

# Next Generation

**Heifer programs help Wyoming youth start Hereford herd and continue family legacy.**

by Kindra Gordon

**A**s the fifth generation on his family's ranch near Wheatland, Wyo., 16-year-old Ty Paisley has grown up with ranch life. Involved in 4-H and FFA, he and his younger brother, Todd, 14, and sister, Hadley, 10, have helped with their parents' cow herd and shown cattle and goats at several events.

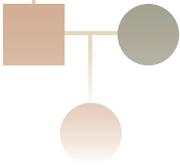


But in the fall of 2011 at just 13 years old, ranching took on a new and very personal meaning for Ty when he was granted his first heifer calf to begin building his Hereford cow herd.

The opportunity to become a cattle owner was made possible for Ty through a unique heifer scholarship program — the NILE Merit Heifer Program through the Billings, Mont., Northern International Livestock Exposition (NILE) held each October. In 2014 Ty had the opportunity to receive a second heifer through the Future Cattle Producers of Wyoming/Donated Heifer Program coordinated by the Wyoming Livestock Genetics Association.

The programs operate through the generosity of purebred breeders willing to donate a heifer to help young people get started in the industry. Ty's NILE Merit Heifer was donated by Matt and Krista Beery of Vida, Mont., and his Wyoming-donated heifer came from Jay Berry of Cheyenne, Wyo.

Ty's parents, Steve and Carrie Paisley, share that Ty was pretty fortunate to be selected for both scholarships. At the time he applied to the NILE Merit Heifer Program, it required applicants to be 13 years old. "Ty made it by four days," tells his dad,



Steve. In January 2014, the Future Cattle Producers of Wyoming/Donated Heifer Program was offered for the very first time, and Ty was one of six students selected to receive a heifer.

In the application and interview process, both programs allowed Ty to identify which breed he was interested in raising, and while his family has an Angus-based cow herd, he chose Hereford to start his own herd. Ty says he was attracted to the docility of the Hereford breed — and because Herefords have a special history for his family.

**Hereford roots**

Carrie tells that it was her great-grandparents who came to the Wheatland area in covered wagons from Kansas in 1888. “The family story goes that winter came sooner than they planned, so they stopped at Cottonwood Creek and homesteaded here,” she says.

Their son Mick, Carrie’s grandfather, brought Hereford genetics to the ranch. During Carrie’s childhood, her parents, Charles and Jean Coleman, raised crossbred cattle and ran Galloway bulls. When Carrie and Steve returned to the ranch, they brought in some Angus

cows from Steve’s parents in Nebraska. “We have all colors represented,” says Steve.

But the entire family takes pride in Ty’s registered Hereford stock. “Ty has brought Hereford back for us,” says Carrie.

The family also takes pride in the legacy that the ranch has been in the family’s ownership for 127 consecutive years. “That is something that

*continued on page 106...*



A Hereford heifer calf donated by Beery Herefords, Vida, Mont., for the NILE Merit Heifer program marked the start of Ty Paisley’s herd in 2012.



Ty received his second Hereford heifer through a program called the Future Cattle Producers of Wyoming. His younger brother Todd (center) and sister Hadley (at back) also enjoy showing cattle.

is less and less common in land ownership today,” Carrie notes.

Although Carrie’s parents are no longer alive, her mom, Jean, Ty’s maternal grandmother, did get to see Ty and his first Hereford heifer. “She was happy to know that Ty was starting his own herd,” Carrie says.

### Growth opportunities

Ty’s Hereford herd is expanding quickly. Over the past three years, in addition to the two donated heifers, he has purchased an additional heifer from Matt and Krista Beery and two heifers from Van Newkirk Herefords in Oshkosh, Neb., and is retaining progeny for replacements as well as his show animals. This summer he is showing a Hereford steer out of one of his Van Newkirk females.

Ty notes that he has certainly learned from the process of having his own cows. “I like working with them and seeing them raise their calves,” he says. He adds that he has also learned the importance of record keeping.

