

What's in Your Toolbox?



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I remember as a kid, I couldn't wait to get a set of real tools just like Dad. As I went into his shop, it seemed there was every tool imaginable. The basics from hammers and screwdrivers to socket sets and punches — it was all available to make the task at hand easier.

But on occasion, there would not be that certain tool needed to achieve the job. So then we would go down the road and stop into Grandad's shed, and most of the time Grandad would have what we needed. I would often think, *How does one acquire so many tools?*, because he had everything.

Even more impressive to me was his desire to add to his collection. Oftentimes he would have new tools, the latest and greatest, if you will, whatever he could acquire to make the ranch and a specific task more efficient.

You see, through experience you gain

knowledge. The knowledge to know what is working and what is not. Being able to make the desired changes and progress, now that's wisdom.

Bull season tools

As bull season is underway and off to a strong start, what tools are you providing to your customers? Are you arming them with the necessary genetics and knowledge to maximize profit? After all, they look to you for their knowledge. But, in my opinion, it's the knowledge gained from them that can really allow your toolbox to be the best.

The American Hereford Association (AHA) offers 15 different expected progeny differences (EPDs) and four profit (\$) indexes (see "Profit (\$) Indexes" sidebar), all designed to guide producers for profit. Understandably, this array of tools can be overwhelming, just like walking into

Grandad's tool shed for the first time. But every one of these serves a purpose.

Likewise, developing more tools like dry matter intake (DMI), heifer calving rate (HCR) and sustained cow fertility (SCF) are important for the future. All of these are economically relevant traits that can improve your bottom-line, not to mention providing a set of genomic-enhanced EPDs (GE-EPDs). Knowing more genetically about an animal early in its life through genomics offers us the opportunity to move ahead at a more rapid pace.

We have some exciting times ahead of us. The Hereford breed has positioned itself in a great light amongst commercial cattlemen. I would encourage you, though, to strive further and to keep sharpening that set of tools to keep them coming back for more. **HW**

Profit (\$) Indexes



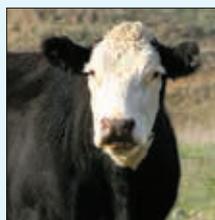
CHB\$

Certified Hereford Beef Index (CHB\$) is the terminal index, so it is developed for producing calves which thrive in a feedlot scenario.



BII\$

Brahman Influence Index (BII\$) utilizes Hereford bulls in a rotational crossbreeding system with Brahman.



BMI\$

Baldie Maternal Index (BMI\$) is geared toward producers using Hereford bulls on Angus cows and retaining females as well as retaining ownership and selling non-selected animals on a grid.



CEZ\$

Calving Ease Index (CEZ\$) is used to select bulls that will be used in a heifer program. **HW**