

Thousands of young people continue to carve their favorite memories and most valuable life lessons through the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA). Many past NJHA alumni are in the industry today raising Hereford cattle, forging impressive professional careers and even bringing their kids back to the Junior National Hereford Expo every summer. Follow this series to read more about how former NJHA members are making a difference.

Paying it Forward

These standout former NJHA members are carving out unique careers and giving back to the breed that shaped them.

by *Wes Ishmael*

If you've never met some people, but know something about where they're from, how they were raised and how they spent their time growing up, it's amazing how much you typically already know them.

For instance, other than a phone call and exchange of emails, I've never met Tamar (Adcock) Crum or Kirbie (Day) Sims, though I hope to one day. Prior to our long-distance introductions, I just knew they grew up in the Hereford breed, were heavily involved in many aspects of the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) and earned and enjoyed tremendous success during those years. I also knew their parents had deep roots in the breed and that they married spouses who grew up like they did, from the same sort of families.

So, I figured they were likely highly motivated professionals today, who sweat the details — salt-of-the-earth types, who place a premium on family, learning and growing. Oh, and I suspected they were most likely still involved with the breed in one way or another.

They are — on every count.

For those of you who have yet to meet them, although I know many of you are well acquainted, here are some details about what they're doing now and how their NJHA experiences helped get them there.

"More appropriately, how did those experiences not help get me to where I am today?" Tamar asks. "It's simple really. I wouldn't have met my husband, Cody. I wouldn't have the memories with



Tamar (Adcock) Crum and family at the 2021 JNHE. Pictured are (l to r) Dean Adcock, Cody Crum, Cort Crum, Tamar Crum, Taryn Johnson, Jan Adcock, Jim Adcock and Del Adcock.



Kirbie (Day) Sims and her family at the 2011 JNHE with KLD RW 0031 Mindy D108, who was selected as the Grand Champion Horned Female.

my family. I wouldn't have the network of people, both friends and mentors, that literally span to both coasts and North and South."

Likewise, Kirbie met her husband, Mark, when they were both NJHA members.

"NJHA has really shaped me into the person I am today," Kirbie says. "It's the people and the opportunities within this great organization, including the contests at the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE), and the events outside of the showring, including PRIDE (the forerunner of Faces of Leadership) and other events.

"The Hereford breed has opened many doors. I think being in the livestock industry helps to build so many of us into who we are today. We need more people to grow up in the livestock industry. The life lessons learned there you can't learn anywhere else."

Let's start with what they're doing now.

Tamar

Tamar graduated from Kansas State University with a bachelor's in animal science in 2014. She went on to study cattle genomics at the University of Missouri, where she earned her doctorate in 2019.

Today, Tamar is a geneticist for Acuity Genetics based out of Carlyle, Ill. It is owned by The Maschhoffs, LLC, one of the largest family owned hog producer networks in North America, with 180,000 sows and market hog production sites in seven states.

"If you would have told me five years ago that I'd be working in the swine industry, I probably would have given you a funny look and walked away," Tamar says. "God's plan is always greater than anything one can imagine for themselves, and my position with Acuity is no different. Acuity, a swine genetics company, uses a system-based approach to combine purebred and crossbred (commercial) data both genotypically and phenotypically to ensure that selection decisions made in our purebred herds mean increased profitability for our customers in the commercial settings.

"Working in swine genetics has been a tremendous learning curve. The structure of the industry, the pace and magnitude of data collection, the rate of genetic change and progress that we are able to observe in comparison to cattle makes my position extremely exciting and fast paced," Tamar says.

Acuity's relationship with the Maschhoffs'

enables it to collect data from commercial (crossbred) progeny to feed into genetic evaluations for their seedstock. "When we make selection decisions on the purebred level, we are constantly checking our data and ensuring our selection decisions are translating to increased dollars in the commercial producer's pocket," Tamar says. "The ability to collect data on the commercial level and translate it to purebred performance and decisions

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— Tamar (Adcock) Crum

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on a large scale is perhaps one area the beef industry lags.”

Tamar and her husband, Cody, moved to Vandalia, Ill. and bought a farm in 2019 when she went to work for Acuity. That’s the same year their first child, Cort Howard, was born. He lazed around until he was 10 hours old before acquiring a vested interest in the Hereford business.

Besides Cody’s work in their Crum Cattle Co. operation and with Tamar’s parents, Jim and Jan of Adcock Cattle, he is a college basketball referee, sells livestock advertising and works as a ringman.

“To Cody and me, there is a difference between being busy and having your time filled with tasks, ventures and opportunities that fuel your passion and your energy to push on to tomorrow,” Tamar says. “For us, each passion that we pursue is more than a job; it’s something we enjoy doing and strive to be better at each day.”



The 2009 National Hereford Queen, Kirbie (Day) Sims, with the state queens vying for the Hereford crown.

