

Candidate Q&A Segment

The six 2019 candidates for the AHA Board of Directors respond to three key questions regarding their candidacy.

Q Why are you running for a position on the American Hereford Association (AHA) Board of Directors?

A Bill: I have been passionate about Hereford cattle my whole life. Through the years operating the livestock market it has been a treat to see some gains in market share for Hereford and Hereford-influence cattle. When asked to consider running for the board, I asked myself, “What I can bring to the membership and the Association?” While marketing cattle at our market, I have been able to help establish a fair market for Hereford-influenced cattle by helping feeders see the benefits of Hereford genetics to receive fair value. I would like to help further that market development across the country.



A Whitey: I am running for the Board because I want to be involved with the continued growth and advancement of the Hereford breed. I would like to have the opportunity to work with people with the same level of commitment I do and to give back to an organization that has given so much to the cattle industry, the Hereford breed and all of us who are in the Hereford industry. I believe strongly that doing things the right way and doing the right thing are reward and recognition on their own. I see the AHA as an organization that holds to those standards and it would be an honor to contribute to its work.



A Becky: I was honored to be nominated by fellow breeders, and I would love to serve the members of an organization and breed that has given so much to me and my family. I feel I am a very well-rounded Hereford breeder — we show cattle, sell seedstock and beef, and participate in leadership opportunities such as “The Brand” Marketing Summit and the Annual Meeting. Herefords are my family’s business and livelihood, and I want to focus on maximizing every opportunity we can to ensure continued growth and success for Hereford breeders across the country.



A Steve: I come from four generations of Hereford breeders. I have been passionate about Herefords my entire life. It is truly impressive what the Hereford breeders have accomplished over the last several decades. We live in an exciting time. I wish to continue the advancement of the breed. Certified Hereford Beef® (CHB) as a branded product can continue the resurgence of the image of Hereford beef. As a cardiologist I feel we need to promote Hereford beef as a healthy choice of protein. There are recently published data showing the health benefits of red meat. The public is not very aware of this data. In addition the tenderness of Hereford beef needs more promotion. We have a platform to do that in CHB. As a Board member I would like to be a spokes person to that end.



A Richie: When I was contacted by a fellow Hereford breeder to run for the AHA Board, I asked myself, “Why do I want to serve on this board?” I believe my answer is very simple: I love and have a passion for raising quality Hereford cattle, and I have a willingness to join the AHA Board in selflessly promoting the Hereford and beef cattle industry for the betterment of our breed and the success of all Hereford breeders.



A Scott: As a passionate Hereford breeder of 45 years, Hereford cattle, Hereford organizations and thousands of dedicated Hereford breeders have shaped who I am today. Our children have been raised in the Hereford family not because we forced them to, but because from their first exposure, they loved the breed and there was nowhere else they would rather be. My family and I believe we were put on this Earth to make the world a better place and we try to live that every day. I look forward to strategic planning and governance and preserving breed integrity while being innovative in our vision for this great breed. We have more tools at our fingertips than ever before — what great opportunity lies ahead! Performance and genetic testing have transformed this breed and as for us breeders, let’s see how far it can take us.



Q If elected, what are three goals for your tenure on the AHA Board?

A Bill: Hereford bulls have gained in marketability over the past few years. We are beginning to see an increase in demand for commercial Hereford females. We have a perfect opportunity to promote the increasing desire to have Hereford cows back in commercial production. In the feeder cattle business, we can market black baldy cattle consistently at the top of the market. We struggle to hold fair market value for straight Hereford feeders. Partnering with feedyards to generate more positive data Hereford feeders, which can be used for promotion, will enhance our place in that market. We are fortunate to have very talented and strong leadership at the Hereford Association. We need to maintain the innovation, commitment and integrity seen in our leadership. I hope to help continue this vision if elected to serve on the Board.



A Whitey:

1. Continuing and expanding educational efforts for our juniors, our membership and commercial cattlemen. Additionally, I would like to see our educational efforts expand more to consumers and the food industry.
2. Work to broaden the use of genomic traits and genetic tools to improve efficiency, disease resistance, fertility and economic traits.
3. The continued expansion of Certified Hereford Beef.



A Becky:

1. Continue to grow and to support the junior program. The juniors are our future, not only as future breeders and advocates for the breed and CHB, but also as leaders in the agriculture industry. Our investment in our youth, growing them into Hereford breeders and developing them as leaders is one of the greatest strengths of our organization.
2. Growing the CHB program so producers from all areas of the U.S. can participate, growing market share for our product and partnering with packers in other areas of the country.
3. Using our research dollars to identify and eradicate genetic defects before they become a widespread problem within our breed.



