

Hereford Excitement Continues to Build



Jack Ward

As the new year has rolled around, the excitement in the Hereford breed continues to gain momentum. We continue to see record highs at commercial bull and female sales, and the enthusiasm that was seen at the National Western was just remarkable.

The power of heterosis continues to be recognized in the commercial industry, and cattlemen are seeing the benefits to adding Hereford genetics. The baldie cattle are just what the industry needs by adding so much from the maternal side and adding fertility while maintaining carcass quality. Furthermore, the cattlemen appreciate the disposition advantage from the Hereford influence.

With the development of GE-EPDs (genomic-enhanced expected progeny differences), Hereford breeders have been able to provide their customers with

another tool to help manage risk and make selections based on Whole Herd Total Performance Recording (TPR) and GE-EPDs.

These tools will allow breeders and their customers to see higher accuracies even on non-parent bulls. Since testing began in August 2012, nearly 3,000 Hereford animals have been 50K genotyped, including both young and proven sires.

This spring, the prediction equations will be re-trained and the correlations updated in order to make the tool even stronger. In addition, the American Hereford Association (AHA) will be sequencing approximately 20 high-accuracy legacy sires in order to expand our work in the area of genomics.

The AHA continues to grow the National Reference Sire Program (NRSP) program while working with large commercial herds in

various research projects to prove the value of Hereford genetics in large real-world settings. We are currently in our second year of work with Simplot Livestock Co., Grand View, Idaho, where calving-ease Hereford sires were used to artificially inseminate virgin heifers.

The first set of calves have been weaned and moved to a GrowSafe feed yard to collect performance data. These steers will be followed through harvest. The long-term goal of the project is to look at the maternal value of the Hereford-sired female.

Data to this point have looked good, the second group of calves is on the ground and we continue to grow this research project.

In addition, the AHA has collected feed intake information at Olsen Ranch for three years and is starting the second year with the Stahly Ranch calves. All of these cattle have had DNA collected and are part of the research for DNA markers associated with feed intake in Hereford cattle. This project looks very promising, and research reports will be seen this spring.

Finally, I would like to make you aware of a rule change that will be adopted this spring. See the sidebar to the left with the amended rule concerning how genetic abnormality carriers are listed on pedigrees. Please read through this amendment and feel free to contact me with any questions. **HW**

Amended Section D

D. Notification to AHA Membership Abnormality with Genetic Marker Test.

When an AHA-approved genetic marker test is available for a genetic abnormality, an AHA-registered animal is confirmed as a carrier of the genetic abnormality when the AHA-registered animal has been determined to be a carrier of the genetic abnormality through diagnostic DNA testing of the animal at an official AHA laboratory. When an AHA-registered animal is confirmed to be a carrier in this manner, the owner(s) of record of the confirmed carrier will be provided notification of such finding in a DNA report generated by the testing laboratory. The confirmed carrier designation will become final immediately, AHA

will record the confirmed carrier status on the confirmed carrier's official AHA record, and AHA will notify, by certified mail, the owner(s) of record of the confirmed carrier of its confirmed carrier designation. An owner of record of the confirmed carrier will have 30 days from the mailing of the certified letter to dispute the test findings and submit a DNA sample from the confirmed carrier for re-testing. If the re-test establishes, to the satisfaction of AHA after consultation with an AHA-approved genetic consultant, that the confirmed carrier designation is incorrect, the confirmed carrier designation will be removed from the animal's official AHA record. **HW**