

# Welcome to Our 100th Volume



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This month marks the beginning of the 100th volume of the *Hereford World* publication dating back to its first publication as the *Hereford Journal* on May 1, 1910.

Hayes Walker and John Hazelton were the first publishers of this once privately owned magazine that was distributed to more than 10,000 breeders at a subscription rate of 50 cents per year. During those days, the magazine was mailed twice a month.

Walker and Hazelton were both legendary historians and keepers of the Hereford truths of their time. In Hazelton's book "History and Hand Book of Hereford Cattle," published in 1925, he expounded on the virtues of the Hereford breed as if they were divine gifts.

"Necessity, the 'mother of invention,' was responsible for the development of the Hereford. How great was the necessity, and how well the Hereford has met it, can be realized only by contrasting the conditions that existed half a century ago when the Herefords were just beginning to receive recognition from the cattlemen of the country," Hazelton wrote.

He defined the success of the Hereford breed in the late 1800s as a beacon of change, a necessity meeting an economic demand and a revolutionary innovation to the range

cattle industry. Following the Civil War, the beef cattle industry made a futile attempt to supply a growing taste for fattened beef.

Reformation and expansion were occurring at a rapid rate across the broken country. The industrial revolution was creating jobs in the big industrial cities of the nation, where countless numbers of new Americans immigrated, finding jobs and generating disposable income as a means to buy one of life's greatest luxuries — great tasting, high-quality beef.

The transformation of the longhorn of the Southwest, which produced a 500 lb. carcass at 4 years of age, was bred up with the Hereford bull to produce a whiteface cross that could yield a 500-600 lb. carcass at 12-14 months of age. Hazelton attributed this amazing success and growth of the post-Civil War beef industry to the genetic potential of the Hereford breed for ease of keeping (efficiency) and early maturity (fertility).

Today the Hereford breed is ironically in a similar position as it was in more than 100 years ago. Despite selection biases and decades of trendy fads, the Hereford breed still possesses the original foundation genes for efficiency, ease of flesh and early maturity. Despite more than 100 years of genetic engineering, the Hereford breed is still the most docile breed of all domesticated cattle.

American consumers, and for that matter many of our export customers, are even

more quality conscious than they were at the turn of the century. However, the one thing that has not changed is that efficiency is still the greatest driver of profitability in the U.S. beef industry.

The Hereford breed brought efficiency to the nation's beef cow herd at the turn of the 19th century, and it's poised to deliver those same traits today. It wasn't easy convincing those range bosses to breed their brawly and hardy Spanish-American Longhorns to a Hereford bull. It's not always easy convincing a producer to put the whiteface on the straight black cow. However, when it becomes evident that making such a decision will improve your bottom line, then that story is an easy one to tell. History has borne out this fact.

Recently, our director of breed improvement, Jack Ward, received data from the Circle A Angus crossbreeding project comparing the pregnancy rates of black baldie heifers to straight Angus commercial heifers managed under the same conditions. The baldie females exhibited a 9% advantage in pregnancy rates compared to the straight blacks, a similar pregnancy advantage was found in the baldie females at Lacey Land and Livestock in California.

This is the efficiency that we're talking about. Heterosis and breed complementarity are still alive and well after 100 years and just as many volumes from the *Hereford Journal's* first published issue. **HW**