

by **Trey Befort**

With a beef market that continues to demand higher quality, some great opportunities have become available for producers utilizing Hereford genetics in their operations to capture added value. Jan. 1, 2019, the Certified Hereford Beef® brand modified the minimum marbling score specification to require all carcasses to have a quality grade of Choice or higher.

This quality improvement has opened the door for some great opportunities, including the ability for producers to be rewarded for producing high quality *Certified Hereford Beef* carcasses. As you can see in the advertisement included on this page,

National Beef Packing Co. has added premium opportunity to value-added grids available to all suppliers.

U.S. Premium Beef LLC (USPB), a producer-owned vertically integrated beef marketing company, has also added premium opportunity to its value-added grid. Cattle marketed through USPB's industry-leading program are also harvested at National Beef. For more information regarding USPB, please visit USPremiumBeef.com. To be eligible for any of the premium opportunities mentioned, carcasses must meet the requirements for the *Certified Hereford Beef Premium* program (specifications listed to the right).

Certified Hereford Beef Premium carcass specifications

Modest ⁰⁰ minimum marbling score
A maturity
Medium or fine marbling texture
10.0 to 16.0 square-inch ribeye area
1,050 pounds or less hot carcass weight
Less than 1.0 inch fat thickness
Moderately thick or thicker muscling
Hump not exceeding 2.0 inches in height
Free of "dark cutting" characteristics
Practically free of capillary rupture

Grid marketing defined

Grid marketing can be intimidating and difficult to understand but can also be very rewarding for those producing high-quality cattle. Simply put, a value-added grid is a pricing method in which producers are paid on an individual animal value basis, based on quality. Rather than all animals receiving the same price, a value-added grid applies a series of premiums and discounts, based on quality grade, yield grade and other factors. These premiums and discounts adjust the base price established and pay the producer for the value of each individual animal.

Because there is some risk involved with grid marketing, having a performance history of the cattle will help to maximize added-value opportunity and to reduce downside risk. Some great opportunities have been created for producers utilizing Hereford genetics to learn more about their cattle quality and performance.

Get involved

One such opportunity available this fall is a Hereford Feedout Program being held at HRC Feed Yards in Scott City, Kan. Through this program, producers can send five or more head to be fed and marketed through the U.S. Premium Beef program at National Beef. Producers participating will receive feedyard performance data along with carcass data on each animal they send. Participation entry deadline for this program is Oct. 1, 2019, with delivery to HRC Feed Yards Dec. 15, 2019. For more information or to participate, contact Trey Befort at tbefort@herefordbeef.org or 816-842-3757.

Another opportunity to consider is the 2020 National Junior Hereford Association Fed Steer Shootout. In its fourth year, this contest is a great way for junior members not only to gain performance and carcass information about their cattle but also to gain a comprehensive knowledge of the cattle feeding and packing industries. Delivery dates to Gregory Feedlots in Tabor, Iowa, are Dec. 1-7, 2019. For more information about the contest, visit JrHereford.org.

These programs are great opportunities for producers to truly see how cattle perform, take advantage of added value and have powerful information on hand when it comes time to make genetic selection decisions, to market the next calf crop or to consider retaining ownership. I believe it is always important to keep an open mind and constantly look for ways to gain education about opportunities to add value and to improve quality. **HW**

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Since 2003, Proud Packer of Certified Hereford Beef®



In 2017 National Beef®, in conjunction with the American Hereford Association, created the Certified Hereford Beef® Premium program to meet a growing demand for consistent, high quality Upper Choice beef.

To continue to meet this demand and grow the brand, National Beef is offering premiums for cattle that qualify for the Certified Hereford Premium (G10A) program, when marketed on select National Beef grids.

For more information, please contact Chad Barker, Vice President of Procurement at 816-713-8660.



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