

Focus on the Cow Herd

The females in a herd must perform in all elements.



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March 20 was the official first day of spring, and I know for many of you around the country, this could not have come quicker. It has been a tough winter for many with extreme cold and snow in some areas and rain and flooding in others. Around Kansas City, it has been cold and dry, and the lack of moisture for many creates uncertainty as we move toward the summer months.

In addition to celebrating the first day of spring, March was also Women's History Month, when we recognized the contributions of women to important events in history and in contemporary society.

In this issue, we are excited to recognize Dams of Distinction and Sires of Distinction. Just as we celebrated the first day of spring and Women's History Month, I'm reminded of the influence females have on the beef industry.

As cattlemen, we focus heavily on the sires we use each year because they do contribute to the success and sustainability of our herds for generations. But the females are the ones that need to perform through cold, drought, heat and any other element thrown at them.

This performance includes calving with no difficulty, caring for and protecting a calf, supplying enough resources for the calf to grow, and then rebreeding within a reasonable interval in order to start this process all over each year. A Dam of Distinction is not recognized after her first calf for good reason. On Page 30 you can find the requirements a female must meet to receive this prestigious recognition.

In addition to recognizing the dams, it is important to recognize the sires that produce these extra special females. Sires of Distinction are also recognized in this issue of the *Hereford World*. A sire will get this designation if he has produced at least seven daughters that are recognized as Dams of Distinction.

Focus on genetics

As you do searches this spring, you will find the Dams of Distinction (DOD) and Sires of Distinction (SOD) designation at the end of a pedigree name on all animals that qualify. If you would like to find the extensive list of all animals earning this honor, visit the American Hereford Association website, Hereford.org, EPD search and utilize the "select if" feature.

Genetics are certainly interesting to study. It keeps all of us at the top of our game to find the sires we believe will have a positive effect on our herds. The various environments in the United States, and around the world, give us opportunities to be unique in our breeding programs. We each have different goals and challenges. We need to stay focused on our customers and, ultimately, our final product.

As you make breeding decisions this spring, I encourage you to utilize all tools and information available. You have to start with the basics and to select bulls that check off all of the boxes for traits of economic relevance including structure, growth, efficiency and end-product merit. The tools are in place to make these choices more effectively.

May God bless you with a great spring season. **HW**