

## Will a South American Hereford Bull Make It to America?



Craig Huffhines

Great breeders of registered cattle from around the world are very similar in many aspects. They tend to be independent thinkers; they take great pride in engineering the next generation; they are constantly looking for an edge in selection that will help them produce the next great one; and when successful, they enjoy the bragging rights that accompany both large and small victories.

I've traveled the world, and no matter where I go, I can see these similarities found in what I call good stockmen. For many decades, these similarities have driven breeders to seek new frontiers in genetic selection and progressed traditional genetic evaluation into high tech spheres.

These competitive tendencies have also driven breeders to look outside their country's population to foreign genetics for the prospects of new genetic enhancements. In the past those decisions were sometimes risky due to the lack of ability in making genetic comparisons across countries.

Today that risk is beginning to change. In 2009 four of the five largest Hereford populations joined together to

produce the first global genetic evaluation — the Pan-American Cattle Evaluation (PACE).

The American, Argentine, Canadian and Uruguayan Hereford organizations teamed up to share their performance data in one collective evaluation. The American and Canadian Associations joined forces in 1995, but this addition of two South American countries formed a new alliance that now allows, through genetic linkage, head to head comparison of Hereford EPDs across all four countries.

These across-country comparisons open up new Hereford populations for use with reliability and confidence. Already, American and Canadian breeders have benefited in increased herd bull, embryo and semen sales to South America.

According to National Association of Animal Breeders data, Hereford exported semen sales were up 36% in 2012 with more than 100,000 units sold. Much of that went to South America.

There are other factors that have contributed to higher semen exports including relaxed health regulations concerning U.S. BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) status along with currency stabilization and a strong agriculture economy for Uruguay. However, because South America can now more effectively compare the performance of their cattle directly to U.S. genetics, a new demand has been generated.

Today, Uruguayan and Argentine genetics are banned from entering the U.S. due to foot and mouth disease (FMD) regulations. Both are

now certified free of FMD, yet health regulations still prevent the importation of semen and embryos without cost prohibitive quarantine requirements.

As the U.S. Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) becomes more comfortable with the disease control standards of our South American partners, we may see the prospect of new Hereford lines from South America trialed in the U.S. We have begun talking with APHIS administrators to determine what it might take to relax these regulations for semen and embryos.

I recently attended the Uruguay Hereford Society's National Hereford Show where we held a PACE technical meeting.

Hereford breeder Kyle Colyer, Bruneau, Idaho, judged the Prado National Show. Both Kyle and I took the opportunity to visit a couple of ranches in the country.

Uruguayan pedigrees are heavily influenced by U.S. genetics, but there were some cow families that might someday prove interesting to test. We identified a couple bulls that might make excellent prospects to test in the National Reference Sire Program (NRSP).

With AI use increasing and the real prospect of population diversity declining, it is encouraging to know that we have strong trade relations and science-based comparisons that might someday allow us to bring in outcross Hereford genetics.

Conquering trade regulations remains our first challenge. Next, may be to add Australia and New Zealand to the picture. **HW**

### Churchill lots generate \$6,775 for HRF

For the third year in a row, Dale and Nancy Venhuizen, owners of Churchill Cattle Co., Manhattan, Mont., graciously donated proceeds from their production sale to the Hereford Research Foundation (HRF). This year, \$6,775 was generated from three lots.

Lot 31A was purchased by Dimitri Matargas, Iron Lake Ranch, Dallas, Texas, for \$4,800. Dale and Nancy will treat Dimitri and three guests to dinner at Houston's Steakhouse in Kansas City, Mo., during the American Hereford Association (AHA) Annual Meeting.

Additionally, Lot 31B, five straws of conventional semen from Golden Oak Outcross 18U, brought \$275 a straw from Dave Bielema, Ada, Mich. Lot 31C, five straws of conventional semen from CL 1 Domino 144Y, was purchased by Nancy Bowling, Blackwell, Okla., for \$120 a straw. **HW**