

N.C.H.C.A.

Vol 66 2nd Edition

May 25

The Highland HOOFBEAT

MISSION STATEMENT: North Central Highland Cattle Association shall protect the integrity and sustainability of the Highland breed by promoting education and social interactions of its members.

Recipe Corner

Fire up the grill and try
homemade BBQ sauce

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Book Review

"Before the Banner" A book
review by NCHCA Junior Harper
Baker

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All About Bulls

Highland herd sire selection
by Jacob Larson

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Maureen Matt

President

Maureen and her boyfriend
Dennis Breneman own Hidden
Ridge Farm in Loganville WI. 45
head of highlands. Their focus is
breeding healthy, quality animals
and beef production.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*"The American Highland Cattle Association (AHCA)
is dedicated to preserving the integrity of the breed,
maintaining an American breed registry, and assisting its
members in creating value with their animals."*

AHCA Mission Statement

*"The North Central Highland Cattle Association (NCHCA)
shall protect the integrity and sustainability of the Highland
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members."*

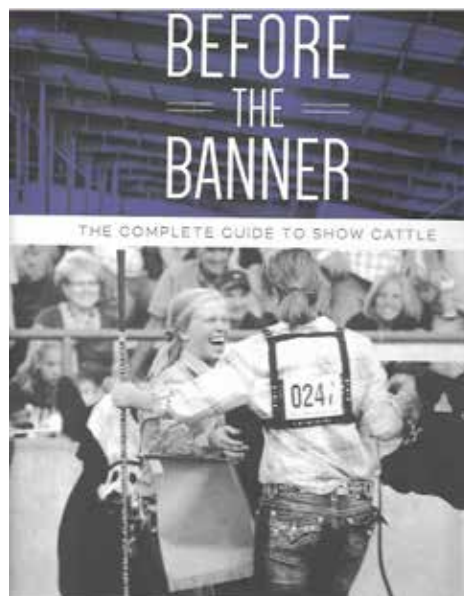
NCHCA Mission Statement

My hope is that, as breeders and producers, spring calving
has been a success, and you are able to be outside and
enjoy all that Mother Nature and your highlands have to offer.
As the busyness of calving season draws to a close,

Continue reading on page 14



The Juniors



Book Review of Before the Banner

By: Harper Baker

Review Status: **Recommend**

Why I read this book...

My dad and I wanted to learn more about showing cattle.

Who should read this book?

Any person that wants to learn about showing cattle. Even if you're already showing, there is so much to learn.

What I learned...

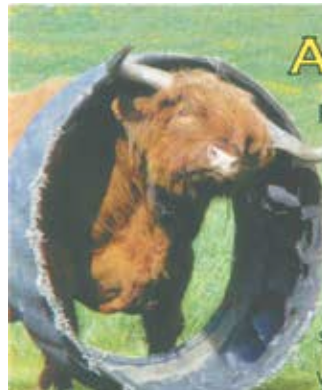
Before the Banner talked a lot about what to do at home with your cattle. The first lesson I learned was about setting small goals to reach your big goals. From this advice, I chose to set up a goal to brush my heifers every day and walk them at least twice a week.

It also talked about the importance of a daily care routine. I learned there is more to washing cattle than just soaping them up. Using the right kind of soap is important, and washing too much can dry out their skin and hair. If you wouldn't do something to your own hair, don't do it to your cattle's hair! What we feed them is also very important. We need to make sure they are getting enough of the right things, but watching them closely to make sure they aren't getting too fat or unhealthy.

Next, the book talked about clipping and fitting. Clipping is my favorite part because it helps our cattle look their best. The main thing I learned about clipping is that it is easier to take hair off than to put it back on. Take just a little at a time.

After all of the work we put in at home, the book also walks through what to expect at a show. It starts with arriving at the show, how to set up your stall, feeding at a show, and getting your animals ready to go in the ring. I learned about fitting for the show, that a little glue goes a long way, and that it is very important to break down the glue after the show and make sure you get it all out of their hair to keep it healthy.

Finally, the book talked about showmanship. This is the most important part of showing cattle. It doesn't matter how good your animal looks if you don't show them off the right way to the judge. I learned about understanding how my heifer looks the best, to always keep my eye on the judge, and to practice, practice, practice so that I'm confident when I walk into the ring.



