

An Age of Technological Progression

As technological advancements are inevitable, the AHA continues to evolve in order to serve the progressive cattleman.



Jack Ward is the executive vice president of the American Hereford Association. He can be reached at jward@hereford.org.

Technology has certainly evolved over time, but it seems to be moving at a much faster pace than ever. I, like many of you, can remember a dial phone and if we wanted to send a note to someone, it was done by the U.S. Postal Service. It was either written by hand or typed on a manual typewriter. My senior year in high school, my mother made me take typing class, and I just could not understand the reason why. That spring when I graduated high school, she and my dad gave me an electric typewriter to head off to college. I certainly used that typewriter for a number of years in course work and even during the first years of my career.

Instantaneous results

I am writing this column on a personal computer and using a keyboard that is set up almost identically to my first typewriter. My mom always knew what was best for me, and now when I make a mistake, I do not have to use any correction fluid or start over; I just keep a finger to the keyboard and make my corrections.

Additionally, I send a number of emails each day through this same computer and it allows me to communicate with colleagues and friends all over the world

instantaneously. As for that dial-up phone, my mom also gave me a phone card when I ventured off to school so I could use any pay phone in the country to contact them at any time. Recently, I utilized a mobile application on my phone called WhatsApp to communicate with some friends and cattlemen in Argentina. That communication was also instantaneous.

AHA advancements

At the American Hereford Association (AHA), we have moved from nearly all data submitted in the early 2000s by mail to over 80% submitted through some type of online format. Today, a breeder, through MyHerd, can register or transfer an animal, submit all performance data and receive performance reports immediately, order a DNA kit, and do most all other business transactions. This system has created a much more efficient office and keeps the turnaround time on registration to less than two days compared to two weeks when I first started at the AHA.

Honestly, most all exchanges can be done through a stroke of a key on a computer. A breeder can order and submit a picture to be used in an ad through email. Think about that one! I can go to a website, take a look

at a picture, order it, pay for it and immediately see it show up in an email for me to use how I see fit.

One of the most impressive changes in the cattle business for me is the power of the genetic evaluation. Not only do we incorporate genomics, but we produce an updated genetic evaluation on a weekly basis which absolutely gives us selection power that we have never seen. It was not that long ago that evaluations were produced one or two times a year because of the lack of computing power. I will not argue with anyone on their beliefs concerning EPDs, but in a population of genetics, if a cattleman utilizes this information, genetic progress can be made. I am not saying more is always better, but the tool has certainly armed us with tremendous information.

Technology will continue to evolve. My mom would be proud that I continue to use my typewriting skills today even though the process has a much different look than during my senior year of high school. We need to be prepared to evolve with the technology and to implement it where it fits and progress. On the other hand, I must admit, I am not sure I am ready to sit in a car and let it drive me. **HW**



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Member Cattle Registration Fees

Age of calf	Paper	Electronic
Up to 4 months	\$14.50	\$12.50
4-8 months	\$20.50	\$17.50
8-12 months	\$27.50	\$22.50
More than 12 months	\$52.50	\$52.50

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