

# Twenty-Seven YEARS in the

Dylan Kottkamp wins senior showmanship, Junior Herdsman of the Year and the Walter and Joe Lewis High Point Senior Award.

by *Sydnee Shive*

Dylan Kottkamp, Clayton, Ind., was just a baby when he boarded a plane in his mother’s arms, bound for his first Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) in 2001.

“My first junior nationals, I was 3 weeks old, and my mom flew herself and I to Billings, Mont.,” Dylan says. “Every single summer since then, I’ve been at a junior national.”

Fast-forward to the 2023 JNHE in Madison, Wis., Dylan’s 22nd JNHE and his family’s 27th, as his sisters, Chandis and Emilee, blazed the trail before him. It ended up being a week few can dream of, let alone attain. Dylan was named champion senior showman, Junior Herdsman of the Year and Walter and Joe Lewis High Point Senior Award winner. Few know what it’s like to win one of the coveted awards, let alone all three, and in the same year to boot.

“It’s surreal. I never ever, ever dreamt this would happen,” Dylan says. “I came into junior nationals trying to keep it simple and trying to enjoy it, and soak in my last year.”



“They did a lot and I credit my win to my sisters a good deal,” Dylan says. “Winning those three titles is the culmination of 27 years. We do everything as a family.”

### Hereford roots

Dylan is a third-generation Hereford breeder. A love for the Hereford breed is in his blood — beginning with his late grandpa, Ed, and his dad, Dale.

“My dad took us to the next level, but my grandpa, he started it all,” Dylan says. “He did a lot for our farm. He started our farm, and he loved Herefords. He loved them to death.”



Dylan’s success is a family effort. The Kottkamp family (back row l to r): Dylan Kottkamp; Chandis Kottkamp; Emilee Foster (Kottkamp), holding Eleanor Foster; Andrew Foster; Lesli Kottkamp; and Dale Kottkamp. Front row (l to r): Everly and Emersyn Foster.



# Making

Dylan has been showing since he was in diapers. He grew up in the show barn, helping his sisters where he could. In lieu of a calf, due to his age and size, Dylan “showed” a pygmy goat for his first couple of years.

“When I was 3, my parents bought me a pygmy goat; that way I wasn’t around the cattle as much,” Dylan says. “I always wanted to be with them, all the time, nonstop. I had a mini show stick, and I had a mini chute. When we rinsed calves, we rinsed my goat, and my goat knew how to place his feet. We’d blow the heifers out, put him in the chute and blow him out. I had a little blower, too. I can give George the goat a lot of credit for showing me the ropes.”

The Kortkamp family owns a herd of about 40 registered Hereford cattle. Almost every animal exhibited by the family has been bred-and-owned, with the exception of three or four head — no small feat for a herd of that size.

“Some people have 500 head, and we have a small fraction of that amount,” Dylan says. “Being able to still compete with that is something we take a lot of pride in.”

## Sister, sister

Dylan’s passion for Herefords runs in his blood, but his passion for show cattle starts with his sisters, Chandis and Emilee. With a 13-year and 11-year age difference between them and their little brother, he grew up studying their every move — even if the trio was only able to show at a few JNHEs together.



Dylan shares a moment with Tar Tut (middle) and Bryden Barber, Dylan’s college roommate (right) after winning senior showmanship. Dylan’s years of exhibiting at JNHE have been valuable to making friends and connections.

“They taught me everything I know,” he says. “I grew up my whole life watching them and trying to chase after their success.”

Chandis and Emilee have a laundry list of JNHE wins. Both of them placed in the top 10 of senior

showmanship multiple times, they won the cow-calf pair show and divisions in the female show. It wasn’t until the 2022 JNHE, when he won the bred-and-owned bull show, that Dylan felt like he caught up, and 2023 was icing on the cake.



Dylan shows his division V reserve champion horned female in the JNHE owned female grand drive. Her division placing helped secure his Walter and Joe Lewis High Point Senior Award win.



“What I was able to do this past year, it’s been 27 years in the making.”

— Dylan Kottkamp



The Kottkamp family at the 2012 JNHE, where Dylan’s sister, Emilee, was named premier exhibitor. The Kottkamp family has attended the JNHE for 27 consecutive years — Dylan attended his first when he was 3 weeks old.