A Steve:



1. We need to promote CHB as healthy, high quality, and tasty. We need to expand the CHB market to the large cities along the coasts. Enhancement of the image of CHB will benefit all Hereford cattle marketed whether marketed as CHB or not. The recent requirement of CHB to grade choice or better should be encouraged as a goal for all Hereford carcasses. The CHB index should incorporate more emphasis on marbling. It is my goal to make the discounts on red hided cattle a thing of the past.
2. Genetic analysis and precision are exploding. We need to continue to be the leading breed for collecting and applying genomic data for breed enhancement. We need to offer more reliable and predictable data to commercial cattlemen than any other breed. We need programs that prove Hereford value to commercial cattlemen. We need to quantify efficiency and promote these findings. This approach will improve our breed's standing in the feedlot causing more demand for Hereford cattle.
3. The Hereford youth program is outstanding and needs to continue to be the best of the breed associations. It is bringing a lot of excitement and talent to our breed. Expansion of the opportunities for youth needs to continue in order to produce leaders of the future.

A Richie:



With the above reasons for wanting to be elected to the AHA Board in mind, continuance of breed improvement and advancement, along with breed promotion and junior development, are my high priorities. My goal is to listen to and make the needs and ideas of the Hereford breeders I represent my agenda. I feel if elected, it would be my duty to represent first and foremost their desires during my tenure as a national board member.

A Scott:



1. To maintain and expand on the premier junior organization among beef breeds. I see our junior programs as a "gateway" for young people to become Hereford breeders and Hereford customers for life. With the inherent docility of Herefords as well as the leadership and scholarship opportunities currently in place, we can accelerate our popularity among juniors.
2. To increase the percentage of Hereford genetics in commercial cow herds. We need to not only promote the advantages of turning out Hereford bulls, but also gain some real traction on the efficiency and profitability advantages of the Hereford-influenced commercial cow. I am astonished at how many commercial cattlemen in our region are not taking advantage of the F1 [first generation] female.
3. Assist our members and their customers in marketing their product. We need to be proactive in developing and growing Hereford-influenced calf sales – both feeders and replacement females. These sales have really helped boost sale prices in our area. Growing demand for our flagship food product, Certified Hereford Beef, is a point of pride to our membership and critical to our focus on our ultimate consumer.

Q In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge the AHA will face over the next 10 years? How can the Board prepare for and overcome that challenge?

A Bill:



The Hereford breed has experienced a rise in membership and registrations the past few years. Market values for breeding stock have seen a corresponding improvement as well. During this period of growth our competitors have been very complacent about Hereford cattle. Over the next 10 years we need to remain very proactive with research and promotion to continue our growth trends. The competition no longer feels the demand for Hereford cattle is short-term and they are ramping up to compete with us. I believe we are still in the very beginning stages of what will continue to be a steady increase in the demand for quality Hereford genetics!

A Whitey:



In the next 10 years there will be many changes and advancements in gene editing technology. The Board will have to make policies to address these advancements. Implementing policies efficiently and effectively will require a strong and growing knowledge of the science and impact the changes can and will have on the industry. Some advancements, such as editing to increase disease resistance and the welfare of animals, will be easy to address. Others will require soul searching. The Board can best prepare to overcome this challenge by continuing to educate themselves and monitoring advancements in gene editing.

A Becky:



Our biggest challenge is managing our breed for phenotypically superior cattle while working on balanced EPDs [expected progeny differences] without going too far in any one direction. By using genomic EPDs, we have a more accurate tool to sell Herefords to our customers to help them improve their herds. However, we must not set too stringent regulations on what is acceptable because, as we know, Herefords are used in many different environments which, coupled with their mothering ability and docility, is what differentiates our breed. We also need to educate our customers so they can make informed purchasing decisions. Often times people just tell us to "pick one out" because all of the information is overwhelming – they tend to only care about one trait and do not know how to use the rest of the information to market their calves. Regional field days may be a way to increase understanding.

A Steve:



There remains a bias in the sale barns against Herefords. To eliminate this, we need to continue to improve the quality grade of our product. We need to promote the tenderness of Hereford beef. We need data to show the superior efficiency of Herefords. We need to expand the data showing the advantages of Herefords. We need to educate our commercial buyers on how best to use the genetic data to their advantage. Expansion of our branded product, CHB, is the key to overcoming this bias. We have an outstanding team of leaders at the AHA. Support of this team is critical to continue the amazing progress of our breed.

A Richie:



In my opinion, the biggest challenge the AHA will face over the next 10 years is staying competitive in the marketplace. To remain competitive will require education of the public about the value of beef protein consumption, more widespread promotion and availability of CHB in the retail market and capitalizing on recent years' resurgence and popularity of the Hereford breed on the registered breeder level to expand into the commercial arena.

A Scott:



My experience tells me our biggest challenge could very well be something currently not on our radar screen. From a leadership standpoint, we must utilize the best and brightest, make sure the best administrative practices are in place, maintain financial strength, be visionaries within our industry and be nimble enough to react if necessary. The rapid progress in genomics and technology has the ability to transform our industry in a short period of time. We must continue to be at the forefront in this area. As breeders, I believe we should maintain broad genetic diversity, recognize the advantages Hereford genetics have in various geographic regions and clean up what needs to be cleaned up. Above all, we need to understand our customers and what they are looking for. **HW**