

Leading the Way

Hereford juniors continue to set a high bar for the industry with their enthusiasm and leadership.



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.

Another great Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) is in the books, and what a great event it was! Each year I leave wondering how next year's will be better, and every year I am blown away by the increased level of quality cattle and, most importantly, quality youth.

A big shout out goes to the National Junior Hereford Association directors for running an outstanding event with the guidance of Amy Cowan and Bailey Clanton. All of you impress me with your leadership and are the driving force behind why the JNHE is a class above the rest.

I would like to congratulate the Hereford Bowl champions from Illinois who swept the junior and senior divisions of the competition, which I had the privilege to officiate. These young people spent an incredible amount of time studying the rules of Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™), along with the ins and outs of the American Hereford Association (AHA). The competition was fierce, but both Illinois teams were well prepared and dominated in their respective divisions. There is no doubt the young people on these teams have a bright future in our breed! Check out all of the contest winners on Page 110.

Real data, real value

I would like to highlight the opportunity to feed your cattle in the Hereford Feedout Program. Hopefully, you saw the promotion in the August *Hereford World* and had a chance to read Trey Befort's Commercial Connection column, but if you did not, I want to give you a chance to learn about this great program. There are many reasons you need to be involved.

HRC Feed Yards, Scott City, Kan., has partnered with the AHA to give breeders and their customers the opportunity to collect real carcass data. This program has real value in many

ways, but the biggest value is finding out where your cattle stand. Knowing how your genetics perform in terms of conversion as well as on the rail is critical for making future decisions. This assurance is critical to merchandize your bulls and helps your customers get top dollar for their calves at sale time.

This information is a great first step in making genetic progress in your herd and brings value to the breed in the eyes of the commercial sector. Data collected from this program can be entered directly into the genetic evaluation and will help build accuracy on your carcass trait values — cattle simply have to be recorded in the AHA database.

The 10,000 carcass records in the AHA database have allowed us to improve carcass values, but quite frankly, we need to get more. Programs like the Hereford Feedout allow you to recognize the true value of your cattle and give Hereford cattle the opportunity to prove their worth in the commercial industry. The best way to get more out of your bulls and to demand a higher premium for your calves and your customers' calves is to prove their merit.

This is a retained ownership program, but HRC can provide financing opportunities. Furthermore, HRC will provide U.S. Premium Beef shares to all cattle in the program, and you will be able to market cattle into the Certified Hereford Beef® brand. This is a great way to prove the worth of your cattle, no matter your location.

Juniors have come from all regions of the U.S. to gain knowledge and prove the genetic merit of their cattle. Take their lead, and let's make the Hereford Feedout a big success — after all, the Feedout is taking place in the heart of cattle feeding country! **HW**

Editor's note: See Page 150 for more information or visit Hereford.org/genetics/breed-improvement/feedout-program/.