



Dan Chase is sold on Hereford bulls and the baldie females they produce. He says R-Y's baldie females gain and grow so much better than its straightbred females.

An Obvious Advantage

California commercial ranch tops market with Hereford-sired calves that were sold 70 days earlier and 6 lb. heavier than previous year's straight black calf crop.

by Angie Stump Denton



Hereford bulls are a recent addition to the R-Y Ranch in northern California, but according to Dan Chase, they are there to stay.



Becky Chase's family has managed the R-Y Ranch for five generations. Today Dan and Becky Chase own and manage the ranch with Becky's parents, Richard and Yet Peters. Pictured is Yet and Becky.

It's hard to argue with data, and commercial cattlemen Richard Peters and Dan Chase of Grenada, Calif., have the numbers to prove the advantage their ranch has experienced from utilizing Hereford genetics. "We're enthusiastic about using Herefords," Dan says. "There is no way you can talk me out of using a Hereford bull. I'm convinced Herefords help add premiums on ship day."

R-Y Ranch is owned and managed by Richard and Yet Peters and their son-in-law and daughter, Dan and Becky Chase. Dan and Becky's children, Dillon and Ty, are the fifth generation to work on the ranch that is located in northern California in the beautiful Shasta Valley.

Dan explains that he was getting tired of decreasing weights and efficiency as the R-Y herd became more and more

straight black. "It was clear to us we needed to make changes," he says. "We needed to do something to add vigor back into our herd."

The family has been selling its calves on the Western Video Market for 12 years, so realizing the need for a change, Dan contacted Andy Peek, who was president of Western Video Market and manager of Shasta Livestock Auction at the time, to seek his advice.

Following that discussion, R-Y Ranch purchased Hereford bulls in 2007 and they plan to continue to buy Herefords for years to come.

The results

It was an obvious advantage, Dan says, pointing to sale receipts. The family's 2007 calves were shipped on Jan. 28, 2008, averaging 582 lb. In comparison, the 2008 spring-born calves, which were sired by Hereford



Dan and Becky Chase point out some of their favorite baldie replacement heifers. The Chases started using Hereford bulls on their straight black cow herd in 2006.



bulls, were sold on Nov. 28, 2008, weighing 588 lb.

“We were able to sell the Hereford-sired calves 70 days earlier, and they still averaged 6 lb. heavier,” Dan says. “And, if we would have kept them another 30 days, we would have seen an even bigger advantage.”

Dan says using the Hereford bulls provided numerous benefits to the R-Y herd:

- 1) A calf that can go to market sooner.
- 2) Improved feed efficiency and conversion.
- 3) Improved conception rates.
- 4) Decreased use of the hay pile.
- 5) More time for cows to recondition before calving.

“The entire package is a major improvement for our program,” he says. “Using Hereford bulls bought us six months in building our program.”

Dan says he’s seen advantages in managing Hereford bulls compared to bulls of other breeds. “They cover the country and get the job done,” he says.

At calving time they also saw a difference in health and calf vigor. “There is more

‘buck and kick’ in those calves,” Dan says. “You just get a little more snap with Hereford influence.”

Bottom line, what R-Y Ranch likes about Hereford bulls is the females they produce. “The baldie is the most desirable package in the cattle business today,” Dan says. “Our baldie females are gaining and growing so much better than our straightbred females.”

R-Y herd

When the cow herd was started by Yet’s family in 1956, it was predominately black baldies. Yet’s father, Sandy Sanders, used Hereford bulls at one time and then other bulls were purchased following the trend in the cattle business. Through the years the ranch used “eared” or Bos indicus cattle before switching to mostly straight Angus about 20 years ago.

It’s easy to describe the family as progressive and aggressive. They have diversified the family’s businesses and continue to expand and grow the ranch. The family manages a custom farming and fencing services business as well as a growing cow herd. A new opportunity for the



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ranch has been to use part of the cow herd as recipient cows for seedstock producers wanting to place embryos.

Today the R-Y herd includes both a fall and spring calving herd numbering about 500 head. The embryo contracts, custom farming and the increased income and decreased expense from using Hereford bulls are allowing the ranch to expand in size and cow herd numbers.

“If we can continue to sell calves 70 days earlier, we can

increase our carrying capacity and stretch feed without buying or renting more land,” Dan says with confidence.

Becky, who has been involved with the R-Y herd since birth, is also sold on the benefits of Herefords. “We’ve got the numbers to prove it,” Becky says. “Using Herefords allowed us to market our calves 70 days earlier, they weighed more, plus they topped the market. You can’t argue with that.” **HW**



A group of 2008 fall-born calves at R-Y Ranch.