

CONSTANT FOCUS

Barber's Herdsman win was one more step in a long journey.

by *Wes Ishmael*

Success is always relative. In terms of awards and honors for a single week, Bryden Barber, Channing, Texas — 2022 Junior Herdsman of the Year — had an extraordinary VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) in Louisville, Ky.

He would be the last to tell you, but he won: division II champion bull; polled division IX reserve champion female (with his sister, Aidyn); Golden Bull Achievement Award; Sullivan Supply Hereford Herdsman Scholarship; Walter and Joe Lewis High Point Senior Award, for the second time; and Junior Herdsman of the Year. That's not even a complete list.

The Junior Herdsman Award is extra special, though. It glitters more brightly because it is bestowed by peers, who vote on the list of finalists chosen by a selection committee. The award reflects performance at the show, as well as years of preparing and presenting cattle at a high level.

Given the respect and admiration he has for his peers and for previous Herdsman of the Year winners,



Bryden Barber, Channing, Texas, was honored as the 2022 Hereford Junior Herdsman of the Year.

Barber always had a goal to join the elite futurity. Winning this year was even more special, he says, because of the other finalists (see 2022 Junior Herdsman Finalists). They included his good friend, Chesney Effling, Highmore, S.D., and his roommate

at Oklahoma State University (OSU) Dylan Kottkamp, Clayton, Ind. Never mind Barber's admiration of Ben Holt, Caldwell, Idaho, and Ryan Rogers, Worley, Idaho, who were both also 2021 Herdsman finalists.

"It is a humbling experience to be selected as a candidate and then to be selected as the Herdsman of the Year," Barber says. "It is an honor that I will forever cherish."

Sustained success

As extraordinary as Barber's 2022 JNHE was, other years and highlights rank right up there, too.

"2021 was the first time I ever won the polled heifer show," Barber says. That was with BR Merida H031 ET, by UPS Sensation 2296 ET and out of BR Anastasia 3023 ET. The same dam produced BR Anastasia E109 ET, which captured grand champion bred-and-owned female honors in 2019 for Barber and his



Barber clips a topline during the fitting portion of the JNHE senior showmanship finals.

sisters, Rylee and Aidyn. 3023 ET is a full sib to BR Nitro Aventus 3116 ET, a bull Barber campaigned to grand champion bred-and-owned honors at the JNHE in both 2014 and 2015.

At Barber Ranch, pedigrees run deep with the operation's prefix.

Barber explains with modesty, "We've been fortunate to be able to put some of our pretty good bulls on some pretty good females of ours."

Such sustained success makes it easy to wonder the secrets.

"You don't sleep a lot. You sweat a lot and you work a lot," Barber says.

In other words, the days are dark to dark — making feed, feeding cattle, weaning and vaccinating calves, sorting and moving cattle and all of the rest. Then making time to spend in the show barn.

If you met Barber for the first time, you'd likely be struck immediately by his beyond-the-years maturity, confidence and humility. The trials



Hours in the barn prepared this partnership for the showing.

and tribulations of ranching in the Texas Panhandle tend to hone such characteristics. So does a strong family, starting with his parents, Brett and Nicole. The Barbers have a long, rich history in the Hereford breed, from Hereford Hall of Fame inductees

to past presidents of the American Hereford Association.

"There are always eyes on you, what you're doing and how you're doing it," Barber says. It's a responsibility he recognizes and takes seriously, especially when it comes to those younger than he is. "They see what hard work can get you, and all of the places you can go."

Barber's years in the National Junior Hereford Association include many destinations beyond the showing. Along with competing in a variety of contests held in conjunction with JNHE each year, he has participated in leadership development opportunities, including Faces of Leadership and the BOLD Conference.

Getting where you want to go is not a part-time job, Barber says — it's all day every day.

Eyes on the destination

After getting his degree from OSU, Barber plans to attend Texas A&M University to get a master's degree in genetics or reproduction. That's where his grandpa, Dale, became a veterinarian. It's where his dad, aunt, uncles and sister all went to school.

“It is a humbling experience to be selected as a candidate and then to be selected as the Herdsman of the Year. It is an honor that I will forever cherish.”

— Bryden Barber



Barber embraces his dad after being named Junior Herdsman of the Year.

2022 Junior Herdsmen Finalists



Ben Holt

Ben Holt, Caldwell, Idaho, is the son of Scott and Kim Holt. Holt is the third generation to raise Herefords; his passion for the breed comes from his family heritage. Holt is currently living in Ellensburg, Wash., and works for Blue Drifter Ranch.

Holt enjoys the many different facets of the cattle industry. He appreciates the opportunity to work with diverse genetics, learn from other cattlemen, make connections and help kids who are interested in the

industry. "I am honored to be a candidate again this year because this award embodies what I am passionate about doing every day," Holt says.



Dylan Kottkamp

Dylan Kottkamp, Clayton, Ind., is the son of Dale and Leslie Kottkamp. Kottkamp is a junior at Oklahoma State University majoring in agribusiness with a pre-law option. Kottkamp is the third generation in his family to raise Hereford cattle. This summer will be the Kottkamp family's 25th Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) and Dylan's 21st.

After graduation, Kottkamp is interested in pursuing a law degree and continuing his involvement within

the Hereford breed. "Being recognized by an organization that has given me so much is truly an honor," Kottkamp says.



Chesney Effling

Chesney Effling, Highmore, S.D., is the daughter of Chris and Kristi Effling. Effling is a junior at Kansas State University majoring in animal sciences and industry with an animal products option. Effling began raising Herefords at a young age to exhibit across the country after her interest was sparked to attend the JNHE.

After graduation, Effling plans to continue her education in meat science because she enjoys

understanding the end product of the animals she raises. "I am honored to be a candidate and credit my passion for the beef industry to the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA)," Effling says.



Ryan Rogers

Ryan Rogers, Worley, Idaho, is the son of Mark and Nikki Rogers. Rogers is currently employed by Colyer Herefords and enjoys the opportunity to work in the cattle industry. In the future, he plans to continue raising Hereford cattle and expand his current herd.

Rogers credits his passion for the Hereford breed to his involvement in the NJHA. Additionally, the people he has been able to meet have molded his career. "I look forward to giving back to the Hereford breed and the

people who have shaped me as a person," Rogers says. **HW**

“There are always eyes on you, what you’re doing and how you’re doing it. They see what hard work can get you, all of the places you can go.”

— Bryden Barber

“I think it will be a major asset going back to our cattle operation and having so much more knowledge about those aspects,” Barber says of his early decision to pursue a post-graduate degree. Whether it’s transferring embryos himself or having a deeper understanding about accelerating genetic gain, he wants to help carry his family’s Hereford legacy forward.

In the meantime, choosing OSU was both practical and pragmatic. While getting a top-notch education, Barber explains it has also opened up an entirely new network of contacts.

All of this is part of Barber’s journey to return home to his family’s storied operation and make his own mark crafting and building Hereford genetics, as one of the fifth generation doing so.

“Just making it one of the best operations we can make it,” Barber says of his ultimate goal. “Improving our genetics and making good cattle for our customers that go on and work in the pasture and the feedlot or the showring. We try to cater to our customers, giving them what they want. We strive to do that and work hard at it every day.”

Family, both immediate and extended, is a continuous thread when you ask Barber about his own successes.

“I couldn’t do any of this without my family, friends and crew,” Barber says. “We couldn’t do what we do without having the people who stand behind us and support us 110% of the way.” **HW**