



Don't Forget Udder Scores

I hope this column finds each of you enjoying a great New Year. I'm sure that some of you are already heavy into calving or anxiously awaiting the new calf crop. This is always an exciting time of year with all the newborns running around the pastures and seeing the fruits of your labor from the past years.

This is the time that you can evaluate the progress that has been made in areas of calving ease (CE), birth weight (BW), calving ease maternal (CEM) and even traits such as disposition and udder quality.

Remember that calving time is not only the time to measure CE and BW, but also to take udder quality scores on your cows. This includes cows of all ages. By this, I mean that udder scores should be taken on all cows each year.

Collecting scores yearly will give you the ability to track cows through their lives. I would also remind you that udder quality scores are just that, and not a measure of milk production. Milk is measured through weaning weights.

The American Hereford Association (AHA) has adopted an udder quality scoring system that ranks udders on a score of 1-9 with 9 being ideal. The AHA requests

breeders measure udder attachment and teat quality with this one score.

An udder score reference chart is in the *Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™) User's Guide* and also in the article "Scoring Momma" on the cover of this issue. Udder scores are reported to the AHA on Form 1 (registration and birth application) or they can be submitted online. Remember that your scoring must be accurate to the best of your ability, and we are really looking for the differences within your herd.

New data online

By the time you read this article, the new sire summary should be released and you will find updated expected progeny differences (EPDs) on the Web, or you can request a new sire summary by contacting the AHA.

The new analysis will be reflective of the new age of dam adjustments as well as the new parameters and correlations. For a quick reminder of these changes, please refer to page 24 in the July *Hereford World*. If you need a copy of this article, please contact me at jward@hereford.org or (816) 842-3757.

As always, please be sure to make selections based on the needs of your herd and the requests of your customers.

Board action

During the October AHA Board of Directors meeting, it was voted on and passed to not print birth weights — both actual and adjusted — on pedigrees. I'm not going to go deep into the scientific explanation of why this makes sense, but I would like to touch on the reasons why it is dangerous to put those weights on papers and allow cattle from different environments to be compared.

From the scientific point of view, it is commonly known that EPDs are the best way to make genetic change. On a more basic level, it is important to compare apples to apples and comparing actual birth weights (or any weight) from herd to herd and within a herd is not comparing things equally. If you could just compare weights, we would not need an age of dam adjustment.

Think about this for a moment: If you have a set of pedigrees lying in front of you from one herd and all of the BWs are listed, these are not comparable because they are from different aged females and from potentially different contemporary groups.

I think we all can agree that calves from 2 year olds will not weigh the

same as those on 5 year olds, and calves born in January will have different weights than calves born in May or even September.

Even more importantly, comparisons should definitely not be made across herds. Cows are handled differently from ranch to ranch and region to region.

When comparing cattle from different environments EPDs are still the best tool. I would never ask any of you to hide information from your customers that they request. Your adjusted and actual weights for all traits measured are still available in either your calving books or on your worksheets provided by the AHA.

Join us for these online Hereford 101s

Finally, I want to invite you to participate in the online Hereford 101s. The next two are scheduled for Jan. 18 and Feb. 22. We will continue to have these from month to month. If you have a particular subject you would like covered, please feel free to contact me. **HW**