

Managing Herefords

Hereford Heritage



The Hereford breed originated as a product of necessity. Efficient, adaptable and hardy, these cattle have always had a face to remember.

Nearly 300 years ago, farmers of Herefordshire, England, founded the breed in response to demand created by Britain's Industrial Revolution. Efficient production, high yields and sound reproduction were of utmost importance.

Benjamin Tomkins is who to thank for the original design. A primary founder of the breed, Tomkins began in 1742 with a bull calf from the cow Silver and two cows, Pigeon and Mottle.

Henry Clay, Kentucky statesman, brought Herefords to the United States in 1817. A true Hereford identity was not established in the states until William H. Sotham and Erastus Corning, Albany, N.Y., began the first breeding herd in 1840.

Among other renowned early Hereford breeders were Charles Gudgell and Thomas A. Simpson of Missouri. Their big break came with the importation of Anxiety 4, a bull credited as being the "father of American Herefords."

A few of these early breeders came together in Chicago on June 22, 1881. The result was the foundation of the American Hereford Cattle Breeders Association, later renamed the American Hereford Association (AHA). Its purpose was two-fold: to keep the breed's records and to promote the interests of its breeders.

Seven years later Warren Gammon noticed naturally hornless Herefords at the Trans-Mississippi World's Fair in Omaha, Neb. He decided to fix the hornless trait using the bull Giant and 11 Hereford females. In 1910 the American Polled Hereford Association (APHA) was founded.

The two Hereford associations merged in 1995, keeping the AHA title. The AHA now registers all horned and polled Herefords.

Through the years

Shows and expositions contributed greatly to a growing Hereford popularity.

The breed's doing ability, coupled with early maturity, revolutionized American beef production.

To achieve this desired early maturity, breeders in the 1930s and 1940s sought short, low-set, wide and deep-bodied cattle. Success eventually became a downfall.

Compact, fat cattle continued to excel in the showing into the 1950s. However, beef packers were starting to pay less for over-fat cattle. The American diet was calling for leaner, more heavily muscled carcasses. Hereford breeders stepped up to the challenge.

Beginning in the 1960s, breeders focused their attention on tools such as performance testing, artificial insemination, objective measures, embryo transfer and sire evaluation. These tools allowed the rapid genetic change needed to bring Herefords in synch with consumer and industry expectations.

A broad genetic base allowed Hereford breeders to select stock comparable in size and performance to competing "exotic" European breeds. Although major changes were made, breeders didn't lose sight of fundamental Hereford traits, particularly fertility and docility.

A new goal was established in the late 1980s — formal documentation of Hereford performance in the feedlot and on the rail. Colorado State University animal scientists conducted related tests for the AHA from 1991 to 1993. Superiority was noted in average daily gain, feed conversion and cost of gain.

Further studies in the early 1990s demonstrated the quality of Hereford beef. Regardless of marbling, Hereford steers consistently excelled in tenderness, juiciness, flavor and palatability.

These findings led to the formation of a branded beef product known as Certified Hereford Beef® (CHB). In 1994 the AHA, Midland Cattle Co. and its affiliate, Mid-Ag, came together to market CHB. Mid-Ag, later renamed Red Oak Farms, was licensed as the exclusive seller of CHB. In October of 1998 the AHA board of directors pulled

exclusivity from Red Oak Farms due to its failure to meet license covenants.

Greater Omaha Packing Co. was licensed as the second company to produce and market CHB in November of 1999. The following October, the AHA formed a limited liability corporation, CHB LLC, for management of the CHB program.

Hereford history was made during the second week of 2005. CHB had its first million pound week, when packers sold approximately 1.3 million pounds of product to participating retail locations and food service outlets.

The CHB program has experienced 40% annual sales growth since 2000, indicating the power of its mission:

To strengthen demand for Hereford cattle, Certified Hereford Beef LLC commits superior customer service, competitive pricing and creative marketing strategies to the sale of tender, great tasting Certified Hereford Beef within retail grocery stores, wholesale food distributors and food service outlets.

Today's Hereford

Today's versatile Hereford continues to be the benchmark against which other breeds are measured as cattlemen continue to seek the optimum traits inherent in Herefords. Those traits critical to survival in the cattle business are exactly the same traits Hereford offers today's industry:

- Fertility
- Reproductive performance
- Feed efficiency
- Optimum size and growth
- Documented feedlot and carcass superiority
- Low maintenance costs
- Optimum muscling
- Optimum milk
- Adaptability and hardiness
- Superior disposition
- Soundness
- Crossbreeding advantages

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Hereford History

1742 – Benjamin Tomkins, a primary founder of the Hereford breed, starts with a bull calf from the cow Silver and two cows, Pidgeon and Mottle.

1817 – Henry Clay, Kentucky statesman, brings Herefords to the United States.

1840 – William H. Sotham and Erastus Corning, Albany, N.Y., begin the first U.S. Hereford breeding herd.

1881 – American Hereford Cattle Breeders Association is organized (name later changes to American Hereford Association [AHA]).

1899 – AHA is first breed association to hold a national one-breed show.

1900 – At the turn of the century, 125,000 Hereford cattle have been registered.

1901 – The polled Hereford breed comes into being with 11 registrations on record.

1910 – American Polled Hereford Association (APHA) is organized. Hayes Walker Sr. founds *The American Hereford Journal*.

1920 – The AHA is the first beef breed association to own its own headquarters; permanent residence is established at 300 West 11th St., Kansas City, Mo.

1933 – The Great Depression takes its toll, and prices drop to a low point; all 2,743 head of Herefords sold at auction this year bring an average price of \$105 per head. AHA registrations also fall from 101,839 in 1929 to 87,541.

1945 – A total of 303,679 calves are registered with the AHA, a record number for any breed in a single year. APHA registrations increase by more than 9,000 head in the same year.

1947 – The first *Polled Hereford World* is published.

1953 – President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower dedicates second AHA headquarters at 715 Hereford Drive, Kansas City, Mo.

1953 – AHA registrations peak at 560,794.

1960 – By the end of the year, the AHA has registered a total of 10 million head.

1961 – The AHA purchases *The American Hereford Journal*.

1963 – APHA registrations jump to 174,575 from 111,008 in 1962. APHA introduces Guide Lines Program to encourage the use of tools most effective in bringing about herd improvement. AHA also starts measuring performance, first through the Herd Sire Feedlot and Carcass program.

1964 – AHA furthers performance efforts with the Total Performance Records (TPR) program. APHA Guide Lines Program becomes active.

1965 – APHA purchases *Polled Hereford World*.

1968 – APHA issues its first artificial insemination (AI) certificate. Producers who don't own the bull can now purchase its semen to AI their cows, making the best genetics available to everyone.

1973 – AHA allows AI.

1974 – APHA surpasses its registration goal of "204 (thousand) in '74."

1974 – The first Junior National Polled Hereford Heifer Show and Forum is held in Nashville, Tenn.

1978 – Kansas State University hosts the first All-American Junior Hereford Show.

1986 – AHA moves to third headquarters on 1501 Wyandotte, Kansas City, Mo.

1994 – The AHA, Midland Cattle Co. and its affiliate, Mid-Ag, come together to market branded beef product, Certified Hereford Beef® (CHB).

1995 – AHA and APHA merge. CHB is officially established.

2000 – AHA forms a limited liability corporation, CHB LLC, for management of CHB program.

2001 – Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™) replaces old performance measuring tools.

2005 – CHB has its first million pound week; packers sell approximately 1.3 million pounds of product to participating retail locations and food service outlets.