

CALF										SIRE		DAM		WEANING RECORD					
HERD ENTITY NUMBER	REGISTRATION NUMBER	DATE CALVED			SEX	ADJ BIRTH WEIGHT	BIRTH WEIGHT RATIO	BIRTH CONT GROUP		C E	HERD ID OR REGISTRATION NUMBER	HERD ID OR REGISTRATION NUMBER	AGE	DAYS OF AGE	WEIGHT	ADJ 206 DAY WEIGHT	WT RATIO	WEAN CONT GROUP	
		MO	DY	YR				ID	HEAD									ID	HEAD
H50	42669966	03	06	04	C	9	*S*	3	1	1	7745	2H14	2	228	514	516	*S*	3	1
												2H11	2	220	508	514	101		



Data with a Purpose

Signs show demand for performance information.

by Angie Stump Denton

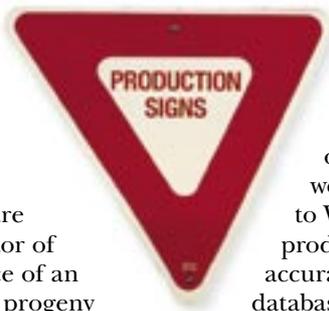
*“What kind of numbers does he have?”
 “Is he a low-birth or high-growth bull?”
 “Is he a high-spread bull?”*

These are just a few of the questions seedstock producers are being asked by commercial cattlemen who are demanding data to support their buying decisions. The signs are clear to most savvy Hereford breeders: performance data is a necessity to be competitive in today’s marketplace.

The basis of collecting performance records is to measure genetic differences between animals for traits of economic importance. The American Hereford Association (AHA) helps seedstock producers in this effort by generating expected progeny differences (EPDs) based on the actual performance data submitted by breeders.

EPD values are the best predictor of the performance of an animal’s future progeny in comparison with other animals’ progeny in the breed. EPDs for the Hereford breed are calculated twice a year with interim EPDs being calculated throughout the year.

Whole Herd TPR
 In January 2001 AHA implemented a Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™) reporting system. Whole Herd TPR is a system of registration and performance tracking, which requires breeders to update their cow herd inventories annually. Breeders are charged for performance data on



a per cow basis as opposed to a per calf basis. With this system AHA members get a true evaluation of their entire cow herd.

“It is absolutely the best performance system in the industry, because it is all or none and doesn’t allow for biased reporting,” explains Jack Ward, AHA chief operating officer and director of breed improvement. “If you collect and report birth weights it has to be all or the Association doesn’t count any of them. You must report a trait measured or a disposal code.”

With selective reporting, if a producer submits only the best half of his calf crop then half of those will be considered above average and half below, when in reality they were all above average. “This type of system when a producer only turns in the best data, it’s not fair to poor animals and it’s not fair to good animals,” Ward adds.

Today 85% of all calves registered by AHA come through the TPR program. To be TPR breeders, producers are only required to submit weaning weights. According to Ward the more traits a producer measures the more accurate and reliable the AHA database becomes.

In 2005 the AHA introduced a Gold TPR breeder program to recognize those progressive Hereford breeders who have measured traits and promptly submitted performance data at all levels of production, including birth weights, weaning weights, yearling weights, scrotal circumference and carcass traits. For specific requirements, see “Gold TPR requirements.”

Turner Bros.
 “Hereford breeders who are serious about being successful seedstock providers to the

YEARLING WORKSHEET										SPRING 2006 EPDs									
CHANGE SEX TO STEER	DATE WEIGHED			WEIGHT	YEARLING		SCROTAL	HIP HEIGHT	DISP	BW		WW		MILK		M&G		SC	
	MO	DY	YR		MGMT	GRP				EPD	Acc	EPD	Acc	EPD	Acc	EPD	Acc	EPD	Acc
										3.1	P	39	P	16	P	35	0.4	P	
										3.6	P+	35	P+	15	P	32	0.3	P+	
																	0.2	P+	
																	0.7	P+	

commercial beef cattle industry must participate in the program (Whole Herd TPR)," says Hereford breeder Jack Turner of Turner Bros., Oklahoma City. "In the absence of such data the breeder does not know the genetics he offers, its strengths, its short comings — the qualities he or she needs to improve upon. In the absence of data the breeder cannot plan or implement a breeding program that produces a product his customers demand."

Turner started collecting performance data in 1987. He credits the decision to the late Bob Taylor of Colorado State University, who operated a family ranch and a registered Hereford operation. Taylor was concerned about the birth weights of Hereford cattle.

"Dr. Taylor told me almost 20 years ago that if Hereford breeders did not work to reduce the birth weight of Hereford calves, Herefords would become a hobby breed," Turner says. "Experiencing terrible calving problems in my own operation at the time and realizing I was passing such problems to my commercial bull customers caused me to realize if I wanted to remain a Hereford seedstock producer with any prospect of success I needed to attack the basic problem of birth weight."

