

Utilize Tools Available



Jack Ward

The theme for last year's *Annual Report* was "Herefords in Demand," and it may be the same theme for this year. For those who attended the National Western Stock Show, it was really easy to see and feel the buzz about the Hereford breed.

Even if cattle shows are not your cup of tea, everyone should agree that this year's event was a real home run for the breed. The obvious things to see were the well-presented cattle in the Yards and on the Hill, the tremendous national sale, and the excitement that could be felt while folks gathered in the hospitality suite.

But, some of the most exciting parts of this year's show were happening outside the rings. At least three bulls were leased by artificial insemination (AI) studs, and the studs are still searching for bulls that will fill their needs.

As I have mentioned before, these folks do not buy or lease bulls just to go through the motions. There needs to be a demand. So, this leads to the question:

"What is the market the AI bull studs cater to?"

There are more than 20 million commercial cows in the U.S. alone versus about 110,000 registered Hereford cows on inventory. With this in mind, it is easy to see what market these studs try to capture. Let's look even closer at what these commercial folks are doing. In most cases the cow herds are bred with natural service sires, and the younger females are bred AI. Obviously birth weight (BW) and calving ease (CE) are still the biggest drivers for selection.

If you notice, the genetic trend for BW within the Hereford breed not only has leveled over the past few years but also has seen a decline. Breeders need to be commended for recognizing the need for change and then finding the genetics to make the change. These changes have allowed commercial cattlemen to select Hereford bulls that will work in their heifer programs and give them the needed heterosis they are demanding.

With this issue of the *Hereford World*, you will find the *Hereford AI Book* that can help you sort through bulls to make the genetic change your herd needs.

You can also search *Hereford.org* or request a printed version of the *Sire Summary* to help you with this year's breeding decisions. Remember, breed for your market, and make genetic

changes in the areas that will affect your sales. But, always breed for a balance of traits, and do not make just single-trait selections.

CHBS bulls announced

In addition, this issue includes a list of Certified Hereford Beef Sires (CHBS), see Page 80. These bulls can affect a breeding program that wishes to add more carcass genetics.

There is a slight change in this year's list because of the change in the carcass expected progeny difference (EPD). The bulls are still in the top 25% of the breed for CHB\$ index, but there is a change in the accuracy number set for marbling EPD and ribeye area EPD from .50 to .30.

Collect, submit udder scores

Remember to collect udder scores on your cows at calving time. Today, we use a two score system that scores both teat size and udder attachment. For information on the new scoring system, refer to Page 20 of the January *Hereford World*, or visit *Hereford.org* and click on "Udder Scoring" under the "Whole Herd TPR" tab.

Also note that udder scores have nothing to do with milk production. This will be reflected by calf performance and should not be a concern when you are measuring udder quality.

Let's keep "Herefords in Demand" by making informed breeding decisions. Use all the tools and sources that the American Hereford Association and Hereford breeders provide. **HW**

Genetic defect carriers online

Confirmed carriers of hypotrichosis, dilutor and idiopathic epilepsy (IE) are listed on the AHA Web site, *Hereford.org*. Go to the "Records" tab and select "Confirmed Carriers."

A list of the carriers will also be printed in the July *Hereford World*, or members can contact the AHA at (816) 842-3757 for a list.

Members can also do a search for animals within their herds that are carriers for hypotrichosis, dilutor or IE. With this feature, members can use the combination search for types of animals (dams on inventory, sires on inventory, specific year calf-crops, etc.) and these new "select-if" statements to find carriers within their herds. For questions about this feature, contact Stacy Sanders at ssanders@hereford.org. **HW**