“They did a lot, and I credit my win to my sisters a good deal,” Dylan says. “Winning those three titles is the culmination of 27 years. We do everything as a family.”

Dylan is also quick to credit his sisters when it comes to his showmanship skills.

“Everything I do for showmanship, I’ve learned from my sisters. Growing up, I watched their every move, from how calm and smooth they were to how to use the correct amount of intensity,” Dylan says. “They both had extremely successful careers, but they never were able to get quite over the hump and win showmanship at the JNHE. So, for me to do that, I call it all three of our wins, because it was 27 years in the making. It was something we all worked for.”

Like his showmanship win, Dylan says his sisters helped propel him to Junior Herdsman of the Year. He loved playing sports almost as much as he loved showing cattle, and the decision to pursue one or the other was difficult. His family made the decision easier.

“If it wasn’t for my sisters, I probably wouldn’t still be showing. I was very active in sports, but I also saw the success they had. My whole career, I’ve really been chasing after their success,” Dylan says. “I’ve chased them a lot, and I’ve chased after what they’ve did and tried to do as much. Their careers were super successful. I just wanted to do as well, if not better than them, all the time, in the best way possible. I wanted to continue the legacy that they started with our family.”

Fitting and clipping are important parts of herdsmanship — Dylan’s brother-in-law, Andrew Foster, helped him finetune his fitting and clipping skills.

“I couldn’t be more thankful for Andrew, and I’ve watched him clip a lot and tried to mimic him as much as possible,” Dylan says. “I owe him a lot.”

Dylan’s magical week in Madison was a culmination of many things, including years of preparation and hard work, along with a healthy dose of luck. Yet, Dylan’s family is one of the most important parts of his success.

Along with his dad, grandpa, sisters and brother-in-law, Dylan’s mom, Lesli, helped him achieve his goals.

“My mom was the glue to it all and had my back through it all,” he says. “I couldn’t be more thankful for her.”

### Magic in Madison

The Kottkamps got hooked when they attended their first JNHE 27 years ago, and their love for the Hereford breed and Hereford people continues to grow.

“It’s something we’ve fallen in love with. We love the people. We love the family aspect of it and the family atmosphere,” Dylan says. “It doesn’t matter if someone’s fifth and you won the class; you’re happy for each other.”

When it came time for Dylan’s last JNHE, the first thing on his list was showmanship.

After disappointing attempts to win senior showmanship in prior years, he entered his final year of competition with a ‘nothing to lose’ attitude. He didn’t have high hopes for the contest — making him more relaxed when he entered the ring.

“I didn’t try to do too much; I kept everything simple,” Dylan says. “My heifer did an awesome job and worked with me perfect, as good as I could have asked. Everything kind of started falling into place.”

He says one of the most special parts about his showmanship win were





Dylan touches up a tailhead in the fitting portion of the senior showmanship contest. Dylan says learning to fit, brush and work with Hereford hair at a young age has made working with hair on other breeds of cattle easier.

the friends and people alongside him. Call it the end of an era.

“I’ve been able to do showmanship with some of my best friends and people that I’ve known for a long time. It was a good amount of last year’s for people, like Bryden Barber, Tar Tut, Chesney Effling; all of them I’ve shown with from forever, it seems like. We’ve been Hereford kids through it all.

“It was a lot of pieces that had to land just right, and it all worked out well. It’s cool to do it with some of my best friends and people I truly admire and think highly of.”

While he didn’t expect to win senior showmanship, Dylan had Junior Herdsman of the Year on his to-do list. He was a candidate for the title last year, but his college roommate, Bryden Barber, Channing, Texas, won the award. The Junior Herdsman of the Year Award is an elite award — one that takes years of hard work and stockmanship. Candidates

are selected by a committee and then JNHE attendees vote for the winner.

