



Webinars Provide Learning Opportunities for Members

The American Hereford Association addresses breeders' questions in *MyHerd.org* webinar series.

by *Haley Stark*

To address commonly asked questions about *MyHerd.org*, the American Hereford Association (AHA) hosted a webinar series covering a basic overview of MyHerd, how to register and transfer animals and how to make DNA requests. More than 140 Hereford breeders and MyHerd users joined the webinars this spring.

“What makes MyHerd so unique is that anything typically completed within the AHA office can now be done online in real-time through MyHerd, making it more efficient for the breeder and their operation than ever before.”

— SyAnn Foster

MyHerd is a real-time, online service that replaces traditional mail services and offers breeders everything from registering and transferring animals, updating any of their performance data to paying their AHA and Hereford Publications Inc. (HPI) account balances. It was launched during the 2014 fiscal year, specifically focuses on the Hereford breed, and

aims to make herd and business management more convenient for the breeder.

“What makes MyHerd so unique is that anything typically completed within the AHA office can now be done online in real-time through MyHerd, making it more efficient for the breeder and their operation than ever before,” says SyAnn Foster, AHA education and information service coordinator.

As with any other online system, questions and troubleshooting often arise. The webinars were created to serve as a helpful tool for answering questions and to explain the logic behind MyHerd's design.

Getting started with MyHerd

The first of the four informational webinars discussed the key features of MyHerd, starting with how to login to the program.

Before diving into the content of MyHerd, Foster reviewed web browser compatibility suggestions. Whether an individual is utilizing a PC or Mac computer, Google Chrome works the best with MyHerd and is highly recommended. For those using Internet Explorer on a PC, the web browser setting must allow *Myherd.org* compatibility. Mac's default browser, Safari, is not compatible with MyHerd. Mozilla Firefox is also available for download and serves as an alternative, compatible program.

Once logged on to MyHerd, users will see the home screen varies by design depending on if they have pedigree or performance breeder status. Pedigree breeders are those who wish to register and to transfer Hereford cattle but are not interested in maintaining and reporting performance data; therefore, the production of expected progeny differences (EPDs) is waived on their herd. Performance breeders have more guidelines and requirements. They are required to maintain an accurate female inventory and to report calving ease and weaning weight on the progeny of each female in their inventory. EPDs will be available on their herd.

Pedigree breeders are welcomed with MyHerd navigation tabs, their current balance, a last login date and a list of MyHerd features. Performance breeders are welcomed with these same features along with a Whole Herd Total Performance Record (TPR™) to-do list that helps breeders stay organized and on track with their Whole Herd TPR requirements.

The "Navigation" tabs on MyHerd pave the way for all the tasks that can be completed

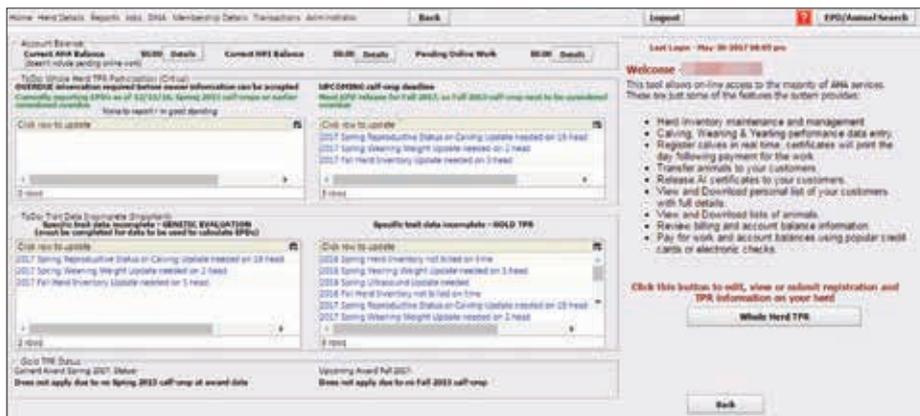


Figure 1: The upper boxes outline any required information for the breeder. The upper left-hand box provides critical overdue required information. This shows breeders whether there are any unsatisfied requirements making them non-compliant. The upper right-hand box shows upcoming required calf crop deadline tasks. The bottom left-hand box features incomplete recorded trait data for the genetic evaluation, and the bottom right-hand box shows upcoming Gold TPR requirements yet to be accomplished.

online. They consist of Home, Herd Details (contains most of the MyHerd features), Reports, Jobs, DNA, Membership Details and Transactions. During the webinar, Foster discussed the components under each of these tabs.

MyHerd has numerous benefits including, but not limited to, registering calves in real-time, transferring animals to customers, electronic registration certificate storage, performance data entry and calf crop analysis. Ultimately, MyHerd provides paperless bookkeeping for the Hereford breeder.

With MyHerd, everything is electronic. Breeders will no longer receive packing slips or monthly statements sent by mail; rather all this information is emailed to them and later can be found online under the "Transactions" or "Reports" tab. Here, the breeder can view previous AHA and HPI transactions as well as pending transactions.

