by Jack Ward, chief operating officer and director of breed improvement

jward@hereford.org

NRSP Helps Prove Young Bulls

Jack Ward

The American Hereford Association (AHA) National Reference Sire Program (NRSP) continues to be a vital ingredient to find young bulls that will be the movers and shakers in the breed. It also continues to prove how breeders have really emphasized genetic improvement, and finally, it proves that even using expected progeny differences (EPDs) on young sires can provide some stability in selection.

Since I joined the AHA staff, I have been enamored with the NRSP that the AHA developed. I have been impressed with the breeders' passion to get bulls enrolled, and I have been equally impressed with the dedication of the test herds that continue to use Hereford genetics to make their programs profitable.

The two herds that have been a part of the program the longest are Stahly Ranch, Cavour, S.D., and Olsen Ranch, Harrisburg, Neb.

In Table 1 you will find the final test results on the three bulls used at Stahly Ranch for calves born in 2008. This set of calves, in general, really impressed Mike Stahly with its performance, and the entire group of steers harvested at more than 72% Choice with no outs.

In addition, the last set of steers at Olsen's also graded nearly 70% Choice with no outs. This is even more impressive when you think of how we handle these contemporary groups of test cattle.

In order to be able to keep good and accurate records, the cattle are fed together and harvested on the same day. This program does not allow for any biased information and does differ a little from normal feeding situations when feedlot managers and owners can sell cattle at different times according to when they believe they are ready.

We have witnessed a marked improvement, and these tests continue to prove that the genetic trend within the breed is true and if breeders use all the tools at their disposal, they can make genetic progress. These tools include data collection at all levels of production including ultrasound and harvest data.

Many breeders are interested in participating in the NRSP, but they are concerned that they are not big enough to become involved. That could not be further from the truth. This program is open to all Hereford breeders who have a bull that they feel would be beneficial to the program and would like to get some early proof on him.

To enroll a bull, you can find the enrollment form at *Hereford.org* or in the January *Hereford World*, or you can contact me at (816) 842-3757 or jward@hereford.org.

After the bulls are enrolled, all of the nominees are sent to the test herds and the individual ranchers make the final decision on which bulls they would like to use. If your bull is selected, you will have to furnish at least 60 straws of semen, and you will be charged a fee that will be given to the test herd to cover costs (that fee varies among herds).

This test has allowed breeders of all sizes to get bulls tested against some of the best and has also provided marketing opportunities. We have seen bulls that have performed well in these tests get leased or purchased by other breeders and artificial insemination (AI) studs. Some of these bulls would include Ribeye, Harland, Progress, Bellisarus and 3027.

On behalf of everyone at the AHA, the Board of Directors and the AHA members, we extend our appreciation to the test herds and those who have supported the NRSP with young sires. Thanks and please keep up the great work! **HW**

Table 1: Hereford bulls used at Stahly Ranch

Sire name	BW Ratio	WW Ratio	YW Ratio	HCW Ratio	FT Ratio	MB Ratio	REA Ratio	CED	BW	WW	YW	MM	M&G	CEM	SC	FAT	REA	MB	BMI	CEZ	BII	CHB
EFBeef Schul-Lar S604-009K G824ET	101	101	101	96	102	90	99	2.0	1.8	52	84	20	46	1.8	1.1	.002	.71	.23	24	17	21	30
KCF Bennett 9126J R294	96	98	101	98	98	107	98	7.5	-1.8	50	92	33	58	3.7	1.5	-.001	.44	.31	27	23	22	33
KCF Bennett 9126J P18	104	101	98	106	99	104	103	-2.8	4.7	66	113	34	67	3.0	1.9	-.026	.37	.08	24	13	20	33