



"CHB Bites" is a column designed to keep you in-the-know about Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) program happenings. CHB LLC is celebrating 20 years with a "Farm-to-Fork" series featuring how Herefords become the ultimate eating experience. You can also follow CHB on Facebook at facebook.com/CertifiedHerefordBeef.

Farm-to-Fork

Part 1: Seedstock

Part 2: Stocker

Part 3: Feedlot

Part 4: Packer

Part 5: Retail

Part 6: Foodservice

Part 7: Consumer

Part 8: Future

Seedstock Genetics

In today's world of here now and forgotten by tomorrow, there remains one constant — Hereford cattle. Hereford cattle have been icons in beef cattle history for more than 100 years.

Today, the beef industry faces more challenges than ever, and consumers are seeking more information about their food: Where does it come from? What does it eat? How was it raised? How was the product handled? What was it given during the course of its life?

At the same time, producers are seeking ways to continue improving their herds — doing more with fewer inputs yet still providing the ultimate eating experience for the consumer. How do you navigate between the two?

The American Hereford Association (AHA) led the way in pioneering that endeavor with the creation of Certified Hereford Beef (CHB®) almost 20 years ago. In fact, the CHB program will be turning 20 years old next October, and to celebrate this milestone, CHB LLC staff will highlight all segments of the CHB program with a "Farm-to-Fork" series.

The series will feature how Herefords become the ultimate eating experience and will appear in upcoming *Hereford World* issues covering the following topics: seedstock and genetics; stocker operations; feedlot operations; packers; retail distributors and retailers; foodservice distributors and restaurant chefs; end consumers, including real-world experiences; and then CHB LLC, the next 20 years.

Looking back

Think back to 1817 when America was still a youngster. James Madison was president until James Monroe took over, and Herefords were being imported by some progressive cattlemen out on the western frontier. Herefords became known as the "great improvers" because they made anything they were bred to that much better.

Fast forward to 1881 and the AHA is formed in Chicago. Just to give you a point of reference, 14 days after the creation of the Association, Billy the Kid is shot by Pat Garret near Fort Sumner on July 14, 1881. The West was still wild, but progressive thinking was already improving a great breed of cattle for the consumer. Today, the AHA is one of the oldest established American breed associations.

In 1992 the AHA commissioned a study through Colorado State University (CSU) to accomplish three things: to determine the extent to which the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) quality grading system accurately evaluates palatability of beef produced by straightbred and crossbred Hereford cattle; to identify specific live, carcass and/or palatability traits to which intensified selection pressure could be applied to improve desirability and marketability of Hereford cattle; and to ascertain the feasibility of implementing a niche-marketing program for lean beef that meets acceptable palatability ratings.

As a result of the CSU study, in 1995 AHA established the CHB program to usher in a new era of great taste and nutrition and to truly build upon its "Excellence Built by Tradition."

"The Association established CHB LLC to promote the time-honored traditions of raising great quality beef," explains Craig Huffhines, AHA executive vice president. Quality is a



Joe and Cyndi Van Newkirk, Van Newkirk Herefords, Oshkosh, Neb., say they are proud of the Hereford breed's maternal traits.

delivered promise with CHB, a beef that provides a satisfying eating experience every time. All CHB is individually evaluated and always certified and graded by the USDA," he adds. "We're in the business of humanely raising great beef and providing consumers with consistently great taste and tenderness for an economical price."

That endeavor starts at the farm with Hereford seedstock producers. Seedstock producers are the genetic suppliers for the breed. Genetic improvement is the key focus of a seedstock cattle operation. Seedstock breeders produce purebreds or registered cows, bulls and heifers and semen or embryos as value-added beef cattle genetics.

All Hereford breeders produce cattle that meet their own desires and preferences, as well as cattle that meet the desires of potential buyers. Usually they are producing cattle that satisfy both conditions.

"Everyone down the line from the farm benefits from the seedstock producer's commitment to a quality product," says David Trowbridge, a Hereford breeder from Tabor, Iowa, and CHB LLC board chairman. "The seedstock producer guards our 'Excellence Built by Tradition' by evaluating which cattle rise to the top and meet the criteria to be registered."

Take for example Dale and Nancy Venhuizen, owners of the Churchill Cattle Co., Manhattan,

Mont., who say they are loyal to the Hereford breed and appreciate the qualities that Hereford genetics bring to the beef industry.

"Hereford cattle excel in their feed efficiency as well as efficiency in general," Dale says. "They are known for their excellence in crossbreeding, disposition and longevity as well as their growth traits."

Or, just ask Joe Van Newkirk of Van Newkirk Herefords, Oshkosh, Neb. Van Newkirk Herefords has been in operation since 1892. "In the 1980s we struggled," says Joe. "Everybody decided to make their cows black, and the Herefords lost a lot of market share. But we knew our cattle were good, and although it would have been pretty easy to change breeds during that time frame, we decided to stick with them and build up our cow herd. We were persistent in making our cattle better and more efficient, and that's what it took to stay in business."

Members of the CHB LLC staff are proud of our rich heritage and the uncompromising dedication to quality from our Hereford seedstock producers. This is how we bring the legacy of naturally great beef from our families' ranches and farms to your family's fork. CHB is "Excellence Built by Tradition. **HW**



Dale Venhuizen, Churchill Cattle Co., Manhattan, Mont., says he appreciates what Hereford genetics bring to the beef industry.