Kirbie

Kirbie earned her bachelor’s degree in animal science at Texas A&M University (TAMU). She planned to focus on the field of embryo transfer. Then she volunteered at a local hospital when she was a college senior. She decided the medical field was her true calling.

“After graduating from TAMU, I started nursing school at Texas Woman’s University in Dallas. Upon graduation, I took a job in Oklahoma City at University of Oklahoma Medical working on the cardiovascular and transplant floor.”

Next came a move to Huntsville, Ala., due to her husband, Mark, accepting a position with the American Angus Association.



At the 2020 JNHE, Kirbie (Day) Sims and her husband Mark judged junior and pewee showmanship. Pictured is Kirbie selecting Jarrett Worrell as the champion pewee showman.

“I worked on a med-surg floor in Huntsville, and then decided to go back to school because I think it’s vital to continue to further your education and continue to learn and grow,” Kirbie explains. “I went to graduate school at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., in the family nurse practitioner program. I graduated in December 2019.”

Today, Kirbie is a family nurse practitioner of Internal Medicine at Gleneagles Family Medicine in Huntsville, where she cares for a wide variety of about 20 patients every day.

These days, Mark owns and operates Sims Plus, LLC, a full-service auction and sales management company. Kirbie and Mark live in Owens Cross Roads, Ala.

Mark and Kirbie aren’t parents yet, but she says, “We look forward to starting a family and raising them in the Hereford industry.”

Getting set to launch

Kirbie

Kirbie got involved in NJHA and showing cattle because of her dad, Paul Day.

“He grew up showing polled Hereford cattle. I looked at the opportunity to spend quality time with my dad, but looking back, it was more than that,” Kirbie says. “I was 10 years old when I showed my first heifer. My passion for exhibiting Hereford cattle grew from there.”

When she started out, Kirbie explains they purchased cattle from Gerber Polled Herefords, Barber Ranch and Rockin’ W Ranch.

“With the help of Mark Kelley and Robyn Samsel (Rainbow Cattle Service of Gorman, Texas), our dream of breeding and raising Hereford cattle grew quickly. Toward the end of my junior career, I was showing cattle that we bred and raised on a competitive level. To this day, we are breeding cattle that are competing at a national level. I’d say we have some of the

leading show cattle genetics in today's market."

Among Kirbie's fondest NJHA highlights and memories — besides meeting Mark are:

National Polled Hereford Queen in 2009

— "Being able to travel and meet some of the most amazing people in the breed were some of the biggest highlights," Kirbie says. "It gave me the opportunity to give back to the breed that gave me so much. This experience also gave me an opportunity to travel the U.S. and attend Hereford sales and events. Seeing some of the top Hereford operations throughout the country was a neat experience."

Friendships — "Some of the top memories are those with Rainbow Cattle Service. Mark Kelley and his family taught me so much. If it weren't for them, I wouldn't be where I am today. I can't thank them enough for all they have and continue to do for my family," Kirbie says.

Learning life lessons, you can't learn anywhere else.

Favorite show heifer —RW Mindy 3078 6096 — an April 2006 daughter of RW KW Hummer K23 3078. She was the reserve grand champion at the 2007 JNHE in Denver, Colo. Kirbie also won the junior showmanship contest with her.

"She had a decorated show career, but the legacy she left as a donor cow is something I am most proud of," says Kirbie. Mindy is the dam of KLD RW Marksman D87 ET. Mindy also served as the model for the heifer ice sculpture at Kirbie and Mark's wedding.

Tamar

Tamar's first year in 4-H was when she was 8 years old.

"My parents and my Papaw Howard traveled to Morgan Ranch in Nebraska, who were longtime family friends. They picked out a Hereford steer for me, whom I affectionately named Howie P. Hereford. Howie, my three younger siblings, my parents and I traveled all over the state of Illinois showing. He was the perfect steer to start my career in showing livestock, and from then on, we were hooked," Tamar says.

Her first JNHE was at Sioux Falls, S.D., in 2001.

"We traveled through the night and endured quite possibly the hottest show I can remember," Tamar says. "There were a lot of what we call 'trials' at that JNHE. My siblings and I were so young, I give my parents 100% credit for the sacrifices they had to make to be able to attend that event."

Tamar's sister is Taryn. Her brothers — twins — are Dean and Del. The Adcock family missed only one JNHE between that first one in 2001 and her siblings' last one at Grand Island, Neb., in 2018.

Among Tamar's fondest NJHA highlights and memories — besides meeting Cody are:

Leadership — "My sister and brothers were heavily involved in the Illinois Junior Hereford Association, holding numerous offices," says Tamar. "I had the opportunity to be elected to the National Junior Hereford Association board of directors in 2010 and had the good fortune to serve as leadership chairman and chairman during my three-year term. I was one of only a few duos in NJHA history who had the opportunity to take off my maroon jacket and hand it to my sister — a memory that will be forever etched in my brain and on my heart."

