Performance Matters

Genetic Abnormality Testing Updates

by **Shane Bedwell**

Learn more about new testing options for Mandibulofacial Dysostosis and a rule change regarding AI-permitted sires.

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Where has the summer gone? It seems like yesterday pairs were getting kicked out to grass, and now it is time to get cranking on those weaned calves in preparation for 2021 sales. I hope your calf crop is coming along as predicted and you are submitting weights into the American Hereford Association's (AHA) genetic evaluation. Along those lines, now is a perfect time to submit DNA on calves to ensure their genomic profiles are back in time to include genomic-enhanced expected progeny differences (GE-EPDs) results in catalogs to aid buyers in selection. Remember, you will receive a $4 credit if these DNA samples are sent to the lab with a tissue sample unit (TSU).

Mandibulofacial Dysostosis commercial test

By now, I hope you have learned Neogen® has developed a commercial test for Mandibulofacial Dysostosis (MD) to test all animals registered with the AHA for the abnormality. The MD test will be offered as a stand-alone test until the MD marker is added to the chip used for the basic test that includes a genomic profile, parentage and the other established abnormalities.

The good news is you can start testing implicated animals with the standalone MD test. Pricing is dependent on the type of test you need. If you already have DNA submitted on an animal at the lab, the cost is $20. The lab will pull an existing sample and extract DNA for the MD test. If you want to screen suspect carriers in your herd, you can submit a DNA sample to test for MD for a $20 fee.

If you want to add the MD test to the basic test, the total charge is $55. For this combination, the MD test will be offered at $13 on top of the $42 test fee for the basic genomic profile.

Members must contact the AHA Customer Service by phone or email to request an official MD test. Consequently, you cannot request an MD test on MyHerd. It is important to contact Customer Service to request the MD test so we can send you the correct sample submission form (DNA kit) to accompany your sample.

I hope the stand-alone MD test will allow you to move forward with the genetics in your herd. In my opinion, it is time to embrace technology and to use it to your advantage to work around unforeseen circumstances like MD and to continue breeding cattle that fit your goals and your customers' expectations.

AI-permitted sire testing

The AHA Board of Directors has approved a new rule regarding AI-permitted (artificial insemination) sires. Starting Sept. 1, 2020, all AI-permitted sires must be tested for all known genetic abnormalities in addition to the established parent-verification requirement. Bulls which have been AI-permitted prior to Sept. 1 will be grandfathered into the rule change, so the new rule will apply only to bulls that become AI-permitted after Sept. 1. HW