

Notes from the Performance Department

by Jack Ward

Pan-American evaluation to release this month

The fall 2009 genetic evaluation will have a name change. It will no longer be NACE (North American Cattle Evaluation); it will be PACE (Pan American Cattle Evaluation).

The countries of Argentina, Canada, Uruguay and the U.S. have joined together to produce the first combined genetic evaluation between countries.

U.S. breeders should see very little change to their numbers outside the changes that normally occur due to pedigree, individual performance or progeny performance.

The model has changed slightly, but the North American parameters will be used. The intent of this evaluation is to broaden the horizons for Hereford breeders between continents.

This evaluation will link the countries and will add to the number of cattle within each genetic evaluation. PACE will expand marketing opportunities between countries and, thus, allow for more linkage as common genetics will be used throughout North and South America.

This could prove to be very beneficial to U.S. breeders as they could market semen to large herds in South America and get bulls proven in large contemporary groups. There has been extensive research done and multiple test runs completed to ensure that this evaluation is not only possible but also informative.

The American Hereford Association (AHA) is proud to be a part of this landmark genetic evaluation, and it could be the stepping-stone to a global evaluation. So, when the next genetic analysis is released and you start your searches on the Web, you will be searching not only North American sires but also South American sires.

Hypotrichosis research update

Jon Beever, University of Illinois molecular geneticist, has discovered a DNA marker for hypotrichosis. This simple recessive trait is recognized as a genetic abnormality within the Hereford breed. The marker is in the process of being moved and validated at Maxxam.

At a minimum, when the test is validated, Maxxam will test all artificial insemination (AI) sires and embryo transfer (ET) donor dams, and their pedigrees will be labeled accordingly.

This testing will not affect regular registrations beyond the requirement of proper validation of AI sires and a profile on ET donor dams.

Again, breeders can have the opportunity to test cattle through the AHA by requesting kits, or they may choose to use Agri-Genomics. If Maxxam is used, all test results will be published by labeling pedigrees and adding carriers to the genetic abnormality list that can be found on the AHA Web site, *Hereford.org*, and is updated in the *Hereford World* once a year (see Page 20).

Some breeders have submitted samples to Beever already, but the test has not yet been added to the Maxxam panel. This addition should be done soon, and at that time the AHA will notify the membership through *Hereford e-News* and the *Hereford World*. **HW**