

The Beginning of a Hereford Legacy

Chapman Land and Cattle built its operation from scratch and now gives back.

When the gavel dropped in Oklahoma City during the 2022 Cattlemen's Congress, the buyer of the Hereford Youth Foundation of America (HYFA) Lot 1 Kentucky Derby Package was announced as Chapman Land and Cattle. This name has made waves over the last year and showed its support for Hereford juniors and HYFA.

Chapman Land and Cattle is quickly growing as a recognized Hereford breeder. However, this family operation, with Ryan Chapman at the helm, only started recently. Ryan worked his way up from the bottom, only to turn around and give back as a major supporter of Hereford juniors.

In a recent interview with him, he told me that he has a family motto that he is hoping to instill in his children — when you pick up something, stick with it.

From parking lots to pastures

Ryan is no stranger to working hard and building businesses from

scratch. At 18, he was working as a parking attendant in Nashville, Tenn., making \$6.75 per hour, directing traffic and sweeping cigarette butts off the ground. Before long, he convinced the owner to let him manage the lot, and more parking lots and garages after that. His hard work, grit and leadership allowed his company, Premier Parking, to grow to manage more than 400 parking locations in 50 cities across the United States, employing more than 2,000 people.

In 2017, Ryan decided to step down from leading the company and sell the business. His family bought the initial 492-acre farm in Nunnely, Tenn., followed by the acquisition of an additional 100 adjoining acres. Ryan then dove into the commercial cattle business.

With no prior farming background, Ryan wanted to be involved in the agriculture world after meeting other people in the industry. Within his commercial herd, he had a handful of unregistered Herefords, and he says, "I didn't know any better than I just knew I liked Herefords. They were my favorite cows, and I decided to research and learn everything about the breed I could."

A good friend and mentor introduced him to Hereford breeders to learn from and then, in 2019, he purchased a handful of registered Hereford heifers from Burns Farms, in Pikeville, Tenn. Ryan has been traveling the



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country with his registered herd manager, John Thomas, assembling a first class set of Hereford cattle ever since.

In June 2020, Ryan and his wife, Betsy, sold their Nashville home. The couple, along with their 9-year-old daughter, Vivian, and 6-year-old son, Bo, took up residence on their Nunnely farm full-time. As their farm continues to grow in size — acquiring an additional 600 acres and land leases — so does the cow herd quality and quantity. Chapman Land and Cattle is focused on building some of the best genetics from some of the top herds, not only in the southeastern region, but from across the country.

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Front row (left to right): Ralston Ripp, Kearney, Neb.; Lauren McMillan, Tiskilwa, Ill.; Lauren Jones, Darlington, Wis.; and Ryan Chapman, Nunnely, Tenn., Chapman Land & Cattle. Back row (left to right): Luke Daniels, Dalhart, Texas; Wesley Denton, Blue Rapids, Kan.; Wyatt Lawrence, Princeton, Minn.; Libby Rushton, Waverly, Tenn.; JW Cox, Flemingsburg, Ky.; and Amy Cowan, Kansas City, Mo., American Hereford Association director of youth activities and foundation.

Giving back

Ryan supports the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) because he believes he has an obligation to help. It was God's plan for him to end up in the Hereford breed. Now, with his kids growing up in this Association, Ryan feels like he needs to do everything he can for the younger generation. "After all," he says, "When we are all long and gone, they will be the ones at the helm of our operations."

Ryan wants to make his giving meaningful and provide juniors with a head start on life. His personal mission is to keep building awareness and a connection to agriculture, providing resources by investing in the future — not only of the breed but the future of its junior members.

Chapman Land and Cattle is a true testimony of what hard work can accomplish. Ryan loves to work hard in the face of adversity; he has the grit, the will and the want.

As a gentleman who started out knowing nothing about agriculture or the Hereford breed to becoming one of the top Hereford breeders in the South with some of the most competitive genetics in the country, Ryan is a testament to the hard work he speaks about. The Chapman family had their first annual bull sale this year, and he says you can expect a production sale in the future, once he believes his cattle are at their peak. With their growing operation, the Chapman family is truly proving that you can accomplish anything that you set your mind to do.

Ryan says he wants to beat the odds a new breeder faces and make his herd grow into a generational operation that his children can take over. As someone who didn't grow up in agriculture, he is dedicated to giving his own children the opportunity to grow up with dirt under their nails and a heifer in the showring. **HW**