Foster compares "Pending Transactions" to online shopping. "Think of it like a shopping cart," she explains. "The 'work' you do on MyHerd goes into the pending transaction screen and it is not considered complete until the associated fees are paid." The red "Pending Transaction" alert at the

top right-hand side of the page notifies the breeder of this status.

Foster also notes it's imperative to utilize the MyHerd back button instead of the browser back button to avoid losing data or being prematurely logged out.

For performance breeders, understanding the Home screen is important. It consists of four boxes that help breeders stay organized and on track to meet the Whole Herd TPR deadlines. See Figure 1.

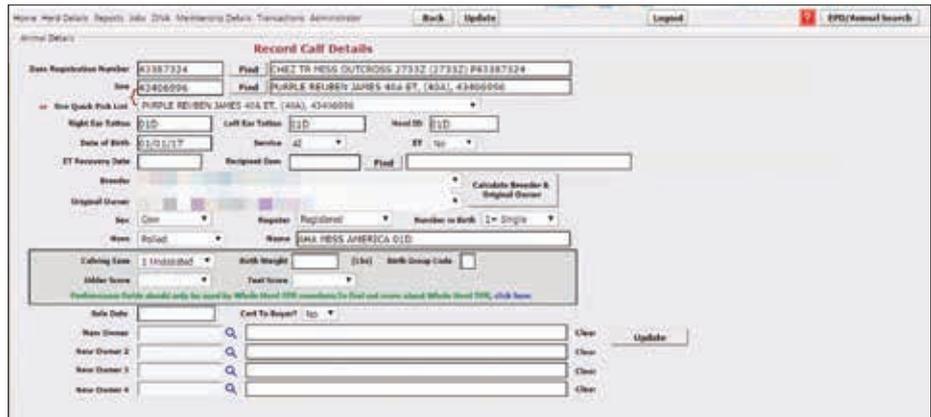
An additional resource for performance breeders is the Whole Herd TPR Calf Crop Tracker table, which can be found by clicking the Whole Herd TPR button in the bottom right-hand corner of the home screen. This table, which

continued on page 132...



Figure 2:

- The Herd ID is unique to that animal, so the ID cannot be used more than once in the same herd (an ID is usually the same as the tattoo).
- You must input birthdates into a MM/DD/YY format.
- When naming a calf, the name cannot be more than 30 characters.



allows the member access to all sections of the TPR program, outlines the calving year and seasons by row and the different traits by columns.

How to register animals

The Calf Registration screen is the page where the breeder can immediately record calf details. Everything that would normally be filled out on paper can now be completed electronically through MyHerd on this page. Foster walked through the entire calf registration process, explained how to transfer ownership immediately on entry and illustrated the information with three different registration scenario examples.

Out of all the data input boxes, Foster highlights a few important details. See Figure 2.

She clarifies the difference when recording natural, AI (artificial insemination) and ET (embryo transfer) bred calves. The “Service” field must have either “Natural” or “AI” selected (if the calf is an ET

calf, AI must be selected) and either a “No” or “Yes” if it is an ET calf.

It is also important to note that the “Breeder” and “Original Owner” input boxes will not populate automatically. To generate this information, the user should click the “Calculate Breeder and Original Owner” button.

The AHA customer service department often receives questions about MyHerd registration “Error” and “Warning” messages.

Foster says, “An ‘Error’ message means something is wrong and the member must either fix and update the calf details or put the animal on ‘Hold’ as a pending animal to save the calf details for updating later. Fix the incorrect information, and click ‘update’ to result in a successful registration once the information is acceptable. If you are waiting for something else, you can click ‘Hold’ to save the calf details. For example, if an artificial insemination (AI) certificate is needed, the member must request an AI certificate to successfully

record this animal.”

“Warning” messages simply prompt the member to double-check the recorded animal details. These messages can be overridden by clicking the “Override” button.

Foster points out that these registration “Error” and “Warning” messages are common. For reference, a common errors chart with each error’s corresponding solutions was featured on Page 16 in the May/June 2017 issue of the *Hereford World*.

How to transfer animals

The animal transferring process on MyHerd is typically the one from which most customer service questions stem from.

An important feature in the transfer process is the “Personal List.” This is a MyHerd feature providing a list of breeders detailed information that the member has done business with in the past two years. The list is also available for download into an Excel spreadsheet, which members can then print for personal reference.

Foster breaks down the transfer screen and important details associated with it. See Figure 3.

Foster notes if the cow being transferred is bred, it’s important to add the service details so at the time of registering her calf, the buyer won’t have to “hold” that calf to get permission from the service sire since it’s indicated here instead.

Breeders must insert individual service sire details for bred heifers and cannot transfer multiple bred heifers at once. However, they may transfer multiple open females or multiple males to the same buyer.

