

by **Shane Bedwell**

Reaching New Heights

Data comparing sires from 2007 and 2017 document desirable genetic improvements.



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A new year brings new goals and expectations of how operations can make improvements to their bottom-line. Similarly, calving season brings renewed excitement relative to what this year's calf crop will contribute to your herd, as well as validates your disciplined breeding decisions. The Hereford breed continues to chart new heights and is leveraged to gain more share in commercial operations around the country. With the eve of bull sale season upon us, I want to share a comparison table showing the progression of Hereford genetics over the last decade.

This table compares the average expected progeny difference (EPD) profiles of the top 10 registration sires for 2017 and 2007. Almost across the board there were genetic gains for the

top sires in 2017 compared to those in 2007. These gains speak volumes to the commitment American Hereford Association (AHA) breeders have made in creating a product that delivers more value, and also verifies the merit of Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™) – the crux of the AHA's genetic evaluation that ensures a quality analysis with complete calf crop information.

A trait that stood out to me is the tremendous improvement in Calving Ease (CE), while still gaining a better than 20 percent improvement in primary growth traits. The improvement in CE is in direct support of U.S. Meat Animal Research Center data comparing Hereford to other British breeds, which showed Herefords have the most desirable effect on reducing calving difficulty. Likewise,

there was a 54 percent and 44 percent improvement in Ribeye Area (REA) and Marbling (MARB), respectively. The fact that Hereford genetics have made such noteworthy progress without sacrificing cow fertility and longevity is comforting. In fact, you will notice a favorable improvement on udder and teat quality as well.

Hereford genetics are delivering the necessary versatility to fulfill the operation goals of commercial cattlemen. Data clearly show the progress made within the AHA herdbook and the front-end genetics available to take advantage of. For more information on EPD traits, visit Hereford.org/genetics/breed-improvement/trait-definitions/.

I wish you all the best in 2019. **HW**

EPD profile of top 10 registration sires for 2017 vs. 2007

	CE	BW	WW	YW	DMI	SC	SCF	MM	MG	MCE	MCW	UDDER	TEAT	CWT	FAT	REA	MARB	BMI	BI	CHB
2017	5.6	1.6	64	103	0.39	1.41	18.1	30.8	62.4	5.3	98	1.3	1.38	79	0.041	0.56	0.23	394	483	117
2007	-1.2	3.5	52	85	0.07	1.1	18.1	23.6	49.7	0.5	91	1.14	1.09	61	0.008	0.382	0.16	375	448	98
Percent difference																				
	566%	-54%	21%	23%	457%	28%	0%	31%	26%	1078%	8%	14%	27%	30%	413%	52%	44%	5%	8%	19%