

# HEREFORD WORLD

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## Ahead of the Curve

*Keeping its customers on the leading edge of technology and high-quality Hereford genetics is top-of-mind for Genoa Livestock.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF GENOA LIVESTOCK

by Julie White

It all started just 10 years ago with the acquisition of land that was originally homesteaded in the mid-1800s and had a long record of ranching. While remaining true to the land's history of raising good stock, Bob and Carol Coker of Genoa Livestock in Minden, Nev., have intentions to stay ahead of the curve — and they have found Hereford cattle fits that goal.

### Homestead history

Sitting in the Carson Valley, the land where Genoa Livestock is located was homesteaded in 1858 through a land claim by William Boyd in what was the Utah Territory. William operated the land as a ranch for forty years. In 1898 Henry Marquart purchased 4,000 acres of the original land and started a dairy.

The Marquarts sold the property in 1919 to their daughter Mary and her husband, Frank Settelmeyer, who continued the dairy, ranching and farming operation. Three generations

of Settelmeyers worked to build the largest family-operated dairy in western Nevada. In addition to the dairy herd, a 1958 newspaper profile on the ranch stated, "...the Settelmeyers have a good number of Hereford cattle."

Fast forward to the mid-1990s, the land was leased for grazing, and at that time the land holding had been reduced to a little more than 1,000 acres. In 2005 Bob and Carol purchased the 1,041-acre ranch as the site for Genoa Livestock and a place to raise Hereford cattle.

They began ranch improvements in 2007, constructing ranch headquarters and a breeding facility. An old dairy barn still sits on the property west of the new headquarters and is still used by the ranch.

### Genoa Livestock

Today, Genoa Livestock calves 215 Hereford cows of two-thirds horned breeding and one-third polled breeding with the objective to produce calving-ease cattle with moderate to high weaning and yearling weights with an

emphasis on improving carcass traits. The Cokers market bulls through an annual bull sale in September in Oakdale, Calif., along with two consignment sales — Cal-Poly Bull Test and Red Bluff Bull Sale — as well as through private treaty. Females are sold privately or through consignment sales.

"We've found value, and so have our customers, in focusing on performance when making breeding decisions," Bob says.

Ranch Manager Jared Patterson says, "We strive to find a combination of traits. We focus on EPDs (expected progeny differences) and built our cow herd from that. Low birth weight, high performance and mothering ability have been priorities, but we have focused a lot lately on carcass value and phenotype as well."

Through data collection and the use of EPDs, Jared says they are held accountable. "It has helped us trace back what we're doing right and it's something that proves our genetics.

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Now days if you're doing what you were doing five years ago, you're going backward. You have to keep in the same trend as technology."

### Better bulls

The majority of Genoa Livestock's bulls are used on black cow herds.

"I got a call recently from a rancher who is a third-generation black herd breeder," Bob says. "He bought two low-birth weight Hereford bulls from us two seasons ago. They had calves this year from 48 heifers off our bulls and didn't have one problem. He was ecstatic."

Jared adds, "With the better part of our bull clientele running black cow herds, their main focus is building females. They want black baldie females."

Bob explains that their customers are striving for the advantage of heterosis, but they also understand EPDs and expect to purchase bulls with numbers to back up their performance.

Jared says their bull customers are progressive. "Besides building F-1 black baldie females, they are looking for opportunities with their feeder calves to get a premium for niche markets or branded beef programs," he says. "Their focus is on carcass traits such as ribeye, marbling and the CHB \$Index which aims them towards those cattle performing on the rail. They are expecting it and the Hereford breed is working to deliver on it."

Bob says their customers want strong carcass traits and Jared agrees. "In the Hereford breed today there are so many bulls out there who are so good numbered," Jared says. "We have the versatility to breed to different genetics but we're trying to keep the good combination of low birth weight, high growth, super good maternal qualities, and carcass traits now are becoming a big thing."

For the fifth year in a row, Genoa Livestock's calves ranked above breed average in 14 of the 15 traits. The only trait to miss the mark is backfat.

### Managing in the environment

In western Nevada, it's fairly common for temperatures to swing 50-60 degrees in a day, along with extreme lows in the winter and highs in the summer, but Jared says the Hereford cattle can handle it.

"They are very adaptable," Jared says. "A trait of the Herefords is adaptability and being able to handle rough climates. We're in different types of weather and those cattle adapt very well."

At Genoa Livestock, heifers are calved in the first half of February, a couple of weeks before the cows, which start March 1. "We're trying



### A decade strong

In just 10 years, Genoa Livestock, Minden, Nev., has made a mark on the Hereford breed. Notable accomplishments by this operation include Cal Poly Bull Test Consignor of the Year in 2011; Cal Poly champion polled Hereford in 2011, 2012, 2013; Cal Poly champion horned Hereford in 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2015; Red Bluff champion horned bull in 2011; and producing the No. 1 calving-ease bull among the American Hereford Association's 2014 proven sires with Genoas Bonanza 11051, now co-owned with ABS Global and Rausch Herefords. **HW**

to keep that window to 80 days," Jared says. "We time AI (artificial insemination) everything. We breed cows at end of May through the first of June. Those cows then go out on grass and bulls get turned out after day 14 — standard protocol."

Spring calves are weaned in October, usually after the fall-calving cow herd of approximately 30 head is calved out.

"Those we try to start calving September 1," Jared says. "We try to keep that in a 45-day window. After the heifer-calf pairs get about two months of age, we'll process them and ship those down to California to utilize the green grass during Nevada's harshest winter months at our small ranch outside of Roseville, Calif. We have a small ranch there and it keeps them out of the cold weather."

Fall bulls calves are kept at the ranch in Nevada to be developed for the Cal-Poly Bull Test. Genoa Livestock develops bulls and heifers similarly after weaning. They are started on a low-energy diet, and bulls are gradually worked up to a higher energy diet.

Jared says managing sickness can be tough, considering the climate and swing in temperatures. "On the cow herd, one of our main focuses is animal health," he explains. "We strive to do everything according to the BQA (Beef Quality Assurance) guidelines."

Bob says they strive to stay ahead of the curve. "My experience has been that if you go along with everyone else, then you're like everyone else," he says. "You have to be able to get out ahead of the curve and that's what we're trying to do with our Hereford herd." **HW**



The Genoa Livestock crew pictured front row (l to r) Gilberto Garcia and Bob Coker, owner. Pictured back row (l to r) are Jared Patterson, ranch manager; Dale Newman; and Valentin Martinez.

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Hereford cattle at Genoa Livestock handle tough and varied climates in western Nevada.