

BOARD ACTION

The American Hereford Association (AHA) Board of Directors met Aug. 1-2 in Amarillo, Texas, at the American Quarter Horse Association Hall of Fame.

The summer AHA Board meeting is one of the biggest planning meetings for the year. The AHA's strategic plan is reviewed and the Board of Directors evaluates funding proposals and establishes the budget for the coming fiscal year slated to begin Sept. 1.

Special thanks to the AHA Board of Directors for their hard work and commitment to the Hereford seedstock business. The following are a list of Board actions:

Breed improvement

The Board discussed the impact of the newly trained genetic panel that was used in the most recent expected progeny difference (EPD) analysis. Nearly 3,500 Hereford animals were genotyped and attributed to the dataset that was used to improve the new genomic predictions.

The Board commends the membership along with its decision last winter to subsidize the cost of the test, which encouraged breeders to test their highly proven herd sires. More than 2,500 additional animals were genotyped after the annual membership meeting in November. Genetic correlations nearly doubled for most traits, adding more power to the genomic test and more accuracy to the EPDs of unproven animals.

The Board asked staff to evaluate the possibilities of a less expensive genomics test that GeneSeek calls the low-density 11K (LD11K). The high-density 77K (HD77K) is presently being used.

The LD11K will have parent markers as well as all of the genetic defect markers of the current test. Staff will be reporting back to the Board the possibilities of this new test panel expected to become a much more affordable tool for genetic improvement.

Simplot project

The Board reviewed preliminary data from the first year and a half of the Simplot project. Simplot is one of the

largest ranch operators in the country. It owns a feedlot in Grandview, Idaho, with a capacity of more than 110,000 head.

The objective of the project is to breed commercial Angus heifers to moderate birth weight, calving-ease Hereford bulls and compare the calving ease and calf crop from the battery of selected AI (artificial insemination) Hereford sires to the Angus sires that Simplot uses.

The calves have been followed through from weaning and on to a feed efficiency test at the Simplot feeding facility that measures feed intake utilizing the GrowSafe system. Thus far, the data look extremely impressive with comparable calving ease scores between Hereford and Angus progeny and advantages in rate of gain, weaning weight and feed efficiency for the Hereford-sired calves.

The Board asked staff to identify an economist to review the data and draft a white paper (research report) describing the economics of the comparative breeding system. Simplot has been so impressed with the project that they have added 350 more cows to the study.

Replacement females from the project will be tracked through production to explore crossbreeding versus straight breeding comparisons related to heifer fertility. Once again, real world scenarios support the economics of Hereford crossbreeding in a commercial environment. The Board approved continued funding of the project.

Udder score EPD

The Board discussed the new udder score EPD report submitted by Heather Bradford and Dan Moser from Kansas State University (K-State).

The report indicates a trend toward great improvement in udder quality for the Hereford breed. The Board would like for this subject to be an education topic for the education forum during the Annual Meeting in November.

USDA feed efficiency study

Close to 2,000 phenotypes from animals that have feed intake data is being used by Mike MacNeil to develop a feed efficiency trait. A portion of those also have genomic information collected, which is being shared with Jerry Taylor, University of Missouri geneticist and one of the lead scientists involved in a project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to study feed efficiency.

The objective of Taylor's project is to identify genetic markers that can be used to predict feed efficiency differences in cattle. The Board endorsed continued support of the project.

Economic index adjustments

The Board approved staff to fund a project with MacNeil to re-evaluate the AHA's economic indexes.

This project is necessary because of the changing economics of the industry since the indexes were last developed, including elevated input costs, higher calf prices, and greater seasonal Choice and Select price differentials. MacNeil will re-evaluate the assumptions in the models for release in 2014.

Marketing committee

The Board reviewed the AHA's proposed media/advertising buy for fiscal year 2013-14. It approved a 20% increase in funding of advertising and approved more funding of online advertising and advertising with video auction companies.

2014 media tour

The Board approved the expense for a media tour that would unveil the Simplot project findings. The tour will be held in conjunction with the spring 2014 Board meeting.

continued on page 6...

BuyHereford.com review

The Board appreciated the nearly \$400,000 in sales in 2012-13 sold on *BuyHereford.com*. However, the AHA continues to subsidize the service. Therefore, the Board voted to discontinue the *Buyhereford.com* service after the Association has met its fall commitments.

