

The American Hereford Association (AHA) Board of Directors met for its annual summer budget-planning meeting Aug. 9-10 on the campus of Kansas State University (K-State).

Since 2010 the AHA Board has been following the goals outlined in the Association's strategic plan to continue to strengthen the Hereford breed and the Association as a whole.

The Board passed a \$5.4 million breakeven budget after depreciation for the upcoming 2013 fiscal year. The AHA is projected to generate \$5.4 million of revenue next year from its parent company and subsidiaries and works to utilize those funds to advance the breed through member service, promotion and advertising, research, commercial marketing, and youth development efforts.

Here are other meeting highlights:

Genetic evaluation basics

As part of the meeting, the Board asked K-State Animal Scientist Dan Moser to review basic principles for proper expected progeny difference (EPD) calculations including the importance of proper contemporary grouping, genetic correlations among traits, heritabilities of traits and age of dam adjustments.

All of these components are used to take biases and environmental influences out of the genetic evaluation and, thereby, produce an EPD that accounts for as much of the genetic influence as can be accounted for in the AHA EPD system.

The Board agreed that this type of educational review would be beneficial to the membership and suggested that it be discussed at the upcoming Annual Meeting in November during the Friday afternoon educational forum in Kansas City.

HCR, SCF EPDs

Moser reviewed with the Board the process of developing and the meaning of the new heifer calving rate (HCR) and sustained cow fertility (SCF) EPDs.

Moser stated that the AHA has the largest database in the world with complete fertility and cow sustainability records. The Board agreed that an educational overview of these two new traits would also be beneficial during the educational forum in Kansas City.

Adjustment of profit indexes

Due to the release of the new HCR and SCF EPDs that attempt to improve the information for breed fertility, the Board instructed staff to work with the original committee of scientists to reassess the four profit indexes utilizing a more robust measurement of fertility.

Up until now, fertility has only been estimated by utilizing scrotal circumference in a less than perfect relationship. The new fertility EPDs should strengthen the indexes with stronger information on the trait that most influences profit, that being fertility.

New EPD trend report approved for release

The AHA has worked with its software provider in recent months to develop a tool for TPR breeders. The new product called AHA Herd Benchmark Report is a report produced for each individual performance breeder. It highlights in graph form the progress a breeder has made in his individual herd relative to each EPD trait compared to the Hereford breed trend over the same years the breeder has been recording performance.

The Board charged the staff with developing a system for making these reports available to each TPR breeder through a downloadable report on his AHA online account. Staff will work to release this information in the fall of 2012.

Funding approved for Hereford genotyping project

The Board approved the cost share of upwards of \$40,000 to 50k genotype as many as 1,000 highly proven bulls for the purpose of continued gene discovery work at Iowa State University.

In order for the relationships between genetic tests and their respective correlated traits to become stronger, more research discovery is needed to strengthen the accuracy of genomic-enhanced EPDs (GE-EPDs).

GE-EPD animal listing

In addition, the Board asked staff to develop a list of all 50K genotyped bulls to be placed on the AHA website. AHA staff has made this list available through a look-up feature on the AHA database search engine.

All animals that have been 50K genotyped and that have a GE-EPD can be found by entering the year the animal was born (up to a four year range at a time), clicking the GE-EPD criteria button and then clicking search. This search will list all animals including males and females. Exclusive bull search criteria can be entered to list only the bulls with a GE-EPD by designating that criteria in the "Select if" box.

Genetic abnormality policy modification

The current AHA policy for the reporting of genetic carriers is to notify the owner of a carrier animal through registered mail and to allow 30 days for the owner to respond to the resulting carrier status.

Since members who have been notified of carrier status have not yet responded to the registered mail inquiry, the Board removed the 30-day notice requirement and instructed AHA staff to no longer send a registered mail notice of the carrier status beginning after Nov. 30, 2012. Carrier status will be automatically loaded into the AHA database system. A breeder will still have the right to retest an animal if there is a question over the result at any time.

New ad campaign approved

The Board approved the development of a dynamic new fold-out advertising campaign that focuses on the Hereford breed's inherent strengths. A \$210,000 budget was approved for the campaign.

A copy of the insert will be included with the October *Hereford World*. Full, half and quarter page ads have also been developed to complement the insert.

Educational forum

A dynamic panel of educational speakers is being planned for the Friday afternoon educational forum during the AHA Annual Meeting weekend. The forum and the Annual Meeting will be at the Argosy Casino and Hotel. See Page 24 for more about the Annual Meeting.

Member service activity

The Board was informed of progress in a number of areas of investment in the records department. Staff has been realigning the records department to maximize efficiency.

The Board approved the implementation of a new phone system. The new ILR-online system is currently in development, and testing will begin in the fall of 2012. The features of the new system will be:

- 1) Payment online,
- 2) Transfer of ownership online,
- 3) DNA test kit requests and
- 4) Requests for AI (artificial insemination) certificates from bull owners.

Other software developments are ongoing with CattleMax in an effort to have their desktop and online packages fully integrated with AHA's system. The CattleMax system is currently being tested by staff.

GeneSeek laboratory conversion

There have been a number of start-up pains in the relocation of the AHA genotyping services from Maxxam to GeneSeek. The delays have caused some backup this summer, but everything will soon be on track.

AHA staff has asked GeneSeek staff to attend the Educational Forum, where they can discuss the new technology and the expectations for turnaround time considering the new technology platforms involved.

Hall of Fame, Merit inductees selected

The Board endorsed the proposed candidates to be inducted into the Hall of Fame and Hall of Merit during the 2012 Annual Meeting.

2012 Hall of Fame inductees are Lilla Bell, Paradise Valley, Nev.; Jackie Davis, Lincoln, Calif.; the Douthit Family, St. Francis, Kan.; and Gene Wiese, Manning, Iowa. Hall of Merit inductees are H.H. "Hop" Dickenson, former AHA executive secretary, and Dusty Rich, former American Polled Hereford Association president. **HW**