



Challenges and Opportunities

Webster's defines foresight as "an act of looking forward." The recent Young Guns Conference gave Hereford breeders from across the U.S and Canada an opportunity to look to the future. The conference was filled with speakers who gave us a glimpse of some of the challenges and opportunities that face cattlemen and Hereford breeders.

Keynote speaker Mark Mayfield challenged the group to look at things with a different perspective — maybe even smile and laugh at things that at times may seem a little trying. Mark talked about people who look at a glass as being half full or half empty. He suggested that we, "Just get a new glass." What a great analogy.

The demands of the cattle industry are changing, and the Hereford breed has positioned itself to "change the glass." As producers look at measuring inputs as well as outputs, the Hereford breed will provide them an opportunity to add genetics that can increase net profits immensely.

This is being proven by the different real-world projects initiated by the American Hereford Association (AHA). These projects include the ongoing work with Olsen Ranch and Stahly Ranch as we continue to look for young sires that will affect the breed.

But more importantly, during the Young Guns Conference, we were given reports from Dave Daley on the Harris Ranch project and Mark Akin on the Circle A Ranch project. John McGrath also shared his vision on how Amana Farms plans to incorporate Hereford genetics into its commercial cow herd.

Daley reported how the first calf crop born at Lacey Livestock performed through all channels of production. The bottom line looked excellent for the Hereford-sired calves. (See Page 52, for a full report.)

Of course this is only one year and it is only a portion of the test. We will need to continue to track how the Hereford-sired females perform in the tough range conditions. Dave also gave kudos to Hereford

breeders for stepping up to the plate and comparing Hereford genetics alongside other breeds.

Akin shared an overview of how the Circle A Ranch is set up and gave the breeders assurance that proper management and data collection will be handled by his crew. He also gave an explanation of what he plans to do with the Hereford-sired cattle. The steers will be placed in Circle A's new state-of-the-art feeding facility where feed intake data will be collected; they will be harvested, and all this data will be added to the Hereford genetic analysis. These steers will be managed next to their Angus contemporaries. The heifers will be retained in the herd, and Circle A will test their performance next to their commercial Angus females.

The general manager of Amana Farms, John McGrath, gave the audience a brief description of the size and scope of its farms. He also laid out his expectations from incorporating Hereford genetics into Amana's program, and he complimented

breeders for participating in the Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™) system. This was one of the main reasons Amana Farms agreed to utilize Hereford genetics in its program.

These speakers, along with other industry leaders, gave attendees an opportunity to take some things back to their ranches that may give them some guidance on ways to increase net profits. Other speakers talked about marketing opportunities and implemented customer service. Additional speakers looked at challenges within the industry in regard to feed supplies and constraints on land.

This was a great conference — the best one I have attended in my lifetime! I want to thank all of you who came, those who organized the event and the sponsors for making it possible. Please find more details on Page 58 of this issue. You can also listen to the presentations at HerefordYoungGuns.com.

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