



## More With Less

The beef industry continues to be pressured to produce more with less, which has given us all an opportunity to look at ways to become more efficient in our operations.

As defined by a dictionary, the term “efficient” is “the ratio of useful output to the total input.” In a cow-calf operation, this can be expressed by measuring the total pounds of beef produced per cow exposed.

It has been documented that reproduction efficiency trumps any other trait for success at the cow-calf level, and this efficiency can be influenced by cow nutrition, herd health, bull and cow fertility, and pasture and feed management. In the past many have tried to change profitability by looking only at outputs and price, but in most cases, the truly profitable producers are the ones that have the output to input ratio in balance.

At the American Hereford Association (AHA), we currently display expected progeny differences (EPDs) for 15 different traits and four profit indexes, and we are in the process of adding additional fertility, feed intake and docility traits.

With this load of traits, it can be difficult to select cattle that give a producer the opportunity to be profitable because the tendency is to always think a little more is always better. As an output increases, there will always be a cost associated with this increase.

Over the years, the industry has developed dollar (\$) indexes to help cattlemen take a balanced approach to selection. These \$Indexes use optimums for various production systems, which allow producers to make decisions with profitability as the goal.

The AHA's four \$Indexes were developed with different production systems in mind. The Baldie Maternal Index (\$BMI) focuses on using Hereford bulls in a British crossbreeding scheme that utilizes maternal heterosis with a focus on heifer retention and feedlot and end-product performance.

As the industry continues to evolve, the Hereford breed has positioned itself well to be the breed of choice in the commercial cow herd for its maternal strengths. The challenge for our members will be to continue to use genetics that provide the industry with cattle that have been selected with a focus on traits of economic importance and can be used to increase profitability, not just total outputs. **HW**

### The four Hereford indexes are:



**Baldie Maternal Index (\$BMI)** — This is an index to maximize profit for commercial cow-calf producers who use Hereford bulls in rotational crossbreeding programs on Angus-based cows. Retained ownership of calves through the feedlot phase of production is maintained, and the cattle are to be marketed on a CHB pricing grid.



**Brahman Influence Index (\$BII)** — This index utilizes Hereford bulls in a rotational crossbreeding system with Brahman. This index puts more emphasis on fertility and age at puberty and less emphasis on growth. Because Brahman cattle are not used in the CHB program, a commodity pricing grid is used.



**Certified Hereford Beef Index (\$CHB)** — This is a terminal sire index where Hereford bulls are used on British-cross cows, and all offspring are sold as fed cattle on a CHB pricing grid. There is no emphasis on milk or fertility since all cattle will be terminal. This index promotes growth and carcass.



**Calving Ease Index (\$CEZ)** — This index is used to select bulls that will be used in a heifer program and has increased emphasis on direct and maternal calving ease. **HW**

## AHA CONTACTS

### American Hereford Association

**Mailing address:**  
P.O. Box 014059, Kansas City, MO 64101-0059

**Physical address:**  
1501 Wyandotte St., Kansas City, MO 64108  
816-842-3757 • Fax 816-842-6931  
hworld@hereford.org • Hereford.org

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Shane Bedwell, sbedwell@hereford.org

**Chief financial officer**  
Leslie Mathews, lmathews@hereford.org

**Director of records department**  
Stacy Sanders, ssanders@hereford.org

**Director of commercial programs**  
Trey Befort, tbefort@herefordbeef.org

**Director of youth activities**  
Amy Cowan, acowan@hereford.org

**National shows coordinator and youth activities assistant**  
Bailey Clanton, bclanton@hereford.org

**Records supervisor**  
Tena Martin, tmartin@hereford.org

**Education and information services coordinator**  
Christy Bradshaw, cbradshaw@hereford.org

### Marketing and communications coordinators

Kaylen Baker, kbaker@hereford.org  
Katy Holdener, kholdener@hereford.org

**BuyHereford.com manager**  
Dennis Schock, dschock@hereford.org  
903-815-2004

### Certified Hereford Beef Staff

**Chief operating officer**  
Amari Manning, amanning@herefordbeef.org

**Vice president of sales**  
Mick Welch, mwelch@herefordbeef.org

**Regional brand managers**  
Sarah Samuels, ssamuels@herefordbeef.org  
Ron Santoro, rsantoro@herefordbeef.org

**Business analyst**  
Anne Stuart, astuart@hereford.org  
For information about marketing Hereford-influenced feeder cattle or about the Hereford Verified program, call Trey Befort at 816-842-3758 or visit [HerefordFeederCattle.com](http://HerefordFeederCattle.com).

### Hereford World Staff

**Director of field management and seedstock marketing**  
Joe Rickabaugh, jrick@hereford.org

**Production manager**  
Caryn Vaught, cvaught@hereford.org

**Editor**  
Julie Mais, jmais@hereford.org

**Assistant editor**  
Sara Gugelmeyer, sgugelmeyer@hereford.org

**Advertising coordinator**  
Alison Marx, amax@hereford.org

**Creative Services coordinator**  
Nicole Crosson, nwoods@hereford.org

**Editorial designer/assistant**  
Christy Benigno

**Graphic designers**  
Bruce Huxol and Sean Jersett

**Production assistant**  
Debbie Rush

**Contributing writers**  
Kindra Gordon, Troy Smith, Heather Smith  
Thomas and Kayla M. Wilkins

### Field Staff

**Western Region – Mark Holt**  
Ariz., Calif., Idaho, Nev., Ore., Utah and Wash.  
4247 S. Road C, Vale, OR 97918  
208-369-7425, mholt@hereford.org

**Mountain Region – Lander Nicodemus**  
Colo., Mont., Wyo. and western Canadian provinces  
2343 Co. Rd. 135, Cheyenne, WY 82009  
307-421-8141, lnicodemus@hereford.org

**North Central Region – Levi Landers**  
Kan., Minn., Neb., N.D. and S.D.  
1017 40 Rd., Minden, NE 68959  
308-730-1396, llanders@hereford.org

**Upper Midwest Region – John Meents**  
Ill., Ind., Ky., Md., Mich., Ohio, Pa., W.Va. and Wis.  
21555 S.R. 698, Jenera, OH 45841  
419-306-7480, jmeents@hereford.org

**Advertising Representative – Justin Stelzer**  
Ark., La., N.M., Okla. and Texas  
13601 S. 4050 Rd., Oologah, OK 74053  
817-992-7059, jcs@hereford.com

**Eastern Region – Tommy Coley**  
Ala., Fla., Ga., Miss., N.C., S.C., Tenn. and Va.  
1284 Stage Coach Rd., Sewanee, TN 37375  
815-988-7051, tcoley@hereford.org

**Central Region – Joe Rickabaugh**  
Iowa and Mo.  
1501 Wyandotte St., Kansas City, MO 64108  
785-633-3188, jrick@hereford.org

**Northeast Region – Contact the AHA**  
Conn., Del., D.C., Maine, Mass., N.H., N.J., N.Y., R.I., Vt. and eastern Canadian provinces

### Member Cattle Registration Fees

	Regular	Electronic
Up to 4 months	\$12.50	\$10.50
4-8 months	\$18.50	\$15.50
8-12 months	\$25.50	\$20.50
More than 12 months	\$50.50	\$50.50

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