



Lifelong Learner

2017 AHA President Terri Barber led the Association through growth and change.

by *Julie Mais*

It may have been her inquisitive nature that started the journey. A lifelong learner, she found the opportunity to discover more about an industry dear to her heart hard to decline. But it was her drive and determination to have a seat at the table, her desire to make sure cattlemen's voices were heard and her resolve to take on a role of service that brought her to the prestigious position of leading the Hereford breed.

"Enlightening, dynamic, exciting" — that's how Terri Barber describes her term on the American Hereford Association (AHA) Board of Directors, and "fortunate" is how she defines herself in her final year serving as president. "I have been so proud and honored to fill this role," Terri says.

The ranch

No stranger to the breed, Terri comes from a multi-generation Hereford family ranch located in the Texas Panhandle. Barber Ranch, Channing, Texas, has raised Hereford cattle for more than 110 years. Terri remembers her parents, Dale and Mary, ran an operation that was predominately horned Herefords. She was actively involved in the Texas Junior Hereford Association and served in numerous roles including president.

When her younger brothers Jason and Justin began their show careers, the family brought in polled genetics. Today, the Barber Ranch cow herd consists of 300 horned and polled Hereford cows. "In terms of selecting for the horned or polled gene, we're not so tied up in that, but more concerned about genetics," Terri says.

The Barbers employ extensive artificial insemination (AI) and aggressive embryo transfer (ET) programs in their herd. "In terms of expansion, land resources are limited in our area," Terri explains. "We've utilized ET work and satellite herds to grow our program."

Terri says Barber Ranch meets customer demands in two markets — the commercial and registered bull buyers and the elite show heifer and feature donor cow customers — which oftentimes overlap.

Each November the Barbers host a bull sale featuring more than 100 service-age bulls, and twice a year they market registered Hereford females including the Holiday Lights Sale the second Saturday of December in the historic Fort Worth Stockyards.

Raising cattle that will make their customers profitable is at the forefront of the ranch's breeding decisions. Terri says they raise cattle that are functional and have sound structures. "Phenotype is still king for us," she says. "But we also certainly must have genetics that perpetuate these cattle so that people want to buy them." She adds EPDs (expected progeny differences) are of utmost importance along with longevity and maternal traits.

"We're all in the beef business," she says. "In our program we're paying attention to marbling and Certified Hereford Beef (CHB®) type indexes. One of the important things for our buyers is to provide indexes and information that goes with it, so when they get ready to market these calves, they can utilize the Hereford Advantage feeder program. We want to continue to add value down the chain. The more we can be a resource for our customers in terms of commercial bull market the better off we'll be."

Career and cattle

While Terri's career doesn't allow her to be involved in the day-to-day management of Barber Ranch, she fills in, in an important role in marketing and

customer service. “The ranch is in good hands,” she says. Her dad, mom, brothers Brett and Justin and their families work on the ranch, allowing Terri to play her part remotely as does her brother Jason who leads Superior Livestock’s purebred beef division. “We all work together as a team,” she says. “It’s a well-oiled machine.”

In promoting Hereford cattle to their customers, Terri says one of the breed’s strongest advantages is that heterosis fits nicely in a variety of breeding situations. “The baldie is still the queen and you can sell them all day long,” she says.

Customer service is what Terri provides daily with her job at Elanco Animal Health as a territory manager in the Southwest region, including Texas and New Mexico.

She has also served as Elanco’s branded-beef marketing associate and has worked directly with premier branded programs in the U.S.

“My day-to-day job is to provide customer service and be the No. 1 value contributor for Elanco Animal Health,” she says. “I like to learn new things and enjoy challenging situations. When I moved from Texas to New Mexico to head up a new territory, I had to learn a new set of customers and products, and I also got to move closer to the ranch.”

Leading the Association

Through her moves and career changes, Terri has remained involved in the Hereford breed, taking on a leadership role in the AHA in 2013. Terri says she ran for the Board to give back to an organization that provided her many opportunities.

“Looking back at the last four years, we achieved a lot,” Terri says. “My time on the Board was dynamic and explosive in terms of what we’ve accomplished — a robust new genetic evaluation; growth in membership, transfers, cow inventory and MyHerd use; bringing on staff Shane Bedwell and promoting Jack in his current role. Having the right people in the right place has paid off for the Association. Our staff is second to none,



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and getting to work with a staff that is so talented, visionary and functional makes our job easy.”

In her first years on the Board, Terri chaired the marketing committee and helped the Association launch a new national advertising campaign, “He Wants it All” and, as president, saw through a website redesign, new genetic evaluation development, new national ad campaign and a comprehensive strategic plan.

Terri says she is proud to be part of the most recent AHA strategic planning process. “We as a Board set the course for the next five years,” she says. “We spent a lot of time on this because it has to be right — there’s no room for error. Having a solid strategy is very important because these other breeds are very competitive so we have to keep Hereford in the forefront.”

Also during her tenure on the Board, the AHA launched the Hereford Advantage feeder-calf program, and CHB has made strides connecting the farmer to the plate. “The CHB team encouraged all Hereford producers to engage in direct consumer outreach,” Terri says. “People want to know where their food comes from, we continue more breeders get involved.”

Terri says the Board continues to face questions as the Association changes over to the new genetic evaluation software. “I encourage our breeders

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to embrace this change that is going to be more accurate at analyzing what these animals can do.”

Also, this past summer, Terri was proud to see her niece, Rylee, join the National Junior Hereford Association board of directors. “Show wins are great, but it’s important to be involved outside the showring,” Terri says. “Leadership is key.”

