

Tough Cull

This month's issue is focused on animal health, and this topic has several parts that are important to sustainable beef production. Not only is beef cattle health important to the bottom line of the cow-calf producer, backgrounder and feedlot, but it also has an important role in regard to the consumer. There is no doubt the consumer is the most important.

As the millennials become the biggest group of buyers in the marketplace, not only will they demand a good eating experience, but they will also want to know how their product has been handled, what it has been fed and if it has been treated properly with the right withdrawal.

The biggest hurdle for the beef industry to cross is making sure that this new group of buyers is satisfied while producers are keeping the industry profitable and fulfilling the demands of a growing world population. How does this affect the Hereford seedstock industry? It is simple; we must again be open to new technology and must identify the genetics that provide consumers what they want and need.

At times, I hear producers say we are in information overload and we should not add any new traits to the already cumbersome set of numbers. I can assure you, however, that this is not going to be possible. Hereford cattle are continuing to add market share in the commercial cow herd, and this

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growth has been fueled mainly because of both the direct and maternal heterosis effects when used on alternate breed cows.

Through the various research projects that the American Hereford Association (AHA) has been involved with over the past few years, Hereford cattle provide a great alternative to a predominant black female.

As the commercial industry continues to add Hereford genetics, it will be imperative for seedstock producers to put selection pressure on pedigrees that are healthier and take less maintenance. Health, just like all other traits, is heritable and selection pressure can be put on this trait while producers are making progress on other economically relevant traits of interest.

The AHA has been committed to working with various U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded projects to build the tools that can make this selection process easier, but it does all start at the producer level. Do not be complacent with high cattle prices, and do not get

caught in the game of being satisfied with marketing a product of less genetic potential because of a short-term gain in profit. We must be diligent in selection and tough with culling in all areas of production including health. The industry and consumers are counting on it.

Board candidates announced

The AHA nominating committee has announced six Hereford breeders vying for positions on the Board of Directors. Candidates include:

Northwest Region

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Southeast Region

Craig Bacon

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Northeast Region

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Southwest Region

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Kyle Perez

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Four directors will be selected during the Annual Meeting on Oct. 31 in Kansas City. Candidate bios will be printed in the October *Hereford World*.

The AHA would like to thank the nominating committee for their efforts: Chairman Marty Lueck, Mountain Grove, Mo.; Kevin Jensen, Courtland, Kan.; Bill King, Stanley, N.M.; Norris Fowler, Jonesville, S.C.; and Bob Morrison, Lexington, Ohio. **HW**