

by Shane Bedwell

Trends for Success

Take notice of the impressive improvement of Hereford genetics in the past decade.



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Greetings to all, and I wish everyone a prosperous 2021. We can only hope a bit – actually a lot – of normalcy returns so we can carry on the traditions we love. As spring bull sale season takes off, I want to highlight trends in expected progeny differences (EPDs) in the Hereford breed over the last 10 years. Whether you are a first-time or a tried-and-true buyer of Hereford genetics, it is important to realize the breed’s achievements in this relatively short time.

Numbers talk

EPDs are important tools and provide the best estimate of how an animal will perform as a parent. As evident in the following graphs, Hereford genetics collectively deliver more than ever. Combining these trends with the breed’s undeniable docility, fertility and soundness, it is clear Hereford genetics give all producers the ability to advance their economic goals.

Most notably, calving ease (CE) and calving ease maternal (CEM) boast an impressive 100% and 150% increase over the last 10 years, respectively. Similarly, there has been a favorable 23% and 20% increase in weaning weight (WW) and yearling weight (YW), respectively. It is important to note Hereford breeders have improved these key growth traits without increasing mature cow weight (MCW), which only increased 11% in the last decade. Simply put, adding more pounds is fine, but it is critical to keep a watchful eye on cow size when retaining females.

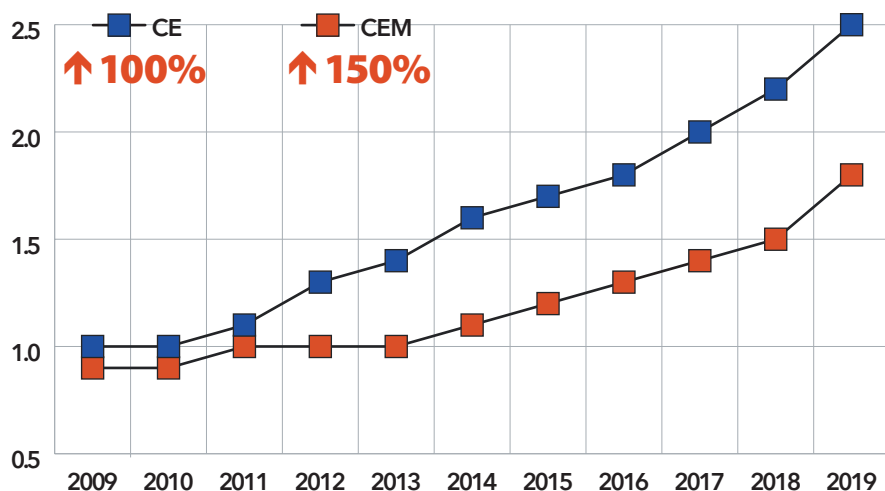
Next, study the 39% improvement in milk (M) and 36% improvement in sustained cow fertility (SCF). This growth speaks highly of the breed’s maternal qualities and ability to thrive in diverse environments. Furthermore,

the udder and teat EPD increased 13% over the last 10 years. There has also been substantial improvements in the ribeye area (REA) and marbling (MARB), which netted a respective 85% and 100% increase from 2009 to 2019. End-product merit is important no matter your endpoint.

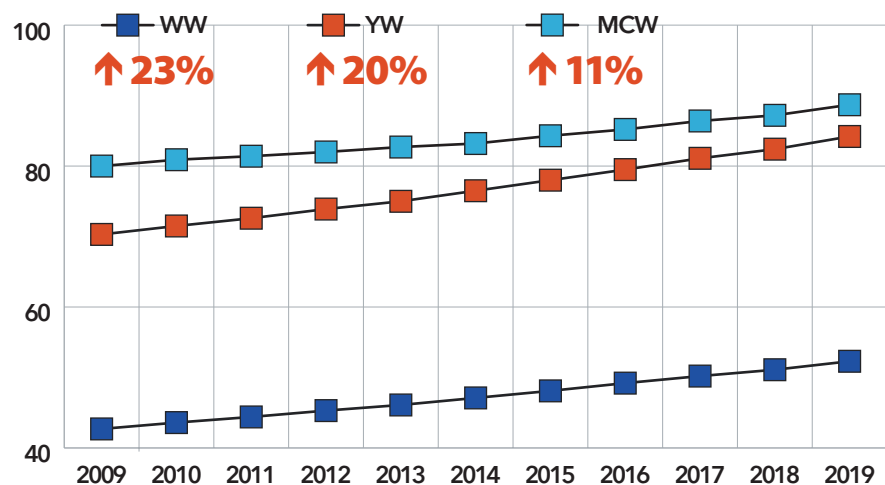
Finally, and to no surprise, the baldy maternal (BMI\$) and Certified Hereford Beef (CHB\$) profit indices increased favorably to the tune of 28% and 13%, respectively. BMI\$ and CHB\$ drive multiple areas of improvement within a commercial operation and are derived from economic factors associated with the traits that build these indices. BMI\$ is an important tool for keeping replacements while CHB\$ is a terminally focused index. Regardless, both of these indices help simplify the selection process by quantifying multiple traits geared for the purpose of profit.

