

Power in Numbers

The AHA continues to build a powerful genetic evaluation providing additional reliability to traits of interest for Hereford customers.



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The American Hereford Association (AHA) membership received a copy of the new Strategic Plan as part of the October issue of the *Hereford World*.

As you would have noticed, both the Mission and Vision Statements were updated and a strong set of Core Strategies have been outlined with some specific goals. The Core Strategies are as follows:

- **Core Strategy 1:** Drive the development and use of genetic tools and technologies
- **Core Strategy 2:** Expand the educational opportunities for AHA members/beef industry
- **Core Strategy 3:** Improve the demand and value of Hereford genetics
- **Core Strategy 4:** Develop and capitalize on “Team Hereford”
- **Core Strategy 5:** Expand opportunities for and engagement of junior members
- **Core Strategy 6:** Strengthen the growth and adoption of Certified Hereford Beef

Core Strategy 1 contains several key initiatives. The first is to continue to negotiate an improved pricing position with genomic testing suppliers. The AHA recently released a new pricing structure and rule that should continue to build the power of the genetic evaluation and to provide additional reliability to traits of interest for your customers.

Currently, the AHA houses nearly 50,000 genotypes on Hereford cattle; these have been instrumental to build a much stronger genetic evaluation. As we move toward BOLT, this information will become even more useful as we will be able to verify pedigrees as they enter the evaluation.

It is a fact — pedigrees are mislabeled about 10% of the time, and these

mistakes are mostly due to bookkeeping errors. Many breeders calve in tight windows which allow for calves to be swapped at birth. Additionally, with artificial insemination (AI) and embryo transfer (ET) programs, semen can be swapped at breeding and, at times, the calving dates can fall between AI and natural breeding dates. As more animals are genotyped, this issue will be resolved at the time a genotype enters the evaluation and insures an accurate foundation for the evaluation.

The AHA released a new \$38 Hereford specific panel which will provide breeders with parentage validation, abnormality results and genomic-enhanced expected progeny differences (GE-EPDs). If applicable, you will be able to include a horned/poled test at a total cost of \$58.

In addition, if you utilize the new Tissue Sampling Unit (TSU), you will be credited back \$4, which makes the test even more reasonable. During the summer Board of Directors meeting, the AHA Board passed a rule that all animals tested through a compliant Whole Herd Total Performance Record (TPR™) breeder will have a set of GE-EPDs accompanied with that animal.

Take advantage of the TSU opportunity and save some dollars when DNA testing. Please contact anyone in AHA customer service to order the sample units. There is also the opportunity to add a drop-down tag, if needed.

In addition to DNA testing, other key initiatives under Core Strategy 1 focus heavily on all breed improvement tools. The Strategic Plan gives the AHA Board, staff and membership a map to keep us focused and headed in the right direction.

It is an exciting time to be a Hereford breeder with the amount of opportunity that we have to grow within the commercial industry. **HW**