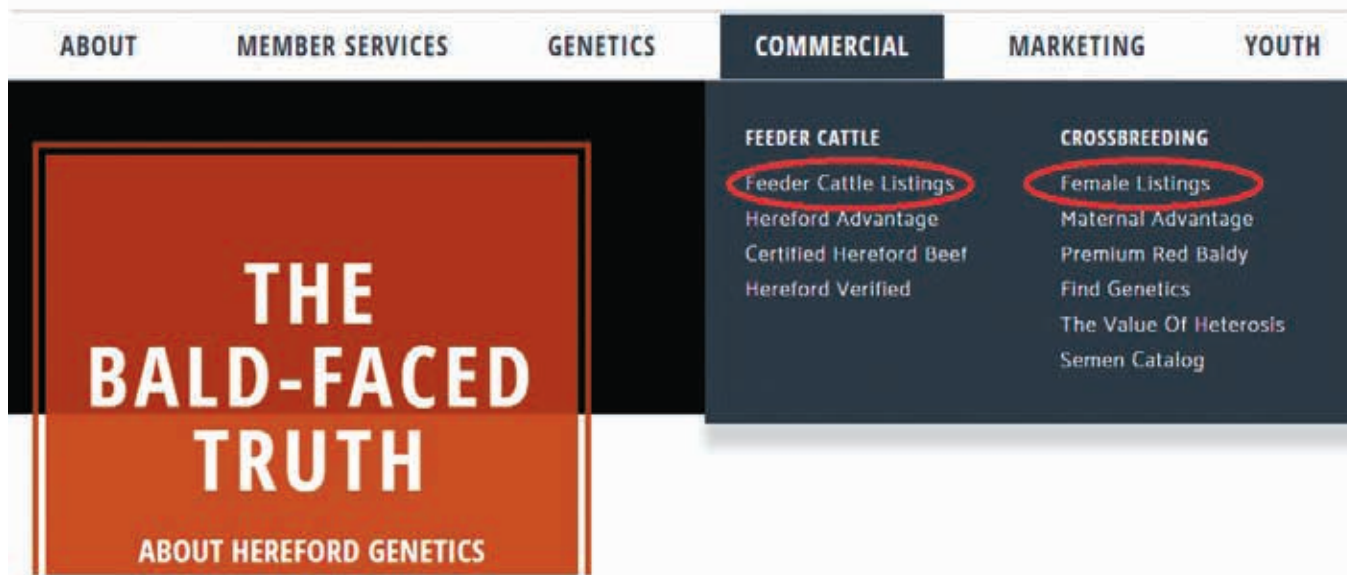


Set a Course for Your Marketing Plan



It may seem like an activity near the bottom of the priority list for some at this point in the year, but now is a great time for producers to start thinking about developing a marketing plan for the next calf crop. With calves starting to hit the ground now, or getting ready to in the next few months, having an endpoint in mind at the start will help make sound management decisions as calves move closer to marketing time.

Marketing opportunities

January's Commercial Connection column outlined the various commercial programs the American Hereford Association (AHA) offers — the Hereford Advantage, Maternal Advantage and Premium Red Baldy programs. These are great tools for producers to take advantage of, and it is never too early for producers to contact the AHA to see which program(s) will benefit their operations.

Along with the aforementioned AHA commercial programs, there are a growing number of value-added programs available for producers to consider. Because there is no one-size-fits-all program, producers should first take a look at their current practices to see which programs will add value to their operation and would not require making any drastic management changes. For example, some verification programs, such as Non-Hormone Treated Cattle (NHTC) or the various verified "Natural" programs, require specific management practices to be followed, so producers should be educated on the requirements if they plan to participate. To learn more about these opportunities, I encourage producers to contact their marketing representative to discuss these different programs, their relevance in the current marketplace and the requirements associated with them.

Regardless of what program(s) producers decide to participate in and market through, it is a good idea to be educated on the options and tools available. One additional free tool to mention is the listing pages found on the AHA website (see image above). Available groups of feeder cattle or commercial females can be listed free of charge and will provide additional exposure to the marketplace. Visit Hereford.org to obtain more information and to take advantage of the tools discussed. **HW**

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