

Your Commitment Has Been Remarkable



Craig Huffhines

It takes special people to be in the seedstock business. It's not an easy task. The challenges are endless to engineer genetics, stay up-to-date with science, understand technical issues like beef cattle genomics, reproductive technology, herd health and management, and all of the nuances going into the American Hereford Association (AHA) Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™) program.

The AHA asks a lot from you as a breeder. We ask you to turn in your cow inventories and amass large sums of data on every measurable trait imaginable that might affect the economics of the beef industry. We ask you to pull hair for DNA samples so that we might become more accurate at catching mating errors that inevitably pop up.

Being a seedstock breeder requires discipline

and commitment. Most of us dislike balancing our checkbooks at the end of the month, but you're asked to record countless data points and then figure out how to use online registry and performance recording systems on slow dial-up Internet. (We are working hard to make this easier in the future.)

This crazy, labor-intensive passion of raising great beef cattle is a team effort. A team made up of your AHA elected leaders; the staff who answer to them and execute the overall direction of AHA leadership; and, most importantly, you, the breeders, who take advantage of the services AHA provides.

This partnership is at times challenging, but it has brought about great results for the iconic Hereford breed. Fifteen years ago, a Hereford bull calf was considered a by-product

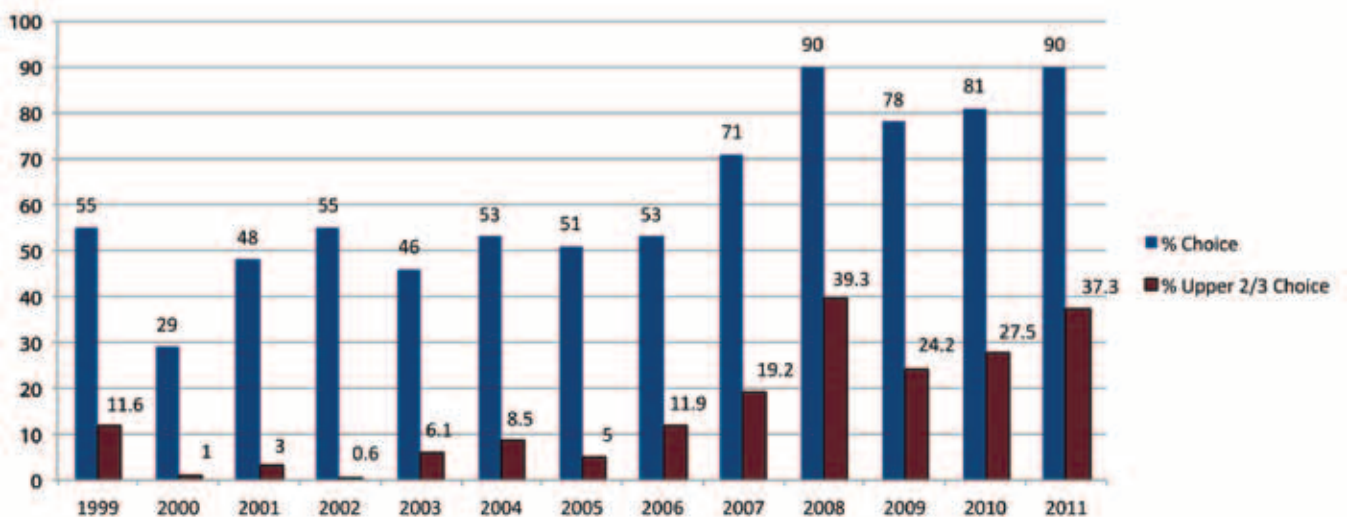
for raising breeding heifers for many Hereford breeders. Today, one in four commercial cattlemen is buying Hereford bulls, and the number is expected to grow.

I want to thank you breeders for all the hard work you put into raising quality cattle. Your passion for this great business is contagious and, thankfully so, because without it there wouldn't be nearly as many involved in raising high-quality, performance-tested Hereford seedstock for the commercial beef business.

I also want to congratulate you for the strides you have made in



AHA NRSP Quality Grade 1999-2011



genetic improvement. In the last 10 years, the Hereford breed has increased weaning weight by 10 lb. and yearling weight by 17 lb., while making the breed average expected progeny difference (EPD) for birth weight trend lighter.

The Hereford breed has also made great strides in carcass quality. The National Reference Sire Program (NRSP) has been a proving ground for both young and proven sires in the area of feedlot and carcass performance. Two herds who have been test herds for NRSP for many years are Olsen Ranches Inc., Harrisburg, Neb., and Stahly Ranch, Cavour, S.D.

During the past 12 years, the Olsen herd has improved the percentage of Hereford-sired calves grading Choice from approximately 55% to 90% (See "AHA NRSP Quality Grade 1999-2011" chart).

Furthermore, Hereford-sired calves raised at Olsen's have improved the percent of highly marbled upper two-thirds Choice carcasses from little more than a handful to 37.5%. No longer should the Hereford breed ever be knocked for not having the ability to produce highly marbled carcasses.

The tools are readily available to engineer cattle that provide calving ease, with rapid rate of gain, and can reach the highly coveted Choice grade that is in such high demand. Aside from those invaluable contributions, the Hereford breed still remains the most docile, user-friendly breed worldwide. It's for these reasons, spawned by your efforts, that the Hereford breed is one of the most sought-after breeds of cattle in America. **HW**