

Advancements Abroad

PACE is back and ready to take genetic evaluation to the next level.



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.

I would like to start by thanking everyone who attended “The Brand” Marketing Summit in Kansas City, Mo., in early June. I’m still blown away by the enthusiasm evident during the summit, and I’m personally motivated to help Team Hereford continue to move forward with a stronger and sharper image.

A personal highlight was listening to longtime Kansas City Chiefs broadcaster Mitch Holthus deliver the keynote speech. He did an excellent job relating his “5 C’s for Success” — cooperation, creative, courage, confidence and conduit — and how breeders can apply these principles in marketing their operations.

PACE revival

I’m pleased to announce that beginning in July 2019, we will be back to running the Pan-American Cattle Evaluation (PACE) genetic evaluation. PACE was first released in July 2009 as a joint effort between the American Hereford Association (AHA) and the Hereford associations of Canada, Uruguay and Argentina. This first-of-its-kind collaboration saw the comparison of cattle from multiple continents in the same genetic evaluation.

A huge positive of PACE was the increase in commerce amongst participating countries in sharing Hereford genetics and improving the breed worldwide. In fact, according to the National Association of Animal Breeders (NAAB), there has been more than a 30 percent increase in semen exports in the last 10 years. This growth is in tandem with the strong North American trade between U.S. and Canadian Hereford breeders.

When the AHA transitioned to the updated genetic evaluation in December 2017, which utilizes Biometric Open Language Tools (BOLT) software, the release was only a North American evaluation consisting of data from the U.S. and Canada. At that time, the two South American countries were not ready to make the transition to the improved genetic evaluation and wanted more time to research changes to the model. Since then, the AHA has worked with the leaders of the Uruguay and Argentina Hereford associations to run research prototypes and to determine the best approach to restructure PACE.

In adding South American data back into the North American genetic evaluation, we will gain more than 500,000 pedigree records and more than 200,000 performance records to contribute to the calculations of expected progeny differences (EPDs) of animals jointly used across continents. Again, getting back to running PACE allows for more linkage with common genetics used in both North and South America.

With this additional data, numbers on some animals are expected to change slightly, but, as a whole, the correlations are very strong comparing the North American and the PACE runs.

At this point, the South American data will only be added in once a year as the two South American countries will only update their genetic evaluation once per year. We will continue to update our genetic evaluation every Monday.

Happy 4th of July! **HW**