

## Managing Herefords

# Online Registration



## Registration Made Easy

*Got a question about registering online? AHA staff members have an answer.*

Whether it's checking the weather or buying a truck, it seems everything and anything can be done online now. Hereford producers are no exception, with *Hereford.org* being the one-stop information resource for everything from shows and sales to recordkeeping.

Since 2002 the American Hereford Association (AHA) has offered members the option to register cattle online. In fact, about 60% of all AHA animal registrations are done using the online registry system. However, like learning any new skill, registering cattle online takes some adjustment. Although the procedure has been modeled after the paper forms to help ease the transition, it can be frustrating at first.

### Easy to use, quick, convenient

Hereford breeder Alex Mih has registered hundreds of cattle using the online system for the last five years. "I think it's relatively easy to become familiar with," Mih says.

Mih and his mother, Mariam, own MM Ranch, Chanute, Kan., and use the online system for both registering cattle and keeping performance records. He says the online system has benefits that paper records don't provide. For example, he appreciates the system's ability to catch human error. "I think there are several features built into the system that help us. If you make an error, the system will pick it up. Say we entered a number more than once; the system shows that to us as an error before we

submit it. That allows for identification of potential errors before the data is ever submitted to the Association."

Members participating in the Whole Herd TPR™ (Total Performance Records) program can create or update herd inventories, record calves with or without birth weights, and submit weaning, yearling and disposal data electronically. Electronic submittal of data and registrations makes for quicker, more efficient processing once it is received by the AHA.

When each "batch" or group of data is submitted to the AHA, the system automatically produces a PDF file report, similar to what you would receive in the mail if submitting the paper forms. This report contains information on contemporary groups, ratios and updated expected progeny differences (EPDs). By using the electronic system, though, the report is produced right away, allowing the producer to use this data for management decisions in a timely manner.

For those accustomed to paper recordkeeping, using the online system may seem daunting. Mih says it can be a large task if the producer only records data once a year. "The biggest advice I would give anyone is to keep the records up-to-date. We have 1,200 cows and two calving seasons to keep records on, so staying on top of it is pretty critical."

He adds that another good feature is that the user can work on a number of records at a time, and then, if

something comes up, the files can be saved to come back to later.

Mih also appreciates the "Calf-Crop Tracker" summary page, which shows the user where he's at in the data system inventory, such as weaning, yearling or harvest data.

Using the online system also makes it easier for producers to include their calf crops in the genetic analyses that are prepared twice a year. It is, however, vital that breeders update the information for all calves in order for the data to be included in the analyses.

AHA Director of Records Stacy Sanders says, "Remember that some traits are optional, but for any of the data for a particular trait to be included in the genetic evaluation, data on the entire calf crop must be submitted."

### Common errors

It's important to remember, however, that the system will sometimes give error messages to the user. Problems indicated by these messages must be fixed before the data can be submitted. AHA Records Supervisor Cindy Coleman says that the following are some common causes of error:

- The user put the "P" prefix on a registration number. You should never use the "P" prefix when using the online registry system or doing an EPD search.
- The calving date was entered incorrectly. Dates must be entered using this format: xx/xx/xxxx. For example, a calf born on May 17, 2010, would be entered 05/17/2010. A calf born Oct. 1, 2009, would be entered 10/01/2009.
- The user forgot to enter a calving ease score for each calf registered.
- The user made an error in the sire or dam ID. The sire and dam IDs must be entered exactly as

### AHA registration costs

The AHA offers discounted registration fees for registrations submitted early and electronically.

	Mail	Electronically
Calves up to 4 month of age	\$12	\$10
Calves between 4 and 8 months of age	\$18	\$15
Calves between 8 and 12 months of age	\$25	\$20
Calves 12 months of age and over	\$50	\$50

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they are in the herd inventory for the computer to recognize them.

- The user did not designate if the calf was horned “H,” polled “P” or scurred “S” when prompted. Each calf must be identified “H,” “P” or “S.”
- The herd inventory was not completed before the user attempted to register the calves. The user must update the herd

inventory each year before calves can be registered.

- The sire of the calf being registered is not enrolled in the TPR program. Each sire must be enrolled so the sire’s ID will be recognized by the system.

### For more information

There is much more information on the online registry system at *Hereford.org*.

To access this, log on to *Hereford.org* and click on “Records/TPR” and then click on “Animal Registration.” Here, there are directions for signing up and comprehensive information about the system as well as a step-by-step guide for users. Members may also call the AHA office at 816-842-3757 with questions. Just ask for customer service.

## Frequently asked questions

The following are some other frequently asked questions about the online registry system:

### Is my information secure?

Yes, users must set up an AHA Internet account prior to inputting any information. The Internet account requires a password to log in and make changes or view your information. It is important to periodically change your password and not to tell the password or make it visible to anyone you do not want to access the account.

### How do I sign up to use the online registry/recordkeeping system?

Signing up is simple. Log on to *Hereford.org* and click on “Animal Registration” under the “Records/TPR” tab. Here you can download the sign-up form, which must be filled out and mailed or faxed into the AHA office. Once AHA has processed the form, you will receive an e-mail with detailed instructions for getting started.

### What does a warning message mean?

A warning message is the system’s way of telling you that the information is not as accurate as it should be or could be. It’s just to draw your attention to a possible error; it’s not necessarily something that will prevent you from submitting the data.

### Do I need to have a brand new computer for the system to work?

No, the registry and data system is all Internet-based, so as long as you have an Internet connection, you can use the system.

### What if my computer freezes up? Will all my data be lost?

No, each time you push “Update” to get to the next screen, the data is saved. Sanders says the most that can be lost is what’s on your screen. There are two options of adding data — either one head at a time or 10 head at a time. At most, 10 records could be lost if that’s what’s on your screen and your computer crashes just before you press “Update.” So it’s possible to lose what’s on your screen, but any prior data entered will be saved.

### What is the comment box for?

Coleman encourages system users to enter information into the comment box for each calf crop such as the calving season and year, i.e. spring 2009 or fall 2008. Other information that could be useful to the staff should be entered here. For example, if there is a pending transfer, the staff needs the full address of the buyer/seller.