

Candidate Q&A Segment

The six 2021 candidates for the American Hereford Association (AHA) Board of Directors respond to three key questions regarding their candidacy



Chad Breeding

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

Chad Breeding

After being asked by several people over the last few years, I felt the time was right for me to give back to the breed that has given me so much and provided a living for my family. I have seen so many changes and have had the chance to see how great the Hereford breed has become, and I want to help it move to the next level.



Jim Coley

Jim Coley

I am a candidate because of my love for Hereford cattle, Hereford breeders and my desire to contribute to the future of the Hereford business. My family raised Hereford cattle before I was born. My dad and uncle instilled in me a desire to work to improve our farm and our cattle. We have always tried to produce cattle that will get the job done for our customers and to do so with the utmost of integrity.



Lou Ellen Harr

Lou Ellen Harr

Being asked to run for a position on the Board is truly humbling. The Hereford breed has been especially good to our family, and a seat on the AHA Board is a way to repay the debt for the tremendous opportunities it has given us. From the cattle providing the majority of our living and livelihood, to friends and clients across the U.S. and Canada, and finally, to a junior program that offered unbelievable benefits to our daughter, the Hereford breed has been integral to my family for years. Coupled with our livelihood being tied to Hereford cattle, along with my experience in marketing cattle, working with young people in the junior program, and a knowledge of the end product, beef, I feel that I can offer a practical and well-rounded perspective to the Board of Directors.



Travis McConnaughy

Travis McConnaughy

The Hereford breed has been a cornerstone on our ranch for five generations. I was born into Hereford cattle with a passion that was passed down to me. We are in the ranching business; this is our livelihood and way of life. The ups and downs in the cattle business affect our daily lives, which drives our ranch to make decisions to better the Hereford breed and the breeders themselves. I am running for the AHA Board of Directors because I want to see the Hereford breed continue to grow. I have a forward-thinking mind and feel I can be an asset to keep the momentum going forward. I am very humbled by the opportunity to run for the AHA Board and find it very exciting to have a chance to serve the breed that has served my family for many years.



John Ridder



Corinne Santos

John Ridder

I had been interested in serving on the AHA Board of Directors in the past, so when I was approached this time, I said, "Yes." I like to be part of the decision making, and I believe I have something to offer on behalf of breeders in this industry.

Corinne Santos

I am extremely thankful and excited to be nominated for an AHA Board position. While my nomination is a huge source of pride, I assure you that I will do my very best to prove to the membership of this organization that your nomination is not wasted. I hope to work hand in hand with the other Board members on the reforms the organization needs to better achieve our goals and mission as a group. I believe my passion for the Hereford breed and my vast experience serving on many different boards will bring a fresh perspective to our organization. I feel confident that I can make significant contributions to this organization, and I am very grateful for this opportunity.

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

Breeding

1. My first goal is to see a Hereford bull in every black-hided commercial program by promoting what Hereford cattle have to offer the beef industry and helping educate producers of commercial cattle about the hybrid vigor and longevity of our breed, thus, helping our producers market their bulls.
2. The junior program is the best way we can maintain our presence on the national stage. It brings so much attention to our breed, as well as free advertising. With that being said, I feel we need to do all we can to continue to grow that program, not only for the benefit of the breed, but to give the youth a way to excel. These young people will be our leaders one day, and the knowledge they learn from our programs will help shape our future.
3. My third goal is to remember — remember where we came from, remember what got us to where we are as a breed today and remember that we are all in this together as Hereford breeders. We should use every tool at our disposal to make the best better.

Coley

1. I would like to be able to use some of the experience I have gained from being active in the Hereford industry for over 50 years to make sound decisions as a Board member.
2. Provide good communication to AHA members in our area about what is going on at the AHA, issues the Board is facing and decisions that the Board has made. Communicate with our members on issues that need to be addressed, as well.
3. Continue to be a strong supporter of our youth and any activities they can participate in, which will make them better Hereford breeders and leaders in our future.

Harr

Increasing demand for Hereford genetics would be my foremost goal. Our national cow herd is mainly black-hided. The Hereford breed offers the most value through the heterosis advantage. Herefords offer an improvement in so many of the financially relevant traits such as fertility, docility and longevity. We must continue to provide and explore different avenues for marketing Hereford and Hereford-influenced feeder cattle, thereby, increasing demand for Hereford bulls in the commercial sector.

Growing our membership numbers is a second goal. Our enviable National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) program not only includes the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE), but also allows for real-world beef production experience through the Fed Steer Shootout. It is a great success story. Yet, we must continue to support the transition of our youth to adult membership. We need to maintain the involvement of our younger membership and give them opportunities to learn from and interact with our adult membership to keep them involved within the breed. Additionally, we must continue to encourage buyers of Hereford cattle to get actively involved within the breed, as well.

My third goal would be to keep members up to date on the latest technology and marketing opportunities available to them. The AHA staff has done a remarkable job with webinars, videos and live programs, such as The Brand Conference. I would like to encourage the continuation of these to not only educate members, but also to increase enthusiasm for the breed and the awareness of Hereford genetics. Furthermore, genomics and genetic technology are paramount in breed improvement and continuing to build the genetic base of our breed. Keeping our members' knowledge current of these genomic programs and genetic technology is of utmost importance.



