

The American Hereford Association (AHA) Board of Directors met in Kansas City, Mo., April 11-12. The following are highlights of the meeting:

Real estate issues

AHA real estate advisors discussed the continued interest and ongoing discussion of the Downtown Kansas City Council reviewing the prospects of a 1,000-room convention center hotel.

A city-funded feasibility study to determine funding mechanisms and site locations has been commissioned. The AHA headquarters is still in a premium location of interest for such a project. AHA real estate representative, Whitney Kerr, continues to remain in contact with the city manager and prospective developers regarding the outcome or interest in the AHA downtown property.

The AHA Board instructed staff to continue to pursue the purchase of at least five acres of the 10 acre tract, currently under option, located near the Kansas City Airport at Sea Biscuit Park. Closing on the tract has been delayed due to city permitting and infrastructure construction delays.

Board approves new auditor

Upon request from the AHA Board during the fall 2007 meeting, staff solicited bids from two other audit firms to conduct auditing oversight of AHA's books and all of its subsidiaries and related foundation business. It was determined AHA would contract with a new audit firm for the fiscal year 2008.

HPI report

The Hereford Publication Inc. (HPI) board reported the magazine continues to perform well financially. Ride-along catalog business remains strong, and hardware and software technology continues to be upgraded on schedule to meet various efficiency and quality demands.

The AHA Board approved the following advertising policy:

The Publisher reserves the right to decline, reject or cancel any advertising for any reason at any time without liability, even though previously acknowledged or accepted.

Other reports

Ashby Green, National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) director of education, presented NCBA's plans for increasing premise registration across the country. NCBA is proposing working with state beef affiliates, beef breed organizations and state BQA (beef quality assurance) coordinators to increase the knowledge of premise identification and its purpose.

This proposal may be of particular importance considering the Country of Origin Labeling regulations are to be implemented in the fall of 2008.

The AHA Board reviewed a proposal to restructure the organizational and funding practices of the Junior National Hereford Expo. It has been thought that because of the size of the event, the cost of the event, and the limited sites that can cost-effectively host the event, a plan should be evaluated to develop a national committee to assist with the planning and fund raising. The board will continue to study such a plan as information is gathered.

Breed improvement update

Today AHA reports carcass expected progeny differences (EPDs) on an ultrasound scale. For example, AHA reports a percent intramuscular fat for a yearling bull progeny as opposed to a marbling score for a steer progeny. The Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) has recommended that all beef breed associations begin to report carcass and ultrasound EPDs on a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) carcass grade scale instead of an ultrasound scale. The Board approved the conversion, which will occur in the summer genetic analysis. The Board encourages breeders to continue to collect as much yearling ultrasound data as possible. This data will be converted to carcass-based EPDs.

AHA staff will confer with the Canadian Hereford Association to determine if it is feasible to expedite the release of EPDs from the North American Cattle Evaluation one to two weeks earlier than what have been

the traditional release dates. Current release dates are Jan. 3 and Aug. 1.

Beginning January 2009, the AHA will no longer use blood typing for the parental verification of older animals. There will no longer be a blood typing laboratory available after that date.

Genetic abnormality policy modification, testing procedure

The University of Illinois released the idiopathic epilepsy (IE) test for public use. The AHA will enter into a licensing agreement with the University of Illinois to utilize the test with AHA's official DNA laboratory, Maxxam Analytical.

Staff will negotiate a cost with Maxxam to include all available genetic abnormality tests including IE and diluter with the normal DNA profiling test for parental verification.

Beginning July 1, all new artificial insemination (AI) sires submitted to the AHA for permitting must be parentage verified and tested for all identified genetic abnormalities that have a valid DNA test, pending Maxxam validation of testing procedures of the new diagnostic tests. Furthermore, all donor dams submitted for permitting are required to have a DNA profile on file along with the same DNA abnormality test results. Listing of donor dam abnormalities results can only be achieved if the donor dam has been parent verified.

Currently there are more than 14,500 DNA samples at the University of Illinois that will all soon be tested for IE. The AHA Board wishes to communicate with the members how that information is to be utilized. First, any breeder who sent DNA samples into the University of Illinois should understand that the DNA samples and test results are the property of the University of Illinois and the breeder. The results cannot be accessed by the AHA without the expressed written permission of the breeder. AHA will be asking breeders to voluntarily submit their results to the AHA. Secondly, no animal will

be listed as a carrier or non-carrier unless the DNA sample can be properly parent verified. Many of the samples at Illinois will not be eligible for parent identification. However, AHA staff will be asking owners of IE-tested AI sires to release those results to the AHA. DNA sent to the University of Illinois on current permitted AI sires may be matched to the profile of record at Maxxam Analytical and then carrier or non-carrier status will be made public.

Research funding

Due to the increase in corn prices, there has been a significant increase in the research cost of both the Amana feed efficiency trial at the University of Missouri and the Circle A feed efficiency trial. The Board approved the continuance of funding for both projects.

Due to AHA's increasing involvement in research and developing populations for gene discovery and validation, the Board will entertain the prospects of developing a not-for-profit research foundation that will provide a tax deduction for those breeders or corporate entities who wish to support Hereford beef cattle research.

Clone policy reviewed

The AHA reviewed its clone policy. Per the recommendations from Dan Moser and Jon Beever, Section VIII. Rule 10, will be edited to read as follows:

Initial Breeding Values- Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs) generated from National Cattle Evaluation for a cloned animal shall be the same values as the cell-donor animal. All data of future progeny from the cloned animal will be pooled with the cell-donor progeny data for genetic evaluation. The AHA will use the best scientific practices for contemporary grouping and genetic evaluation involving cloned animals.

Show and sale committee report

The show and sale committee proposed a list of judges for the 2008-2009 national show season that was approved by the Board. A listing of those judges will be released in the July *Hereford World*.

Three other actions were approved:

1) No longer does a bull or female have to participate in a regional show in its area to be eligible for show bull

or female of the year title; 2) The show programs and show results distributed in news releases and in the *Hereford World* will reflect the ownership of the animal as it is recorded on the registration certificate. New owners of animals will be accommodated by announcements made at ringside and information placed in advertising; 3) A committee was formed to evaluate the rules for Hereford breed steer eligibility.

Breed marketing plan

The AHA marketing team outlined for the Board a host of initiatives to enhance awareness of the organization, innovations and value of the breed to the commercial beef industry. An aggressive media push has been instituted over the last two years with good success. Staff was instructed to develop a budget for the menu of items presented and submit it at the next budget meeting in August. **HW**