



## *History of the National Polled Hereford Queen Contest*

By Dianne Raff Peebles

In the early 70's, many state and regional Polled Hereford Associations selected queens that represented their association at the state fair, field days, sales and other association activities. For a National Show or Standard of Perfection Show the host state's queen "reigned" over the show. Often a queen from a neighboring state came to the major shows to assist the host state's queen. In those days, the queens handed out ribbons and were in pictures. There was no leading in the classes and formal dressing for socials.

In January of 1973, the Kansas state queen came to the National Western Polled Hereford Show in Denver to assist the Colorado-Wyoming Polled Hereford Queen Dianne Raff (Peebles) with the show. The talk during that week was the upcoming 50th National Polled Hereford Show to be held in Fort Worth a few weeks later. Jim Harris, Johnny Winston, and Ed Meacham, all of the APHA, talked with the queens about coming to Fort Worth to be a part of the 50th National Show.

Three state queens plus the Texas Queen were in Fort Worth in February of 1973 for the 50th National Polled Hereford Show and Sale. Several of the Poll-Ettes at the National assisted the queens in getting to all of the activities including the formal ball. During that era, most all of the queens outfits were western-style pantsuits, cowboy hats and boots. A group of Poll-Ettes including Faye Gill, Flo Pattridge, Charlotte Olsen, Faye Ellis and Helen Hartfield who would later be instrumental in establishing the National Queen Program, were particularly taken by Dianne Raff's all-white outfit and how it stood out from the other colors.

That week Jim Harris, Senior VP of the APHA in charge of special activities, and Dianne discussed involving all of the state queens in the next year's National in Denver. Since she was still to be the Colorado-Wyoming Queen, Jim suggested she extend the invitation to all the state queens to attend the 1974 National Show.

At that time, the state association where the National was to be held was responsible for hosting the show. That association was to find trophy donors, set up a hospitality booth, host the social, and provide table decorations for the National banquet. Dianne Raff was also the Secretary of the Colorado-Wyoming Polled Hereford Association and worked with Jim Harris and the APHA office in coordination plans for the up-coming National.

During the summer, Jim got Dianne the addresses of all the state queens as they were selected. In the early fall she sent invitations to each of the state queens to attend the 1974 National Polled Hereford Show and Sale in Denver. She invited them to the Social and to sit with her in the show ring. Jack Olsen arranged for passes for the girls to get into the National Western grounds. A table was reserved for the queens at the banquet. Paul and Flo Pattridge, Jack and Charlotte Olsen and Mr. & Mrs. Forrest Bassford sponsored the banquet tickets. All of the queens wore formals to the banquet. They had a great time, learning about one another and became good friends.

During the National, the queens also helped staff the APHA Booth giving out registration packets and nametags, handing out catalogs, giving information and helping in other ways. The queens were also involved in other National Western Show activities, handing out sale catalogs for the Junior Livestock Sale and were all in the ring for the selection of the Grand Champion Steer. The queens also toured the Coor's brewery, the Jolly Rancher candy factory and attended a fashion show sponsored by the Colorado Cowbells at the Brown Palace Hotel our headquarters.

In their meeting, the National Organization of the Poll-Ettes decided to continue having the queens at the National. Flo Pattridge gave them the rules of the Colorado-Wyoming queen contest. A committee was appointed and from that came the National Polled Hereford Queen Contest. The rules were published in the Polled Hereford World and in November of 1974 at the 52nd National in Louisville, KY fifteen state queens went through an interview process with a three-judge panel and the first National Queen was crowned by the president of the American Polled Hereford Association at the annual banquet. Flo Pattridge, president of the National Poll-Ettes, had a banner made in New Mexico on the Indian Reservation. It was hand-made beaded leather and read POLLED HEREFORD QUEEN OF AMERICA.