COME HOME TO HEREFORD

where grit builds greatness

McConnaughy

As a purebred and commercial cattleman, I feel it is very important to keep increasing our marketplace in the commercial sector. This, I feel, is the bottom line in the cattle industry, no matter the breed. The commercial cattleman needs to succeed for everyone else to succeed. We need to keep driving Hereford home and find every angle to get a good Hereford bull into these commercial herds of cows, big and small.

Youth in agriculture are very important to me. Team Hereford has done a great job at keeping the youth involved. After just experiencing our first JNHE, it is amazing the enthusiasm that surrounds this event. I want to keep this alive and find ways to keep the youth attracted. Agriculture is the backbone of our country, and the youth are the future of agriculture. I think it is important to get them involved in not only showing cattle, but also introducing them to activities and other avenues of the business.

With genomics becoming an increasingly used tool in the industry, I feel we need a ton of real data to increase the accuracy of the genomics. That is where I want to lend my hand and help find ideas to drive data cost down so more members can participate, and the breed can get a more precise reading to improve the accuracies. Talking to other breeders, this seems to be a big obstacle for them to participate. This is a huge tool that I feel we are just getting to.

Ridder

- To listen
- To be open-minded
- To make decisions that are for the best of the breed and our customers

Santos

I can't remember a time in my life when the Hereford breed was not a part of it. My family and I have had great success with the breed, and I would love the opportunity to give back to an organization that has given me so much. My areas of focus would be as follows:

1. To continue to apply resources to our junior organization, which are our future leaders of this great breed. I am continually impressed by the talented juniors who are showing within our breed. They not only prove time and time again to be great showmen, but also to be great cattlemen and women.

2. To see the Certified Hereford Beef® (CHB) program reach the Western states and elevate Hereford genetics to the hierarchy of the beef industry. The strengthening of the *Certified Hereford Beef* program in areas where it is not as prevalent will only create greater demand for our products — whether it be on the rail or in the field.

3. To continue to foster innovation for our member services. Every herd, whether they are good or bad, is a reflection of the breed. We have membership operations that vary in sizes and scales. We should always be striving to make it simpler when gathering, evaluating and disseminating data, thus, enabling our breeders to have the resources to be successful.

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

Breeding

In my opinion one of the greatest challenges of the AHA over the next 10 years is to keep the best personnel employed. As our market presence grows, others in our industry will start to come after what we have. The Board needs to prepare and plan for the “what if” that lies ahead. We, as well as all beef producers, have a fight on our hands with the packers, the public perception of beef, as well as the input cost of raising beef. Our leaders need to be on the cutting edge and able to think and plan outside the box.

Coley

It is a never-ending struggle to stay relevant in today's beef industry. The AHA Board needs to do everything possible to encourage its members to continue to improve the genetics in Hereford cattle with visual appraisal along with any other tools available. We also need to continue to identify and eliminate sources of genetics with cancer eye, prolapse, fertility and structure issues. The AHA needs to help our members make these improvements in our cattle, while providing easy-to-use and reliable data and registration services. Also, this all must be done within a budget that allows the AHA to be financially solid for years to come.

Harr

One of the biggest challenges for our breed is to not become complacent despite our current popularity in many segments of the industry. Our Association must continue to adopt breed-improving technology with newer and more encompassing genetic evaluations, genomic testing, and real-world genetic testing through programs like the

National Reference Sire Program and Fed Steer Shootout. The *Certified Hereford Beef* program must be grown to meet market demand for beef and increase the demand for Hereford genetics. Additionally, we need to continue to invest in research efforts around Hereford genetics and utilize that research to inform both purebred and commercial producers of the advantages of Hereford and Hereford-influenced cattle.

McConnaughy

The biggest challenge, I think, will be the perception that beef is an unhealthy option for the human diet. This is not just within the Hereford breed, but it is industry wide. That is why I believe it could be one of the biggest threats or challenges we may face. We, as an industry, need to come together and campaign against it. This is bigger than Hereford. This is bigger than Angus. It is the beef industry being threatened. Agriculture is the largest industry in the world; we are big enough to fight back! We need to present the facts and educate people. I believe a uniform message needs to be found so the beef industry, as a whole, can use it to campaign against it.

Ridder

Our biggest challenge in the coming 10 years is much like it has been — making the breed dominant in the minds of the cow-calf operator. What is always the challenge is how you do that and what tools you use. The Board can best prepare for and overcome this challenge by staying relevant. If we are acting rather than reacting, we'll be a step ahead. Keying in on what the actual problem is will help us to focus and problem solve.

Santos

Herefords have made tremendous strides to become the superior breed within the beef industry. Over the years, our breeders have pursued the right genetic focus to create a breed known for their exceptional maternal traits and their premium carcass. This has increased market share for Hereford and Hereford-influenced cattle. With that being said, there is still more market share for Hereford cattle to gain. There are various ways we can reach out to our membership to better understand the challenges they face within their market. We can then take this data and prioritize our objectives to develop a strategic plan of action, which can then be executed and managed. Increasing market share will continue to propel the Hereford breed to the top and support the viability of the Hereford breed. **HW**