

Electronic Efficiency

AHA launches real-time online registry data system, MyHerd.org.

by Julie White



“Documentation of cattle has evolved over time but it has always been the core purpose of the American Hereford Association (AHA) from the beginning,” says Craig Huffhines, AHA executive vice president. “Today, we live in a much different world where time is our most precious asset.”

Efficiency is key in cattle production — something Hereford breeders have embraced. With farmers seeking more than half of their income off-farm, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture’s 2010 Agricultural Resource Management Survey, and with 80% of AHA members owning 20 head or fewer, breeders are juggling more and more.

Efficiency and performance

“Our primary job as an association is to collect pedigree and performance information from our membership to be used in developing breeding values known as expected progeny differences (EPDs) that can be used to predict the genetic merit of Hereford seedstock,” Huffhines explains.

To make this record keeping easier for the membership,

AHA developed and launched *MyHerd.org*, a real-time online registry data system that provides online access to the majority of AHA record services.

“The idea behind MyHerd was to develop a system whereby Hereford breeders can turn in their registration and performance work, transfer animals, pay their AHA bill, and handle virtually any service need required at any time day or night,” Huffhines says.

Stacy Sanders, AHA records department director, says the Association had an online registration system prior to MyHerd. “The AHA Board of Directors wanted to implement as much efficiency as we could,” he says. “So in August of 2011, they made the decision to upgrade the in-house registration system so that we could develop an online registry system that was in real-time and that took little processing from staff.”

Following months of discussion, research and development, in May 2013, MyHerd was ready to be shown to a handful of test herds.

“We tested through that summer, took comments and

had a meeting when many of them were in town for the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE),” Sanders says. “One of the biggest takeaway from test herds was what users see when they first log in. The whole concept of the “to-do list” came from the test herds. They said what they really wanted to see was exactly what they needed to do and didn’t want to go find it.”

He says that’s one of the most common positive comments the AHA receives from users today.

Over the next two years, MyHerd continued to be tested and tweaked, based on feedback from Hereford breeders. In February 2014, MyHerd with its full feature package, was released to around 40 breeders. “We didn’t add many users for a few months following that, but by May 2014 we started sending emails to members who used the old online system,” Sanders says. “We then sent out a couple hundred emails a week and gradually notified members.”

By August 2014, each person who had business with AHA in the two prior years was notified, and MyHerd saw nearly 800 users sign up. In September 2014, AHA officially released MyHerd.

myHERD.org

MyHerd.org webinars

Do you need help with the new online registry system, or would like to see how the new system works before signing up?

Join the *MyHerd.org* team for a webinar on how to get started with MyHerd. Participants will learn about the customized home screen for pedigree and performance members. Registering calves in real-time and transferring owned animals electronically will be demonstrated during the session. This is also an opportunity to ask questions and get virtual help. Visit Hereford.org to sign up for the webinar or email the team at MyHerd@hereford.org.

Upcoming webinar sessions:

Feb. 16, 7 p.m. CST
Feb. 17 11 a.m. CST

What is a webinar? A webinar is a seminar or presentation that takes place on the Internet. A webinar allows participants from different locations to come together for a virtual presentation and ask questions. HW

“I would tell any breeder thinking about trying it to just go ahead and do it because it’s worth a try — it’s a lot easier. Also, don’t be intimidated. Yes, there is a learning curve and yes, you’ll probably make a mistake, but the AHA is very helpful if you have questions. If there is an error or a problem in data I submit, I know immediately, instead of finding out later through the mail. The program tells you what to fix.”

— Jan Adcock

Today, MyHerd has 1,600 users representing 2,800 accounts of the AHA's 6,300 adult and junior membership. "We have about 2,800 of 6,300 hundred members accounted for under MyHerd," Sanders says.

Real-time features

MyHerd provides members with a multitude of features including real-time calf registration, electronic animal transfer, online bill paying, herd inventory maintenance, artificial insemination (AI) certificate release and the capability to view

and download lists of animals and customers, among much more.

"I'm really excited the AHA rolled out MyHerd," says Eric Walker, Morrison, Tenn. "I've been fortunate enough to be on the initial test committee. I've seen this program on a first hand basis and am really excited

about all the features you'll be able to use with this program."

Walker says MyHerd makes getting performance data simple and quick. "As a breeder, small or large, you'll be able to benefit from this new package AHA has come up with," he

continued on page 42...

MyHerd.org Q&A

| Question 1 |

What is required to use MyHerd.org?

Answer: A computer or a tablet with internet connection is required to use MyHerd. Smartphones do not have the capacity to operate MyHerd.

| Question 2 |

What does it cost to use MyHerd?

