

Mother Nature Strikes Again



As this issue goes to print, cattlemen in Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska are recovering from a series of winter storms that plagued the region beginning in late December. The storms left tens of thousands without electricity and thousands of cattle without feed or water.

News reports say National Guard helicopters dropped emergency food bundles and bales of hay for people and livestock trapped by snowdrifts as high as rooftops after back-to-back blizzards paralyzed the Plains. Crews worked around the clock to reset utility poles, restore electricity and dig out the snowbound.

Colorado officials have compared the blizzard to a 1997 storm that claimed almost 30,000 head of cattle and cost ranchers \$33 million.

The storm's severity prompted President Bush to sign emergency declarations for federal aid to Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska. In addition, several cattlemen's organizations have lobbied their resources to help producers, and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) has launched a disaster relief effort.

According to NCBA, the relief aid is similar to the effort employed after Hurricane Katrina. It targets producers affected by dangerous winter conditions in Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas. NCBA and state cattlemen's associations are providing assistance through the National Cattlemen's Foundation (NCF). Every dollar contributed directly assists families

struggling to keep their farms and ranches operating.

Donations are tax deductible. Credit card contributions can be made by calling (866) BEEF-USA; online by going to the NCF Web site, www.nationalcattlemensfoundation.org, then selecting "Make a Contribution"; or by check.

Checks should be made payable to the National Cattlemen's Foundation, with "disaster relief" included on the memo line. Mail checks to the NCF, 9110 E. Nichols Ave., Suite 300, Centennial, CO 80112. Those able to donate hay, trucking services or equipment should contact NCBA's Courtney Pollock at (303) 850-3393.

Dealing with Mother Nature is not always easy. In this issue, we take a look at how two Hereford families were affected by Hurricane Katrina and the Texas wildfires. Along with their stories, we also learn how other Hereford breeders came to the aid of those in need. See Page 49 for these stories of courage, perseverance and compassion.

At the 2006 Cattle Industry Convention, attendees had the opportunity to watch video footage from Hurricane Katrina. The images of devastation were heartbreaking. The video touched all of us who watched in awe.

Just as heartbreaking were the devastating pictures of the Texas wildfires and the havoc they caused. One Texas Department of Agriculture news release stated that more than

10,000 fires burned nearly 4 million acres across the state of Texas from Dec. 26, 2005, to March 15, 2006. In the Panhandle alone, about 1 million acres burned. Entire cities were evacuated, homes and barns were lost, and equipment and hay supplies were burned, as the wildfires took their toll.

A challenge facing producers in the Northern Plains is drought. Brian Fuchs, climatologist with the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, told writer Kindra Gordon that the forecast for the spring of 2007 is for more moderate temperatures. He said producers in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Arizona might see drought conditions subside, but the drought will likely linger in the Northern Great Plains. For more about Fuchs' predictions, see Page 36.

As farmers and ranchers, we are at the mercy of Mother Nature. We learn how to deal with her challenges and appreciate the bountiful crops and grass she helps grow to feed our cow herds. May God bless our Hereford family members who are struggling from the mentioned challenges; we hope 2007 will bring relief and new optimism.

Also in this issue

We hope you enjoy *The Whiteface* newsletter that is included in this issue. The theme is "Hereford Testimonials." It's exciting to read

why the producers featured in the issue chose to incorporate Hereford genetics in their operations.

Assistant Editor Teresa Oe did an amazing job researching and writing this piece that the American Hereford Association (AHA) and its members can utilize as a marketing tool for years to come. The AHA communication team encourages producers to utilize it as a means for informing others of the advantages of Hereford genetics. The newsletter will be available online at Hereford.org for producers to download and print out.

Focusing on forage is the theme for this month's issue. Included is a wealth of information about efficiently utilizing available resources. On the cover, Hereford breeder Debby Dulworth shares her family's strategies for managing forage-oriented Herefords. Writer Troy Smith investigates the experts' opinions on rotation and continuous grazing. There's also information about prescribed burning and grazing riparian areas.

Take the time and read the section; you'll be glad you did.