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MEET THE NEW NORTH CENTRAL DIRECTORS



My name is Jeremiah Mewes. Me and my family of 6 live on our farm, Gypsy Ridge, in Northwest Wisconsin. I was born and raised on my grandparents dairy farm. In the early 2000's the cows were sold and I moved away and started a successful construction company. In 2016 we moved back home and bought the family farm. Knowing we wanted cattle but never one to follow what everyone else does we bought our first Highlands in 2019. We are mainly a beef operation with around 50 head.



I'm Jessie Webb from Glenville, MN. My husband Matt and I along with our two kids started Goose Creek Cattle late in 2021. About this same time we joined NCHCA and a bit later, AHCA. I grew up on a small family owned farm where we raised pigs, elk and commercial cow/calf operation. I was fortunate enough to show cattle in 4-H with my siblings. I've always thought Highlands were such a beautiful breed and when my parents sold out of the elk in 2019, they had 40 acres of open pastures. My dad happily agreed to let us start raising Highlands to keep the grass down. We started with 3 females and a bull, all unregistered. We have grown to about 25 head of both registered and unregistered. We co-own a bull (Circle V High Road) with Kyle & Katie Baker of Glory Oaks Farm. We are raising these beautiful animals for both show and beef. It's been such a rewarding experience so far. We have met so many great people who are always so willing to help out and answer our questions as they arise. This breed and the family behind it is like no other!

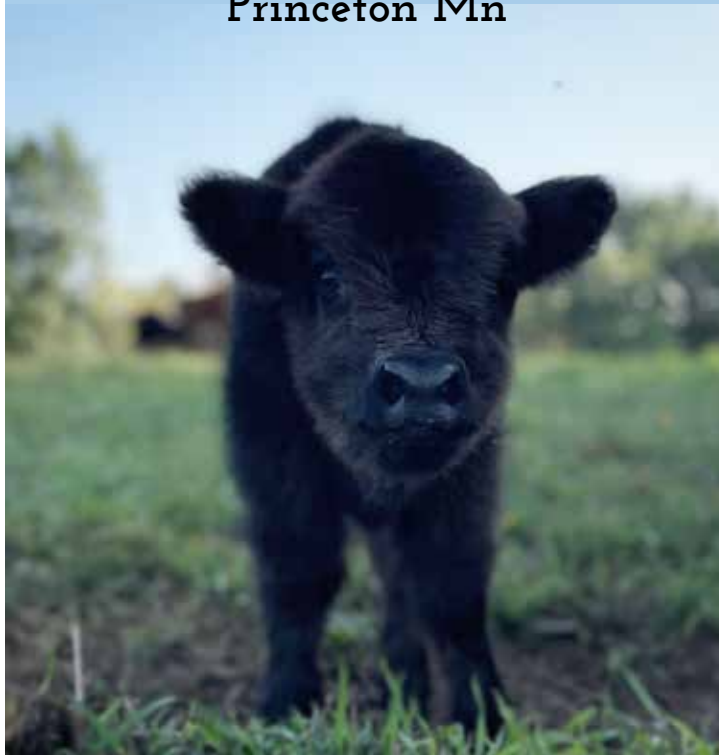


Todd grew up on a dairy farm in New York and has a degree in Agriculture from SUNY Alfred. In 1985 Todd married Ginny Pfaff who was from Wisconsin. Todd worked on 4 large dairy farms in central NY over the next 30 years. Todd was hired as manager of the Scottish Highland herd for Ledyard Farms in 2017 where he learned about the breed and showing highlands. Mid-Lakes Highlands started in 2020 with the purchase of 3 heifers from Ledyard. Since there were no AHCA shows in the east in 2020, Mid-Lakes Highlands made the first trek to shows in the midwest, attending the NCHCA Show and World Beef Expo.

In 2022, the herd of Highlands was moved to the homestead of Ginny's family in Wisconsin where we currently own 8 head. Mid-Lakes has won multiple ROE Heifers and Cow/Calf of the Year awards and was Premier Exhibitor at the 2024 National Western Stock Show.

