

HER OWN CROWN

Melanie Fishel, Belevs, N.C., wore her crown to serve, lead and inspire.

by **Melanie Fishel**, 2020 National Hereford Queen

To say serving as the 2020 National Hereford Queen was a dream come true would be an understatement. As a fourth-generation Hereford breeder, I grew up with a love for the land, Hereford cattle and the people involved who quickly became family; but, never in my wildest dreams did I think I would have this opportunity nor would I have grown so much as a person. The role of the National Hereford Queen is to serve as an ambassador for the breed and to act as a role model for others. Although I came into this position with excitement and an understanding of my role, I did not realize how much the Hereford breed would give back to me in this short year.

True to my passion

I have learned how important it is to stay true to yourself. Miss Rodeo Wyoming put it best when she said, “There’s a reason we get a crown and not a glass slipper. A glass slipper is firm and solid; it either fits you or it doesn’t, with no flexibility to conform to you. A crown, however, is one-size-fits-all. The crown has the ability to fit whichever head it is placed on.”

Each National Hereford Queen receives her own crown and each National Hereford Queen has the opportunity to make this role her own. This crown can be worn by anyone who is willing to work hard, has a true passion to represent the Hereford breed and exhibits a love for the people and heritage this great breed encompasses.

Although we have all faced our fair share of challenges this year, I have so much for which to be thankful. Since October of 2019, I have attended more than 20 events as National Hereford Queen from Raleigh to Reno and Denver to Jackson. I have met people from all over the globe from whom

I have learned while also sharing my Hereford story, whether that be with an RFD-TV reporter, an international Hereford breeder, a stranger on the plane or a young showman who wonders why anyone would wear a crown and a white dress to a cow show.

These memories are ones I will cherish forever. I would like to thank my family and friends who were there every step of the way with unconditional love and support. Thank you, Hereford breeders, for making me feel so welcome at every show and sale I attended and for your encouragement throughout the year. Thank you to the National Hereford Women, Hereford Youth Foundation of America and the American Hereford Association for all you do to make this program the best of its kind in the industry and for providing this opportunity to young leaders in agriculture. I will miss wearing the white boots, but I look forward to continuing to play an active role in the Hereford breed and am forever grateful for this opportunity. **HW**