It is apparent Hereford breeders have risen to the challenge of delivering genetics that improve your bottom line. Best wishes with your bull buying adventures this spring. **HW**

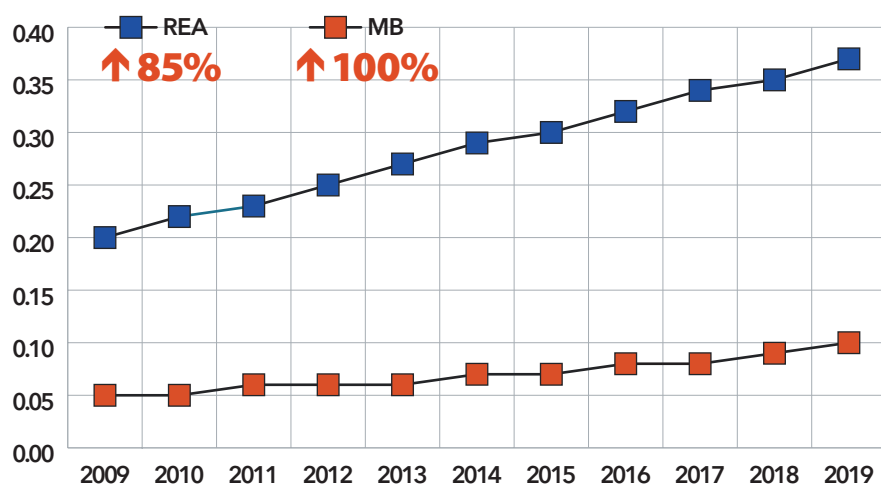
Calving ease and calving ease maternal trend 2009-2019



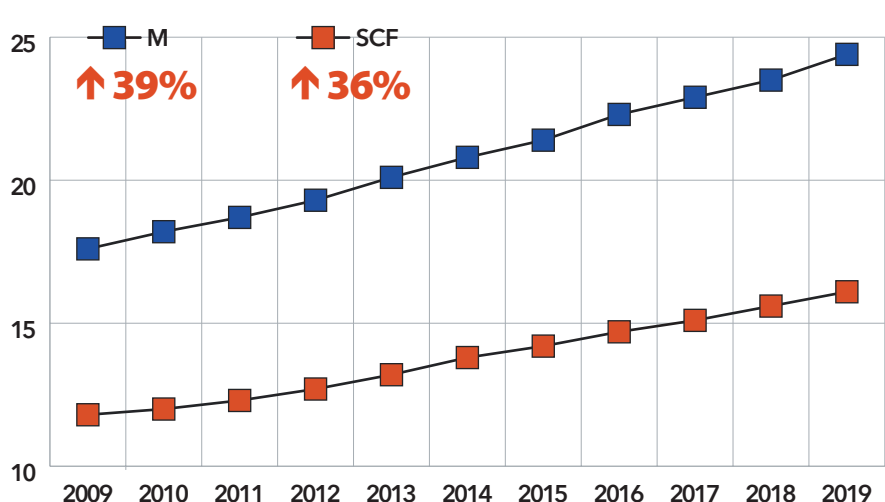
Weaning weight, yearling weight and mature cow weight trend 2009-2019



Ribeye area and marbling trend 2009-2019



Milk and sustained cow fertility trend 2009-2019



Baldy maternal and Certified Hereford Beef profit indices trend 2009-2019

