



Just what is this producer and others looking for in a sale book?

From the Commercial Cattleman:

What to Include in a Sale Book

by Teresa Oe

A sale book, for many breeders, is the most crucial marketing piece of the year. While design and timing of distribution are important, it is the information provided that sets one operation apart from the next.

Jack Ward, American Hereford Association (AHA) chief operating officer and director of breed improvement, encourages breeders to include a variety of performance data in their sale books. Although many breeders fear overwhelming their commercial customers, each buyer is looking for something different. Thus, Ward recommends including all available performance data, including actual weights, expected progeny differences (EPDs), indexes, scrotal measurements and ultrasound/ carcass data.

Discussions with two Hereford breeders and two of their commercial customers reaffirmed the unique wants of each cattleman and the need for solid, varied information.

Spencer Herefords Inc.

Dale and Terrill Spencer of Spencer Herefords Inc., Brewster, Neb., hosted their 46th annual production sale last fall, including 80 bulls and 50 bred heifers. In their sale

book, the Spencers included birth weight (BW), weaning weight (WW), yearling weight (YW), maternal milk (MM), and milk and growth (M&G) EPDs. They also included three carcass EPDs: rib fat (FAT), intramuscular fat (IMF) and ribeye area (REA). Actual birth weights were also listed in the sale book. Sale weights and scrotal circumferences, as well as weaning, yearling, REA and IMF ratios were provided as a supplemental sheet on sale day.

Between 40 and 50 bulls were pictured and some of the bred heifers as well. Dale wrote the footnotes and Terrill took care of the technical processes for submittal of information to Hereford Publications Inc. (HPI) Creative Services Department (see sidebar: Sale Book Got You Down?).

Terrill tries each year to think of ways to make the sale book easier for cattlemen to use. One simple feature she included last year was a black edge on all the bull pages to separate the bull lots from the female lots. A herd bull page is generally included, and Dale writes bull and heifer introductions to explain the Spencer program.

Kyle Geiser, Merna, Neb., and Robert Larsen, Verdigre, Neb., are commercial cattlemen who are extremely pleased with Spencer cattle and the sale book that accompanies them. Nevertheless, they have a few ideas for all breeders to consider when planning future sale books.

Geiser's main emphasis is raising replacement heifers. Therefore, he'd like to see more information on the bulls' mothers. Ninety percent of his interest is in EPDs rather than individual data and he weights his ultimate buying decision 50% paper, 50% visual.



Hereford Publications Inc. (HPI) Creative Services Department assists Spencers and Tegmeiers in developing their sale books. Note the black edge on Spencer's bull pages. Terrill included this to separate the bull lots from the female lots — a simple, but helpful design element.

Larsen comments that pelvic measurements have gone to the wayside in recent years. As a cow-calf operator keeping replacement heifers, he would like to see this measurement included in production sale books once again. He would also like to see more breeders arrange sire groups in sections and include a chart detailing what “good” numbers are for performance measures. For instance, he says he would benefit from an explanation on what numbers to aim for when evaluating carcass data.

Clarence Tegtmeier and Sons Inc.

Clarence Tegtmeier and Sons Inc., Burchard, Neb., has been home to Herefords for more than 50 years. Russ Tegtmeier says that this is year 46 of hosting an annual production sale. He and his brothers, Roger and Ron, operate the farm/ranch that once was their father Clarence’s. Tegtmeiers market 35 bulls and 35 females, mainly bred heifers, through the sale. The rest are marketed private treaty.

In their sale book they include actual BW, adjusted 205 WW, adjusted 365 YW and BW, WW, YW, MM and M&G EPDs. They also post actual adjusted FAT, IMF and REA. Tegtmeiers plan to include carcass EPDs once accuracy is established, since the measurement of these traits is fairly new to the ranch. A supplemental sale day sheet provides the weight of the bulls and scrotal circumference measurements.

The open female lots include BW and WW EPDs, and the bred heifer lots include breeding information.

Russ writes the sale book footnotes. He pays special attention to the lots without pictures, trying to provide marking details and information about the cow families behind the bulls.

Tegtmeiers also make sure to have complete information pages, with the date, time and location of the sale, as well as the names of sale staff and history of the program, feeding details and vaccination status.

Like Spencers, Tegtmeiers have many satisfied customers. Among these are two commercial cattlemen, Dick Reinhardt, Marysville, Kan., and Dennis Schuester, Steinauer, Neb.

continued on page 96...



Tegtmeiers know the importance of complete information pages and good pictures — two factors that are essential to sale book success.

Timeline for Sale Book Development

Joe Rickabaugh, American Hereford Association (AHA) director of communications, provides the following timeline for sale book development.

NOTE

One year to six months prior to sale

Establish sale date. Contract auctioneer and sale manager if needed. Contact ringmen you want to work your sale. Contact breed association fieldman with date so the sale can be published in the national breed publication. Contract sale site facility if the sale is not going to be held at your operation.

NOTE

Six months prior to sale

Establish advertising schedule and start small advertising with ads to get your date out to people. Start planning sale pictures to be used in sale book. Line up photographer and have pictures taken at least three months prior to the sale. Now is the time to decide on a theme for your sale and the colors/design you want to use for print advertising and also your sale book. Start working on a prospective buyer list, the list you will use to make calls prior to the sale.

