

ELLSBURY RANCH TAKES HOME COMMERCIAL PRODUCER OF THE YEAR

Ellsbury Ranch, Sundance, Wyo., received Commercial Producer of the Year honors at the American Hereford Association (AHA) Annual Membership Meeting in Kansas City, Mo., Oct. 26.

Ellsbury Ranch LLC is a fifth-generation cow-calf and yearling operation in northeastern Wyoming, owned and operated by Colter and Sarah Ellsbury, and Jeff and Whitney Stull. The couples purchased the cattle and equipment in 2017 and enjoy raising their families on the ranch and teaching their children about the ins-and-outs of the operation. Together the Ellsbury and Stull families are raising six kids from the ages of 2 to 14 alongside the cattle operation — Lyman, Ridley and Mattie Ellsbury, and Ruby, Sutton and Weston Stull.

Ellsbury Ranch roots reach back to 1885 when their great-great-grandfather moved his family west from Minnesota to land in Beulah, Wyo., where they successfully set up a general store, feed stable and hotel. The family pulled up stakes in Beulah in 1891 and settled along the creek in Farrall, Wyo., the modern-day headquarters of the ranch.

Initially, Ellsbury Ranch was home to Hereford cattle, but in the '90s the herd transitioned to black baldies before becoming home to solely black-hided cattle in the 2000s. But, after Ellsbury and Stull acquired the herd, they felt like they needed a change to bolster performance, despite their strong commercial Angus cow herd. So, Ellsbury Ranch welcomed back Hereford sires in 2018 when they purchased three bulls from Frederickson Ranch, Spearfish, S.D. The resulting black baldy calves showed the textbook example of heterosis firsthand with the bald-faced calves consistently weaning



Ellsbury Ranch, Sundance, Wyo. was named the Commercial Producer of the Year at the 2024 AHA Annual Meeting in Kansas City, Mo., Oct. 26. Pictured (l to r) are: Austin Snedden, AHA director, Maricopa, Calif.; Sarah and Colter Ellsbury, Sundance, Wyo.; Jeff and Whitney Stull, Sundance, Wyo.; and Wyatt Agar, AHA president, Thermopolis, Wyo.

at heavier weights than their black-hided peers. With this added boost in pounds and performance, Ellsbury Ranch sold its last black bull in 2023 and now has an entirely Hereford bull battery to make black-white-faced, Hereford-sired calves.

Today, Ellsbury Ranch runs 550-head of black-hided cows, a Hereford bull battery and about 300 yearlings on 19,000 acres of privately leased and forest service ground deep in the Black Hills. Their black baldy calves are consistently at the top of the market, whether they are sold through Superior Livestock, the local sale barn or privately off-the-ranch. Ellsbury Ranch has traditionally sold its steer calves through Superior Livestock and marketed their heifer peers privately or through the local auction barn. But, as demand has increased in their area for black-white-faced, F1 replacements, Ellsbury and Stull have more opportunities to market their heifer calves as replacements. Local ranchers

have been demanding Hereford-sired, black baldy replacements because their maternal heterosis, coupled with their docility, efficiency and longevity, are second to none. Last year, the operation's heifer calves were sold after the steers on Superior Livestock's Bighorn Classic.

With the added pounds, demand and docility the bald faces brought to Ellsbury Ranch, the families have no plans to change their business model. Ellsbury and Stull plan to continue to market all of their in-demand black baldy cattle — selling steers through Superior and finding value-added outlets for their replacement-quality heifer peers. By bringing in black-hided replacements to pair with their Frederickson Ranch Hereford bull battery, Ellsbury Ranch will consistently have a calf crop of entirely black baldy F1s — just the way they like it. **HW**