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Compare and Improve Udder Quality with Two New Traits

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With the release of the spring 2015 Pan-American Cattle Evaluation (PACE), the American Hereford Association (AHA) will include two new traits for udder quality.

The two traits will be seen in the list of traits as udder suspension (Uddr) and teat size (Teat) and will be released on the Web only, at first, and you will find them positioned right after maternal cow weight (MCW). This first release will be the trait by itself with no correlations to other traits, and there will not be a genomic impact with genomic enhanced-expected progeny differences (GE-EPDs). We will plan to move forward with these additions in the near future.

There were around 200,000 observations in the first evaluation, and the heritability for both Uddr and Teat will be about .34, which makes this trait fairly highly heritable, so genetic progress can be made rather quickly. See Figure 1 below that tracks progress over the past 30 years.

As you know, we switched to a two-score system in 2008. See the "Udder Scoring Fact Sheet" posted in the *Hereford.org* Education Center and the January 2007 *Hereford World* article "Scoring Momma" for more information.

The correlation between the two scores and one is .72, so it makes all udder scores useful in this evaluation. This EPD can be used the same as other EPDs and will allow you to compare animals and, most importantly, has the potential to change udder quality between sire groups.

Remember that it is important to continue to collect udder scores within 24 hours of calving — the closer to calving time, the better. It is also important to understand that there is no perfect score, but it is the ranking and the differences within the herd that are important.

Remember that the scoring of 1-9 is used for both traits with 9 being more close to ideal. Please also understand that this scoring system is not concerned with milk flow or production; those will be measured with the weaning weight (WW) and milk and growth (M&G) EPDs. All we are looking at with this trait is the type of udder and teat.

This is an important trait to analyze because commercial producers demand genetics that are problem-free. The loss of time, longevity and calf performance due to a poor quality udder cannot be tolerated. **HW**

Figure 1: Udder quality progress