



Balancing Progress and Tradition

With 113 years down and forever to go,
the Sidwell family of Carr, Colo., sets goals for the future.

by *Rachel Gabel*

Brampton Agnes VI, a purebred Hereford cow, ambled off the train in Kansas City, Mo., from Herefordshire, England, in 1908 and became the first female in then 23-year-old G.A. Sidwell's cow herd. Columbus Regent was added as a herd sire and the result was the foundation of the modern-day Sidwell Hereford herd.

G.A. marketed cattle throughout the 1920s and added Disturber 4th, purchased in Des Moines, Iowa, through a partnership between G.A. and J.E. Biehl. The cowman — who then called Queen City, Mo., home — built a herd and hosted production sales at his home. In 1930, the Sidwell family moved their belongings and cow herd to Carr in northern Colorado, an environment far removed from the humidity and green grass of Missouri. They saw great potential

in the wide-open, short-grass prairie that remains home to Sidwell Herefords today.

On the map

The 1940s marked the regular production sales hosted by G.A. and his son, F.A. Staying true to their commitment to raising and marketing good Hereford cattle, the business weathered the Great Depression, hosting production sales in '40, '45 and '47.

It was in the 1940s that E.N. Jeffers' bull, Prince D109, caught G.A.'s eye. Jeffers, a Hereford breeder in Springer, N.M., refused to sell the bull. That bull weighed heavily on Sidwell's mind, and after several attempts, he and his son, F.A., purchased half-interest in Prince D109 in 1947.

At G.A.'s insistence, the bull's name was changed to Colorado Baldwin. A Bud Snidow



Breed enthusiasts gathered for a tour of Sidwell Herefords' Carr, Colo., ranch in 2018 to view more than 100 years of hard work and history.



Late Harold Sidwell and his wife, Marlene, started the Cadet cow family in the 1970s by breeding descendants of the family's original Colorado Baldwin bull. A painted portrait of that historic sire still hangs in their home.

painting of this burly horned Hereford bull, which defined years of Sidwell breeding, still hangs in the Cheyenne, Wyo., home of F.A.'s son, the late Harold Sidwell, and his wife, Marlene. According to an article in the *Livestock Journal*, about 90% of commercial cattle in the Rocky Mountain West were Colorado Baldwin bred. Sidwell Herefords was officially on the map.

Staying the course

The 1950s ushered in the era of annual sales and the continued popularity of Baldwin-bred cattle as the ranch and the family grew. When G.A. and F.A. partnered with M.J. Diehl to market bulls, their annual bull sales necessitated the construction of a sale barn at the ranch headquarters in 1958. Long before the digital reach of modern bull sales, the Sidwells sold cattle to 28 states and Canada.

G.A. retired in 1959 and F.A. took the reins, and invited his sons, Walter, Harold and Richard, to join F.A. Sidwell & Sons. Hereford females joined the sale lineup and the bull known as Domino Plus 20th was tasked with moving the operation forward.

In the 1970s, the operation restructured, with F.A. and Harold remaining at the ranch. Harold and Marlene bred calves dubbed "Cadets" using descendants of the original Colorado Baldwin bull,



Bryan Sidwell (r) first partnered with his parents, Harold (seated) and Marlene, in 1985. After their retirement in 2013, Bryan and his wife, Linda (l), took over the operation, and they represent the fourth generation of Sidwells at the helm.

HT Bald Plus 9239 and Britisher 33. The Cadet cow herd was later bred to M&M Advance B216, adding a "Line 1" Hereford influence. Resulting from their successes, the Colorado Hereford Association honored F.A. as the Breeder of the Year in 1981.

Harold and Marlene eventually formed a partnership with their son, Bryan, in 1985. As for so many producers, the low prices of the 1980s were exceedingly difficult for the Sidwells. Recalling the contributions Harold and Marlene made to the operation, Bryan recalls poignant memories of sacrificing and seeking jobs in town during those years. Still, Sidwell Herefords stayed the course, celebrating 100 years in 2008. With an eye on the future and a century of history, the operation changed again when Bryan wed, and Linda joined the family.

New horizons

With Linda — who hails from a Nebraskan Hereford operation — came daughter Brooke Hinojosa. The past National Junior Hereford Association director showed polled Hereford heifers she acquired from Eddie Sims, Elgin, Okla., and Ernst Herefords, Windsor, Colo., as part of the Cattle for Kids program in Weld County in Colorado.

"Those were the first two polled animals on the ranch, and Harold didn't say much because it was Brooke, and she was truly the apple of his eye," Linda says. "Harold was the grandfather to her he didn't have to be, but he chose to be."

Harold and Marlene retired in 2013, two years after Harold's induction into the American Hereford Association's Hall of Fame. Wanting

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Harold and Marlene made many sacrifices to ensure Sidwell Herefords' legacy during hard times, such as working off-farm during the '80s.



Step-granddaughter Brooke Hinojosa (l) was the apple to Harold's eye, and the first member of the family to bring polled genetics to the ranch.

Sidwell Herefords to stay relevant and competitive, Linda and Bryan knew adding polled genetics was an investment in the future, not a lack of reverence for their history of horned cattle. When polled genetics were added in 2018, Linda says it was not without a fair amount of grumbling.

To produce cattle for the commercial industry and the showing alike, Linda says their magic lies in the bulls. She and Bryan sent a retired Harold and Marlene to Oregon to purchase a bull they found at Harrell Herefords.

“Harold got him purchased, but he got so wrapped up in it he bought himself a heifer and Brooke a heifer,” Linda says. “I think if they had been selling chickens that day, he would have been buying chickens, too.”

The Harrell bull, known as H5 1147 Advance 4118, proved to be a modern-day game changer, producing calf crops for several years before being sold to the Rocking Chair Ranch in Texas. According to Linda, 4118 changed the herd’s Line 1 females and paved the way for success using E133, a Belle Air son called Snacks, purchased from Barber Ranch, plus Rip Wheeler, a full sibling to Belle Air, also from Barber Ranch.

The set of replacement females and sale bulls resulting from the outcross Belle Air bulls are ones Bryan and Linda are proud of, calling them the



Today, Bryan and Linda balance progress and tradition to breed Hereford bulls and heifers on the same short-grass prairie their family settled on in the 1930s.

best set offered in years. According to Linda, the phenotype and look of Rip Wheeler is exactly what the cow herd needed, offering added dimension and a great set of numbers on paper.

Until the end, Harold enjoyed frequent updates from the home ranch in Colorado while living in his retirement home in Cheyenne. Harold, like his father and grandfather before him, remained a horned Hereford man until his passing in May of 2020.

Today, Bryan and Linda work together to find a balance between progress and tradition, offering private treaty bulls and heifers raised on the same short-grass prairie G.A. Sidwell saw so much potential in years ago. **HW**



H5 1147 Advance 4118 and the Sidwells’ foundation cow herd created modern cattle with added dimension and excellent expected progeny differences (EPDs) that are fit for the showman and commercial cattle producer alike.