



Buddy and Lisa Edenburn received the Advisors of the Year award at the VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo awards night. National Hereford Queen Emily Meinhardt and 2018-2019 National Junior Hereford Association Chairman Austin Matheny presented the award.

The Dedicated Duo

Buddy and Lisa Edenburn, Penfield, Ill., have the teamwork thing down — a quality also evident in members of the Illinois Junior Hereford Association.

by *Diane Meyer and Adrian Austin*

As the saying goes, great things come in pairs. Although the saying may be cliché, there is nothing cliché about this year's winners of the Advisor of the Year award — or Advisors of the Year, in this case.

As the Thursday night awards ceremony at the VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) in Denver came a-buzz, Illinois Junior Hereford Association (IJHA) advisors Buddy and Lisa Edenburn sat with their impressive group of Illinois juniors, eagerly awaiting the announcements of contest winners and the new junior board directors. Illinois members had made a big splash in the JNHE contests so far, and one of their own, Noah Benedict, was in the running for a spot on the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board of directors.

But before their anticipation was put at ease, Buddy and Lisa were in for a special surprise. Surrounded by close friends and family, the power couple was named the 2019 Advisor of the Year.

"It meant a lot for Noah, someone who is like a son to us, to be elected to the NJHA board on the same night we accepted this award," Lisa describes. "I cannot even put the night into words..."

"We are humbled and honored by this selection," Buddy continues. "To have Noah, Cody and Bailey there to celebrate with us was an indescribable feeling."

A decade of service

Together, Buddy and Lisa have advised the IJHA for more than 10 years and have been involved in the IJHA for a number of years beyond that, having raised their daughters, Bailey and Miranda, in the program.

Benedict, who currently serves as IJHA president and is a newly elected NJHA board director, has been mentored by the Edenburns throughout his junior career and speaks highly of their devotion to Illinois juniors and their families. He highlights the couple's tireless efforts to ensure youth have the best

experience possible while exhibiting their Hereford cattle.

"They not only do this as individuals, but as a team," Benedict says. "They provide one of the best examples of what a couple should look like. Their willingness to cooperate with each other and how they handle tough situations is textbook."

Traditionally one of the largest state junior associations, these Illinois advisors arrive to JNHE a day earlier than most families in order to mark stalls and prepare for the week. "Buddy organizes the entire stalling chart each year," Benedict says. "Last year, he went through 14 different stalling maps in order to make sure each junior's family had their requests met."

Over the years, the couple has developed 10 new scholarships, contests and programs within the IJHA program, and take these competitions just as seriously at JNHE. "Lisa runs and organizes most of the contests at the Illinois Preview Show," Benedict shares. "She spends her entire week at junior nationals making sure she is present at every contest an Illinois junior competes in and she makes sure she watches each of our juniors go through the show ring at least once."

Benedict adds Buddy and Lisa are positive role models to everyone they come in contact with and always handle themselves with grace, dignity and respect.

To the Edenburns, working together just comes naturally. "We've been married for 30 years," Buddy says. "It's just natural to work together. We both have our duties and know how to take care of them."

With a humble attitude and kind hearts, both Buddy and Lisa exemplify what it means to be advisors, made all the more evident by their appreciation for the award.

"Lisa and I have been blessed to serve such a great group of kids and we love them all," Buddy says. "The kids are why we do what we do, and we just hope to provide them a helping hand along the way." **HW**