

Candidate Q&A Segment

The six 2018 candidates for the AHA Board of Directors respond to three key questions regarding their candidacy.

Q: Why are you running for the Board?

A Doug Banks

The Hereford breed and the people who are the backbone of the Association have played a vital role in our family's life. I feel it's important to be involved in activities of associations supporting one's interests and business ventures and to give back to and to support those efforts. I now have more time to dedicate to the challenge of serving on the American Hereford Association (AHA) Board.

A Craig Beran

I'm running for the AHA Board of Directors because I want to be a part of the guiding direction of the future of the breed, as well as have input in how the breed grows and develops. I want to ensure that we continue to stay on the cutting edge of the beef industry.

A Bruce Everhart

I have a lifelong passion for this incredible breed and hope my 40 years of financial experience as an ag banker can help lead and advise the Association to maintain a strong and stable financial future for our members. I believe in a positive and enthusiastic view of the future and will bring that to work every day. The opportunities for our breed and the Association are bright, and I want to give back to an organization and to the people who have given so much to me and my family.

A Andrew Matheny

I have been involved in the Hereford breed for the last 36 years and have been the beneficiary of the work done by breeders and Board members who have grown the breed to where it is today. The opportunity to serve on the AHA Board of Directors in this capacity is a way for me to give back to the Hereford breed that has given me so much over the years.

A Steve Merry

I come from five generations of Hereford breeders. I have been passionate about Herefords my entire life. It is truly impressive what the Hereford breed and the Hereford community have accomplished over the last several decades, and I wish to continue the advancement of the breed. As a cardiologist, I feel we need to promote red- and white-faced beef as a healthy choice of protein. We have a platform to do that with *Certified Hereford Beef*®. As a Board member I would like to be a spokesperson to that end.

A John Ridder

I am so honored to be considered for the AHA Board of Directors. It is no secret the AHA has made huge strides in a positive direction in the last 10 years. I would love the chance to help push this huge Hereford movement to the commercial beef industry. With the progress that has been made, it is now a matter of keeping the forward momentum. I believe I can offer my talents and strengths to help achieve those goals. I am a big-picture thinker, and I'm able to listen to others in order to help solve problems. I am the first one to go for change when it's necessary, but I am also slow to change when things are working well.

Q: What are some goals or ideas you have for the Association?

A Doug Banks

The advantage of using Hereford genetics in crossbreeding programs is well documented. With the large number of small herds of commercial cattle in the country, Hereford breeders need help in doing a better job of promoting this advantage at the grassroots level and help in providing marketing outlets for their customers. It would be beneficial to make a fact sheet available to Hereford breeders to use for marketing on farm as well as a communications tool to use at local beef meetings, field days, stockyards, feed stores and wherever cattle producers gather.

Hereford-influenced feeder calf sales have proven to be a highly successful and profitable outlet for producers to market their calves. In most cases, calves with Hereford genetics top the market, provide extra income to their owners and provide an excellent source of animals for the *Certified Hereford Beef* program. We need to provide leadership and encouragement for breeders to work together to establish and to promote this type of marketing for their customers.

A Craig Beran

My goals for the future of the AHA include continued growth of the *Certified Hereford Beef* program to encourage the market for Hereford genetics, an emphasis on quality for the future genetic choices through the breed and a continued push to make genetic testing affordable and accessible throughout the breed.

A Bruce Everhart

I want to help continue to grow our membership and registrations. These are the lifeblood of a healthy and vibrant future. Utilizing the genetic tools we have today – and will have in the future – in a strategic way will be critical to our competitive advantage in the beef industry. Of course, promoting the strengths and benefits of our youth programs through education, scholarships and leadership opportunities will solidify our position as an industry leader today and in the future. We need to continue to utilize the most cutting-edge research to provide factual data of competitive traits to the beef industry.

Our Annual Meeting is a unique opportunity to touch all points of interest for our members, whether it is the show, the educational forums or the administrative business of the breed.

A Andrew Matheny

I feel that as a breed we need to continue to educate cattlemen on the benefits of using Hereford cattle and to provide value-added programs that will benefit the commercial cattleman that uses Hereford genetics. Genomic testing is a valuable technological advancement that will help move the breed forward and, therefore, must become an affordable tool for all breeders to utilize.

A continued focus on growing the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) and the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) along with the Fed Steer Shootout is necessary. We must find new avenues to involve our junior members and to attract new ones. As the JNHE continues to grow, there will be growing pains that will have to be addressed to make sure the JNHE continues to be a positive experience for the junior members and their families.

Steve Merry

We need to continue the collection and use of as much data as possible to help in the selection of our genetics. We have begun to incorporate genomics and need to continue to be the leading breed organization for reliable and predictable data. This approach will improve our standing with commercial cattlemen as the breed with the most reliable data to purchase genetics.