Save the Date
NCHCA
*Summer
Picnic*
JULY 19, 2025

Hosted at
Windland Flats Farm
Princeton Mn



SAVE THE DATE SEPTEMBER 13, 2025

*The
Fall Show
in Austin*

JUNIOR SHOW FRI. SEPT. 12 AT 9 AM

OPEN SHOW SAT. SEPT. 13 AT 10AM

AUCTION SAT. AT 3PM

AWARDS BANQUET AT 5:30PM

The Recipe Corner

Basic Bar-B-Q sauce

Summer is coming and you know what that means! Time to fire up the grill get busy with some BBQ. You know what? You are going to make your own sauce this year. Yup, no more buying weird sauce with unpronounceable ingredients. Making your own BBQ sauce is easy and the best part, you get to make it your own by adding sweet, spicy, savory or smoky add-ins.

INGREDIENTS:

1½ cups brown sugar
1½ cups ketchup
½ cup red wine vinegar
½ cup water
1 T. Worcestershire sauce
2½ T. dry mustard
2 t. paprika
2 t. salt
1½ t. black pepper
2 dashes hot sauce

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix it up, boil it for 5 minutes or so and then get creative.

Like it sweet? Try adding chopped up fruit like mango, pineapple, pear or apples. Molasses or honey can be fun too.

Like it spicy? Try adding cayenne, chile powder, diced jalapeño or green chiles.

Like it savory? Try adding minced garlic, diced onion, cumin or garlic/onion powder.

Like it smoky? Try adding liquid smoke,



smoked paprika, hickory smoke flavor.

Honestly, you should just let it rip. Customize your sauce and then YOU get to name it.

Mama Michelle's Mojo Marinade?
Tony's Tasty Topper Sauce?

2025 & 2026 NCHCA AUCTION SALES PLANNING UNDERWAY

The North Central Highland Cattle Association Sale Committee has been working hard to plan two premier live auctions in the next 12 months. The first will be the Females of Fall Sale held September 13, 2025, in conjunction with the NCHCA Show at the Mower County Fairgrounds in Austin, Minn. Consignments for this sale will start in June. Last year we averaged over \$9,500/lot. Start putting your thoughts together on female lots soon.

We are pleased to announce the first-ever NCHCA Bull Test Sale to be held in May 2026. This sale will be limited to 30 Highland bulls, who must be born March 1 - May 15, 2025. Cattle will be at a centralized feeding facility in western Iowa from January to May 2026. Measurements taken during the bull test will include weights, average daily gain, feed efficiency scores, backfat, ribeye area, intramuscular fat, scrotal and more. Only the top bulls will be eligible to sell on the test sale, so start eyeing up your bulls and thinking about consigning them this Fall.

The Bull Test Sale will be combined with a Highland Female Sale and will be held in western Iowa near Omaha. More information will be available this Fall when the official sign up begins in September for both the bull test and female sale. If you have questions, please reach out to any member of the sale committee.

NCHCA Sale Committee



The Wisconsin Beef Council is proud to announce the 10 individuals selected to participate in the second class of the Wisconsin Beef Leadership Institute.

The 2025 participants are: Abigail George (Mondovi), Avery Bermel (Platteville), Danielle Wafle (Mauston), Dennis Breneman (Loganville), Heidi Strey (Osseo), Morgan Bobek (Markesan), Paige Gaffney (Barneveld), Ray Melander (Black Creek), Rhandi Ehn (Winter), and Ryder Starck (Elk Mound).



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262-539-3257
232 Bridge St.
Burlington, WI 53105

Nathan & Emily Larson
262-210-3256
17166 Polk Rd.
Stanwood, MI 49346

LARSON'S
HEADACREZ
Headacrez82@gmail.com

HIGHLAND HERD SIRE SELECTION



Criteria for keeping or castrating bull calves

By Jacob Larson

The rapid rise of Highland cattle popularity in the past few years has been a great benefit to Highland breeders worldwide. While it is exciting to see the herd books gain a lot of numbers, there are some hidden negatives to this success. With popularity and high demand has come an increase in the number of inferior male calves being kept as breeding sires. Lately the Highland gene pool is being flooded by the influence of bulls that really never should have been kept as bulls. While this has always been a tendency, we have never seen as many bad bulls registered as we are now seeing in the US. I have heard that the situation is similar in Australia and other countries as well. This article is aimed at helping Highland owners become better educated on the traits that are essential for a good bull and those factors that would automatically disqualify a bull calf from graduating to sire status. My hope is that this will help empower breeders to make good choices for your cattle business and the genetics of the Highland breed in general.