Answer: There is no additional cost to use MyHerd. The only requirements are to have an active American Hereford Association (AHA) member account and to provide the Association with a valid email address. Your email will allow us to communicate with you about information regarding your account and to provide important updates.

| Question 3 |

Can I use MyHerd even though I use a herd management system like CattleMax, GEM, etc.?

Answer: Signing up for MyHerd doesn't mean you can't use herd management software. AHA recommends to use only one system to submit registrations and Whole Herd Total Performance Record (TPR™) data; otherwise, your herd management software could become out-of-date. MyHerd works great in addition to a herd management system because it offers features a herd management system can't provide, like electronic animal transfer, artificial insemination (AI) certificate release and AHA online bill payment.

| Question 4 |

Once I've logged into MyHerd, I see that my animal and Whole Herd TPR to-do lists are empty. What do I need to do?

Answer: First ask yourself, "What type of computer do I have (Mac/Apple device or a PC/Windows computer)?" Depending on your computer type, a specific browser is recommended. Follow these browser suggestions:

Mac: Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome. The Mac default browser, Safari, is not compatible with MyHerd.

PC: Internet Explorer, Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox. Note: If you have a PC computer and you're using Internet Explorer, please apply the following compatibility setting to connect to the database successfully. If you don't complete the compatibility setting, animal and Whole Herd TPR to-do lists will remain empty with no data.

- 1) Open your Internet Explorer browser.
- 2) Click the "Tools" icon.
- 3) Click "Compatibility View" settings.
- 4) Enter *MyHerd.org* and click "Add" to add *MyHerd.org* to the compatibility list.



| Question 5 |

Where do I find the MyHerd help directory?

Answer: The "help directory" icon is a red question mark and is located in the top right-hand corner of all MyHerd pages. When the help icon is clicked, a help page displays, based upon your location within MyHerd.



| Question 6 |

When registering a calf, why do I have to click "Yes" or "No" in the embryo transfer (ET) box if my calf is natural or bred AI?

Answer: Due to the new ET policy and the real-time function of MyHerd, the system needs to know if it should require an embryo recovery date to calculate the breeder and original owner of the calf.

Rule 17A: new embryo transfer policy — For ET calves there will no longer be an ET certificate required for registration. The new requirement for registering an ET calf will be the reporting of the recovery date of the embryo at the time of flush. As previously, ET calves are charged an additional \$10 per head over and above the normal registry rate (same cost as an ET certificate).

| Question 7 |

I am a performance breeder. How do I enter weaning weights?

Answer: Click on the "Whole Herd TPR" button found on the right side of the home screen. Select the "WW" link corresponding to the year and calving season on which you want to report. A weaning performance screen will open.



- 1) Select a calf and the information for that animal will highlight in blue when selected.
- 2) Enter the weaning date in the observation text box.
- 3) Enter the actual weaning weight and weaning management information.
- 4) Click "Update" to submit information.

| Question 8 |

I'm a performance breeder. What is the GOLD TPR to-do list for? I don't report ultrasound data because I sell my calves at weaning.

Answer: The GOLD TPR to-do list displays incomplete trait data that must be completed before the respective performance deadline to qualify for a GOLD TPR award. The list is made available to all performance members. If you are interested in the award, complete the tasks described, but if you're not interested in becoming a GOLD TPR breeder, then ignore the tasks listed. The GOLD TPR award is presented to progressive Hereford breeders who have collected measured traits and promptly submitted performance data at all levels of production.



| Question 9 |

I received an email about an AI certificate. How do I update my pending animals on MyHerd?

Answer:

- 1) Log into *MyHerd.org*
- 2) Click on the tab "Herd Details" and select the menu item "Pending Animals."
- 3) Double click on the pending animal which needs an AI certificate.
- 4) The animal's details screen will open. Click the "Update" button, and the system will pull the available AI certificate and place it on the animal's record.
- 5) When the AI certificate is applied, a warning message will tell you the AI certificate is going to be used. Click "OVERRIDE" to use the certificate and to complete the registration.

| Question 10 |

Why is all of my online work considered pending? Isn't MyHerd in "real-time?"

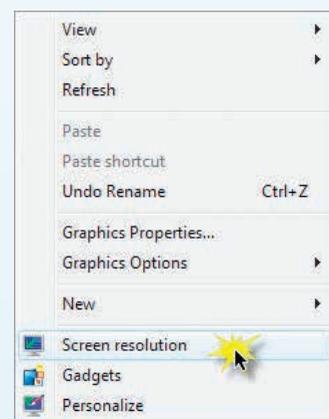
Answer: MyHerd is in real-time, and your data are entered and received as you work. Everything you do on MyHerd is tracked by a transaction. The pending transaction screen can be thought of as a "shopping cart" or "work history" for all work completed on MyHerd. Not all transactions have charges associated. For example, when you transfer an animal and create a new non-member account, a non-member creation \$0.00 transaction is generated.