NOTE

Three months prior to sale

Start working on sale book. Printer and production generally require one month of production time. Contact Internet provider (if using) to line up advertising, online sale book, e-mail blast, etc. Start working on mailing list in order to have it ready for sale book mailing. Consider sending a postcard to prospective buyers inviting them to return the card for a sale book to be sent.

NOTE

Two months prior to sale

Sale book needs to be sent to production company. Mailing list needs to be complete for sale book mailing. Make sure to order enough sale books to cover your mailing and also the day of the sale as well as last minute requests. It is less costly to throw away unused sale books after the sale in comparison to losing a prospective buyer because you didn't print enough sale books.

NOTE

One month prior to sale

Catalog should be in the mail. Start making calls to prospective buyers. Send sale books to everyone you have received a reply card from. Make sure you have enough sale books for sale day. Send sale books to sale staff; they can get the sale books into buyers' hands.

HW

For Reinhardt, it's the reputation herd and fair treatment he's received from Tegtmeiers over the years that keeps him coming back. He likes their sale book, and particularly pays attention to the pictures and footnotes. He says that footnotes really help, as long as they're unbiased.

Schuester uses Hereford bulls on his black cows. He tends to look first

at BW, likes to see actual data and also sees the need for carcass traits in today's cattle business.

What they're telling us

While overwhelming buyers may be a concern for some, how can you begin to guess what information will make the most sales? Each customer is looking

for something different, so it's critical to provide as much information as possible as clearly as possible.

Make good use of the performance data you've gathered. Explain the EPDs and carcass traits. Dedicate a page or so for descriptions and "good" numbers or breed averages. This information can be obtained from the AHA by calling (816) 842-3757. The Hereford Sire Summary Report preface, found at www.hereford.org under "Whole Herd TPR: EPD Search and Reference," is also a good source for EPD and profit index explanations.

Finally, don't forget to include the basics: farm name/sale name, sale day phones, date, location, time, time zone, farm address and telephone number, Web site, e-mail address, auctioneer, livestock press, breed association representatives, special guests, board of directors, queens, date and time cattle will be available for inspection, other sale-related activities, terms and conditions, veterinarian, livestock insurance, livestock transportation, motel accommodations, directions to sale site (map), and letters from owners, managers or sale managers. **HW**

Sale Book Got You Down? Let Creative Services Help

No doubt, the sale book is a powerful tool, but let's face it — with everything else going on, who has time to put their all into sale book development? If you're having difficulty getting your sale book completed or are unsatisfied with its quality, Hereford Publications Inc. (HPI) may have a solution.

HPI's Creative Services Department has been assisting Hereford members with their promotional needs since 1989. "Creative Services has the production and creative staff to make an effective promotional piece for any size operation," says Joe Rickabaugh, American Hereford Association (AHA) communications director.

Creative Services offers a step-by-step booklet to help clients organize material for sale books to ensure a complete marketing tool. Dale and Terrill Spencer of Spencer Herefords Inc., Brewster, Neb., used to do their own sale book, but for the past two years have hired Creative Services to help. "Since working with the AHA, our sale book is a lot cleaner," Dale says. "More people have commented on how nice it is."

He adds that labor and time involved have been greatly reduced. Dale particularly likes having access to the AHA database. "I don't have to worry about EPDs (expected progeny differences) and pedigrees being right," he says.

Terrill is responsible for doing the technical sale book work. She scans, labels and submits photos to Creative Services and fills out the booklet provided for sale book materials and layout. She says the process is "very simple, just a lot of typing."

Spencers have their own mailing list; however, they have the option to use the AHA mail search as a benefit of utilizing Creative Services. With the AHA mail search feature, breeders can send sale books to AHA adult members, junior members, commercial producers who receive the *Hereford World* tabloid, bull buyers, cow buyers or a combination of any and all lists. Rickabaugh notes that if breeders provide a mailing budget, AHA staff can help identify an appropriate mail search.

In addition to print sale books, the AHA offers an online option. Spencers were one of the first to utilize HerfNet online sale books, which include pedigree and EPD information from the AHA database. Dale is sold on the online sale book. He often can tell when he talks to customers that they've seen or are looking at pictures of his bulls on HerfNet. "Once you put a picture on, it's there forever," Dale says, referring to the ability to see ancestors of the bulls for sale. Dale is certain that the online sale book has increased Spencer sales. "It's amazed us where some of our contacts have come from," he says. "We have a lot of commercial producers who look at it (HerfNet)." **HW**



Sale Book Checklist

- farm name/sale name
- sale day phones
- date
- location
- time
- time zone
- farm address
- farm telephone number
- Web site
- e-mail address
- auctioneer
- livestock press
- breed association representatives
- special guests
- board of directors
- queens
- date and time cattle will be available for inspection
- other sale-related activities
- terms and conditions
- veterinarian
- livestock insurance
- livestock transportation
- motel accommodations
- directions to sale site (map)
- letters from owners, managers or sale managers