Before we get into the specifics I would like to make a couple general comments. First, bulls always need to be held to a high standard of quality since one bull is capable of siring many calves in a year. His genetic influence is therefore much greater than any single cow and his traits are going to be much more influential in the breed (for better or worse). Only one bull is needed to breed about 25 cows on average. This means that the breed population would not decline even if only one bull calf was registered for every 25 females registered! Yet the current ratio seems to be far higher than necessary on the male side. Even if we account for the smaller average Highland herd size, the ratio still would not need to be more than 1 bull for 12 cows. When you consider these numbers along with the fact that the ratio of male and female calves is 50/50, it quickly becomes obvious that the majority of bull calves are not needed for breeding. Furthermore the majority of bull calves will not meet quality standards for bulls regardless of the population requirements. ((see pictures of three bull calves that failed to meet quality standards))



Each of these bull calves were above average in multiple categories but were castrated because of issues that were not obvious at a glance. One was not masculine enough, another had structural problems that appeared after weaning age and the third calf's dam had poor udder quality

So what are the quality standards for bulls? I have listed a few qualifications below that should make this more clear.

The first and most foundational requirement is fertility. Every bull needs to have two uniform testicles and enough libido to do his job well. 26 cm is a minimum scrotal circumference I use for calves at weaning and this measurement should be over 32 cm by a year old. 40+ cm is normal for a mature bull. The size of a bull's testicles determines his potential rate of sperm production and therefore the number of cows he can breed in a given time frame. His desire to do the job is equally limiting. Libido can be observed and evaluated in a group setting and scrotal circumference tapes are easy to use and can be found online for purchase.

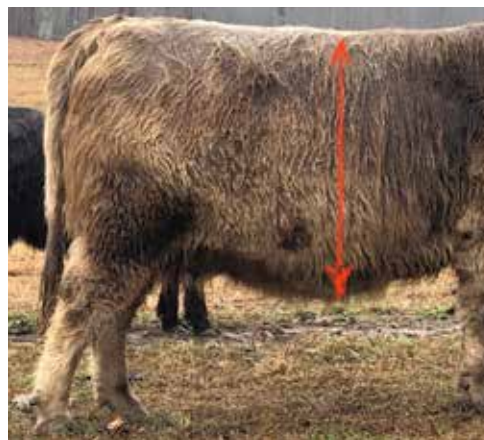
Another necessity is correct skeletal structure. That starts at the foundation with a solid hoof and a deep heel. Athleticism is particularly important for a bull since he will need to cover some ground to locate cows and have the ability to mount all those cows. Without good structure longevity is potentially limited, in which case all other points of breeding quality are no longer useful and profitability is cut short. Breeders should pursue knowledge of bovine anatomy and get familiar with what quality structure and movement looks like. I have developed a visual guide to structure and breed character that is specific to Highlands in an effort to help breeders gain a better understanding of these things. That resource is available on my website <https://gathering-farm.com/jlarsonhighlands>

Breed Character is another important consideration. A bull calf might have many of the utilitarian criteria for beef and breeding but lack that set of characteristics that make him uniquely Highland. If we are honest with ourselves, most of us got into Highland cattle, at least in part, because we loved the way they look. Their beauty is a selling point and a major factor in the present surge in the breed's popularity. Unless you are strictly producing beef it is unwise to neglect to select for aesthetic quality in your young bulls. The A.C.H.A breed standard would be the best source of information for comparison

Look for bull calves that have a long history of quality breeding behind them. There are many "one hit wonders" in the world of cattle breeding but your odds of achieving consistent quality in the calves produced increases with the number of good ancestors stacked in their lineage. This is a particularly important consideration with Highlands because of their higher degree of genetic diversity as compared to many other breeds that are heavily line bred to achieve uniformity. A good pedigree is not a stand alone criteria for keeping a bull but it can make a big difference in the consistency and quality of his offspring.

