

Preparing for the Future

The beef industry gears up for another 50 years of improvement at the 2018 Beef Improvement Federation conference.



Jack Ward is the executive vice president of the American Hereford Association. He can be reached at jward@hereford.org.

This June the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) celebrated its 50th anniversary at its Annual Meeting and Research Symposium in Loveland, Colo. Founded in 1968, BIF was organized by Ferry Carpenter and Frank Baker during the 1967 National Western Stock Show. The group's original focus was to transition the cattle industry to one of performance-based evaluation, rather than visual appraisal, by standardizing procedures and measurements and creating ways to evaluate data.

The yearly symposium now focuses on research, innovation and education for producers and scientists. Although it is incredible to look at the progress made over the past 50 years, it is critical to focus on the next 50 years.

At its foundation

Fifty years after the first BIF conference, genetic evaluations have added various traits of economic relevance, including genomics, and developed profit indexes. These are the building blocks for future developments, and over the next 50 years, the industry will face issues including animal welfare, environmental impacts, human health and diet, and food safety — all of which will affect sustainability.

The American Hereford Association (AHA) supports the efforts of BIF and encourages breeders to use the tools developed to make sound breeding decisions. This convention marked my 15th year of attendance, and over the years it has been amazing to see various tools introduced, put into practice by breed associations, adapted by members and, more importantly, utilized by the commercial industry. These tools have allowed the industry to continue producing more with less. As world population grows and resources are challenged, resourcefulness will continue to be a focal area for improvements.

The convention gives scientists and producers alike an opportunity to exchange ideas. Additionally, the interactions within sessions and the hallway discussions are invaluable. Shane Bedwell, chief operating officer and director of breed improvement of the AHA, was also part of a panel sharing information about new genetic evaluation software programs implemented this year.

Convention highlights

This year's convention also had some very special moments for the Hereford breed. Craig Huffhines was presented

with the BIF Pioneer Award. The award recognizes those who have made notable contributions to breed improvement. Craig was instrumental in establishing a great path for the AHA. Craig served as the AHA executive vice president during the implementation of Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™) and the inclusion of genomics, and he was certainly instrumental in starting the Certified Hereford Beef® program.

The biggest highlight of the week was the Van Newkirk Hereford program being recognized as the Seedstock Producer of the Year. Joe, Cyndi and the entire Van Newkirk family certainly have one of the premier seedstock programs in the country, where they focus solely on producing seedstock that makes the commercial industry profitable and sustainable.

In addition to those recognitions, both Shane Bedwell and Kevin Schultz, president of the AHA Board, were elected to the BIF board. Stephen Scott, CEO, Canadian Hereford Association, will represent the Canadian Beef industry on the board as well. It was a great event with a great Hereford presence. **HW**

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Age of calf	Regular	Electronic
Up to 4 months	\$12.50	\$10.50
4-8 months	\$18.50	\$15.50
8-12 months	\$25.50	\$20.50
More than 12 months	\$50.50	\$50.50

