

# Building a Foundation



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The first three months of 2017 have certainly challenged the agriculture industry and specifically the cattle industry. We have seen devastating floods in the extreme West Coast, record snowfall in many parts of the U.S. and, most recently, the tragic wildfires through Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma and Colorado.

And yet, it never ceases to impress me as to how the agriculture community comes together to help neighbors and friends. These wildfires have cost lives for both livestock and producers. It has been heartbreaking to hear of those younger producers who lost the battle as they were trying to protect their cattle. At the same time, it is very clear the agriculture community supports one another as we read about the hay, fencing supplies, monetary donations and other gifts headed to those in need as they begin to rebuild their businesses, homes and livelihoods.

## Simplot Ranches

American Hereford Association (AHA) Director of Breed Improvement Shane Bedwell and I recently visited with the cowboys and ranch managers at Simplot Ranches in Grand View, Idaho, to discuss ongoing research. The project started in 2011 and, at the onset, was looking at using high-accuracy Hereford sires in a predominately Angus-based heifer program.

The intention of the program was to show the

value of heterosis even in a heifer program and to document the advantages of crossbreeding through all stages of production including feed intake and end product. In addition, Simplot has looked at the value of maternal heterosis and has documented a more than 2% advantage in the fertility of the Hereford-influenced cows versus their Angus contemporaries.

In addition to sharing information and results over the six years of the project, we heard from the cowboys about how difficult the winter has been in their area. They saw record snowfall and cold temperatures during their busiest calving of the first-calf heifers. The message is clear that calving ease and vigor are huge factors.

Time will tell what impact the weather and fires will have on the cattle business over the next few months and years, but in these areas, it will certainly challenge the ranches and businesses for a good, long time. Please continue to keep all of those affected by these devastating fires and storms in your thoughts and prayers.

## Walking sire DNA rule

I want to remind all breeders that the AHA Board of Directors voted to require all walking herd bulls born after Jan. 1, 2011, that sired a calf that needs to be registered to have a DNA profile at the official lab of the AHA before the calf can be registered. We have seen a few of the registration

requests come to the office without the sire being DNA tested. This becomes an issue with getting registrations completed in a timely manner. This information is just a reminder to make sure you have the DNA completed on any bull that heads to a pasture with cows prior to breeding season.

## Sires of Distinction (SOD) and Dams of Distinction (DOD)

In this issue of the *Hereford World*, you will find a list of both SODs and DODs that have been added from the previous year. You can find a full list by searching the entire database at [Hereford.org](http://Hereford.org) on the "EPD Search" found in the upper right hand corner on the new AHA website.

As the breed continues to gain more share in the commercial industry, it is important to find genetics with longevity and the strength to stand the test of time. As we continue to identify genetics that will be profitable through all stages of production, the maternal value of the Hereford breed will be the cornerstone for commercial cattlemen.

With this in mind, it is important to keep calving ease, teat and udder traits, and disposition along with the right growth, milk, mature-cow weight and end product in your selection decisions. The commercial cattlemen demand it all, and it starts with building a strong foundation with your cows. **HW**