



***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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**“The Bald-Faced Truth About Hereford Genetics” Highlighted at the Cattle Industry Convention**

**Phoenix** – The American Hereford Association (AHA) is committed to progressive cattlemen and helping producers meet today’s challenges head-on.

During an AHA hosted event at the Cattle Industry Convention and National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) Trade Show on Feb. 1, AHA Executive Vice President Jack Ward, AHA Director of Breed Improvement Shane Bedwell and Certified Hereford Beef (CHB®) Operating Officer Amari Seiferman shared how Hereford genetics can maximize the value of the commercial herd by leveraging traits such as fertility, feed efficiency, docility and feedlot profitability.

“The AHA had another strong fiscal year in which the AHA reported increases in all aspects of business and a new strategic plan set in place, the Hereford breed is well-positioned to move the cattle industry forward,” Ward said. “We have a membership committed to the commercial industry and creating value and efficiency throughout the production system.”

“The AHA is leading the industry in genetic technology and stands poised for a stronghold in the DNA era,” Bedwell said. “December 2017 was a groundbreaking moment for the AHA in terms of its genetic evaluation and breed improvement.”

The AHA launched its first updated expected progeny differences (EPDs) and corresponding accuracies using the Biometric Open Language Tools (BOLT) genetic evaluation software on Dec. 4. Unique to the industry, this evaluation is fully supported by the Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™) program. With more than 55,000 Hereford genotypes on record, the AHA offers a progressive genetic evaluation that will help identify the most profitable Hereford genetics for the commercial industry.

“Along with this genetic evaluation we released two new traits — Sustained Cow Fertility (SCF) and Dry Matter Intake (DMI),” Bedwell said. “With Whole Herd TPR, we were able to develop SCF which is a longevity and fertility trait blended together. DMI is an economically relevant trait on the cost side for feeding cattle. Both are big components of our updated profit indexes which include Baldy Maternal Index (BMI\$), Brahman Influence Index (BII\$) and Certified Hereford Beef Index (CHB\$).”

The AHA continues to build solid genetic data through the National Reference Sire Program (NRSP), which allows Hereford breeders to test young sires in real-world commercial settings. Unmatched in the beef industry, NRSP has tested hundreds of bulls. This robust test program allows Hereford to stand alone in the area of breed improvement. Because of the commitment of Hereford breeders participating in the program, young sires have been identified and proved for all traits of economic relevance.

“We believe in the value of the NRSP and are working to continue to grow this program,” Bedwell said.

The cheapest and most profitable technology available to cattle producers is heterosis. The Circle A Ranch and Harris Ranch research projects both documented calves sired by Hereford bulls have a \$30 per head advantage in feedlot profitability, and females have a maternal advantage of 7% higher pregnancy rates when comparing the Hereford-sired females to Angus-sired females. Data from Circle A also proves a net income of \$51 more per cow per year and a significantly higher selling price for bred heifers.

“Heterosis adds value across the board,” Bedwell said. “As we look to grow beef supply, one thing we can do is give commercial breeders tools to make good decisions capitalizing on breed complementarity. If we can take out some of the guesswork and let heterosis play its role, we’re in a good spot as an industry. Hereford has proven itself over and over again through research and trait progress.”

### **Certified Hereford Beef**

The CHB brand continues the tradition of marketing and promoting the Hereford breed’s superior genetics through a specification and quality-based branded beef program established over two decades ago.

“We are in our 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of growth for the brand. We have increased our footprint not only domestically, but we’re excited to have entered into the international market,” Seiferman said. “The CHB brand allows not only a focus on a breed-specific program, but the competitive advantage of differentiation.”

CHB® continues to expand product offerings under the brand label. “Because of consumer demand and awareness of the program, we have recently released and expanded our value-added line to include portion-controlled cut steaks, fully-cooked and deli items to enhance our product offerings.”

In 2017, The introduction of CHB® Premium, a top Choice and Prime program, solidified the CHB brand’s position in a competitive marketplace.

The CHB brand continues to position the program to increase market share and lead the industry with a premium brand of beef backed by Hereford genetics.

## **AHA Programs**

“The AHA continues to be engaged with the commercial industry and provide programs to our members and young breeders,” Bedwell said.

The Hereford Advantage Program allows commercial breeders to identify genetically backed, high-quality Hereford and Hereford-influenced feeder cattle and to build premiums in cattle meeting the threshold. Cattlemen participating in this program will benefit from an expected progeny difference (EPD) ranking summary, added market exposure, genetic improvement in their herd and access to AHA resources.

The AHA is committed to offering young cattlemen real-world experience. In 2017 the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) created the Fed Steer Shootout – a program focused on youth education and industry experience through commercial cattle feeding, industry technology and performance measures. NJHA members house their steers at Gregory Feedlots, Inc., Tabor, Iowa, where they are custom fed and evaluated. Educational events such as webinars and field days are hosted throughout the contest.

The AHA, in collaboration with GeneSeek and Allflex, recently launched the Cow DNA Project to gain more genotypes on females. With these programs in place, the Association believes they are taking a stance that will allow them to progress in the industry.

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*The American Hereford Association, with headquarters in Kansas City, Mo., is one of the largest U.S. beef breed associations. The not-for-profit organization along with its subsidiaries — Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) LLC, Hereford Publications Inc. (HPI) and American Beef Records Association (ABRA) — provides programs and services for its members and their customers, while promoting the Hereford breed and supporting education, youth and research. For more information about the Association, visit [Hereford.org](http://Hereford.org).*