board is a way of giving back to the Association."

Selected to serve as the 2015 vice president was Sam Shaw, Caldwell, Idaho. Sam is a third generation Hereford breeder. The Shaw family owns and operates Shaw Cattle Co. and has been in the Hereford business for 68 years.

The Shaws currently run more than 1,250 cows including registered Herefords, Angus and Red Angus. They host an annual production sale in the spring and market 500 bulls and females. They also sell bulls and females private treaty throughout the year.

They have an extensive artificial insemination (AI) program. All females are synchronized once and then heat detected for a second cycle. They also collect feed intake data using the GrowSafe program. The entire crop of bulls from their fall calving herd is placed in the program.

Sam and his wife, Janel, have three children.

Completing their terms on the AHA Board were outgoing president Steve Lambert, Oroville, Calif.; Dale Venhuizen, Manhattan, Mont.; and Keith Fawcett, Ree Heights, S.D.

Delegates elected three new directors during the membership meeting. Jim Mickelson, Santa Rosa, Calif.; Kevin Schultz, Haviland, Kan.; and Bob Thompson, Rolla, Mo., will serve four-year terms on the 12-member Board.



## Jim Mickelson

California Hereford breeder Jim Mickelson and his family own and operate Sonoma Mountain Herefords, Santa Rosa. The Sonoma Mountain

herd currently includes 175 head of registered Hereford cows.

In 2003 Sonoma Mountain Herefords got its start with the purchase of the remainder of the Kunde Herefords herd, which dated back to the 1940s.

Jim and his wife, Marcia, oversee the operation, while their son, Bobby, along with his wife, Heidi, is in charge of day-to-day activities and is the ranch's herdsman. Jim and Marcia's daughter, Jamie, is involved as well; she's responsible for the show string. The Mickelson family shows cattle at local, regional and national shows including the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver.

Bulls are marketed each year as long yearlings or 2-year-olds in the ranch's production sale, held in conjunction with Lambert Ranch for the past eight years. Recently the Mickelsons have begun marketing females to commercial and registered breeders.

Sonoma Mountain Herefords has been a Gold Total Performance Record (TPR) Breeder for several years. In 2007 the operation was selected as the California Beef Cattle Improvement Association Seedstock Producer of the Year.

To educate the public, the Mickelsons operate sustainable tours in conjunction with their winery operation so that the public can see firsthand how the cattle are raised.

Jim recently served as one of the spokespersons for the CHB program. He has also served as the California-Nevada Hereford Association president and was on the merger committee for that association. He has been a junior advisor for the California-Nevada Junior Hereford Association and has served as the Western States Hereford Association show and sale director and as a director and president of the Sonoma Marin Fair.



### Kevin Schultz

Kansas Hereford breeder Kevin Schultz, Haviland, Kan., manages his family's Sandhill Farms, a seven-generation, diversified farming

and cattle operation. Hereford cattle have been bred on their land since the mid-1900s.

The farming operation consists of dryland and irrigated corn, soybeans and wheat.

The cow herd includes about 300 cows. With the maturity of Conservation Reserve Program acres, the Schultz family is in an expansion phase.

Through the use of embryo transfer (ET), approximately 200 of the calves are registered, and the balance will be purebred commercial. The commercial cows have been purebred Hereford since the mid-1940s.

The family has fed out its steers at commercial feedlots for the past 15-20 years. Feedlot performance data, as well as individual carcass data, have been collected and tracked.

In 2008 the family started a spring bull sale. In the sale all 5-year-old cows that are pregnant with heifer calves sell. The Schultz family also sells commercial open heifers and customer-owned black baldie heifers each year in the sale.

Sandhill genetics have been part of the National Reference Sire Program (NRSP) and the Circle A Ranch heterosis project. Kevin uses these programs to increase the accuracy and predictability of his bulls and to identify outliers that will help move the breed in the desired direction. Sandhill Farms is a Gold TPR Breeder; the family has been whole-herd reporting since the beginning of its registered cattle program.

Kevin was a longtime member of the Kansas Polled Hereford Association, serving multiple terms on the board and as president. He is a current member of the Kansas Hereford Association. In 2004 he was AHA's nominee to the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Young Cattlemen's Conference. Sandhill Farms was honored with the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Seedstock Producer of the Year Award in 2010.

Kevin and his wife, Vera, have three children — Brooke, Tyler and Courtney.



Pictured is the 2015 American Hereford Association (AHA) Board of Directors. Seated (l to r) are: **Eric Walker**, Morrison, Tenn., president; **Sam Shaw**, Caldwell, Idaho, vice president; **Fred Larson**, Spring Valley, Wis.; **David Trowbridge**, Tabor, Iowa; and **Craig Huffhines**, Kansas City, Mo., executive vice president. Directors standing (l to r) are: **Bob Thompson**, Rolla, Mo.; **Joe Van Newkirk**, Oshkosh, Neb.; **Jim Mickelson**, Santa Rosa, Calif.; **David Bielema**, Grand Rapids, Mich.; **Kevin Schultz**, Haviland, Kan.; **Curtis Curry**, McAlester, Okla.; **Jonny Harris**, Screven, Ga.; and **Terri Barber**, Austin, Texas.



### Bob Thompson

Involved in production agriculture all his life, Bob Thompson, along with his wife, Gretchen, own and operate Glengrove Farm near Rolla, Mo.

The farm was a registered Jersey dairy farm from 1926 until the mid-1960s. Bob's family has owned the land since 1903, and the Thompsons started their registered Hereford herd in 1974.

They began performance testing through the University of Missouri livestock Extension service and the American Polled Hereford Association in 1976. The current Glengrove herd consists of approximately 50 cows and has been developed through the extensive use of AI and, in recent years, the use of ET. Their production goals center on producing diversified genetics that will meet the needs of their purebred and commercial customers and perform in their environment on fescue grass.

The Thompsons market cattle through the Show-Me Hereford Classic sales in April and November. They also consign to the "Missouri Opportunity" state sale. In addition to the Hereford cattle, they own a corn and soybean row cropping operation in north Missouri near Princeton.

Bob and Gretchen are also part owners in a small investment group that has recently broken ground on a new backgrounding feedlot to add value for local feeder calf producers.

Bob is a past president of the Missouri Hereford Association (MHA) and was inducted into the MHA Hall of Fame in 2011. Glengrove Farm was honored with the MHA Purebred Breeder of the Year award in 2012. He and Gretchen donate in support of the Missouri Junior Hereford Association, the Hereford Youth Foundation of America and National Hereford Women.

Bob is also involved in his community. He currently serves as chairman of the Missouri State Fair Foundation. He's on the University of Missouri College of Agriculture's Foundation Board of Directors, and he's an advisory board member to that university's research farm. He serves on the board of directors for the Central Federal Savings and Loan in Rolla. He is a former president and chief executive officer of the U.S. Bank in Rolla and a former chief financial officer and agriculture director of the Missouri Enterprise Business Assistance Center.

Bob is a Missouri 4-H Foundation Heritage League member and a Missouri FFA Alumni Foundation member. He's a former member of the Governor's Advisory Council on Agriculture and was a recipient of the Governor's Award for Agriculture Achievement in 2012.

He served his country in the U.S. Army in Vietnam and was awarded a Bronze Star. **HW**