World's Perspective

Gratitude and Growth

by ***Katie Maupin Miller***

Innovation can be driven by tradition not just rooted in it.



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This year, when I gather around the Thanksgiving table and count blessings, one of my greatest will be sitting beside me in his highchair — our 10-month-old son. Having a child sheds new light on time-honored traditions and breathes new meaning into your day-to-day.

Traditionally, Thanksgiving serves as a time to count your blessings and be grateful, but my husband sometimes scoffs at these cliches. "How can you do better, if you're satisfied with what you have?" he wonders. It's an interesting question. Can you still strive for change when you're happy with where you are?

I think so. In my experience, the most profound change is found at the intersection of gratitude and growth. Multi-generational ranches are a great example of this. With each generation brought into the fold, the operations inevitably change, welcome new perspectives and often grow alongside of the family. The Hereford breed is fortunate to have many outstanding examples of generations working together to better the industry.

As a new mom, I find myself reflecting on things I've been grateful for in my life, experiences I want to share with my son, but I've also put a lot of thought into ways I can make the metaphorical road he will travel even smoother along the way. As magazine editors, we look back at each issue and offer kudos to our team members, but we also study areas where we can better serve you — our reader.

The American Hereford Association (AHA) also thrives at the intersection of gratitude and growth. The breed's long history as an essential part of America's cow herd — helping tame the West by adding bald faces to scrubby range cows — will always be an important part of the Hereford story. Yet, Hereford breeders aren't happy to be anchored in history alone. They strive each day to make cattle better, and they have. AHA staff and Board members rally around their mission, devoting themselves to following the Association's *Long-Range Strategic Plan*, which will ensure that bald faces will always be an essential element of the U.S. cow herd.

Last month, folks gathered in Kansas City for the AHA Annual Meeting and Educational Forum. The Association honored breed and industry influencers we're grateful for and lifted up the next generation of agricultural leaders. Team Hereford constantly strives to improve the breed while remembering its history.

In this issue

Flip through the pages of this issue to see how the breed continues to build upon its heritage, making it an integral component of today's most successful cattle operations. The *Annual Report*, on Page 39, chronicles the many steps the Association made this year in meeting the goals laid out in the strategic plan, from recording setting sales to supporting the next generation.

Read Austin Snedden's story on Page 24. The retiring AHA president steered the Board toward progress and continued to home in on the breed's value to commercial cattlemen with his signature mixture of conviction and respectful forthrightness, traits he attributes to his parents, which he's passing along to his own children. Austin knows change and innovation require more than words; they take action. "If I'm going to have opinions about things, then I'd better be willing to do something about it," Austin says.

AHA knows this too. For the fourth year, the Association welcomed some of its brightest young stockmen to the Seedstock Academy to delve into the breed, genetic improvement and the beef supply chain. Learn about this immersive experience on Page 32. HW