Board Points

Members First

by **Chad Breeding**

AHA staff provide the professional and personal touch.



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Hats off to members of the National Junior Hereford Association for an extraordinary display of Hereford genetic progress and individual talent at this year's VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE). It's always a summer highlight and a showcase for the breed.

Thanks for such a spectacular event go to the exhibitors and contest participants, their families, the dedication of countless volunteers and unwavering support of sponsors. However, I also believe it's important to recognize that its success also depends on the American Hereford Association's (AHA) committed staff.

Amy Cowan, Bailey Clanton and Chloé Durian likely come to mind immediately, along with the AHA ambassadors, interns and the junior board. The AHA field staff are familiar to many, as are members of the communication staff at the show, such as Taylor Belle Matheny, Kelsey Vejraska and Sydnee Shive. Who you don't have a chance to see at the show are many other AHA staff who play a key role in the event's success, including those in the records department who work to make sure exhibitor paperwork is in order and on time.

Speaking of the records department, if you're like me, they should really be known as the customer service department. It starts with an actual person answering the phone, followed by knowledgeable help. Any time I have a problem, I can call, and they help find an answer. I know many of you feel the same way, based on conversations over time.

They're on a mission

Those are just some of the staff involved in a single event. Some of the same ones and others work tirelessly to provide members and the industry useful information through a variety of publications and electronic channels, including news releases, *Hereford World*, *Baldy Advantage*, *Hereford Headlines* and the *Bald Faced Bottom Line*.

Similarly, creative services staff continue finding new and effective means for AHA members to market their genetics, be it via print ads, sale books or geo-targeted social media.

Others, like Trey Befort focus more intently on the commercial side of the business, including the Hereford Feedout Programs and Certified Hereford Beef®.

Then there are folks like Shane Bedwell and Stacy Sanders who keep Hereford on the leading edge of genetic evaluation, research and breed improvement.

Of course, staff starts with Jack Ward, the leader, who is focused not just on today or tomorrow but on what the breed and the organization need to be prepared for years down the road.

Common to staff is the fact that they take their positions personally. It's not a job; they want to help the breed and breeders succeed. Everything done at AHA is done with the membership in mind. Plus, they have continued to find ways of doing more with less. The amount of money AHA spends on personnel is significantly less than 10 years ago. Leslie Mathews, AHA chief financial officer, ensures budget maintenance, as well as the organization's reserves.

The point is AHA members should be proud of the staff representing them.

Meet the world

The World Hereford Conference in October is the next big event AHA staff have been preparing for over the course of several years. This is an amazing opportunity for breeders from across the U.S., and from around the world to participate in a once-in-a-life-time event. HW