Ease of fleshing and growth are also important traits to look for. Can a bull grow and fill out on the resources available to him? Will his steer calves fatten well? Will his female offspring calve, lactate and re-breed in a timely way or will they have trouble keeping enough body condition to do so?

Keep bull calves that exhibit balanced traits. It is a common and easy mistake to get tunnel vision on a single point of quality such as growth, muscle or breed character and neglect to screen for other significant attributes. Extreme cattle are sometimes useful ingredients in a breeding program that is seeking to moderate opposite extremes but the ultimate goal is balance since that results in the highest level of functionality and profitability all around. The quicker you can find or breed bulls with balance the better. It is important to look at carcass traits since that is the ultimate end of our cattle but as you do so also be thinking about a bull's potential to sire daughters with structure and maternal traits that will make them great brood cows. Good breeders learn to extrapolate between the appearance of a sire's structure and the female version that his daughters will express. You need to see the cow in the bull so to speak. Ask questions like "Will he pass along a broad hip and pin set and a deep rib that will allow his daughters to be easy calving and efficient with their resources"?
(See images of hip and rib)





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Todd, Ginny & Tiffany Green

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315-406-1201

midlakeshighlands@gmail.com

@midlakeshighlands



Mark & Jamie Schulz

18709 690th Ave

Elkton, MN 55933

507-481-7367

info@flatlandfarm.com

www.flatlandfarm.com



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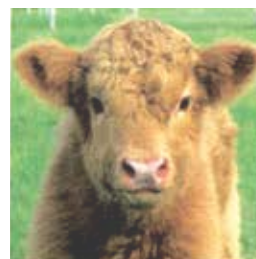
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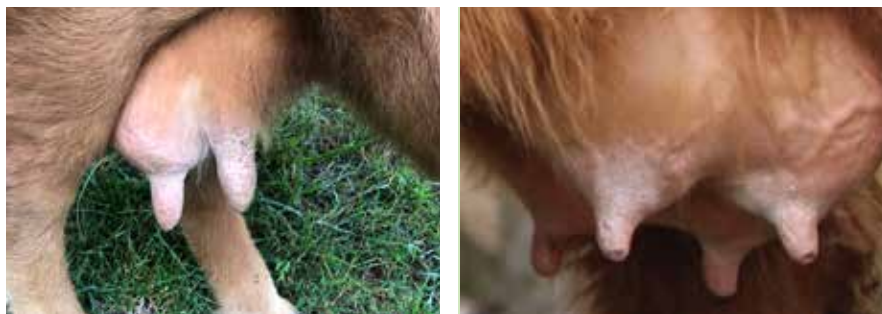
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www.WindemereHighlands.com

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Another good question to ask is "what was his dam and paternal grand dam's udder quality"? Are there any full sisters that are lactating that could be evaluated for teat and udder structure? Since the bulls you keep, or buy in, will be siring many future cows you will want to be sure that they have the genetics to sire daughters that will have good udder longevity. Having the genetics for ample milk production is also a good thing so long as it is accompanied by strong udder structure if not, you just have a recipe for a pendulous udder and blown out teats around half their normal life span. (see udder pictures).



Last but not least, a good disposition is must since this is essential for management and safety in general. However, care should be taken to not lose a bull's respect through too many treats and cuddles. Balance is necessary in this regard.

Above I have listed many of the positive things to look for but I think it may be just as useful to look at the reasons owners commonly keep inferior bull calves intact.

"He's cute".

First bull born on a place and the owners are sentimental.

Poor understanding of functional bovine structure.

Breeders are blinded by pedigree expectations/ predictions.

Inadequate knowledge of breed performance statistics.

Ignorance of negative traits in the lineage. Udder genetics, heavy birth weights etc.

Buyers are waiting and there is money to be made.

Bull calves sold pre-weaning before their quality can be fairly assessed.

Ignorance of line breeding/ inbreeding and its negative effects.

Tolerance of poor dispositions or emotional bonds to calves. I know it's not easy but the best breeders are those that can remain objective.

3 Stage Evaluation Method:

I employ a 3 stage evaluation method that may be of use to you as you look at your calves.

