

# CANDIDATE Q&A SEGMENT

The six 2020 candidates for the American Hereford Association (AHA) Board of Directors respond to three key questions regarding their candidacy.

## Q Why are you running for a position on the AHA Board of Directors?



**Wyatt Agar**

### A Agar:

The Hereford breed has been a staple in our operation and a passion not only of mine but of my entire family for generations. Our livelihood is solely dependent upon the cattle industry. Therefore, the marketability and sustainability of the breed in all phases of the beef industry impacts our daily life. If developed correctly, there are huge opportunities for the Hereford breed to continue its expansion into the commercial sector. With my daily activities including relationships ranging from seedstock to feedlot operations, I believe I will be an asset to the organization and breed as a whole in its continued expansion.



**Jimmy Atlas**

### A Atlas:

I have reached a point in my life where I feel I have the time and the experience to serve our membership as a Board member. I am passionate about our breed and feel strongly that our breed should continue to grow.

In our area of the country, we interact more with small breeders than large. I hope to promote the idea of small breeders embracing the use of expected progeny differences, understanding the importance of the registration process and by submitting information to the AHA to strengthen our breed genetics. Additionally, it is important to educate breeders and consumers that the majority of the black baldy cattle that qualify as Certified Angus Beef® are at least half Hereford.



**Barry Morrell**

### A Morrell:

I am truly humbled to be nominated for the AHA Board of Directors. I have a passion for the Hereford breed and a desire to see our cattle produced well and marketed to their full extent. I believe Hereford cattle deserve respect for their contributions as a breed, and I want to ensure the future of our cattle industry is well represented. I would like to see less divide between red- and black-hided cattle producers and to encourage collaboration between our breed and the working cattleman. My family believes change is only made when you step up to solve a problem; that is why I am running for a position on the AHA Board to enact change for our breed and its members.



**Richie Oakes**

### A Oakes:

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 industries for the betterment of our breed and the success of all Hereford breeders. I feel my involvement in the commercial and registered sides of the beef industry as well as my experience as a former feedlot owner will bring a unique perspective to the AHA Board and the breed.



**Jerome Ollerich**

### A Ollerich:

Over the past few years, I have been asked by several Hereford breeders to run for the AHA Board. I feel with my 50-plus years of experience as a Hereford breeder, I have a lot of knowledge regarding many aspects of the breed I can share with the Board to help improve Hereford genetics in the marketplace. I am a grassroots breeder who works closely with the commercial cattlemen to help them improve their herds by working with them to select the right bulls for their operation. My love and passion of Hereford cattle has given me a desire to give back to the breed. I feel serving on the Board is another step I can take to help improve the Hereford breed.



**Bob Schaffer**

### A Schaffer:

I am honored and feel very privileged to have been nominated by my fellow breeders to be considered to serve on the AHA Board. I have always strongly believed if you have Hereford cattle or are part of any

organization you have an obligation to the breed and fellow breeders to do your part to promote and continuously improve our product and market. I have been raising Hereford cattle for 25 years. Over the past 25 years, I have served on the Virginia Hereford Association board for 18 years and served as president or vice president for seven of those years. I have focused on bringing a business perspective to the management of the association. Renaming our Virginia Hereford events to "Mid-Atlantic" expanded participation. Establishing a bull development program improved the quality of Virginia bulls and grew our market share. Establishing a junior show at the fall sale benefited our juniors as well as provided a market for adult members to sell quality heifers. On the farm we have embraced most all AHA programs. We are one of the original Gold Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™) breeders and are now a Platinum TPR breeder. The whole herd has been DNA tested and has genomic enhanced expected progeny differences (GE-EPDs). Bulls are all performance tested and top bulls enter the AHA National Reference Sire Program. All available technologies are utilized to produce a high-quality product. There are many diverse reasons people have Hereford cattle, and all are important to have a strong organization. All the nominees to the AHA Board over the years have been high-quality people forming a passionate and energetic team. I would like to add my time and talent to the Board to continue the growth of the Hereford breed and its many breeders.