Staff was instructed to review options that might reduce AHA's cost of providing venues for breeders to list animals, semen and embryos that they want to sell.

CHB board report

Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) LLC is expected to report a more than \$200,000 profit this fiscal year. Total tonnage is expected to be even to slightly higher than a year ago during an incredibly difficult year for beef customers due to record beef prices and big spreads in price between beef and competing proteins.

However, volume of cattle and carcasses certified is expected to be up 3% this past fiscal year. It was noted that CHB LLC had not lost a customer in four years, an impressive accomplishment considering the difficult economics of the beef retail and food service industries.

Under approval of the CHB LLC board, Trey Befort has been hired as CHB LLC supply chain manager. Trey, a K-State graduate and former cattle buyer for JBS Swift, started in August. His responsibility will be feedlot relations and CHB feeder calf marketing.

HPI update

The Hereford Publications Inc. (HPI) board reported a fantastic year for the publication. HPI will report a year-end profit.

Hereford World advertising has been very strong in FY 2012-13. Ride-along sale catalogs are becoming increasingly popular as breeders understand the quality of work and the customer advantage HPI has in delivery of the catalogs to every AHA member as well as a tremendous commercial bull buyer list.

HPI's new employee, Nicole Wood, was commended for an excellent start-

up and quick learning curve to her Creative Services coordinator position.

Member service committee

The committee reported on the progress of the new AHA online registry system. A committee of breeders has been established as test herds and asked to offer suggestions as to how the system can become more user-friendly to members.

Staff is hopeful that the new system will be available for rollout in the fall of 2013. Furthermore, Christy Bradshaw, an Idaho native and K-State graduate, was recently hired as the AHA education coordinator. As part of the AHA strategic plan, her duties will be to develop educational tools to help breeders better understand the AHA online registry system as well as whole herd Total Performance Records (TPR) issues.

Youth program, JNHE review

The Board commended the efforts of staff in organizing and supporting fundraising activities to support the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE). Approximately 650 juniors and their families from 40 states attended the recent event in Kansas City.

The JNHE has become one of the "talks" of the industry relative to developing young people and drawing new families to the Hereford breed. The Board discussed strategies for sustainability of the event, which operates at a cost of approximately \$300,000 annually.

Finance, budget committee

The Board evaluated revenue trends for the organization. It was noted that the Association's core revenue services including registrations, cow inventories, transfers and member service fees have been relatively flat for over a decade, yet cost of operating, including travel costs, insurance, and manpower have increased with inflation.

In fact, the AHA has not increased rates for more than a decade. The Board voted to slightly increase registration rate by 50 cents per head and TPR cow herd enrollment by 50 cents per head beginning on Jan. 1, 2014.

The board approved a consolidated budget with a slight profit after depreciation with projected total revenue of \$5.7 million.

Hall of Fame, Hall of Merit inductees selected

The committee reviewed candidates for the Hereford Hall of Fame, honoring breeders of Hereford cattle, and the Hereford Hall of Merit, honoring industry influencers that had an impact on the progress of the Hereford breed.

The 2013 Hall of Fame honorees will be Truman Lawrence former manager of Morlunda Farms, Lewisburg, W.Va.; and Conard and Nancy Stitzlein, owners of Mohican Farms, Glenmont, Ohio, and Mohican West, Laurel, Mont.

Hall of Merit awardees will be Jim Boyd, retired AHA fieldman from Abilene, Texas, and Dorian Garrick, Iowa State University geneticist responsible for the introduction of Hereford genomic-enhanced EPDs.

AHA nominating committee

AHA Nominating Committee Chairman Randy White, Albuquerque, N.M., submitted five candidates to be considered for election to the AHA Board this fall.

Candidates and the region they represent include: Joe Van Newkirk, Van Newkirk Herefords, Oshkosh, Neb. (Northwest); Terri Barber, Barber Ranch, Austin, Texas (Southwest); Dave Bielema, Grand Meadows Farm, Ada, Mich., (Northeast); Mike Taylor, Cottage Hill Farms, Petersburg, W.Va. (Northeast) — pending USDA approval; and Jim Davis, Terrace Farms, Lexington, N.C. (Southeast). Watch for the candidates' biographies in the October *Hereford World*. **HW**