“This is one I’ve had circled for a long time,” Dylan says. “It’s cool that the junior members vote on it, and it makes you feel like all your hard work

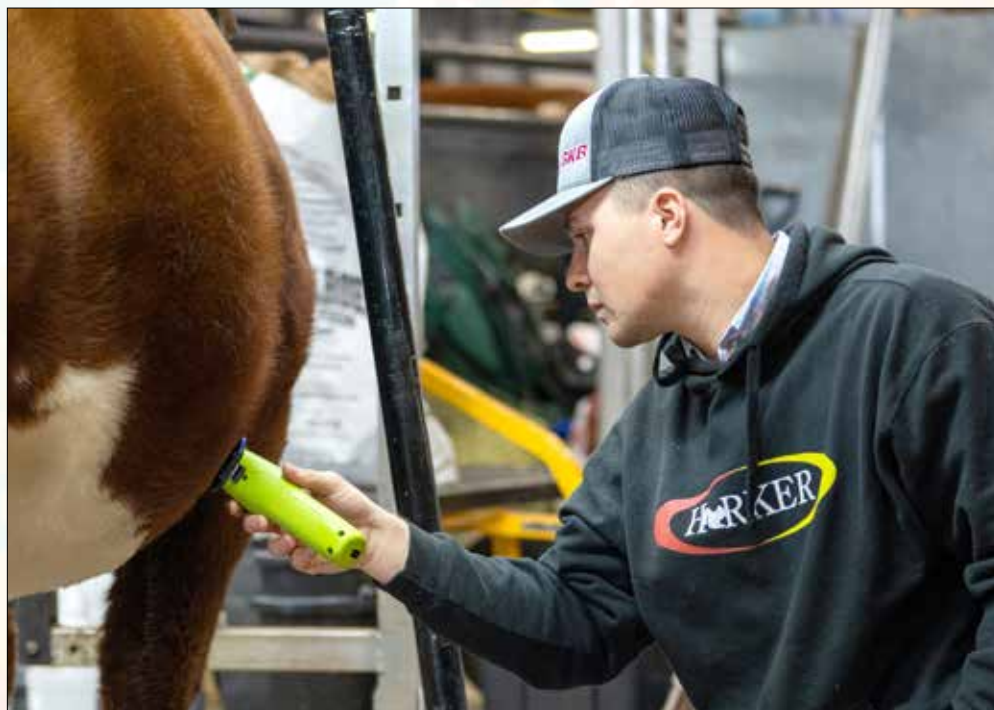
is being seen. There’s a lot of work that goes into it and to be acknowledged for it is really humbling.”

Presentation goes hand-in-hand with herdsmanship, and Dylan’s experience fitting, clipping and feeding Hereford cattle since a young age helped him stand out among his peers during the Junior Herdsman of the Year voting. His bald-faced experience also made presenting cattle of any breed a breeze.

“I always joke, ‘Herefords stand out.’ I also say, ‘Not many people know how to feed Herefords or blow out a Hereford,’” Dylan says. “They’re a unique breed because they take more management. At school, I work for a lot of people in other breeds, and working hair is something that comes a little bit more natural for me, because I’ve had to deal with just about every kind of hair possible.”

Part of Dylan’s showing savvy comes from his family’s generations of herdsmanship, starting with his grandfather, Ed. Kottkamp’s father, Dale, continued to hone his presentation skills along with the family’s Hereford herd. Dylan says his father is one of the best show calf feeders he knows.

“My grandpa and my dad really paved the path for me,” he says.



Dylan fits a heifer. Fitting, feeding and clipping abilities are important parts of herdsmanship.



“Those two have been huge role models for me, and I couldn’t have asked for two better men to grow up with and watch and try to become.”

**Outside the showing**

While the Walter and Joe Lewis High Point Senior Award does include points for show placings at JNHE, it’s also a culmination of work outside the showing. Dylan jokingly set his eyes on the award last year, after his roommate, Barber, took home the buckle. Becoming serious about winning the award began in June — when he approached his state advisors and made a plan to win the team fitting contest.

“At our state preview show, I told my advisors, ‘Hey, I’m going for this, and I’m going to try to be in as many competitions for our state as possible,’” Dylan says. “I knew this was my last time to be able to do something.”