Both programs encourage the heifer participants to show their animals at local fairs and events as well as to give presentations about their growing herds to various audiences. Ty



Ty has also purchased several females to expand his Hereford herd, including this Van Newkirk dam.

has been asked to describe his projects at the Wyoming State Fair and state FFA convention, as well as to participate in several radio interviews for local stations. Steve says that these opportunities have prompted improved public speaking skills for his son.

“The interview processes and public aspect of both programs have pushed Ty to be more comfortable in public settings, and to be able to talk to groups of people, often without much warning,” Steve says. He has observed Ty becoming better at organizing his thoughts and communicating clearly with an audience.

Steve and Carrie have also seen Ty’s interest in the production aspect grow. “Ty has always loved the stewardship aspect of ranching and taking care of animals. He enjoys walking, rinsing and working with his animals daily, but I think the showing aspect is almost secondary to him. His enjoyment seems to come from working with animals and watching them grow and develop,” Steve shares.

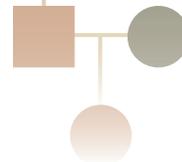
Because of Ty’s interest in developing his cattle, Steve notes that the two heifer scholarship programs were a good fit for Ty because both programs focus more on developing heifers for lifetime production rather than short-term showing condition.

Looking to the future, Ty says he hopes to continue expanding his herd. He’s not certain



Carrie Paisley’s great grandparents homesteaded near Wheatland, Wyo., in 1888. Her grandfather was the first to raise Herefords on the family ranch, and these photos show the herd in about the 1920s and 30s. Ty Paisley represents the fifth generation on the ranch, which has had continuous ownership in the family for 127 years.





what total number of head he'd like to get to but does have a goal of raising some Hereford bulls that could be used for crossbreeding on the family's Angus cow herd.

Of the entire experience of getting Ty started with the Hereford breed, Steve and Carrie acknowledge that the other Hereford breeders in their area have been very helpful and encouraging. Steve credits both of the breeders who donated Ty's first heifers, as well as Jay Middleswarth, for their involvement.

With time the Paisley's anticipate that their two younger children may also apply for their own heifer scholarships. But Steve says it is important that they are responsible and big enough to handle the heifers. "We really want them to be able to work with them on their own," he says.

And, ultimately, Steve and Carrie say they anticipate the day when this unique opportunity will come full circle — and their family will be able to donate a heifer to a young individual getting started in the industry. Carrie concludes, "We've seen Ty benefit greatly from these programs, and giving back is one of our goals." **HW**



## More about the programs

The purpose of the Northern International Livestock Exposition (NILE) Merit Heifer Program and the Future Cattle Producers of Wyoming/Donated Heifer Program is to help youth get a start in the beef cattle business by awarding heifer calves to 4-H and FFA youth. Individuals between the ages of 12 and 16 years of age may apply for the program. Entries are not limited to Montana. Applications are due in June and selections are made in October.

Each program participant owns his calf jointly with NILE until the completion of the program. During the program duration, participants are responsible for raising the heifer, arranging for her to be bred, completing the record-keeping

procedure and bringing the animal back one year later as a bred replacement heifer for exhibit at the NILE Stock Show. The program is completed after the heifer is determined bred, all record keeping has been completed and the heifer has been shown at the NILE Stock Show. The participant may then keep his or her heifer and her progeny with the goal of starting his or her own cattle herd. For more information, visit: [thenile.org/p/events/livestock-/meritheifer](http://thenile.org/p/events/livestock-/meritheifer).

Wyoming youth of high school age are eligible to apply for a donated heifer through the Future Cattle Producers of Wyoming/Donated Heifer Program. During the first year, selected participants go through a program of growing,

breeding and keeping records on their heifers. They work closely with their donors to keep their focus on the long-term productivity of the cow, not just preparing a show animal. The first year is highlighted with a showcase of each individual following the Supreme Cow Contest at the Wyoming State Fair. This includes a record book being judged, an extensive interview and evaluating their animal to a panel of producers. In the second year, participants again complete a record book and present a video presentation of their cow-calf pair at the State Fair. For more information, visit [wylga.com/futurecattleproducers.html](http://wylga.com/futurecattleproducers.html). **HW**