



Tips for Weaning Time

I hope you are either catching up with rainfall or drying out from a little too much. It has actually been a nice summer around Kansas City; the cows are doing well and everyone is thinking about weaning.

With different environments, different weaning strategies can be utilized. Those of you who are in drought areas need to remember that early weaning is an option and can provide an opportunity to get cows rebred in a timelier fashion. There is plenty of research that proves early weaning to be a great option for those who have feed restrictions or just simply want to manage a cow herd a bit differently from tradition. The benefits of early weaning are:

- More cows managed per acre.
- Increased pregnancy rate.
- Less calf mortality due to immune system still being strong in younger calves.
- Increased marbling in fed cattle.
- True reading of milk production in cow herd.

These are just a few of the ways that early weaning can benefit both purebred and commercial producers. Hereford breeders need to remember that weaning weights are accepted for the genetic analysis on calves that are 110 days of age. Obviously this practice does ask for more feed into the calves, but it is either feed the calf or feed the cow.

If you are in a less stressful area and are looking to wean at a more traditional time, remember that weights need to be taken and submitted prior to Nov. 1 to be used in the spring genetic analysis. In addition, we need weaning weights on all calves including embryo transfer (ET) calves if you are going to collect ultrasound data.

Also, take cow weights along with body condition scores on all cows at weaning. This does not need to be done on the day calves are weaned; you have a 45-day window on either side of weaning.

Remember to incorporate a good health program. Prewaning shots are vital to the future value of a calf including performance and carcass quality. Consult with your local

veterinarian to develop a proper health program. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Internet changes

I would like to let all of you know about some changes we've made on the American Hereford Association (AHA) Web site, www.hereford.org. The AHA Board of Directors has approved changes to the Web site, allowing easier access to data and simplified searches. First of all, performance pedigrees are now available for anyone searching for Hereford genetics.

Second, more options have been added to the expected progeny difference (EPD) search form. Now you can search by carcass sires or even by National Reference Sire Program (NRSP) sires.

Finally, you may have noticed a Spanish version of the Web site's animal and member search tools. We wanted to make Hereford data more accessible to our Spanish-speaking breeders and customers. Now, these folks can use the AHA search tools with ease.

Remember, Hereford cattle are continuing to gain market share

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as commercial producers are looking for problem-free, easy-feeding cattle. Drought conditions along with financial constraints will continue to force producers to seek those cattle that excel in these convenience traits.

Continue to collect information and remember to listen to your customers and the industry. **HW**