

Sights Set on Successful Seedstock

It is an exciting time for seedstock producers to improve the industry by using the genetic tools available.



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Many of you can remember Wendy's advertising tagline, "Where's the Beef?" It has been recognized as one of the top 100 taglines of all time, and even though it had a different purpose, I think it explains very quickly some of the great accomplishments the U.S. beef industry has achieved.

One element to measure profitability within a commercial cow herd is the pounds of beef produced per cow exposed. It has been reported over the past several years that the U.S. has seen a 15 to 20 percent increase in production. In 2017, we saw about the same amount of beef produced compared to 2003 with about 13 percent fewer cows. Over the past 20 years, the average finish weight has increased nearly 160 pounds on average. There are a number of factors affecting these increases, including nutrition and health improvements, but there has also been a huge change in genetics and genetic selection tools.

We have seen significant genetic improvement in the Hereford breed.

Below are some tables outlining the progress made.

Making improvement

The genetic tools added over the years have allowed seedstock producers to make improvements in several areas, and these improvements have provided a product commercial producers can utilize to add dollars to their bottom lines.

These tools allow the industry to make selections on antagonist traits, and as we continue to add traits for economic relevance, seedstock producers will need to continue to work with customers to identify those that will keep adding profitability. For instance, how can the industry sustain performance and growth without exceeding a mature size or inputs associated with a profitable bottom line? Producers must push the boundaries, but we now have tools to measure inputs to maximize profitability.

The seedstock producer has an incredible opportunity in the

beef industry. In some ways, it is a bit daunting. The total number of registered cows in the U.S. across all breeds represents about 2 percent of the entire cow herd. The majority of bulls utilized in the commercial cow herd are produced by seedstock producers, and most of those bulls are virgin bulls. For the industry to continue to make progress and be sustainable, it must embrace technology.

It is imperative to utilize all tools available, but it is also important to keep your mind focused on type traits, as well. Those include feet and legs, confirmation and structure, fleshing ability, and, most importantly, disposition. What an opportunity we have as seedstock producers. Listen to your customers and the industry, and we will continue to keep Hereford genetics at the forefront of the commercial industry. **HW**

Genetic trends 2000-2018

