



Leadership Is a Requirement for Success

"Get action. Seize the moment. Man was never intended to become an oyster."

— Theodore Roosevelt

This quote by our nation's 26th president is certainly appropriate during this challenging time in our nation's history. As cattle breeders and beef producers, we sit squarely in the crosshairs of political and economic challenges in this country. There are a lot of issues on the table that affect our lives every day.

The debate over national security, the effect of energy on transportation costs, the renewable fuels mandate and its effect on feed costs, the inflationary cost of fertilizer, the exportation of jobs, a legislative-happy government encroaching on our good business practices, and the looming death tax that threatens to break up family properties and business continuity are all issues that are fundamental to our industry. All

of these issues are, to a degree, out of our control but are certainly within earshot of a loud voice — a voice that is influential if we want it to be.

As Teddy Roosevelt alluded, we cannot just crawl in and clamp down our shell, waiting for someone to come shuck us out. Our attitude will determine our action just as we have adapted, made improvements and changed the real and perceived value of our Hereford cattle the last 10 years.

If you have a passion for production agriculture, for the beef cattle business and for your Hereford breed, then don't sit on the sideline and ride this one out. Get involved! Start by becoming a member of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA). Get involved in your state cattlemen's association and send your signal; and last, but not least, make your vote count.

Hereford breeders are accustomed to taking on challenges, and as a result, the breed is as well positioned today in this economic climate as

any other breed of cattle in this country. The nation's cow herd is saturated with Angus-based genetics.

The continental breeds have changed their genetic base to the point where they are now a high percentage of Angus genetics. Outside of Bos Indicus breeds in the Southern states region of the U.S., where else but Hereford can commercial producers go to find genetic diversity that will actually lift their economic output?

The Hereford breed is the answer the commercial man is looking for, and it starts with you. You are all seeing the shift in demand. Your private treaty sales are stronger; the last four years of production sales have reflected an extremely strong bull demand and the demand for Hereford females is unprecedented. It is so rewarding to see the improvements you as breeders have made in your cattle. You are paying attention to your

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customers' needs, fixing your problems and making genetic improvements in the areas that make a difference.

How do we ramp up this trend further?

It will take salesmanship on your part. The old adage "out of sight, out of mind" can never be truer whether you're talking about fighting for your local water rights or trying to sell a potential customer a bull in the next county.

You have to take the first step. Get out of your shell and make the phone call. Get in the pickup and make a visit. At the end of the day, customers, suppliers, neighbors and family members all want the same thing: we want to know that someone cares enough about us to check on us and is willing to provide a need when we need it most. Hereford breeders, now is the time to be an industry leader when the industry needs us the most! **HW**