

# Research in Crossbreeding Leads to Start of Hereford Program at Chico State

Dave Daley, California State University (CSU), Chico, associate dean and University farm administrator, conducted a three-year crossbreeding study and found an economic advantage to using Hereford bulls over Angus bulls in a predominately straight-bred Angus cow herd. Results of the study have generated significant national interest in establishing crossbreeding programs.

The research, funded by the Agricultural Research Initiative, the American Hereford Association, Lacey Livestock, Harris Ranch Feeding Co. and Harris Ranch Beef Co., found improvements in feed efficiency, animal health and net economic return. As a result of the study, the American Hereford Association and other breeders donated cattle and embryos to help launch a Hereford program at CSU, Chico.

“The breeding program offers one more area of field experience for students,” says Daley, “and gives students the opportunity to interact with an additional segment of industry professionals.”

The three-year study was conducted as a “field trial” under real world range conditions on ranches in central and eastern California. Angus cows were mated to both Hereford and Angus bulls under typical Western range conditions. The hypothesis of the study was that there would be an economic advantage to crossbreeding, especially in the finishing phase.

Angus cattle have been effectively marketed to the consumer for such things as quality grade (marbling) and tenderness. Crossbred animals, however, are generally expected to exhibit hybrid vigor resulting in advantages in traits like longevity, health and reproductive fitness – which directly impact net profitability to the producer.

For more information about the study, visit [Hereford.org](http://Hereford.org). **HW**

