

Broader Horizons

As the agriculture community overcomes trying times, Hereford breeders continue to embrace improvements.



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Typically, come July, farming is done, haying is underway and summer activities are in full swing. This year has been everything but typical. As I write this article, members and their neighbors are still dealing with the devastation of tornados and flooding. Just after the most recent tornado in our area, Mary Ann and I found debris in our yard and pastures from nearly 50 miles away.

It has been a tough year to say the least, but the resilience of the ag community — especially the cattle community — never ceases to amaze me. While working cattle at home recently, I realized I could not recall a day of a 2019-born calf that has been ideal. Even though temperatures have warmed, our calves are still having a hard time finding a dry place.

As I talk to breeders from around the country, their stories are close to the same. But, more importantly, the attitude and the message are very positive. Breeders comment their calves look good, the cows are slicking off and it is remarkable how they have weathered the storms.

As you read through this issue of the *Hereford World*, you will see stories on the history and some of the influential moments of the American Hereford Association (AHA). Certainly, this past year proves the importance and resilience of the Hereford breed in the cattle industry. Hereford cattle are tough and can withstand just about anything Mother Nature throws at them. Just as importantly, breeders of Hereford cattle are tough, strong-willed and determined to focus on the traits which have kept the breed at the forefront of commercial operations for centuries.

Sharpening our skills

The AHA recently hosted “The Brand” Marketing Summit in Kansas City, Mo. It was an incredible event attended by

more than 200 participants and even included guests from other countries and other breeds. Mark Core, executive vice president and chief marketing officer at Vermeer Corporation, facilitated the conference.

Mark and his family also own and operate a very successful cattle business that has been in his family for many generations. With his background, Mark understands cattlemen love nearly every chore associated with the ranch — except marketing.

With this in mind, The Brand served to guide attendees in taking advantage of the multitude of simple tools available that can help market their operations. The event kicked off with a couple of sessions reminding Hereford breeders to stay fully engaged in breed improvement but to also keep a close eye on our ultimate customer — the consumer. Mark also led the group in an exercise to help each outfit identify its “True North,” which included analyzing strengths and weaknesses and setting goals to best serve each operation’s customers.

Over the day-and-a-half session, the message was clear — all of us need to and can do a better job with our marketing strategies. Another major takeaway is that marketing does not start or stop on sale day.

The lineup of speakers was incredible. They were inspirational and informative, and they challenged the group to embrace new approaches in their marketing strategies. This first-of-its-kind event in the seedstock business will greatly benefit all who attended. I would like to thank everyone who helped make it a reality.

Lastly, I want to wish all of you a great 4th of July. This is an important day to remember and to celebrate the great country in which we live. Best wishes as we play some catch-up from a tough winter and spring. **HW**