Transactions		Pending Transactions	
Date	Description	Amount	Additional Info
01/01/15 2024	Transfer(Cow) - 30 days	5.00	Online Animal Transfer
01/01/15 1948	Transfer(Bull) with Regn.	5.00	Online Animal Registering
01/01/15 1948	Reco-Bull 9 to 12 months	25.00	Online Animal Registering
01/01/15 1948	Join Member	0.00	Online Non-member Creation - Registration

| Question 11 |

I am trying to enter my credit card CVV code to pay my bill, but I can't see the entire CVV code text box to enter the numbers. Why can't I see the whole box?

Answer: The reason you can't see the entire screen is that your screen resolution is set below 1200 pixels. To increase your screen resolution, go to your desktop and use your mouse to right click. Select the menu option "Screen Resolution." Increase your screen resolution to at least 1200 pixels wide. Make sure you click "Apply" and then "Okay" to save the change. Wait for your screen to adjust and go back to your MyHerd window. **HW**



says. "It's user-friendly and is easy to navigate.

One of the features I also like on this new system is you're able to pay as you go. You enter your credit card and your work is processed and everything is done."

Shelia Jensen of Jensen Bros., Courtland, Kan., says they participated as a test herd. "A feature I really liked was the ability to keep up with our Gold Total Performance Record (TPR) status," she says. "If you miss something you need on a weaning weight or yearling weight on an animal or two, it'll kick you out of the Gold TPR status. You can go in and it shows you what you need to do to upgrade that group. It tells you when and it gives you a list of when to get it done and how to update it. MyHerd also lets you know what animals are missing. Then you can go through the search, "find animal" and you can put in their IDs and it will pop up with the full name. Sometimes that really helps."

Jensen says the "personal list" was also one of her favorites. "You can go in there and it has a complete list of your buyers. It tells you their names and information; it's like having your own address book. And it's personal, so other breeders can't get into it, which is a nice feature to have."

MyHerd also complements herd management software. Dixie Hoffman

of Hoffman Ranch, Thedford, Neb., uses GEM software to register all calves. "We have quite a few partnerships so I can use GEM to input all those," she explains. "I can then download the GEM program and it works directly into MyHerd."

Hoffman says she registered about 270 calves in 2014 and began using the AI certificate release. "I can go right in and issue it out. At that point I would be trying to figure out who I've sent what to. MyHerd brought that information right up for the billing purposes."

She adds that one of the real advantages of MyHerd is users can see current transactions and previous transactions and can pay their bills online. "It goes through in the evening and by the next morning it is clear and anything you have holding is sent out."

As soon as MyHerd became available, Jan Adcock, Assumption, Ill., signed up. Adcock and her family have a small herd of 25 brood cows and participate in numerous state and national shows.

"We do a lot of embryo transfer (ET) and almost entirely AI," she says. "MyHerd is real-time which is nice. Once you hit 'submit' it's gone. The turnaround for getting registration papers is so quick and I like the fact that you have access to so much

information without having to contact the AHA."

Adcock says there is a learning curve with the program, but it's straightforward. "I would tell any breeder thinking about trying it to just go ahead and do it because it's worth a try — it's a lot easier," she says. "Also, don't be intimidated. Yes, there is a learning curve and yes, you'll probably make a mistake, but the AHA is very helpful if you have questions. If there is an error or a problem in data I submit, I know immediately, instead of finding out later through the mail. The program tells you what to fix."

Looking forward

Sanders says MyHerd will continue to evolve and new features will be added. "We are working on some options for members to do their data entry offline," he says. "The primary one will be spreadsheets. Not that you download, fill it out and send it back to us, but you download, fill out the information and you load it back to MyHerd."

This approach allows breeders the flexibility to record data when they do not have an Internet connection and to upload it to the system later.

MyHerd will eventually allow users to post DNA work, track the status of requests and get results through the program.

"Another priority, but longer term to accomplish, is a mobile app that allows you to record information on your phone," Sanders says. "Say you are tagging calves and take down information through the app. It will then sync with your MyHerd account and you can add additional data later. This will be a feature that will integrate with MyHerd."

AHA's last fiscal year recorded that 63% of registrations were submitted electronically. "Our goal is to get 80% online registration," Sanders says. "Not just by adding more users, but getting more use." He says continuing to make MyHerd user-friendly will help not only to add more users but to get more use of the program.

Huffhines says, "MyHerd will continue to be improved over time with our ultimate goal to provide a 24-hour, 7-days a week virtual office where breeders have all the tools required to conduct business with the AHA." **HW**

Editor's Note: To sign up for MyHerd, email your AHA member number to MyHerd@hereford.org.