

Moving Hereford Ahead



Jack Ward

As we prepare for the Christmas season, it is important to reflect on the challenges and opportunities that have faced the American Hereford Association (AHA) over the past few months.

During the recent AHA Annual Meeting in Kansas City, Mo., Oct. 30 — Nov. 1, Certified Hereford Beef (CHB®) celebrated its 20-year anniversary, and a group of past Board members got together to reminisce about the merger of the Hereford and Polled Hereford associations, which also took place 20 years ago.

In perfect balance

For the largest share of the past 20 years, the AHA has had one leader, Craig Huffhines, and during the annual meeting, we had a chance to honor Craig for his years of service to the AHA. As I mentioned on that Friday evening, a wise Purdue economics professor, Bob Taylor, shared with the graduating class of 1986 that the biggest challenge we would face as we started our professional careers is balancing our job, family and spiritual life.

As I worked side by side with Craig for twelve years, he was the epitome of a great leader because he kept things in perfect balance. I owe a lot to Craig, just as all of us do, for his leadership, knowledge and commitment to the livestock industry. Through Craig's

leadership, the Hereford breed is positioned well, and our challenge now will be to keep this position and to move it ahead.

New staff, new roles

As I continue to transition to this new role at AHA, I look forward to working with staff, breeders and the AHA Board of Directors to produce the tools that will create demand for Hereford cattle within all segments of the industry with a huge focus on commercial breeders, feedlots and packers.

With that said, I want to welcome Shane Bedwell as the new chief operating officer and director of breed improvement. His role will be to bring a fresh and exciting face to the AHA, and he will work to create tools through breed improvement programs that will help the membership select cattle that will be profitable for their customers.

Trey Befort will combine his old role of being the head of cattle procurement for CHB with one of being the director of commercial programs. Trey will continue to focus on putting Hereford-influenced cattle into feedyards, but he will also be challenged to put together a strategy for the AHA to collect more feedlot and packer data that can be utilized in the genetic evaluation in order to prove the worth of Hereford feeder cattle.

In addition, he along with staff, will develop tools to recognize Hereford-influenced cattle that are sired by genetics that will add value through growing stages, feedlot performance and end product merit. These tools will ultimately be used by seedstock producers' customers to recognize value in Hereford-influenced cattle.

Finally, Amari Manning has been hired as the chief operating officer of CHB (see CHB Bites on Page 20). Her focus will be the everyday management of CHB including managing sales staff, packer relations and the promotion and growth of CHB.

This program has had a huge effect on Hereford-influenced cattle over the past 20 years with 641 million lb. sold, representing 5.4 million cattle harvested and 3.4 million certified. Amari will bring fresh and exciting ideas that can move the CHB brand in a direction that will continue to create demand for Hereford genetics.

This new and current staff has so much knowledge and enthusiasm for the beef industry and Hereford breed. I am blessed to serve the Hereford breed, and I have been blessed to spend my entire life in the industry that I cherish. I look forward to continuing the growth and excitement for Hereford genetics. God bless and merry Christmas to all. **HW**