

Making Strides



Jack Ward

As we enter the summer months, most reports show that the crops are in the ground and hay is getting put up in most areas with few issues. Moisture has been good to plentiful and feedstuffs should be solid for the next few months. I am sure that most have completed spring breeding and have turned the bulls in with cows.

Hereford membership has seen another good sale season with solid averages and more cattle getting sold in most cases. As each of you made breeding decisions this spring, I hope that you found the additional runs of the genetic evaluation useful. It is key as we move forward to get data into the evaluation as quickly as possible. Of course, for the proven bulls, it is less important. However, for those looking to make quicker generational turns with younger genetics, it is imperative that we add data as they are submitted to give the best and most informed evaluation to make genetic progress.

With this objective in mind, I would encourage breeders to get data submitted at each stage of production as soon as possible. As we move forward with the exchange from our current genetic evaluation to the new BOLT software, we will have the capability to move to even more frequent runs of the evaluation.

As the summer progresses, I challenge breeders to identify ways to submit more harvest data on calves. This end-product information, when added to the genetic evaluation, has such an enormous effect on end-product traits and will allow breeders to identify genetics that are demanded by the feedyard and packer.

Of course, I would not encourage any breeder to single-trait select. The progress Hereford has made to identify maternal genetics that fit the commercial industry has been unprecedented over the past few years; however, the consumer is the ultimate buyer, and quality will continue to add value to the end product.

The American Hereford Association (AHA) young sire tests have allowed us to collect a great amount of carcass data, but if breeders feed some cattle or have customers with calves with known sires and can provide information on end-product performance, we can use this data in the evaluation.

Recently I attended a meeting at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (MARC) in Clay Center, Neb. This meeting was attended by both pork and beef industry leaders, and we

heard about current research being done at MARC and discussed opportunities. In both industries, there is still plenty of work to be done in the areas of genomics, animal health, food safety, efficiency, reproduction and all other areas that affect profitability for both industries. All of this work needs to be done in a manner that is healthful for the environment and answers the call that consumers have for animal welfare.

In April, I was fortunate to join a strong delegation of U.S. Hereford breeders at the World Hereford Conference hosted by the Uruguay Hereford Society. It was a great opportunity to meet with cattlemen from around the world to discuss issues of not only Hereford breeders but to hear about issues facing the entire beef industry.

We enjoyed some great technical meetings and presentations along with country reports during the conference. We watched a great Hereford show — both haltered and pen shows. The post-conference tours were exceptional and provided a clear picture of how Hereford cattle are raised in Uruguay.

It was very clear that producers in Uruguay still maintain a focus on grass-fed beef, and during our tours, we saw a lot of U.S. genetics represented. The food and hospitality was first class, and on behalf of the AHA, my thanks and congratulations go out to the Uruguay Hereford Society. **HW**



PHOTO BY JANEL SHAW

Cattlemen in Uruguay focus production mainly on grass-fed beef.