

Standing Strong

Learn the latest on Maple Syrup Urine Disease (MSUD) and the Beef Improvement Federation conference.



Shane Bedwell is the chief operating officer and director of breed improvement of the American Hereford Association. He can be reached at sbedwell@hereford.org.

Happy beef month. I have to say I'm looking forward to some warmer weather and getting the grill out to enjoy a great Certified Hereford Beef® steak. Last month I commented on the toughness of the winter, and unfortunately, the start of the spring for some has not offered much reprieve. I definitely feel for all of you who have endured the hardships of Mother Nature, and I also know Hereford breeders are resilient and will bounce back.

MSUD update

As a follow-up to last month's article regarding Maple Syrup Urine Disease (MSUD), I hope you have found the defect carriers report helpful in identifying animals that may warrant testing in your herd. It is important to periodically check back and rerun this report as newly tested animals are identified either as MSUD Free (MSUDF) or as a MSUD Carrier (MSUDC).

I will say several hundred animals have been submitted to be retested, which has further aided in understanding this abnormality. The standalone MSUD test will be available to breeders until Aug. 31, 2019, and applies only to animals with a current genotype at the lab. To order a standalone MSUD test, contact American Hereford Association (AHA) Customer Service at 816-842-3757.

All newly genotyped animals will automatically receive the results for MSUD because the AHA has upgraded to a high-density genotype panel. This detailed genotype panel will be instrumental in continued

research efforts and in discovering marker effects of both established traits and potential new novel traits. As science progresses, the profile of this genotype panel will develop with additional marker content which, in turn, will allow for further genomic advancement.

Even with this cutting-edge panel, it is important to collect and measure all phenotypic traits to allow the AHA's Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™) program to move forward with the same strength it has today. Producers must never lose sight of the value of collecting these phenotypes. Having both the phenotypic measures and the genomic enhancement records for an animal improves the quality of the breed's genetic prediction and, most importantly, increases the level of accuracy associated with the traits of interest.

You are invited

Finally, I would like to invite everyone to attend the 2019 Beef Improvement Federation Annual Meeting and Research Symposium. This year's meeting will be held in Brookings, S.D., and is sure to be a great conference.

For registration information and a schedule of the conference, visit BeefImprovement.org. A strong Hereford presence at this event is important as new ideas and thoughts are exchanged regarding performance programs. Additionally, breeders have a lot to be proud of when it comes to the level of advancement being made in herds across the country. Meeting dates are June 18-21, and I hope you can find time to attend the meetings. **HW**