We need to promote the health benefits of red meat to the public. There are recent medical data that demonstrate the safety and health benefits of beef. The additional advantage of Herefords as having more tenderness needs to be emphasized. *Certified Hereford Beef* is well positioned to promote Hereford beef as a healthy and tasty brand name. This support will improve the marketing of Herefords to all end-product consumers as well as increase demand for our genetics.

John Ridder

It certainly takes a team to make any organization run effectively, and I believe the AHA currently does a great job. If I am elected, nothing would please me more than to continue to have the best staff and the best team in the business. I understand this requires open communication and consistent hard work from all parties involved.

I would like to see programs continue that prove Hereford value to commercial cattlemen. On our farm we feed Herefords and Angus side-by-side. I know there is a difference in feed efficiency — I see it every day. I would strongly encourage the need to quantify efficiency and then promote those findings.

I would like to see the *Certified Hereford Beef* brand continue to promote an upper Choice or better product that should add value to carcasses. Once we show the beef industry how well we can produce and market high-carcass-value animals, I anticipate the discounts on red-hided cattle will be a thing of the past.

I would like to see the National Reference Sire Program have a goal at the end of the program, such as guaranteed prearranged lease arrangements with artificial insemination companies for the top bulls to help encourage involvement in the program.

Andrew Matheny

Being a member of the AHA for 36 years, I have seen changes within the beef industry and how the AHA has reacted to those changes. The Hereford breed has handled these changes well, which has allowed us to be one of the most prominent breeds in the market. As a breeder, I understand there will be challenges to face in the years to come and staying ahead of these challenges will help members and the Hereford breed. One of the biggest issues our breed will face in the next five to 10 years will be continuing to expand our market share within the beef cattle industry. In the past few years, we have been able to expand our market share and have seen growth in registrations and sale averages. Through diligent work by Hereford breeders and the AHA, our breed has improved the carcass quality, phenotype and genetic merit of Hereford cattle. For the Hereford breed to continue this growth, we must continue to use available technologies such as genomic testing as well as phenotypic evaluation and look for new innovations that can provide our customers with a more reliable genetic product. Currently we are able to provide our customers with more genomic and performance data than ever before.

The Board must continue to embrace the changes that are occurring within the industry and position our breed at the front of the pack in terms of research and marketing avenues for Hereford-influenced cattle. The Board must also work to continue the growth of the NJHA and the Hereford Youth Foundation of America. We have one of the strongest junior breed associations in the livestock industry, and by continuing to grow our youth and their membership, we will strengthen the breed as a whole.

Steve Merry

The perceived concepts that beef is unhealthy and an inefficient use of resources are major issues we will need to address. These ideas are best corrected by presenting the facts and recent data showing them not to be true. We need to strongly promote the health benefits of beef in general and Herefords in particular because of their efficiency and lower resource input. Secondly, there remains a bias in the sale barns against Herefords. In the marketplace, we need to continue to supply our commercial buyers with the most data possible to help them make genetic selections, which make them more efficient and profitable, thus demonstrating the advantages of Herefords. I strongly support the Association's efforts to demonstrate the Hereford advantage and to promote *Certified Hereford Beef*.

John Ridder

It is difficult to say what the biggest challenge the AHA will face is, but I do know change will happen. We can speculate it will be a positive or negative change, although most times in the livestock industry the bad things turn into good things in a few years, and vice versa. Some issues that will affect beef producers, Hereford breeders and, ultimately, the AHA include tariffs, environmental regulations and consumer demand. I believe it is the job of the Board to be fiscally responsible with the Association's money but, at the same time, remember that it is the Association's job not only to keep records but to promote our breed and to explore new opportunities. Having the right team in place to get tasks completed and business moving in the right direction is absolutely necessary. We are very fortunate to have a great team at the AHA, and when issues come up, they are able to respond quickly. I believe the Board's number one responsibility is to work closely with the CEO who is ultimately responsible for putting his team together. **HW**

What is the biggest issue the AHA will face in the next five to 10 years, and how does the Board need to prepare to face that issue?

Doug Banks

The biggest issue facing the Hereford breed is continued growth in market share by selling more Hereford bulls to commercial producers. The only thing constant in this world is change, and the strategic plan developed by the AHA recognizes this and provides an excellent roadmap on how to achieve this goal and how to be ahead of the curve in dealing with the many issues the AHA will face in the future.

Craig Beran

In the future, I see potential increased government regulation as the biggest challenge facing the AHA and the beef industry. I feel that could be best combatted by a focus on education, both for breeders and consumers.

Bruce Everhart

Building relationships with cattlemen and cattlemen outside of our breed by telling the Hereford story is vital to maintain our position of strength and also to grow our market for the future. Listening to the industry and teaching the advantages of docility, growth performance, fertility and cow toughness will be but a few of the key messages to reinforce.