

Shifting Gears

You can't get far if you don't use the right gear.



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There are a few times — more than I'd like to admit, really — when I reflect back on my childhood and say, "What was I thinking?" As I attempted to come up with some creative monologue to correspond with the gears gracing the front cover of the 2018 Annual Report, I kept coming back to the memory of my 8-year-old-self learning to ride a geared bicycle. It certainly took me longer than it should have to use those gears to my advantage.

On one very exciting Christmas, Santa gave me a cherry red, 10-speed Schwinn. I rode around and around our yard, getting a feel for shifting between the low and high gears. Within a few minutes I decided my favorite gear was seven. And that's where the gear shift stayed.

As I got more confident I started walking my bike up the hill behind our house until I reached a fence-line about 40 yards up. I would hop on and race down into the yard, trying to see how far I could circle around the house without having to pedal. My bike still remained in seventh gear, no shifting necessary.

Then came time to tackle pedaling uphill. Again, I have no idea what I was thinking, but I refused to switch to a lower gear when the incline grew steeper. I pedaled my tail off trying to make it back home, exhausted by the time I finally rode over the cattle guard into the front yard.

My parents tried to explain the only way to go uphill "easily" was to shift to a lower gear — my mom tried to explain the logic, while my exasperated dad teased, "You're so slow you can't stop fast!" Yet for whatever reason, I refused to utilize all of the gears on that 10 speed.

Getting the gears to click

It wasn't until I got a Honda CRF80F a few years later the whole "uphill, low

gear" rule finally clicked. Going uphill in fourth gear doesn't work out too well if you're not going fast enough. Unless I wanted to stall out every time, I would have to settle for third. My parents were right after all — imagine that.

This year's Annual Report design is based on the premise of gears and how their inner workings power an entire machine. An unlimited amount of gears in all different sizes can piece together to supply energy to the machine. However, the right gear needs to be in place for them to work properly.

The gears throughout the Annual Report represent the multiple facets empowering the Hereford breed and the beef industry as a whole. They represent the American Hereford Association (AHA), its membership and staff, and all of the other segments of the industry working together to produce the best beef cattle in the world. When we are all working together and utilizing each gear properly, we can advance at an ideal pace that maximizes our potential.

In this issue

In addition to the Annual Report, the November issue includes a story on retiring AHA President Kevin Schultz. Ride along as he reflects back on his presidency and his commitment to the Hereford breed.

As we embark on a new fiscal year, Team Hereford is positioned just right to continue advancing the breed, ultimately strengthening the entire industry. I look forward to seeing the growth and accomplishments of our breed unfold over the next year. On behalf of the Hereford Publications Inc. staff, we hope you enjoy this issue and share our pride in last year's successes. May your day be bright and your smile brighter. **HW**