

## Customer Service Tips and Tricks

### DNA testing

The importance of and need for DNA information continues to grow in the beef industry. The value of DNA testing your animals is immeasurable and the genetic information we obtain from DNA testing is used in so many ways.

First, it can be used to verify the pedigree/parentage of the animal, and can be used in the future to test parentage on the animal's progeny. Second, DNA tells us if the animal is a carrier of any of the three major abnormalities within the Hereford breed – hypotrichosis, color dilutor and idiopathic epilepsy. Third, the genomic information of the animal goes into our genetic evaluation to help the accuracy of the animal's expected progeny differences (EPDs).

Not only is DNA testing important, but it is required by the American Hereford Association (AHA) on all sires born after Jan. 1, 2011, for registered calves, any dams used for flushed embryos and registered embryo transfer calves. The process for DNA testing animals through the AHA is as follows:

- 1) Request the DNA test(s) from AHA.
- 2) You will receive a DNA submission form for each animal for which you requested a test. This form will have a barcode at the top. This barcode is

very important and must be present on the form before you send the sample to the lab. If you do not see this barcode, contact Laura Loschke or Toni Shapiro at 816-842-3757.

- 3) Collect your sample and tape the sample in the middle section of the submission form.
- 4) Then simply mail the form, with the sample attached, directly to the DNA lab. Breeders should continue to plan ahead when it comes to DNA. It takes three to four weeks to get results from the time the DNA sample is received at the lab.

The AHA allows several different types of samples for testing. Those include hair (from the tail switch), a blood card, a tissue sample unit (TSU) or semen. The AHA will offer members a \$4 credit, per animal, on their AHA account when using the TSU to submit a DNA sample rather than using hair. The credit occurs when the animal's DNA results are received from the lab, verifying the DNA sample was submitted as a TSU.

A common question is why samples come back as failed. Common causes of sample test failure are biological contamination (fecal matter or dirt in a sample), chemical contamination (dye or pigment from animal markers,

insect repellent or cleaning agents), improper storage of the sample (heat exposure or improperly freezing the sample – the freeze/thaw cycle of a self-defrosting unit can degrade DNA), simply having an insufficient sample or improper shipment of the sample.

If you are interested in DNA testing your herd, don't forget to take advantage of the AHA's special \$20 per head pricing on DNA testing your cow herd. This offer will only run until Dec. 31, 2018. Contact Tena Martin at [tmartin@hereford.org](mailto:tmartin@hereford.org) for more information.

DNA requests can be made online through MyHerd or by contacting AHA Customer Service. The AHA is dedicated to building a powerful genetic evaluation and providing additional reliability to traits of interest for Hereford breeders and their customers.

Having trouble navigating through MyHerd? Visit [Hereford.org/MemberServices](http://Hereford.org/MemberServices) to view more than 20 tutorials to learn the ins and outs of MyHerd, or contact AHA Customer Service at 816-842-3757. To sign up for MyHerd, email your member number to [myherd@hereford.org](mailto:myherd@hereford.org). **HW**

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### DNA tests available:

- **Genomic profile** (parentage profile, genetic abnormalities and GE-EPDs): **\$38**
- **Full package** (Genomic profile plus horned/pollled test): **\$58**
- **Add on horned/pollled test** (adding this test after the original profile has been done): **\$30**