



“CHB Bites” is a column designed to keep you in-the-know about Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) program happenings. You can also follow CHB on Facebook at facebook.com/CertifiedHerefordBeef.



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Feedlot

We continue our Farm to Fork journey with the feedlot, where Herefords will be fed a special blended ration to help them achieve their full potential as finished cattle. We visited with two feedlots that are renowned for turning out Certified Hereford Beef (CHB®): Feller Cattle Co., Wisner, Neb., and Gregory Feedlots, Tabor, Iowa.

Tom Feller of Feller Cattle Co. (started in 1985) began helping his dad when he was in high school. David Trowbridge, manager of Gregory Feedlot, started a registered Hereford herd in high school with his brother. Following high school, Trowbridge earned an animal science degree from the University of Nebraska and went to work for Gregory Feedlot, where he has been a manager since 1977.

Trowbridge says Herefords fit seamlessly into feedlot operations. “I am proud to say that today’s genetics in the Hereford breed will perform competitively with any other breed in the feedlot,” he says. “Herefords will compete for top gains, conversions and carcass quality. We have genetic diversity and most producers continue to select animals that push our breed forward in all areas of economic relevance.”

According to Trowbridge, the term “finishing cattle” is unique



Do your cattle fit the Certified Hereford Beef Brand?

Live cattle specifications:

- Must have predominately (51%) white face
- Must be Hereford and Hereford-English crossbred cattle
- Must be beef type breeding only (no dairy breeding)
- Must have no excessive hump (Bos Indicus influence)
- Can't be bulls, cows or heiferettes
- May be horned or polled

Carcass specifications:

- Must have USDA select or higher marbling
- Must be “A” maturity only
- Must exhibit medium or fine texture marbling
- Must have a 10-16 in. sq. ribeye area
- Must have less than 1 in. fat cover
- Must be 600-1,000 lb. hot carcass weight
- Must exhibit moderately thick or thicker muscling
- Must have less than a 2 in. hump
- Can't be dark cutters
- Can have no capillary rupture

And if you are looking to buy or sell your top-quality Hereford calves, visit HerefordFeederCattle.com, the latest collaboration from the American Hereford Association and CHB LLC. The website is a free tool for sellers and buyers to list, view or purchase Hereford-influenced cattle. Producers can list cattle by completing a simple online form at the website listed above. If you want more information, contact Trey Befort, CHB supply chain manager, at 816-842-3757 or tbefort@herefordbeef.com. **HW**



Hereford feeder calves like these fill feedlots of Feller Cattle Co. and Gregory Feedlots.

to the United States, as it refers to the beef industry's program of taking cattle from a low-energy, mainly roughage diet and progressively increasing the energy level of their diet to produce a "grain-fed" product with a higher level of marbling.

In a perfect world, Feller says, a 600 lb. steer should take 220 days to finish, while a 900 lb. steer should finish in around 140 days. In order to reach this goal, feedlot cattle receive expertly designed nutrition. Feed rations are determined by animal gender, genetics and final market destinations.

Feller and Trowbridge both hire consulting nutritionists for their feedlots. "The ever increasing technical aspect, levels of precision and constant introduction of new products makes it very difficult to maintain the level of expertise needed," Trowbridge says, making the use of a consulting nutritionist much more efficient.

Vaccinations are given to all cattle when they come into the facility. Each individual animal is also given an electronic identification number. "Vaccinations are essential

to maintaining good health in cattle and thus maximizing the production potential of each animal," Trowbridge says. Both feedlots are responsible for the care and daily observance of their cattle but use a consulting veterinarian for diagnosing, treating and ensuring proper procedures are in place.

When the cattle are getting ready to transition out of the feedlot, they are checked for any necessary withdrawal times. Withdrawal times are common for many of the vaccinations and feed additives used in feedlots and to maintain consumer food safety. Today, this means using a computer program linked to the animal's ID that alerts the feedlot if cattle are being shipped out before the proper withdrawal time. With this procedure in place, feedlot managers can separate the animal until it is properly cleared.

Feller says the well-being of their cattle is a top priority and running a feedlot is a year-round endeavor. "Our doors never close," he says. "Either cattle are coming in or shipping out. We are feeding twice a day and riding pens every day."

"Modern Herefords have improved in the last 10 years," Feller says and contributes this improvement to the breeders who made it happen. "Herefords are more efficient, have good disposition and are weather acclimated."

Gregory Feedlots and Feller Cattle Co. both stated they prefer to finish Hereford-influenced cattle for several reasons. "Good Herefords gain 3.5 to 4 lbs. a day in the feedlot," Feller says.

"We are increasing the number of whiteface cattle in our program because of both the proven improvements in performance and the availability for our producers to access a premium for their product at the packer level," Trowbridge adds. Both feedlots provide CHB-eligible to Greater Omaha Packing Co. Inc.

Feller stated, "We like to deal with programs that tie the packer, consumer and producer together for not necessarily a partnership, but rather a communication relationship that helps everyone perform at their peak and be more efficient." **HW**