

Opportunity Awaits

As this *Hereford World* issue goes to press, the bull sales have started and the reports are amazing.

Last spring's *Drovers'* survey reported the demand for Hereford genetics in the commercial industry was growing, and it certainly did not miss the mark.

The opportunity for Hereford breeders will be endless, and with this opportunity comes a challenge. In addition to the demand growing for Hereford genetics, the *Drovers'* survey also pointed out some of the most important traits commercial cattlemen are looking for when selecting Hereford bulls.

The No. 1 economically important trait (ERT) is calving ease (CE). Cattlemen want problem-free cattle that are easy to handle. CE is not only important at calving time, but it is also directly related to how quick a female can get back in shape for rebreeding. As we look at improving this trait, the challenge will be to make this improvement and not make sacrifices in other economically important areas.

So, during this breeding season, remember that the choices you make today can directly affect your herd over the next 10 years

and beyond. This is where the real challenge begins, because, as the demand for Hereford cattle continues to grow, breeders will be forced to use all tools at their disposal to make sound breeding decisions. Remember, no matter the size of the herd, seedstock producers must be the ones who supply the commercial industry with the genetics to keep producers profitable.

More importantly, let's look at the demands of the future. It is predicted that in 50 years the population will have grown enough that the food supply will need to increase 100%, and technology will need to account for 70% of this increase.

These statistics indicate that genetic improvement will become even more important. Commercial cattlemen have realized, again, the importance of hybrid vigor and crossbreeding and the importance of incorporating Hereford genetics into their crossbreeding plans. But, commercial cattlemen will rely on the seedstock producers to make the right breeding decisions to find and utilize the right kind of Hereford cattle.

Bottom line, Hereford breeders need to check their biased thoughts at the door and use the information at

hand to find the genetics that will help feed this world in the future.

History is a great thing, and I find myself thinking back to the way it used to be and reminiscing about old experiences, but let's not let history rule our thoughts as we move forward. This industry has created the tools to make genetic progress.

A performance program based on whole-herd reporting is where it starts, and because of modern technology, breeders can research records through several mediums including the American Hereford Association (AHA) Web site — *Hereford.org*.

Take advantage of one of the largest databases in the world at *Hereford.org* and do an expected progeny differences (EPD) search.

In addition, you will find information in this *Hereford World* on some of the most exciting sires in the Hereford breed. Do not be afraid to do additional research through phone calls with breeders, bull stud representatives, AHA field staff and anyone else you can talk to about Hereford genetics. The Hereford breed is at a real crossroads, and the challenge will be in your hands — what an opportunity! **HW**



Jack Ward