

Hereford Beef: Tender and Lean



jlong

The “silver bullet” for the perfect breed proves to be ever elusive as cattle producers of all breeds around the world fight a never-ending battle to produce such. However, recent studies encompassing multiple parameters of Hereford cattle prove that we’re getting closer to winning the battle.

Today’s consumer not only demands tender, great-tasting beef, but also expects it within lean cuts of meat. For Hereford cattle, that’s not a problem.

In March 2006 a beef checkoff funded executive summary titled “Pre-Harvest Cattle Management Practices for Enhancing Beef Tenderness” was published. The summary included information about how cattle genetics affect beef tenderness.

Table 1 in the summary references research findings of scientists from the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (MARC), Clay Center, Neb.

Tommy Wheeler, acting research leader for the meat safety and quality research unit and his MARC colleagues, Mohammad Koochmaraie, director; Steven Shackelford,

food technologist; and Larry Cundiff, geneticist, published the results of a trial testing the tenderness of steaks from seven industry-dominate cattle breeds in the *Journal of Animal Science* in 2005.

In order to assess beef tenderness, Wheeler and colleagues subjected loin steaks to two different analytical measures — Warner-Bratzler shear force and a trained sensory panel.

Table 1 in the checkoff summary compares the carcass quality and beef tenderness characteristics of the seven dominate breeds — Hereford, Angus, Red Angus, Charolais, Gelbvieh, Limousin and Simmental.

The shear force results in this table show that the Hereford steaks were comparable in tenderness to those from their British counterparts, Angus and Red Angus. Since 65% of the Hereford steers graded Choice or higher compared to 88% and 90% for Angus and Red Angus, respectively, this tenderness measure indicates that Hereford cattle do not necessarily need excess amounts of marbling to produce tender beef.

This is exciting news. Hereford producers can feel confident knowing their

cattle excel in yet another trait. Packers love Hereford beef because it’s just what food service and retailers want — increasing sales. Retailers love it because it’s a quality product that’s consistently tender, and consistency is vital to retaining repeat shoppers. Most importantly consumers rave about Certified Hereford Beef® (CHB) because they don’t have to sacrifice leanness for tenderness.

A multitude of meat quality research studies have investigated marbling and its tenderness implications. Most meat scientists agree that marbling accounts for 10-15% of meat tenderness, not an overwhelming percentage.

Numerous reports show that a segment of American consumers negatively correlate increased intramuscular fat deposits and health-conscious diets. In addition, multiple studies show that consumers are willing to pay considerable premiums for tender beef. Hereford producers, packers and retailers have an opportunity to fill the demand for both tender and lean product.

Although it’s not included in the checkoff summary, MARC’s published data also shows that the trained sensory panel rated the Hereford steaks as equal to the other British breeds in not only tenderness attributes, but juiciness and beef flavor intensity as well.

The bottom line is that this research shows that Herefords are able to produce steaks as tender, juicy and tasty as those from other breeds noted for higher levels of marbling.

While we all know there’s no “perfect” breed, time after time scientific studies and consumers prove Hereford cattle aren’t far from it. And that’s not just any bull — that’s Hereford bulls! **HW**

CHB captures Chili Bowl trophy

Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) LLC, with the help of Greater Omaha Packing Co. Inc. and National Beef Packing Co. LLC, collected more than \$800 in donations during the 24th Annual North Carolina Chili Championship & Rubber Duck Regatta. The event, which was Sept. 23 in Tanglewood, N.C., raised money for the March of Dimes.

CHB LLC staff members Rob Ames and Jared Long, along with Reid Swanson, National Beef; and Lance Bartley and Roy Wiggs, Greater Omaha; lured event visitors to the tent by serving CHB ribeye steak sandwiches loaded with green peppers and onions.

CHB LLC took second place in amount of money raised, capturing the prized Chili Bowl trophy. **HW**



Jared Long, CHB LLC account manager, is presented the coveted “Chili Bowl” for capturing second place in total amount of charity donations raised.