

Efficient Grazers

Each month we are asked to write columns to share some thoughts and concerns with the membership. At times we are asked to challenge breeders to explore different options, and we also use these columns to explain new programs that the American Hereford Association (AHA) offers. I am sure that by now most of you understand that I am not very impressive with a pen. I try to keep my comments pretty straightforward and to the point.

Each month, Angie gives us the *Hereford World* theme, and she and the staff do a great job writing editorial that will stimulate thought. This month, the theme of the *Hereford World* is grazing. In and of itself, this word seems to be rather boring. But after a second thought, I realized that the good Lord put beef cattle on the face of the earth to utilize the many pastures we have throughout the country. There is not a more amazing scene than looking at a group of cows with newborn calves running around a spring pasture.

I have talked on several occasions about the importance of the different programs and technologies that are available to breeders, but I also remind you that there is nothing more significant than raising cattle that use grass to support a calf, maintain body condition and be pregnant for the next calving season. This doesn't mean you should forget the importance of feedlot performance or raising cattle that perform on the rail and are acceptable to the consumer. But, we need to remember the reason that beef cattle have such an advantage in this society. The reason is that they are efficient "grazers" and have the ability to take an inedible product to most beings — grass — and convert it into something that all people need for a healthy diet — meat.

With this in mind, it is also important to understand our environment and make selection decisions based on the type of cattle that our environment can handle and still provide a profit for the owners. This

is a delicate question and one that needs to be answered by individual breeders. Obviously, environments vary from region to region throughout the U.S. So, it is difficult to have a common standard by which all breeders need to follow.

The consumer is still the one we need to ultimately please, so in reality, we all have the same common goal. We need to produce a product that satisfies a variety of consumers. This truth ties directly to the AHA's Core Strategy III: Increase the quality and consistency of Hereford genetics.

The AHA provides many tools for its members to make logical decisions. Even though we each have an environment that we have to manage around, the long-term stability of the Hereford breed lies in the hands of its members to provide a product that can be utilized by commercial producers. This product should be of consistent high quality. There is new technology being developed each day, and it is exciting to be a part of an association that is working alongside other entities to validate and discover these different technologies.

In summary, AHA members have a tough task ahead of them. The task is to provide a product that is acceptable in quality and consistency in the marketplace, and still profitable to raise within a specific environment. Keep up the good work.

Online Hereford 101

In March the AHA hosted its first online Hereford 101. The webcasts offer Hereford breeders an opportunity to learn about AHA programs and activities. Producers can ask questions that are answered live during the webcast.

The next webcast will be May 18 at 7 p.m. (CDT). The focus will be the age of dam adjustments, parameters and correlations. Dan Moser, Kansas State University animal scientist, will be the guest speaker.

To log on to the webcast visit www.liveauctions.tv. **HW**



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Don't Forget



May 31 is the deadline to have data submitted for the summer analysis.