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

### A Agar:

As I travel to video sales and to sale barns buying calves, there is a lot of producer interest in using Hereford bulls. However, the breed still comes with the stigma that marketing offspring will be tough. We need to continue to work with feeders and processors to develop, improve and promote our premium programs to enable producers and buyers to see the real benefits of Hereford-sired calves. The broad impact of those benefits, whether in the form of terminal factors like the Certified Hereford Beef® (CHB) brand or maternal factors like the Premium Red Baldy Program and putting first generation (F1) females into production.

Genomics is a very important tool in the development of our expected progeny differences (EPDs), and I would like to work harder at collecting more live data to back our numbers. Fostering programs like the National Reference Sire Program and adding more merit to ratios will give our EPDs real-world appeal.

The Hereford breed has a phenomenal youth program we are all proud of, and with the development of the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) Fed Steer Shootout, we have broadened our participant base. I would like to continue the development of this program so juniors have the opportunity to have a strong hands-on understanding of the feedlot and the processing phases of the beef industry.

### A Atlas:

1. Increase brand recognition and consumer preference for *Certified Hereford Beef* in the Southwest to parallel the brand's recognition in the Western region. Increasing CHB brand recognition and consumer preference is important for the future of our breed.
2. Decrease price spread between black cattle and Hereford cattle at sale barns as a result of an increase in *Certified Hereford Beef* demand.
3. We are presently ranked No. 1 in commercial sales. The Hereford breed must continue to dominate the commercial industry. You either lead or follow, and we want to LEAD.

### A Morrell:

1. To develop a marketing campaign that targets typical consumers in the grocery store and encourages them to purchase *Certified Hereford Beef*. Consumer demand drives the packer and feedlot and all the way back to the commercial cattleman who must choose between buying Hereford or Angus bulls. I find Certified Angus Beef®

on the menu in dining establishments from McDonald's to high-end steakhouses, meaning their brand is far more recognizable than *Certified Hereford Beef*. My goal is to develop a partnership between the AHA's Certified Hereford Beef committee, the Marketing committee and the Breed Improvement committee to develop a campaign that encourages the consumer to choose *Certified Hereford Beef* first.

2. Once the consumer begins to choose *Certified Hereford Beef* and demand grows, my goal is to bridge the gap between the producer, feedlot and packer. The truth is, black-hided cattle sell better because there is an understanding they have better carcass merit. As a breed, this belief should be one of our biggest concerns to address and to change. We need to use our EPDs to select for all carcass traits — ribeye area, marbling and the spread from weaning weight to yearling weight. Our goal as a breed should be to sell cattle that are superior in carcass merit compared to other breeds. Only then will we influence the supply chain and shift demand in our favor.

3. The future of the Hereford breed rests in the hands of our youth and the next generation of Hereford cattle producers. My goal is to reconnect the AHA and the NJHA, as collaboration is the key to the success of our breed. The AHA has the genetic knowledge, resources and experience to share with Hereford youth, and NJHA members understand the desires of the next generation of consumers and future marketing opportunities. I propose a liaison who openly shares ideas from both boards and memberships in order to promote the sharing of knowledge and opportunities to both young and old Hereford producers.

#### **A Oakes:**

With my 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 to make the needs and ideas of the Hereford breeders I represent my agenda. If elected, it will be my duty to represent first and foremost their desires during my tenure as a national Board member.

#### **A Ollerich:**

1. I will work to promote the use of Hereford bulls on commercial Angus cow herds. There are a lot of commercial producers who have not considered using Hereford bulls, yet. We must continue to promote the Hereford bull to those cattlemen.

2. I will help the continued growth of our junior programs. These young people are our future. Not only in the Hereford business and cattle industry but in agriculture as a whole. Whatever career they chose to pursue, their Hereford roots will always be with them.

3. I will help grow the *Certified Hereford Beef* program. We have a great product, and we need every household to know about it. Just like promoting Hereford bulls to the commercial cattlemen, we need to promote our great product to the American shopper. Promoting our product will take a lot of time and dedication.

