



# Strategic Planning Delivers Steady CHB Program Growth

Sales in first quarter fiscal year (FY) 2008 up 3.8 million pounds more than FY 2007.

As general manager of Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) LLC, I've had a lot on my mind for the past eight months. I feel acutely the responsibility to continually move the program forward by:

1. Increasing the number of CHB® pounds sold through all of our many marketing channels.
2. Retaining every customer and growing his business.
3. Creating the pull for more Hereford cattle from our packing partners.
4. Earning, billing and accounting for higher royalty payments through all sources.
5. Maximizing use of our budget to promote CHB to consumers through all channels.
6. Deploying our staff in the most effective ways possible to create increased sales.
7. Optimizing our Web presence to expand our electronic marketing effectiveness.
8. Reviewing daily all aspects of our business practices to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

9. Fully utilizing the talented new American Hereford Association director of communications, David Mehlhaff, to deliver our CHB message to the beef industry.

10. Developing and using strategic planning processes to enhance every part of our business and its operations.

This list, though it represents our top priorities, is the tip of the iceberg. Literally hundreds of decisions, strategies and tactics are generated by activities derived therefrom.

Right now, we are implementing the action items created from our Jan. 11, 2008, CHB staff strategic planning meeting. It's the second such meeting conducted since I began leading the program: the first was in May 2007. We've made steady progress meeting the objectives set in that first meeting. Now we've examined our achievements and disappointments, reset our course in appropriate areas, and set higher goals.

There are only so many hours in a day, so accurately sifting through this information daily is critical. It's easy to spend too much time and resources on a project that nets only a small return. Constantly re-examining our efforts and judging their value based on established benchmarks keeps us on a highly productive course.

Planning and goal setting are one thing. Converting those plans to reality is the hard work part. As a staff, we are relying on our brains, brawn, long hours, persuasiveness, business relationships, personal commitment and a lot of plain old good luck. As many have said before, the harder we work, the luckier we get. Our job is to move the CHB program forward vigorously. We must retain our current customers and build their sales volume. We must find new customers, secure their business and profitably serve them over the long haul.

Action we took starting last May yielded new foodservice distributors and restaurants, additional grocery store accounts, much improved packer relations, new feedlot arrangements, a complete revise of our Web site, advanced planning on new product lines and highly productive retail promotions and set goals for increased sales.

Looking back now, it is all paying off in big dividends, as our fiscal year (FY) 2008 started off with 3.8 million more CHB pounds sold in the first quarter than was sold in FY 2007. This is a clear signal that our growth trend is turning to positive territory and represents a 46% increase over the previous year.

Our on-going Web site redesign work is assigned to John Denton of Denton Designs LLC. Under CHB staff direction, the site has been reprogrammed in the latest version of Internet software code and the graphic presentation is new, fresh and very appealing. It's easy to get where

you want to go now, and the content is being upgraded constantly. It's not just a pretty Web site: we are using it daily to direct interested buyers to our sales and marketing information. Please visit *HerefordBeef.net* the next time you're online, and let us know what you think.

Currently, we are doing an extensive city-by-city market analysis of the U.S. grocery industry, seeking potential CHB wholesale and retail customers. An intelligence dossier is gathered on each city and each prospect. We are strategically targeting opportunities unearthed by this process, contacting the principals direct or through our packers, and closing on those principals for a sales interview meeting. Those most likely to listen are carefully chosen, sent samples, directed to our new Web site and offered extensive marketing and training assistance when they join our CHB family.

Our efforts to create packer pull for Hereford cattle have been rewarded with greater processing numbers posted during the last five months. National Beef Packing Co. LLC began running ads in January seeking CHB-qualified cattle for increased production to meet the growing needs of our customers. This extraordinary effort on National Beef's part underscores the value of the CHB brand to this packer and shows success at driving more cattle to its plants. **HW**