

They Trust You

Plan your breeding program to create cattle that exceed your customers' expectations.



Shane Bedwell is the chief operating officer and director of breed improvement of the American Hereford Association. He can be reached at sbedwell@hereford.org.

Congratulations to all the breeders who had females and sires earn the prestigious Dam of Distinction and Sire of Distinction honors. These awards are a true testament to maternal efficiency, and these females should be highlighted and leveraged in your programs to anchor breed improvement.

Breeding season is upon on us, and I hope you've had an opportunity to dig into the current *Hereford AI Book*. Breeders who advertised in this issue made it a real testament to the progress Hereford is making. This issue is filled with bulls that can make multi-trait improvement, and I encourage you to seek out one of those bulls to use.

This year's bull season has been a strong one, and there is tremendous momentum for the Hereford breed. I have heard comments from several breeders this winter of new commercial customers who purchased a Hereford bull for the first time to put on their black cows. These are success stories, and they need to be shared in your communities and cattlemen activities. Why? It continues to build the momentum and will more than likely bring new customers to your sale next year.

Deliver performance

I also hear from breeders, "My customers don't look at the numbers, and they only buy bulls on phenotype.

So why should I spend the extra money to ultrasound my bulls and get genomic-enhanced expected progeny differences (GE-EPDs)?"

Commercial producers expect this from you — they trust you. They trust you to provide a bull that has the herd bull appeal but one that can also deliver performance in their calf crop.

And I hear, "Well they just sell at weaning, so conversion and carcass merit are not important." However, I guarantee when a feedlot buyer loses money on a pen of calves, that buyer is going to track down where they came from. Then the next year your commercial customer has lost a buyer for his calves.

This trust and relationship built with commercial customers is crucial to continued growth. I applaud those of you that have built these relationships and, as a result, are experiencing some of your best sales in recent times. You can see a trend in some of these sales that commercial customers are paying up for the bulls that have it all. It seems that for the last couple of years, customers are willing to pay close to the same price they were in 2015 for the top-end bulls.

The ceiling is high and wide for continued growth in commercial cow herds. I encourage you to keep adding as much genetic potential as possible in these cattle while keeping them functional and offering the strength for which the Hereford breed is known.

Don't limit your programs to only what your customers are buying currently. I'm glad commercial cattlemen expect a lot out of a Hereford bull, as we truly have the breeders and the cattle that can satisfy them. **HW**

BIF hosts 50th anniversary convention in the Rockies

Mark your calendar to attend the 50th Beef Improvement Federation Annual Meeting and Research Symposium June 20-23 in Loveland, Colo. The convention serves to facilitate discussion and to provide education on current issues facing the beef industry. For more information, visit BeefImprovement.org. **HW**