The stages/ages are at 3, 6 and 9 months

- Evaluate at 3 months give or take and band as many as possible at this young age. Weed out obvious issues of phenotype and/or genotype.

- Re-evaluate at weaning. Bulls should be weaned at 6 months or no later than 7 months. Take weaning weights and compare to breed data.

- Evaluate again at 9 months to a year old to make a final decision. Ask yourself questions like:

- Has he maintained growth, structure and disposition? Or, Does he show adequate libido?

Stay as objective as possible at all three points and be willing to castrate a bull candidate at any point.

- The best calf at weaning is not always the best calf at a year and the longer you keep him the greater the potential for bias. Take measurements

To Do List:

Learn castration techniques

Learn cattle anatomy/structure. There are many resources available and I also specialize in teaching this to Highland breeders privately and in association hosted lectures.

Learn the pedigrees of your cattle and the traits that various farms and lineages are known for. And finally, sell your best bull calves strategically you don't want to waste those few good bull prospects that get to keep their nuts! If they graduate from your stringent program you aren't going to sign them up to work a pointless job right??



If you have questions or want further details on any of the points I've made here feel free to reach out on FB messenger or Email me at CjLarson08@gmail.com .



The Wilkinson's
19046 Irish Drive
Richland Center, WI 53581
608-647-3594
buckcreekfarm@outlook.com

Scottish Highland Cattle



Mark, Randi & Joe Johnson
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mail@climbingstumpfarm.com

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E: pellcreek1875@gmail.com
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President's message continued

you might have some questions or need to talk with another highland owner about a thought or concern. As one of the eight regional associations recognized by the American Highland Cattle Association (AHCA), there are multiple opportunities for highland breeders to come together to network, socialize, and promote the grand old breed!

Did you know it is common for farms to be members of and participate in multiple regional associations? In North Central alone, we have over 190 members from 21 different states! While the majority of our membership is concentrated between Wisconsin and Minnesota, we have members from coast to coast. Other regional associations include: Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, Mountain States, Northeast, Northwest, South Central, and Southern. These associations, as well as North Central, provide opportunities for every member of the family to have fun with their highlands, network and share advice, as well as give a local voice to the national organization through the board of directors.

Every highland breeder is important, no matter the type of operation. Whether you own a cow/calf pair, strictly show cattle, have a hobby/pet farm, or are a highland beef producer, the integrity and sustainability of the highland breed depend on us all. I hope to see you at local and national events in the future.

-Maureen



HERE IS YOUR CHANCE TO GET AN HEIRLOOM QUALITY WORK OF ART

& SUPPORT THE NCHCA JUNIORS AT THE SAME TIME

The NCHCA Juniors will be selling raffle tickets for a Highland Cow quilt (pictured below) to support their activities. Tickets will be available before and during the NCHCA show in Austin, MN in September. More details will follow, be on the lookout for ticket sale information or contact a junior in your area.

The quilt is 100% cotton with 100% wool batting and a super snuggly flannel backing. It is built to be used and to last! It measures 65" x 77". It would make a nice twin bedspread or a full bed size coverlet.





The North Central Highland Cattle Association (NCHCA) was formed in 1982 to promote Scottish Highland Cattle, form a marketing unit for breeders, and to provide a local organization closer to home. The organization has done this and provides opportunities for youth and families to have fun with their Highland cattle. Our association provides networking and educational opportunities for its members, has an active junior program for youth, and provides a local voice to the national organization, the American Highland Cattle Association.

Board of Directors

President - Maureen Matt Tel 608-415-7641

hiddenridgehc@gmail.com

Vice President - Michelle LeTourneau Tel 320-279-1790

housenfarm@gmail.com

Treasurer - Julianne Motis Tel 218-576-3633

Treasurer@nchca.org

Secretary - Randi Johnson Tel 51-491-5061

Secretary@nchca.org

Director - Todd Green Tel 315-406-1201

ginny.green32@gmail.com

Director - Jeremiah Mewes Tel 715-641-0065

gypsyridge2016@gmail.com

Director - Jessie Webb Tel 507-402-2085

Jessica.webb31@hotmail.com

A.H.C.A. Rep - Jan Larson Tel 262-539-3257

headacrez@yahoo.com