

# The Power of Black. Only Better.

A look at the 2006 national advertising campaign.



Craig Huffhines

Hereford World columnist and marketing expert Keith Evans says that readers take about two seconds to decide whether to read an advertisement or turn the page. He explains this is just enough time to look at the illustration and possibly scan the headline.

Have you seen the ad below in publications this fall, maybe in *BEEF*, *Drovers* or *The Progressive Farmer*? Did the illustration and headline make you stop to read?

Last spring the American Hereford Association (AHA)

communication team began working with AdFarm, an agricultural-focused communications agency, to determine the marketing goals of the Association and the angle for the 2006 national advertising campaign. On the forefront always is the need to “sell” Hereford cattle to the commercial producer.

When AdFarm pitched the initial photo and headline similar to what’s in this ad, they were expecting quite a ruckus, no doubt. A Hereford ad that’s black is sure to raise some questions.

Yet, the truth of the matter is that surveys show 70% of today’s national cow herd is Angus based. At the present, the greatest opportunity to expand Hereford market share is to convince commercial Angus producers to use Hereford bulls on their black cows. The reasons to do so are plentiful; the effects of heterosis are real.

The imagery in the national ad thus capitalizes on the black baldie, a cross that demonstrates its excellence on the range and in the feedlot — an industry icon that cannot be created in any way, shape or form without a Hereford.

The headline asserts that the whitefaced calf is more powerful than its solid black counterpart. Why? Because Herefords are the efficiency experts. By adding Hereford genetics to their herd producers can increase efficiency traits including conversion, hardiness, fertility, longevity and disposition.

Efficiency means power and profit in today’s cost-ridden industry. And so, the AHA has set out to promote

Hereford (and Hereford-cross) efficiencies wherever and whenever possible.

With AdFarm, a focused media plan was developed. The national ad was placed in close to a dozen publications, selected for their effectiveness in reaching target populations of commercial cattlemen.

The ad was also made available in a variety of sizes to state Hereford presidents at the 2006 AHA Annual Meeting, so that the Hereford efficiency message could be spread on the state level as well.

The AHA Web site features the efficiency experts, as does *The Whiteface*, a quarterly publication started in August to communicate with non-member users and potential users of Hereford genetics. In the spring you’ll hear about the efficiency experts on select radio stations, and AHA news releases throughout the year will reemphasize specific efficiency points.

AHA staff asks you, the individual breeder, to continue to strengthen the message. When you’re putting together your sale book or talking to potential customers, think efficiency. Talk conversion, hardiness, fertility, longevity and disposition. Use the slogan “Herefords — The Efficiency Experts.”

There are numerous ways to help spread the good Hereford word. Presenting a uniform message is critical for successful industry communication. We think we’ve caught the commercial cattleman’s eye. Let’s keep his attention. **HW**