#### **A Schaffer:**

After many years of attending and participating in the AHA Annual Membership Meeting and Conference, I have noticed four consistent points of discussion concerning our future — junior educational programs, genetic advancements, the *Certified Hereford Beef* program and marketing to commercial breeders. I am proud to be a part of an organization that values its youth and invests in educational opportunities for our future leaders. My goal in that area is to continue with this investment.

Continued improvement of our product is another goal. We need to continue supporting genetic research, to increase the reporting of performance data from our breeders, to encourage breeder adoption of available tools to evaluate the quality of genetics we produce and to improve management of our cattle from breeding to market.

Growth of the *Certified Hereford Beef* brand has been a long-term goal for many in the breed. We have made progress over the years but still face barriers. My goal is to get outside the nine dots and go from growth to major expansion. An expansion of CHB's footprint will contribute to the overarching goal of expanding our influence in the commercial herds. We have the product and the data to prove that Hereford cattle add significant value to the profitability of the commercial breeder. Let's go blitz producers so every time they turn around they get the word!

### **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(s)?**

#### **A Agar:**

I foresee two factors that will be challenges to the Hereford breed in the next 10 years. The first is the development and expansion of our market share into the commercial sector. We can accomplish this expansion by continuing to develop the AHA's existing premium programs and working closely with feedlot operations.

The second factor is not specific to the Hereford breed but an issue facing the cattle industry as a whole. As producers we must address the perception that beef is unhealthy and an inefficient use of natural resources, whereas lab-produced proteins are more environmentally friendly. These notions can be easily addressed by presenting the facts and data about beef production, but we must deliver a uniform message as a breed and industry.

#### **A Atlas:**

Breeders must provide a marketable product that is trouble free, so commercial breeders first seek Hereford bulls and females. This behavior is key to increasing demand for our breed in the commercial segment. Demand for Hereford bulls and females in the commercial segment has been tremendous in recent years, and we must seize this opportunity to further our growth and to regain the market share that has been lost to other breeds. Producers who previously used black bulls on black cows now want baldy calves for increased performance. Sound udders and eyes, along with pigment, are two additional traits that are very important to commercial producers. The Hereford breed is still overcoming misconceptions and poor breeding from years ago that tainted the breed with a reputation for eye and udder problems.

#### **A Morrell:**

The AHA faces a concerning issue in the coming years. We can only sell *Certified Hereford Beef* so long as consumers are still buying beef products. Plant-based protein and cultured meat are a concerning trend in which consumers are not buying as much real beef, and this trend is expected to rise in the next 10 years. Right now, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association is working alone to produce research and data that supports the claim that beef remains best in terms of sustainable nutrition. In my opinion, each breed needs to be proactive in addressing this shift in consumer demand and to work together to ensure beef remains on the plates of millions of Americans. Currently, our marketing strategies amongst the breeds divide our industry and consumer base. However, with this challenge on the horizon, the AHA Board needs to initiate a collaborative response to beat fake meat.

#### **A Oakes:**

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 educating the public about the value of beef protein consumption, more widespread promotion and availability of *Certified Hereford Beef* in the retail market and capitalizing on recent years' resurgence and popularity of the Hereford breed from registered breeders to expand into the commercial arena.

#### **A Ollerich:**

In the past several years, Hereford bulls have gained an increased market share in commercial cow herds, and CHB demand has grown in retail and restaurant establishments. In the next 10 years, it is our challenge to keep these trends going. We need to promote the advantage of Hereford genetics to the commercial cowman, the feeder, the packer and the American consumer. As we continue to gain in the marketplace, our competition will combat us, and we need to be ready to hold our ground. One of the best forces we have to combat our competitors is our youth. Support our youth and promote our great breed!

#### **A Schaffer:**

The Hereford breed has fought a long, hard battle to return to relevance in the cattle industry. Our challenge today is to not become complacent with our successes. We need to embrace change and to constantly seek it. "Continuous improvement" needs to be our objective. Making our product better is a challenge we need to accept. We need to move forward and to share the benefits of Hereford genetics without arrogance. We still have marketplace bias to overcome, but we have facts and science on our side. Every member needs to become a marketer for the breed, and the AHA needs to provide tools and training to challenge the industry. **HW**