Winning heifers — Tamar was on the end of the halter of numerous state champions, a couple

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2013 retiring NJHA board members (l to r) Matt Woolfolk, Austin Buzanowski, Jaime (Hanson) Sorenson and Tamar (Adcock) Crum.



The Adcock Family had a very successful career in the showing. This reserve champion polled female was a highlight of Tamar's career.

of JNHE division champions, and the 2008 JNHE reserve champion polled owned female. She and her siblings were always very competitive in showmanship competitions, too, including numerous state champions and top 10 appearances at the JNHE.

“While successes in the showing are certainly fun, and what any person who sets out to show cattle dreams of accomplishing, quite frankly, it’s participating in public speaking, attending Faces of Leadership and similar opportunities that really

I could show livestock. I am certain we didn’t say it enough back then, and we definitely took it for granted. Quite simply, there are not enough words for the gratitude we owe our parents.”

Family again — Tamar says one of the most recent highlights was having her entire family together at this year’s JNHE for the first time since 2016, in order to watch their parents, Jim and Jan, judge junior and peewee showmanship.

Hereford today

Kirbie

“We’re still involved with the family operations in Oklahoma and Texas, still raising and showing cattle on a national level,” Kirbie explains. “I am proud that my family’s small operation blossomed into what and who it is today — KLD Herefords at Waxahachie, Texas.”

“At the conclusion of my junior show career we flushed several of my past show heifers. This allowed us to breed, develop and market our genetics across the country. It took planning and hard work. We wouldn’t be where we are without having done that.” Kirbie says. “In the past few years, we have been fortunate to host a few online sales and sell cattle private treaty,” she explains.

“We have bred and raised cattle that have claimed champion honors at the National Western Stock Show, North American International Livestock Exposition, American Royal, Western States Hereford Show, JNHE, Fort Worth Stock Show, and most recently, Cattlemen’s Congress.”

Kirbie points out they also have a few AI sires listed with Genesource.

“The most popular of those is KLD RW Marksman D87 ET. He is a direct son of Mindy, and he recently sired two division winners at the 2021 JNHE,” Kirbie says. “Mark and I judged peewee and junior showmanship at the 2020 JNHE.

I’ve been blessed to be able to help judge the National Hereford Queen contest, as well. We try to give back when and where we can.”

Tamar

“Cody and I and my parents, Jim and Jan Adcock, operate our Crum Cattle Co. and Adcock Cattle, as a team. While our herd isn’t large in numbers, we work hard to keep on top of the up-and-coming genetics,” Tamar says. “We have an online sale each October where we market our heifer calves.”

This summer, Tamar and Cody also launched Chappel Hill Market.



Tamar (Adcock) Crum and Jamie (Hanson) Sorenson served the NJHA board of directors. They made a great team leading many successful Faces of Leadership Conferences.



Tamar (Adcock) Crum receives the handshake from the judge in a memorable moment in the showing.

molded and honed the skills that developed me to fit into a career in the industry,” Tamar says.

Family — “My parents instilled in us at a young age that this is what we do as a family,” Tamar says. She emphasizes the last bit of that sentence, as in, “We work, win, lose, enjoy, learn as one.”

“Many families go on vacation; showing cattle was what we did,” Tamar explains. “My siblings and I worked side-by-side every day in the barn. While, some days were quieter than others, some of my favorite memories with them are days spent there. I am realizing now, as a parent myself, just how much my parents sacrificed so my siblings and

“We have always enjoyed being able to feed out a few of our steers and market halves and quarters to our communities,” Tamar explains. “With our move to Vandalia, we decided to get licensed to be able to sell individual retail cuts rather than just bulk quantities, as we saw a desire from customers who wanted beef but maybe did not have the freezer space. We launched in May and haven’t looked back since. We have loved the opportunity to share our passion for raising beef, meeting people and providing quality beef to members of our community.”

Advice for juniors

“Have fun. Get involved and stay involved. Make friends,” says Kirbie. “Wake up every day trying to better yourself. Be thankful and grateful. Each day is a new day — give it all you have. It’s more than winning banners. It really is the friendships and people that make the Hereford breed the best there is. I think it is important to set goals. Learn from those around you, going in with an open mind.

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Surround yourself with those who support you. The future is bright for the Hereford association with the junior members we have.”

Tamar encourages young people to push themselves and utilize their many opportunities.

“Take advantage. It sounds so simple, but really, the NJHA works so hard to provide opportunities for juniors of all ages, personalities, etc. Take advantage of them, think outside the box, push yourself to your limits,” Tamar says. “Trust me,

I like to stay inside the box, too. Your time as a junior and a junior family goes by way too fast to be caught idly watching it pass by.”

“While, I don’t know what my life would have looked like without my involvement in the NJHA, I am a firm believer that we are not ‘made’ by ourselves,” Tamar says. “The mentors that have poured into us, the values our family instilled in us, the opportunities that we chose to seize and the ones that we elected to pass by have all melted together to develop us into the persons that is exactly where they were meant to be.” **HW**