

# The Importance of Collecting and Submitting Data



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As we make final preparations for the release of two additional traits — Heifer Calving Rate (HCR) and Sustained Cow Fertility (SCF) — it is important to understand how these traits are made possible. In 2000 the American Hereford Association (AHA) Board of Directors made a commitment to adopt the most comprehensive performance recording system that is also endorsed by the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) — Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™).

Whole Herd TPR has absolutely positioned the AHA to gain back market share in the commercial industry because of the reliability and strength of Hereford expected progeny differences (EPDs).

Of course, many other factors have strengthened the program including the introduction of genomics along with the multi-trait genetic evaluation, but it is the commitment to data submission by breeders that has made this program so useful.

It is good to remember the very basic rules of Whole Herd TPR and how the data submitted is used in the evaluation. There are only two traits that are mandatory to be a compliant TPR breeder, and those are 1) reproductive status or disposal codes of each cow on inventory and 2) weaning weights or disposal codes on

each calf born. These rules have been in place since the inception of the program.

However, for the number of calves recorded by year through the AHA, more than 93% of those calves come with a birth weight (BW).

In addition, a calf crop must have all calves accounted for with either a weight or disposal code in order to have them used in the genetic evaluation. There is no biased reporting for any trait in the Whole Herd TPR system.

When considering the genetic trend for BW and calving ease (CE) in the Hereford breed, CE is the trait of economic relevance, but BW is a great indicator trait for CE and with so many CE scores being equal, the biggest driver of CE is BW.

Hereford breeders who were serving on the AHA Board in 2000 when Whole Herd TPR was implemented need to be commended for changing the course of Hereford genetics and its perception. Because of the time it takes to make generational turns in the cow business, it is truly impressive the amount of progress that has been made during the past 15 years. Of course, the value of continuing to collect phenotypes and incorporating genomics into selection will also add



reliability and strength to the TPR system and ultimately each animal's EPDs.

In 2005 the AHA Board developed the Gold TPR program to recognize breeders who went above the TPR basics. To qualify for the prestigious award, the breeder must submit his or her herd inventory prior to the inventory surcharge deadline and must have, on record at AHA, a complete report of calving ease and reproductive status for each dam on the inventory. A complete set of birth, weaning and yearling weights is also required as well as scrotal measurements for each bull calf with a recorded yearling weight. In addition, Gold TPR Breeders must report ultrasound data on 25% or more of their calf crop.

It is the job of the AHA to continue to build and provide the tools that it takes for breeders to make the kind of genetic progress to produce the cattle their customers need. As we continue to add traits to the genetic evaluation, it will be important for breeders to consider the use of profit (\$) index values in order to not over emphasize single traits. Continue to collect data and to get it submitted and the Hereford breed will continue to add market share in the commercial industry. **HW**