Terri values being a role model for young Hereford breeders and is thankful for a long list of those who have helped shape her, noting first and foremost her parents. Terri says Jack and Lynn Chastain, through their mutual involvement in the Texas Hereford Association, have been instrumental in her life. She also notes Diane Johnson, former editor of *Texas Hereford*; Bonnie Coley-Malir, former AHA junior activities director; Lea Weinheimer, former International Brangus Breeders Association youth activities director; fellow breeder Nancy Keilty; former AHA Executive Vice President Craig Huffhines; cattiewoman Minnie Lou Bradley; past Commissioner of the Texas Department of

Agriculture Susan Combs; Lovell Kuykendall; and B.C. “Bud” Snidow; as well as many Board members and past AHA presidents.

Reflecting on her time in this role, Terri encourages members to get involved and to be vocal. “If I can think of one thing that I as a breeder should be doing it is to attend industry events and learn what is coming down the road,” she says.

As the first female AHA president (second in the lifetime of Hereford associations in the U.S.), Terri hopes one day to see more females serving on the Board. “We obviously have diversity from different regions and production types, but it would be really impactful to have more active females and younger people serving in these roles.”

Terri adds, “Be engaged and open to change. Take time to be engaged and learn new things coming your way. But mostly I want to thank my fellow Hereford members for letting me have the honor of leading the Association this past year. Heartfelt congratulations to all involved in our breed’s current progress and successes.” **HW**

Q&A with AHA President Terri Barber

Q: What do you consider to be the five highlights of fiscal year 2016-17?

- A:**
- A decidedly sound balanced budget on all business segments
 - Completion and implementation of a dynamic Strategic Plan for the next five years
 - Advancement of a robust genetic evaluation that has propelled our comprehensive genotype predictors and accuracies to the highest level to date
 - The beef industry’s largest, most successful National Junior Hereford Expo (NJHE) and Faces of Leadership activities to date
 - Creation of stimulating and successful marketing programs for commercial producers as well as the purebred segment

Q: What do we need to work on as a breed?

- A:** Furthering our educational opportunities amongst breeders, customers and consumers to demonstrate the true value of what our Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™) program and resulting genomic predictions have brought to this industry is an area that will benefit from continued efforts. We have successfully positioned ourselves with the most comprehensive performance program within the beef industry, allowing breeders to take full advantage of mating predictors to help them and their customers realize value on all levels. Continuing to cull heavily and perpetuating the lines that bring the most value should be front and center of any breeding program. Developing more commercial feeder-calf alignments — this will assist baldie calves to market while growing the

Certified Hereford Beef (CHB®) program. Just as important is keeping up with the latest efficiency improving technologies, while eluding complacency should be top of mind.

Q: How do we continue to gain commercial market share?

- A:** Promoting our genetics to lead the way is how we continue to gain commercial market share. Hereford breeders, leaders and staff have done a tremendous job positioning us where we are today — to be the go-to breed for producing the most versatile animal that fits in every market sector.

Our new Hereford Advantage feeder-calf program, the Hereford-influenced feeder-calf sales growing by state and region coupled with our field staffs’ abilities to help grow this market will all contribute to more market share in this area. We are seeing unprecedented success and growth within our CHB brand, which continues to see more calves qualifying from the CHB\$ index thereby generating more participation from producers that is helping commercial cattlemen grow their profits by using Hereford genetics.

Q: When you were elected to the Board, what were your goals for the Association? How have those changed?

- A:** A fervent passion, my goals have been surpassed by steady performance and growth over the last four years. Among those goals were to grow revenues, memberships in both juniors and adults; to help commercial producers realize higher profits; to improve our genetic evaluations



The Barber family works together on the ranch as well as remotely to keep the ranch running like a well-oiled machine.

and accuracies for all measurable traits while developing and gaining breed success through an impressive national ad campaign while retaining the most qualified and progressive staff our breed can find. In my opinion, changes have all been positive, progressive and beyond goal lines set forth. I feel like we have accomplished a multitude in just four years with our efficient staff, Board and the acclaimed genetic scientists we are fortunate to be working alongside. We have great talent in the people, genetics and global recognition of a world class breed of cattle in place to be the epitome of the beef industry.

Q: How would you summarize your tenure on the Board?

A: Dynamic, enlightening and significantly pivotal in terms of genetic growth and engagement is how I would summarize my Board tenure. Our causes and decisions have been grounded in science and driven by thoughtful, committed individuals to produce significant outcomes. It has not been without challenges, and some trivial distractions by outsiders, not fully comprehensive of our breed's history and legacy, but those were thoughtfully and swiftly enlightened.

I would be remiss if I didn't say what a genuine pleasure it has been to get to know better and to work with our talented AHA (American Hereford Association) staff. I would like to personally thank each of them as our accomplishments have been made possible by

their selfless devotion to our mission. Please know your contributions are valued and greatly appreciated.

Q: Considering the challenges facing the Board and the beef industry in general, what do you think Hereford breeders need to address?

A: Hereford breeders need to address how their operation's goals fit their customers' profitability in order to keep beef a mainstay on the protein plate. We have far too many competitors who are keen and profitable within the protein world (i.e. other species sources) and know how to fight for consumer demand and marketplace approval. We also need to be mindful to take great care in our selection tools and culling of undesirables. With the prospects of gene editing looming, import/export tariffs always fluctuating, and further integration and downsizing of our nation's cow herd we need to focus on controlling what we can control. Continue to collect data, and remember, you cannot manage what you do not measure. **HW**



Terri advises Hereford breeders to address how their operation's goals fit their customers' profitability to keep beef a mainstay protein on the plate.