

## New Program Promotes AI Use



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Last April the American Hereford Association (AHA) had a two-day strategic planning meeting. This meeting was beneficial to the AHA staff and Board. Many issues were discussed that will continue to give strength and direction to the breed and the AHA.

Core Strategy 3: Increase the quality and consistency of Hereford genetics, is aimed directly at the performance department and the breed improvement committee.

Perhaps the biggest advancement in our breed could result from the increased use of artificial insemination (AI). See Table 1, which shows the comparison of the percentage of registrations from AI sires in the Hereford breed compared to Angus.

I realize that there are “walking” herd sires in the breed that will outperform any AI bull you might use. My dream would be to find those bulls within the breed and utilize them everywhere. In order to find them, we need to use some proven AI bulls to compare and document their value. In doing this, we will change the genetic trends within the breed and add more quality and consistency to our product.

So as a Board and staff, we pose the question to breeders around the country, “Why do you not incorporate AI use into your program?” There are several answers to the question, but two seem to be the most common. First, the issue of time and labor. This is addressed easily today with the different synchronization programs that are available. Secondly, the concern of semen and certificate costs. The AHA staff and Board have been discussing and researching

this issue over the past several months.

In April a new program — non-certificate AI bulls — will be introduced. This program will allow breeders to nominate a bull into the AI program without selling AI certificates.

With this program the Board and staff are sending a bold statement. We believe that we need to continue to build the breed’s momentum by increasing AI use in the Hereford breed and are willing to giving up some potential AHA revenue to do so. As breeders utilize AI more, it will send a message to customers that Hereford breeders are serious about genetic change and are committed to providing a product that will be more predictable.

Specific requirements of the non-certificate AI bull program include:

- A bull can be nominated into the program starting in April 2006.
- Calves being born after Dec. 1, 2006, are eligible to be registered through the program.
- There will be a random sampling of parentage verification of all AI and embryo transfer (ET) calves.
- Producers will pay \$250 to enter a bull in the non-certificate program.
- Once a bull is entered into the program, he will remain in that program and will not be able to move between certificate and non-certificate programs.

The goals of the non-certificate program are to increase AI use within the breed and increase registrations of AI-sired calves. I encourage all bull owners wishing to sell semen to take a close look at this program as it could increase the sale of semen and eliminate the administrative work that goes along with the sale of AI certificates. **HW**

**Table 1: Comparison of the percentage of registrations from AI sires in the Hereford breed compared to Angus.**

