

# IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Allan and Braman win NJHA Advisors of the Year while at the helm of the Texas junior Hereford program.

by *Katie Maupin Miller*

From show moms to show managers, two Texas women humbly accepted the 2022 National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) Advisors of the Year award during the VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) in Louisville, Ky. Becky Allan, of Nocona, and Dee Braman, of Refugio, were recognized for their tireless contributions to the Texas Hereford junior associations.

“Becky and I would want everyone to know how humbled and gracious we are,” Braman says. “There are hundreds of advisors out there working just as hard as we are. We are very, very excited about getting to represent Texas and getting all those accolades.”

## Bigger in Texas

The Lone Star State does things in a big way, and its junior Hereford programs are no different. Each year, the state’s horned and polled Hereford associations team up to sponsor a state Hereford show, which dwarfs many breeds’ junior nationals. This year the state show, dubbed Bet on Red and White, drew 600 entries from more than 250 exhibitors. And Allan and Braman were at the helm, standing squarely in support of their children — Mason Allan and Madeline Braman — who served as the junior associations’ presidents.

Texas rallies behind the Hereford breed and its young people. Each year, the state show offers more than \$20,000 worth of prizes, not

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including Texas Polled Hereford Association manager Chad Oates and his commitment to Texas youth.

“You can reach out to parents and say you’re in charge of the

to mention scholarships, educational opportunities and a high-caliber cattle show. Allan and Braman led the charge this year, but as they will tell you, there was no shortage of spare hands,

silent auction, or you’re in charge of speeches. Without all those families and parents who step up to take little pieces of the pie, there is absolutely no way that the show would function,” Braman says.

The number of parents, volunteers, breeders and business owners who support young people makes the Texas Hereford family a special one.

## Hereford family

Consequently, the welcoming nature of the Hereford industry is what drew both the Allans and Bramans back to the breed. Both families had roots in the Hereford industry, but when it was time for their children to grab a show halter, the support,



Becky Allan and Dee Braman accept the NJHA Advisors of the Year award. Pictured (l to r) Wyatt Lawrence, retiring NJHA vice-chairman; Allan; Lauren Gatz, National Hereford Queen; Braman; and Noah Benedict, retiring NJHA chairman.

encouragement and opportunities surrounding red-white-faced cattle made their choice clear.

“We just decided that Herefords were the breed we wanted our kids to show,” Allan says. “It was a great program with Amy Cowan leading it, and then Bailey came in. I just saw what an unbelievable program the NJHA offered.”

Now, as show moms and state advisors, Allan and Braman hope to herald others into the Hereford breed for the same reasons. Each Texas Hereford junior event is planned with young people in mind — especially those youth who are new to the associations.

“Whenever someone new comes in, we want them to feel welcome,” Allan says. “We heard this year that the new kids couldn’t wait to come back. The people are so friendly and welcoming. The kids instantly felt like they were part of something.”

Allan grew up as a military brat who often moved, so she is empathetic to any young person who steps into a new situation. The duo strives to make each junior who sets foot into a Texas Hereford event feel that instant belonging. This philosophy likely contributes to Texas Hereford’s junior programs’ explosive growth.

Braman notes their motherly instincts have guided many of their decisions. Not only does the pair want to present their children with ways to grow for the future, but they want to provide opportunities for all of Texas’ young agriculturalists.

### **The next generation**

Speaking of young people, Allan’s and Braman’s children have already made their marks both in the showing and in the Hereford breed — raising and exhibiting numerous champions. The life lessons their kids learned ringside have not only helped them garner banners and accolades but also have shaped them into young people who make parents proud.

Out of the Allan boys’ many awards, Allan is most proud that her sons, Tyler, Mason and Landry, see a future in the agricultural industry. Her boys often help the next ones in line by mentoring young people and even judging showmanship competitions. Braman is happy to have raised two girls, Madeline and Carlisle, who are just as satisfied to stand at the backdrop behind a calf they have raised as they are to hold the halter of a champion.

As Braman says, “It is not what you have that everyone remembers you by; it is what you do with what you have that leaves a mark.”

Both women agree that the Hereford associations — state and national — offer young people opportunities.

“It takes a village, and I think this Hereford family on both the state and national level is that village,” Braman says. “There is just no family like Hereford.” **HW**