Dylan’s fellow fitting team member, Ava Doig, St. Paul, Ind., even made a visit to his house to practice for the

contest. He helped show her the ropes, with a goal of getting clippers in both of his younger teammate’s hands. Maddox Gunn, Greenfield, Ind., was also confident and coachable. Dylan wanted them both to learn something from the competition. The team ended up taking home first place.

“That fitting contest is a hard deal to win,” Dylan says. “It’s not easy,

“It’s not easy, and I’m very happy to bring a lot of pride to the state of Indiana. We have an awesome membership and a lot of great juniors. It’s cool to be able to be that role model and hopefully give them something to look up to, like I had growing up.”

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Dylan says his odds to win the Walter and Joe Lewis High Point Senior Award weren’t great — there’s a large number of exhibitors that can compete for the honor.

“It’s a kind of unheard-of goal,” he says. “The puzzle pieces have to fit just right. I was fortunate to have that happen.”

Dylan’s week of accomplishments factoring into his high-point win included being a member of the grand champion fitting team, member of a final four Hereford bowl team, part of the reserve grand champion state group of five, earning the champion senior showman title and showing the reserve division V owned horned female. He took home several scholarships and is

heavily involved in the Indiana Junior Hereford Association.

“Junior nationals are about professional skill building and being a herdsman and a showman. I think those three factors go into being a junior member and getting the most out of junior nationals. I think this award really encompasses it all, too.

“It was really cool, really humbling, and I’m super fortunate. It’s something that takes a good amount of luck, a lot of heart and a lot of hard work and dedication to the craft.”

Dylan is a senior at Oklahoma State University majoring in agricultural business, pre-law, with a minor in marketing. He’s involved in several leadership roles on campus. He’s served in leadership positions for his state Hereford association and attended the BOLD Conference. He says the National Junior Hereford



After being announced as champion senior showman, Dylan shakes hands with senior showmanship judge Kyle Lemmon, Manchester, Md.



Association helped shape him into the person he is today.

After Dylan finishes his undergraduate studies, he will attend graduate school and major in international agriculture. He wants to pursue a career in agricultural sales

after graduation, and eventually move into a management role. He plans to expand his Hereford herd, and continue the legacy founded by his family.

“I have big goals,” Dylan says. “I’m a big believer that if you don’t

think big, you can’t accomplish something big. I think this past year encompassed that.” **HW**



2023 Junior Herdsman of the Year finalists (l to r): Dylan Kottkamp, Clayton, Ind.; Chesney Effling, Highmore, S.D.; Cassie Allscheid, Waterloo, Ill.; Sara Harfst, Sheridan, Wyo.; and Ryan Rogers, Worley, Idaho.

## 2023 Junior Herdsmen Finalists

### Cassie Allscheid

Cassie Allscheid, Waterloo, Ill., is the daughter of Eric and Cindie Allscheid. Allscheid graduated from Missouri State University in May 2023 and will begin her professional career this fall with ShowMe Genetic Services, Strafford, Mo. She is a third-generation Hereford breeder and has been actively involved in the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) and Illinois Junior Hereford Association.

### Sara Harfst

Sara Harfst, Sheridan, Wyo., is the daughter of Robbie and Danette Harfst. Harfst is a junior at Oklahoma State University majoring in agribusiness with a pre-law and finance option. She plans to become a certified financial advisor. Harfst is a fifth-generation Hereford breeder and credits the opportunities provided through the NJHA to her development as a young breeder.

### Chesney Effling

Chesney Effling, Highmore, S.D., is the daughter of Chris and Kristi Effling. Effling is a senior at Kansas State University majoring in animal sciences and industry with an animal products option. When she became interested in attending the Junior National Hereford Expo, Effling began raising Herefords at a young age to exhibit across the country.

After graduation, Effling plans to continue her education with a focus on meat science. She enjoys learning more about the end product of the animals she raises.

### Ryan Rogers

Ryan Rogers, Worley, Idaho, is the son of Mark and Nikki Rogers. Rogers is currently employed by Colyer Herefords, Bruneau, Idaho, and enjoys the opportunity to work in the cattle industry. Rogers also helps manage Rogers Herefords alongside his father.

Rogers credits his passion for the Hereford breed to his involvement in the NJHA. Additionally, the people he has met over the years have helped mold his career. **HW**