A Balanced Team

Keep fundamentals in mind while utilizing genetic selection tools.

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As many of you know, I really enjoy basketball — especially watching college basketball. As I write this article, we just completed "March Madness," which is one of my favorite times of the year. In about a three-week period, you can see some incredible college basketball games, and this year was no exception. A No. 16 seed beat a No. 1, and my Purdue Boilermakers looked like a team to contend. They did make it past the first round but couldn't get it done in their second game of the tournament.

Additionally, I think we may have seen one of the best college basketball teams of recent times win the championship. The Villanova Wildcats were refreshing to watch for many reasons but, mostly, because they were a great team. The team included a very impressive bench, and each teammate had confidence in the other. They were well coached on the basics of defense, passing, shot faking, driving and rebounding. What a team! It was obvious that they had a goal with their sights set on a national championship.

Playing smart
On Page 32 in this issue of the *Hereford World*, you will find a list of bulls that qualify for Certified Hereford Beef (CHB®) Sires of Distinction recognition. These sires meet a threshold for accuracy, and this group has a very straightforward goal with all progeny expected to be terminal. These sires would be selected to use on mature cows with a target of producing cattle through retained ownership that will grow with fewer inputs and produce a high-quality, high-indexing carcass. Again, we measure not only the output but the inputs to maximize profit.

When your customers are looking to retain ownership on a set of calves with no emphasis on heifer retention, this is a set of sires to consider. If your customers have a specific grid in mind,

then you may want to sort them first on the Certified Hereford Beef Index (CHB$) and then put emphasis on a specific trait.

With a balanced approach, just like the Wildcats, you can build a set of bulls that maximize profit, not just output. If we simply breed for more, then we lose sight of the input portion of our programs and, ultimately, our customers' programs. With that said, we do need to push the limits and not be afraid to push our environment for more production. Commercial cattlemen expect this from their seedstock suppliers.

Just like the Wildcats' team not being made up of one-and-done NBA stars, your artificial insemination (AI) sires and herd bulls need to balance the traits that make you and your customers profitable.

Even though it is good "coffee shop" talk to say your cattle topped the market at the local sale barn or that your bull gained more than 5 lb. a day on test, it doesn't always equate to the most profit. We need to push all traits but realize there can be additional costs associated with bending the curve. Let's play smart and start with the fundamentals of type and structure for our environment and then incorporate the tools that help make genetic selections to produce the kind of cattle that fit your environment.

Congratulations to the breeders who have produced or own sires that have received the CHB Sires of Distinction recognition. This accomplishment shows your dedication to making Hereford cattle better.

Lastly, Memorial Day is also fast approaching. This annual holiday does give us time to celebrate with our families, but, more importantly, it should give us time to reflect on how fortunate we are to live in a country with the freedoms and opportunities we have. God bless all who have served and continue to serve our country. **H**W

Mark your calendars for BIF

Make plans to attend the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Annual Meeting and Research Symposium June 20-23, in Loveland, Colo.

Visit *BeefImprovement.org* for more information. **H**W