Turner says his customers demand performance data. He estimates that if he didn't measure traits and report the data to the Association for genetic evaluation and EPD calculations, he would

not be able to market 90% of the bulls and females he produces as seedstock.

"Participating in the Whole Herd TPR program has enabled us to remain as a successful Hereford seedstock producer providing a product to a commercial customer base that is profit oriented," Turner says. "Our customers tell us the genetics they need to produce low-cost beef cattle. We listen and act accordingly. Participation in the TPR program is the basis from which we provide our serious buyers a spreadsheet with 29 specific items of information on each bull we offer."

Huth Polled Herefords

Jerry Huth, Huth Polled Herefords, Oakfield, Wis., has been collecting performance data — weaning and yearling weights — since 1973. Today Huth collects calving ease information; birth, weaning and yearling weights; ultrasound measurements; cow weights at weaning; dam udder scores at calving; and scrotal and frame size at yearling.

"Collecting data helps me develop a road map of how my cattle will perform," Huth says. "The best thing the Association ever did was implement Whole Herd TPR. It is the duty of a registered Hereford breeder to keep careful data on cattle and the only way to do that is to participate in TPR."

Since 1973 Huth has increased his bulls, average yearling weights



"Collecting data takes time, but if you want to be a bona fide registered breeder you've got to do it."

— Jerry Huth

from 900 lb. to 1,200 lb. and increased weaning weights from 425 lb. to 650 lb.

Huth suggests producers organize tight contemporary groups. "Tighter contemporary groups make it easier to collect data while making the data more useful and more uniform, which is the key," he says.

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Gold TPR requirements

- Submit herd inventory prior to the date inventory surcharge goes into effect
- Complete reporting of calving ease and reproductive status for each dam on inventory
- Complete reporting of birth weights
- Complete reporting of weaning weights
- Complete reporting of yearling weights
- Complete reporting of scrotal measurements for each bull calf with a recorded yearling weight
- Ultrasound data reporting on 25% or more of the calf crop **HW**

"In the absence of data the breeder cannot plan or implement a breeding program that produces a product his customers demand."

— Jack Turner

REGISTRATION NUMBER
42669966
42669967
42612264
42612267



Performance data is a necessity to be competitive in today's marketplace.

COR	OR	TION	R	WEANING RECORD					CHANG	SEX TO	STEER
				A	DAYS	WEIGHT	ADD	WT			
				GE	OF		2% DAY	RATIO	ID	#	
				AGE	AGE	WEIGHT	WEIGHT			HEAD	
				2	228	514	516	*S*	3	1	
				2	220	598	608	101	1	3	

and yearling weights; they now also collect ultrasound and carcass data.

"Today I don't think we could sell to our commercial customers without data," Ken Bieber says. "Whole Herd TPR is one of the great things our Association started. I wish we would have done it years ago. If producers submit disposal codes, it will help our Association identify problem cattle. Whole Herd TPR is a must."

Bieber says collecting data has helped K&B improve traits without sacrificing other traits. By collecting data and making selection decisions based on this data, the Biebers were able to increase bull yearling weights by 150 lb. while decreasing birth weight.

"Having data on the cattle makes them worth more when you sell them," Ken says.

Participating in performance programs has also helped the Biebers with replacement selection. "When you use the data you won't miss any of the younger cattle," Ken says. "You can select cattle that fit your selection program."

According to Ken, participating in Whole Herd TPR is an easy decision to make. The day is coming when there won't be many breeders selling cattle without performance data. He does warn that too much data can confuse people.

Ken says ratios are important tools to determine how an individual compared to its contemporary group.

"If you don't have data commercial producers are not going to come to your place to buy cattle," Ken says. "Today's commercial cattleman is well educated and wants to know how cattle are going to perform." **HW**

He also says it's important to collect and submit performance information on your entire herd. Don't just pick the best.

Huth is a believer inudder scores, and he encourages other producers to begin taking these scores as well.

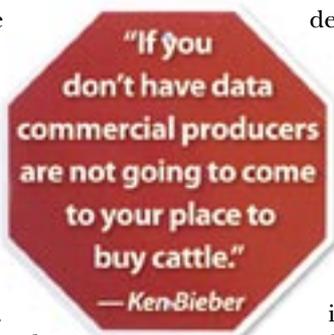
"If I did not collect data on my cattle, I would only have a commodity product," Huth says. "You might as well not be in the registered business if you don't collect data. The commitment to collecting data can average \$250 more per calf for the whole calf crop."

Huth encourages producers not to focus on just one EPD. When he selected for just high growth

he had to assist 20% of births on his farm. Since refining that focus and making selection decisions that keep birth weights in check, his assisted births have declined to 2%.

"Collecting data takes time, but if you want to be a bona fide registered breeder you've got to do it," Huth says.

"Collecting and submitting the data in a timely fashion does make the process easier."



K&B Herefords

Gold TPR Breeder, K&B Herefords of Onida, S.D., was one of the first herds in South Dakota to start collecting performance data. In the beginning the Bieber family collected birth, weaning