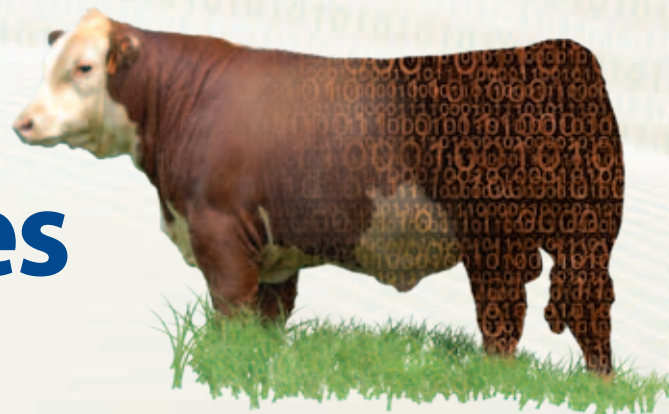


Hereford Data Drives Demand



The 2011 Hereford media event focused on how Hereford is taking a global leadership role developing genetic evaluation tools, and included updates on heterosis research, breed improvement strategies and demand trends.

Sept. 19-20 the American Hereford Association (AHA) hosted a media event sharing information about Hereford genomics, Hereford research projects and the National Reference Sire Program (NRSP). The event was hosted at longtime NRSP test herd, Olsen Ranches Inc. of Harrisburg, Neb.

Media professionals representing 350,000 magazine subscribers, thousands of unique website users, nearly 100,000 online e-newsletter subscribers and more than 300 radio affiliates in 12 states attended the event.

Hereford genomics

During the press conference Tuesday morning, Association staff and Matt Spangler, University of Nebraska assistant professor and beef genetics Extension specialist, gave an update on Hereford genomics.

Jack Ward, AHA's chief operating officer and director of breed improvement, explained how AHA has taken a proactive approach testing and validating the tools available to ensure that when it is released, a Hereford genomic product will be reliable and useful to AHA members.

AHA Executive Vice President Craig Huffhines said, "As an Association, we aligned ourselves with researchers and worked collaboratively with the National Beef Cattle Evaluation Consortium (NCBEC), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Meat Animal Research Center and other global Hereford

continued on page 28...



Monday night attendees enjoyed a visit to the Oregon Trail Wagon Train, including a covered wagon ride and ribeye steaks. Pfizer Animal Health sponsored the Monday night festivities.



On Monday Dale Grotelueschen of Pfizer Animal Health shared with attendees an update on Pfizer products and current research.





Tuesday morning on the way to the ranch, media had a chance to take photos and video of a group of mature cows with calves. It was a picturesque setting with great Hereford genetics on display.



At the ranch, media had a chance to photograph and video younger cow-calf pairs, steers and replacement heifers.

associations to discover the genomic markers that are economically relevant to the Hereford breed.”

Ward explained that AHA has been working with Dorian Garrick of NBCEC on genotyping. “Today we have more than 1,200 high-accuracy sires 50K genotyped,” Ward said. “This population has been used to train and validate a Hereford-specific panel.”

Spangler told the media in attendance, “The AHA has taken a large and much needed step in the implementation of marker-assisted EPDs (expected progeny differences). Their approach of working with the NBCEC allows them flexibility in how they specifically incorporate the information into their genetic evaluations.

“In order to continue to evolve and further develop their genomic predictions, it will be critical that Hereford producers continue to collect phenotypes and genotype influential animals within their respective herds,” Spangler added. “They should be proud of what they have accomplished and capitalize on this inertia to continue forward.”



The father-son team of Art and Douglas Olsen manages a commercial Hereford operation in western Nebraska. In 2004 the Olsens were recognized as the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Commercial Producer of the Year.



Olsen Ranches Inc., Harrisburg, Neb., has participated in the AHA’s NRSP since 1999. Through the years, the Olsens have tested 146 Hereford bulls and submitted data on 7,623 progeny.



In 2010 the Olsens, in cooperation with AHA, added a GrowSafe system to their feedlot.

Ward explained that the Agricultural Business Research Institute (ABRI) has developed the software to add genomic information into the Hereford Pan-American Genetic Evaluation (PACE) and AHA staff is currently working on a research run with introduction scheduled for spring 2012.

AHA also plans to continue to 50K genotype Hereford sires with support from partner countries. It will also maintain a database repository for future genomic research.

The real help to seedstock breeders and buyers will come as AHA continues to work with the science community to train and validate the Hereford-specific panel for all measurable traits, including feed intake.

To keep costs down and to simplify the process, the Association has plans to work with a one-stop-shop lab that will provide parentage testing, genetic abnormality testing and genomic information for the genetic analysis.

“The Association’s role is to give our members tools to make improvement in beef production,” Ward said. “Genomic-enhanced EPDs are the next phase in breed improvement strategies that will allow our members to continue to improve the genetics they produce.”

For more information about AHA’s genomic testing, contact Jack Ward at 816-842-3757 or jward@hereford.org.

Other presentations

Following the genomics press conference, other presentations included updates on Hereford feed efficiency testing and heterosis research projects. AHA Breed Improvement Committee Chairman Jerry Huth summarized the results of the Circle A Ranch and Harris Ranch heterosis projects and also explained current projects.

Huth and Ward also gave an update on the three new traits — mature cow weight, heifer calving rate and sustained cow fertility.

Huffhines shared a Hereford industry update including Hereford demand trends.

To see posted videos, news pieces and radio spots online, visit the Buy Hereford Facebook page, [Facebook.com/BuyHereford](https://www.facebook.com/BuyHereford), as well as the Brownfield and Drovers CattleNetwork websites and search “Hereford.” **HW**



Olsen family members pictured (l to r) are: Arthur “Art” Olsen; Karyn Holt; Cheryl Miner, holding Lynn Miner; Beth Donnell; and Isaac, Douglas and Pamela Olsen, holding Luke.



Each year the Olsens develop about 300 replacements. They typically keep 150 and then market the other 150 as bred heifers.



AHA President John Woolfolk welcomes media to the event and thanks Pfizer Animal Health for its sponsorship.



Ken Anderson of Brownfield Radio Network and Jenni Latzke of *High Plains Journal* interview Douglas Olsen about the Olsen program and the NRSP.



Spangler complimented the Association for the process it has taken testing and validating Hereford genomic products.



Leslie Smith of the Rural Radio Network interviews Jack Ward about current breed improvement research projects.