

BuyHereford.com Growth Continues



Jack Ward

Through the years, I have written many of these columns and most of them are directly related to breed improvement and the programs that have been developed to improve Hereford genetics. Most of these programs have a direct link to Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR) and its importance for unbiased reporting.

Today, the Hereford breed is seeing a tremendous “pull demand.” This demand can be seen in the commercial, seedstock and junior programs. So, once you have built a program that has the genetics and type that your customers are seeking, then you will need to develop some type of marketing strategy.

This marketing comes easily to some, and, traditionally, most large breeders have either an annual production sale or an aggressive private-treaty marketing scheme. The interesting part of the seedstock industry, and specifically the American Hereford Association (AHA), is that the largest portion of the membership has less than 30 cows. Because numbers are a limiting factor in having a production sale, these members have to be very inventive in their marketing schemes.

As AHA staff, we have tracked very closely the growing demand for Hereford genetics and asked ourselves the question, “How are we going to get the cattle marketed for all size breeders?” Of course, the

AHA sponsors a number of national sales in which breeders may participate.

In several states there are beef expos and state- and regional-sponsored sales that provide very strong opportunities for breeders to market their cattle. In most cases the states have recognized the importance of selling Hereford genetics that are documented with sufficient levels of performance, and most require that breeders participate in the AHA Whole Herd TPR program. My hat is off to those organizations. In many cases these sales utilize the AHA staff to help select cattle. But, again, some members do not have the time or resources to market cattle even at these sales.

So, a year ago, the AHA developed an online auction site (*BuyHereford.com*) in partnership with the Wendt Group to help Hereford breeders market cattle, embryos, semen or any other item they have for sale.

During this first year, there have been some very exciting sales; the site has been utilized by both large and small breeders to market single lots as well as entire production sales.

This concept is not new. It has experienced huge success in the swine industry and could be considered the typical way to market pigs around the country; in addition, it has also seen widespread use in real estate and machinery auctions.

There are some real benefits to these types of

auctions for both the buyers and the sellers.

As a seller, it obviously has an advantage to the smaller breeders and allows them access to potential buyers around the country. Furthermore, it will allow producers to market year-round. A producer may offer a heifer calf one month, a cow another, a bred heifer another, some semen one month and maybe even some embryos from a cow that flushed better than expected.

Additionally, this type of auction can give a farm or ranch advertising at a minimal cost. We have had breeders who have sold items on the site and right after the sale have actually sold additional items to contending bidders and even bidders that were just watching and later called the owner to make a deal.

Even our larger breeders could utilize this sale site with cattle that might be born outside the window for marketing within their production sales. For example when I was marketing genetics at Maple Lane Farms, the production sale was always in the fall. If I would have had an opportunity to use this kind of site to market some fall-born calves in the spring, the sales would have given us some much needed cash flow throughout the entire year.

For a buyer, purchasing on *BuyHereford.com* is a very seamless process that gives him access to cattle from all size programs from throughout the entire U.S. In addition, it may give some

continued on page 55...

Buy **Hereford.com**

opportunities to purchase embryos and utilize a set of cows with better genetics or even allow him to purchase some rare semen that could really change his breeding program.

Producers can call on breeders and discuss their programs without pressure or time constraints compared to a typical sale day. It is simple to sign up as a buyer and to utilize the bidding process either by watching and participating as the sale ends or to leave a maximum bid that is protected.

During the past year, I have personally seen *BuyHereford.com* work extremely well for all size breeders.

The bottom line — everyone now has the opportunity to market throughout the entire industry. We have seen this site grow, and purchases have been made by folks outside the AHA membership.

To learn more visit *BuyHereford.com*, contact one of the AHA field staff or contact Tyler Humphrey, from the Wendt Group, at 410-230-3450 or tylerh@humphreymarketingsolutions.com. **HW**