

# Keeping an Eye on Longevity and Performance



Jack Ward

The pace has been fast and furious during the first few months of 2017 for the American Hereford Association (AHA). It started with the airing of an American Rancher segment that highlighted the benefits of incorporating Hereford genetics into a commercial program and the benefits Hereford provides through all segments of the industry. From there, staff spent some time in both Denver and Ft. Worth, Texas, at national Hereford shows that provided great crowds, boundless excitement, strong cattle numbers and fantastic sales.

The next stop was Nashville for the annual Cattle Industry Convention and National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Trade Show. The AHA and Certified Hereford Beef (CHB®) had a booth and hosted attendees from all over the U.S. and from at least four countries to discuss the benefits of Hereford genetics.

It was reported there were more than 9,000 attendees that made their way through the trade show, and it was exciting to

see the crowds around the booth including seedstock producers, commercial cattlemen, feedlot owners and operators, packers, and those in the food service and retail business.

Nashville has a lot of restaurants that serve CHB, and it was great to get to enjoy some CHB meals and to support these businesses. I would strongly encourage you to contact CHB for a list of those businesses the next time you are in the Nashville area.

## Focusing on customers

During the Cattlemen's College sessions, Shane Bedwell, AHA director of breed improvement, gave a presentation on structure and its effect on the commercial cow herd and feedlot performance.

Shane's presentation hit home with many. Hereford breeders have stayed committed to collecting performance information for economically relevant traits and are dedicated to the Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™) program; however, we must always keep an eye

on those traits that keep Hereford at the forefront of the industry such as feet and leg structure and basic conformation that lend themselves to longevity and performance.

The industry is in an interesting place because all animal protein production is up, and we continue to build both longevity and efficiency in all industries. As we tighten margins through all segments, it will be important for the seedstock industry to stay committed to producing cattle that check all of the boxes. "He Wants it All" is still the message we keep hearing, and producing the type of cattle that "Does it All," should be the commitment Hereford breeders have to the industry.

The AHA will stay focused on providing the tools and information you need to raise the cattle your customers demand. Each breeder and customer may have a different strategy, and with this in mind, AHA will continue to give you transparency of data, to work toward building new traits, to make profit (\$) indexes stronger and to build a genetic evaluation that is robust and backed by pedigree, Whole Herd TPR data and genomics and generated through the most powerful software available. It will be your job to use the tools available to provide seedstock that will make your customers profitable. **HW**

