

'Threshold of an Era of Opportunity'

The Hereford breed and the livestock industry have a history of embracing consistent, progressive change.



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I had a severe case of writer's block and needed inspiration. What better way to push forward than to study the past? I headed to the shelves of archived *American Hereford Journals*, looking for something published in the 1960s. The Jan. 1, 1961-April 16, 1961, collection caught my eye in the sea of sand-colored, hardback-bound journals on the bottom bookshelf.

The big, unchanging picture

After flipping through ads showcasing bulls for sale at the upcoming January 1961 National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver, I came across the equivalent of the *World's Perspective* column.

A passage caught my attention: "There are new challenges, of course, and new problems, but this breed and its breeders are steeped in a tradition of victory. There are new advances to be made, as this industry stands at the threshold of an era of opportunity in breeding, selection, feeding and in otherwise utilizing the new tools which scientific findings steadily make available."

I was fascinated with how those words from 58 years ago are still true to a T. Curious, I dug up the January 1961 issue of the *Polled Hereford World* to see what other gold I could mine.

"The future" was a hot topic in January of 1961. In an article about the future of meat production, M.E. Ensminger wrote, "The only sure thing about predicting the future of this industry is that, for better or worse, there will be momentous changes.... Most of this progress of the recent past has been achieved through the application of science, automation, and technology."

At this point I was borderline freaked out with our breed's aptitude for future-telling. (Should this be added to our list of documented strengths?) But there was a valuable take-home message in those manifestos: The who, what and

where's of change will remain unknown, but the when, why and how's of change will stay the same. Change is ongoing in the quest for improved efficiency and quality by means of science, automation and technology.

Our breed has a strong stake in the livestock industry because we embrace progress, which is synonymous with change. It appears we are still at the threshold of an era of opportunity — and always will be.

In this issue

The 113th NWSS was another great year for Hereford breeders, who were applauded for their high-caliber genetics. Coverage of the 2019 show begins on Page 44. In honor of bull-sale season, this issue includes a section on marketing, with articles on pages 86, 92, 98 and 104. To my peace of mind, the aforementioned story at the root of my writer's block was finished in the nick of time (see Page 34).

With 100 years in the Hereford business, Bayers Hereford Ranch was honored as a Century Breeder in 2018. Read about the Bayers' rich family history on Page 28.

There is something special about celebrating the past. And so, the March 2019 *World's Perspective* will conclude exactly as it did in the January 1961 *American Hereford Journal*:

"The great assurance for the future lies in the record of the thought and vigor which always have found application in the Hereford field. There is no complacency here. There is yet much to be done as this still young breed faces its future. As the men [and women — it is 2019, after all] behind the breed and progressively, as for years past, just so will this greatest of all breeds of improved livestock continue to respond." **HW**