

A Season of Progress



Shane Bedwell

May can bring a lot of happiness and joy into our lives. First and foremost, happy Mother's Day to all the hardworking moms out there. As time goes on, you realize just how many sacrifices your Mom has made to offer you the best opportunities. I'm forever grateful for the foundation my mom gave me as well as the opportunities that my wife is giving our children.

May is also Beef Month — can it get any better than the smell of Certified Hereford Beef on the grill and enjoying friends' and neighbors' company? This time is a great opportunity to share our story and to talk about our commitment to raising the best beef in the business.

The Herford Advantage Program is also celebrating its first year of success. This program has not only allowed progressive commercial cattlemen to highlight their feeder cattle but, more importantly, created an educational opportunity between breeders and customers.

Simply put, this program has allowed us to raise the bar on Hereford and Hereford-influenced cattle. By itself this is a great step in breed improvement, but in most of these cases, cattle were awarded with a premium, as well. Please contact Trey Befort or me for more information about the Hereford Advantage Program. We'd certainly like to help your customers capitalize on their genetic investments.

Research

On another note, Jack Ward and I recently met with Jon Beever at the University of Illinois Department of Animal Sciences to discuss strategies on how to pursue finding specific markers for cancer eye and prolapse.

A few of you have sent in samples, and most of these samples have been useful for some preliminary research. However, we still need more. In the short term, if you happen to have a cow that has one of these conditions please send in a blood sample of the affected cow in a purple topped tube.

For these samples to be useful, there needs to be some detailed background information accompanying the sample. Including the registration number, age of the cow and a description of the condition is important.

Specific to cancer eye, we need to know where the lesion is located. Often there can be skin tags around the eye or even small lesions on the

eye that may or may not be malignant. The most common and aggressive are tumors of the third eyelid; these can progress from being a persistent watery eye to a large tumor mass in a season.

Being able to differentiate these is important for research and researchers being able to identify exactly what markers are responsible for these conditions.

Similarly, for prolapse it's important to indicate what kind of prolapse the cow endured. Including whether it's vaginal or uterine will allow Dr. Beever to better associate the correct phenotype to his marker research. If possible, include a picture of the animal focusing on the specific condition.

Finally, when submitting a sample, include an additional sample of a non-affected cow raised in the same environment that shares the same sire. Including this extra step will again help us with the research that needs to be done.

All samples should be shipped to the University of Illinois, Department of Animal Science, 1201 W. Gregory Dr., 220 E. R. Madigan Laboratory, Urbana, IL 61801.

I will be updating the research section of *Hereford.org* with more information regarding these two conditions. **HW**

