

The American Hereford Association (AHA) Board of Directors met in Kansas City, Mo., Aug. 19, 2008. The following are highlights of the meeting:

## Finance committee

The AHA Board approved a budget with projected consolidated revenue of \$5.59 million in fiscal year (FY) 2007-08 for AHA and all subsidiaries including Hereford Publication Inc., Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) LLC and American Beef Registry Association (ABRA).

The finance committee reviewed income projections and all variable costs and submitted the budget to the Board for final approval. The Association is expected to report a profit in FY 2007-08 with financials to be published for the AHA Annual Membership Meeting.

## AHA rule changes

Several amendments to the AHA rules were approved including:

Section III, Rule 21, regarding the return of registration papers of Herefords that have died, was stricken from the rules and is no longer required.

Section V, Rule 3 will now read: Calves conceived after the death of a bull shall be eligible for registration under the same conditions and provisions governing the eligibility of calves conceived by artificial insemination (AI). The Association may request that calves sired by deceased bulls be parentage verified. Ownership of a deceased bull may be transferred if it is DNA profiled through the AHA approved laboratory.

Section IX, The following Rule E was added: DNA Genetic Abnormality Testing: In the event the AHA identifies a gene marker test for a genetic abnormality, animals may be tested to determine carrier status by an AHA approved laboratory. If breeders wish to officially confirm an animal free of a genetic abnormality and designate it as such on the animal's pedigree, then the following guidelines must be met:

The breeder must request the DNA test kit from the AHA records department.

The results of the test must be returned directly to AHA from the official laboratory.

The animal must be parentage verified to assure pedigree identity.

## New Sires of Distinction program

The AHA has recognized Dams of Distinction for several decades. The Board approved a program that would recognize Sires of Distinction in two different ways. When a bull produces at least seven daughters that reach Dams of Distinction status, he will be recognized on the Sires of Distinction list.

Furthermore, the Board approved a CHB sire listing. A sire that ranks in the top 25% of the breed for the CHB index and has a minimum of 50% accuracy for both ribeye area (REA) expected progeny difference (EPD) and intramuscular fat (IMF) EPD will be recognized as a CHB Sire of Distinction.

## Genetic abnormality update

Since the announcement of idiopathic epilepsy (IE) as a defined genetic defect last spring, a few more cases of infected animals have been turned in to Jon Beever at the University of Illinois. These samples have been beneficial to Beever's research.

A report from Beever stated, in his opinion, IE is caused by a single gene and he is getting closer to finding the location of the gene on a single chromosome. It is hoped that a marker for the gene will be discovered and validated this fall. A report will be given at the Annual Membership Meeting in Kansas City.

In addition, DNA samples from infected Hypotrichosis calves and their parents have been sent to Jerry Taylor, University of Missouri, where new molecular technology (50,000 SNP chip panel) will be used to search for the gene marker for the trait.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) developed this new technology, and Taylor is one of only a few who are conducting research utilizing the technology. It was thought that the DNA samples from the IE calves should also be sent to Taylor, but Beever says he is far enough along with his method that the new technology would not add any more information.

## Electronic data transmission improvements

The Board directed staff to pursue additional means for speeding the rate of transfer of registry and performance data utilizing other software options in conjunction with the online registry system. Staff will be developing options in the coming months that might speed this process, particularly for those with low bandwidth Internet access.

## Marketing committee

The Board approved expenditures of close to \$500,000 to support the 2007-08 AHA national advertising campaign, along with a communication and marketing plan managed by David Melhaff, AHA's new director of communication. Consistent with AHA's strategic plan, several initiatives are under way to convey research results, innovations and positive messages of what is happening within the Hereford industry.

## Hereford Publications Inc.

HPI reported a very good year. Net income was up more than \$90,000 for the year, and the *Hereford World* magazine took home several awards from the Ag Media Summit, including first-place newspaper award for the tabloid version, first-place award for a sale book, second-place award for the *AHA Annual Report* and honorable mention for an advertisement for the Hereford Youth Foundation of America.

Andee Marston was announced as the new Southeast regional field manager, and there was discussion concerning the replacement of Ben Brillhart in the mountain region in February 2008.

## Research report

The Board reviewed results and progress of several ongoing research projects including the Harris Ranch heterosis study, Amana Farms project and Circle A Ranch project. See Page 52 of this issue for the Harris Ranch phase one report. The Board endorsed continual funding of each of these efforts.

## Land, building update

Whitney Kerr, AHA's commercial real estate advisor, reported to the Board the economic and political climate of downtown Kansas City and the effect of those trends on the potential sale of the AHA headquarters.

Kerr said at least two interested parties have approached him about purchasing or attempting in some manner to control the AHA property, but nothing concrete at this point has evolved.

In the meantime, the AHA still has 10 acres in Seabiscuit Park, which is located across from the Kansas City International Airport on the east side of I-29, under contract. The Board decided to extend the closing date for that property until May 2008. The transition of a new city planning commission has delayed the approval of construction permits for that project. Closing on the 10 acres is contingent on the road, utility and lighting infrastructure being completed.

## Show, sale report

The use of ultrasound measurements will be discontinued at the National Western National Hereford Show in Denver, and carcass EPDs will be provided to the judge.

## Hall of fame, merit selection

Stanley Stout will be inducted posthumously into the AHA Hall of Merit. Hereford breeders James D. Bennett, Va.; Robert Hooper, Ariz.; and Bill Bennett, Wash., will be inducted into the AHA Hall of Fame.

## Other business

A Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) study group committee was formed to continue to evaluate the long-term funding and event planning of the growing event. **BW**