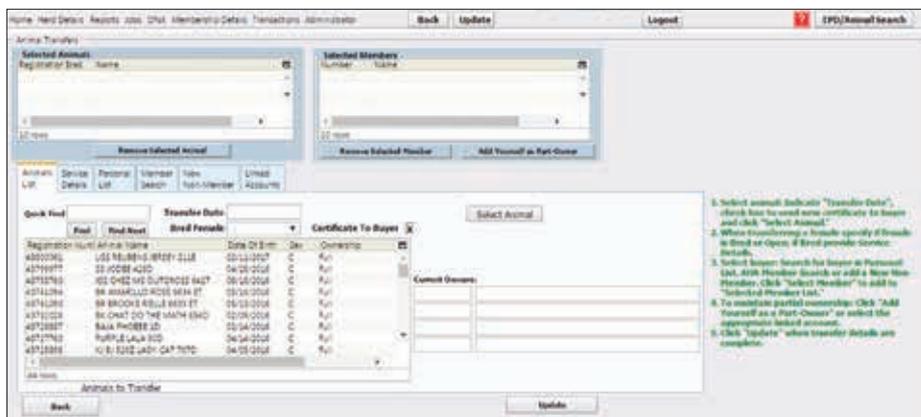


Figure 3: The Animal Transfer screen is powered by the top two boxes. In the selected animals box, pick the animal needing a transfer. In the selected members box, pick the buyer (this does not have to be an AHA member). Next, if the selected animal is a female, indicate if it is an open or a bred heifer/cow.

Most of the confusion during the transfer process arises from the four buyer options featured on the bottom half of the Animal Transfer screen. Foster breaks down these four options into questions for the breeder to ask himself/herself:

- Have you done business with this buyer in the past three years? If so, look for the buyer in your Personal List.
- Do you have the buyer's AHA member number? If so, click the "Member Search" tab to find the buyer by his/her member number or do a quick search with his/her name, state, city and zip code.
- Is the buyer a member of the Association? You can create a new non-member identity since a buyer doesn't have to be a member of the Association to own Hereford cattle. (It is advised, if a similar existing membership populates in the bottom table, to select that membership so you don't create a duplicate account.
- Are you transferring ownership to linked accounts? If so, select the Linked Accounts tab.

Once animal transfers have been completed, it's crucial to review activity. "Visiting your pending transactions is a great way to double check transfers before they're paid for and released," Foster says. "If a transfer is sent out to the wrong buyer, the AHA has to wait until they get the registration paper back from the wrong buyer before they can edit the transfer into the right buyer's name. You can prevent this process by double checking your work in the 'Pending Transaction' screen. At that time, if any information is wrong then you can contact the AHA customer service department to fix any errors before payment and release of your animal transfers."

DNA requests

The DNA features on MyHerd, released this past fall, are the newest part of the program.

Table 1: DNA tests

DNA test options:

- Basic Panel
- Basic Panel + GE-EPDs
- Basic Panel + H/P Test
- Basic Panel + GE-EPDs + H/P Test

Sample collection methods:

- TSU – can do this at birth
- Blood cards – can do this anytime
- Hair – must wait at least four months

Foster says there are two main tasks under the DNA tab: how to make a new DNA request on any active- and inactive-owned animals and how to view and understand the DNA test results.

Focusing on making a DNA request, it's key to understand that there are several steps to the process and this feature serves as a building block for users. First, users should select the animal to be DNA tested. Next, they should select what the primary reason is for getting this animal DNA tested. Reasons include: profile only, parent verification, sire verification, dam verification, AI/ET permit or multi-sire. Following this step, select the type of DNA test needed depending on preference and the purpose of getting the animal DNA tested. A list of DNA tests can be found in Table 1.

After completion of these steps, a final screen will come up outlining the specific DNA test request. This verifies all the information is correct and that the breeder is getting exactly what he/she needs for that particular animal.

It is important to note if a parent verification is needed and a sire or dam does not already have a DNA sample on file, then the breeder will also have to provide a DNA sample for that sire or dam.

Foster also stresses the importance of not only double-checking the DNA request information but also planning ahead. All DNA requests have a three- to four-week turnaround once the sample is received at the lab.

Every DNA test request goes through three processing stages: sent; acknowledged; and tested. "If a test is still processing, you won't be able to make a new request until the processing test has been completed," Foster says. "The reason for this is to prevent

duplicate test requests for the same animal. Once the status is 'Tested,' you can view results by selecting that specific animal and then MyHerd gives the detailed results."

Foster says MyHerd is convenient because the status of the test can be checked at any time. All the information is available on MyHerd.

Upcoming learning opportunities

Throughout all the hosted webinars, Foster emphasized the additional informational resources available to AHA members that include help pages on MyHerd and several tutorials on different MyHerd topics featured on the AHA website, *Hereford.org*, under the Member service tab.

"The AHA is adamant about providing members supplemental ways to learn and become more familiar with AHA service," Foster says.

To further improve member knowledge and to create more learning opportunities, a survey was released in June. This survey was created to provide feedback on MyHerd and the educational webinars, as well as what other areas/topics members would like to learn about and become more familiar with.

Foster says the AHA plans to host another MyHerd webinar series in late fall and winter. The material covered will be based on the corresponding survey results and frequently asked questions received in customer service.

Foster and the AHA customer service team are excited to work on more webinar opportunities and to help AHA members in any areas where they need assistance. She encourages individuals to contact customer service with any questions they may have. **HW**