

Talent vs. Hard Work



Julie White

It came as a shock and was followed by a knot in my stomach. I had never before seen the third, fourth or fifth letter of the alphabet on a test let alone a report card. But there it was in crimson red on a final test — “D-.”

I breezed through elementary, junior high and high school classes basically making straight “A’s” and hardly needing to study except putting in a few hours for a couple of dual credit courses through the local college.

I knew full and well I had been struggling in macroeconomics during my first semester at college. It was mostly pride that kept me from getting help early on when the grad student leading the lectures covered the material at a much faster pace than I was used to. After not doing so well on a midterm, I just told myself, “It’s OK, and you’re good at school. This stuff will click and you will be on your way to another list of A’s.”

Somehow I limped out of that course with a passing grade accompanied by a wake-up call. Talent can only take me so far. Returning to school after winter break, I had a newfound respect for studying coursework and spent that semester forming new habits.

Not only does hard work complement talent, but hard work creates proficiency where talent lacks.

In the 18 months I’ve worked for Hereford

breeders, I have found interest in the breed to be nothing but exceptional, and the demand has proven it. Cattlemen are finding the Hereford breed’s attributes desirable, and breeders are capitalizing on this desirability by providing their customers high quality genetics.

The flip side to this is another great story. In the short time I have been focusing my time and energy on Hereford cattle, three new traits have been released as part of the genetic evaluation — udder suspension, teat size and carcass weight.

In addition, new fertility rates (Heifer Calving Rate and Sustained Cow Fertility) were released last year as a research analysis. Along with those, Dry Matter Intake was also developed and released as a research analysis. More and more breeders are employing genomic-enhanced expected progeny differences (GE-EPDs) and utilizing increased accuracies.

It’s exciting to see Hereford breeders work hard to learn and utilize tools available to improve their cattle. It may not come naturally for all to decipher numbers and traits, but those who learn the tools will reap benefits.

In this issue

This month we recognize 2,385 Dams of Distinction and 85 Sires of Distinction. The Dams of Distinction

program recognizes superior cows in the breed and the cattle producers who manage them based on data submitted to the American Hereford Association (AHA). These cows meet the highest standards of commercial cattle production (see Page 32).

The Sires of Distinction program recognizes superior Hereford bulls that sire efficient, fertile and productive females. See Page 38 for the list of bulls honored.

Turn to Page 44 to learn more about the 2016 Hereford Innovator Award winner, Lowell Atwood from Stanford, Ky., and how he has worked to help Hereford breeders receive a fair price for their Hereford and Hereford-cross calves.

The AHA’s online registry system, *MyHerd.org*, continues to add new features and provide training for breeders to get the most out of the program. In this issue we review the online animal transfer feature. Flip to Page 50 for information on how to get the most out of MyHerd, learn about the “Personal List” feature and read through detailed animal transfer FAQs.

Also in this issue are results of the Fort Worth National Hereford Show on Page 60.

I hope this April issue finds you in the midst of a beautiful spring. **HW**