

Inside...



DNA Q&A 16



Weaning Tips 22



Pyrethroids and Bull Fertility: Cause for Caution, Not Panic .. 26

More Vigor

Likely Land & Livestock Co., a member of the Harris Ranch Partnership for Quality program, has incorporated Hereford genetics into its program to improve reproduction, longevity and calf vigor.

by Angie Stump Denton

Nearly 15 years ago, Bill Flournoy, president of Likely Land & Livestock Co., along with his brothers — John and David — made the decision to join the Harris Ranch Partnership for Quality program. After 15 years of using only Angus bulls, Flournoy says Likely Livestock has seen a decrease in calf vigor, reproduction and longevity. So the decision was made to add Hereford bulls to the mix.

“Our cow herd got to be straight black and was getting a little ‘dull,’” Flournoy says. “We have a good bunch of Angus cows with good udders but we were struggling to get our cows bred. We also saw our neighbors using Hereford bulls on black cows.”

Heterosis research

Flournoy says he was excited when he heard about the Harris Ranch Heterosis Project. The heterosis study, which started in 2005, was conducted in cooperation with California State University, Chico; Lacey Livestock; Harris Feeding Co.; and Harris Ranch Beef Co. The objective of the project was to conduct a controlled crossbreeding system comparing progeny sired by Hereford and Angus



Thanks to the Harris Ranch Heterosis Project, more calves like this one — full of vigor and Hereford sired — will be born at Likely Land & Livestock Co.

bulls under commercial conditions, emphasizing economic differences at the ranch, feedlot and packing plant.

The three-year, real-world commercial heterosis project comparing progeny from Hereford and Angus bulls when crossed on Angus-based cows proved calves sired by Hereford bulls have a \$30 per head documented advantage in feedlot profitability when compared to Angus-sired calves. The study also documented a maternal advantage of 7% higher pregnancy rate when comparing the Hereford-sired females to Angus-sired females. For more about the

Harris Heterosis Research Project, visit Hereford.org/HarrisHeterosisProject.

With the results of the Harris project documenting the advantages of heterosis, the Flournoy brothers made the decision to purchase Hereford bulls to utilize on their Angus-based cows. In 2011 Hereford bulls that met the carcass and growth specifications set by Harris were purchased and utilized in the Likely Livestock herd.

“We went to Hereford bulls to get more vigor in our cattle,” Flournoy says. “Not only in our calves but also in

continued on page 14...

reproduction. We wanted to get more longevity and reproduction efficiency from the Hereford-sired cattle.”

Looking back

Bill's great-grandfather, John D. Flournoy, settled in the South Fork Valley (Likely, Calif., area) in 1871. Many of John's descendants have followed in his footsteps as a cattleman.

Formed in 1973, Likely Land & Livestock Co. is a partnership between Bill Flournoy and his brothers — John and David. Their dad, Don, still helps on the ranch, but the three brothers manage the day-to-day operations. Bill manages the 2,500-plus cow herd, John's focus is hay and grassland management, and David keeps all the equipment running effectively.

The brothers, along with other ranch hands, meet at 6 each morning for breakfast at the ranch cookhouse. It's a time to plan for the day's activities. The ranch cook also prepares lunch for the crew.

Their program

Likely Land & Livestock is a commercial beef operation that is highly dependent on federal lands for summer grazing. Historically, the Flournoy family managed a Hereford-based cow herd.

“We really like the Hereford bulls. The bulls are gentle and nice to manage yet they are active in the pasture and get their job done.”

— Bill Flournoy

For the last 15 years, the Flournoy family has focused on end-product merit because of its participation in the Harris program. “We've seen a lot of improvement in carcass quality,” Flournoy says. “Improving from 50% Choice to now 95% Choice or better.”

Because of the family's commitment to utilizing progressive tools, in 2002 the ranch was named Commercial Cattleman of the Year by the California Beef Cattle Improvement Association.

Today the Likely Land & Livestock herd numbers 2,500 cows along with 100 herd bulls. Each year the Flournoy family retains 450 heifers. The operation also puts up about 9,000 tons of hay per year.

The cow herd calves in January and February. Likely Land & Livestock



Co. calves are weaned in late fall and preconditioned in its feedlot for 45 days on chopped meadow hay grown on the ranch. Then they are shipped to the Harris Feedlot in Coalinga, Calif.

The Flournoys have utilized artificial insemination (AI) in recent years. This has allowed the family to breed replacement heifers to low birth weight bulls.

Hereford results

Flournoy says his family is very happy with the first Hereford-sired calf crop that is on the ground. “They look good and show a lot of vigor,” he says.

His crew also likes managing the Hereford bulls. “We really like the Hereford bulls. The bulls are gentle and nice to manage yet they are active in the pasture and get their job done,” Flournoy says. “We also like how they do not try to climb out of the corral when they get by themselves.”

This summer 30 Hereford bulls are currently in use at Likely and the plan is to buy another dozen or more this fall. Flournoy says the plan is to eventually have half his bull battery Hereford.

“We're happy, to say the least,” he says about the decision to add more vigor to their herd by utilizing Hereford bulls. **HW**



The Flournoy family settled in the South Fork Valley in 1871 — more than 140 years ago. After 15 years of using Angus bulls, the family is utilizing Hereford bulls to add more hybrid vigor in its calf crop as well as improve cow herd reproduction efficiency.