

## Unparalleled



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](mailto:sbedwell@hereford.org).

“Beef is my favorite food. Herefords are my favorite breed of cattle and Hereford breeders are my favorite people.” - John Wayne

When I was growing up, my family had a mail-in subscription to John Wayne movies. It was a real highlight to open the mailbox and see what movie we received each month. Whether we had seen the film or not, it was like Christmas morning when that package arrived.

John Wayne forever became my hero and a man I look up to. Little did I know as a kid, The Duke was as big of a star off screen in the Hereford business as he was on screen, riding tall in the saddle in classic Western films. The 26 Bar Ranch is etched in history as John Wayne’s historic Hereford ranch in Arizona. His cattle were good, and the bigger-than-life star loved Hereford cattle.

I enjoy hearing stories of 26 Bar Ranch’s successful sales and quality Hereford cattle. I also look forward to visiting the new John Wayne Experience Museum in Fort Worth, Texas. I hear it is fantastic. A friend said there is a great 26 Bar Ranch display, including John Wayne’s remarks from an opening speech at a bull sale: “Beef is my favorite food. Herefords are my favorite breed of cattle and Hereford breeders are my favorite people.”

An iconic statement from an iconic man, who stood up for what he loved and wore his passion on his sleeve. As much as this country needs a John Wayne figure, and as much as I want to see a new movie with him riding Dollar, I can’t get bogged down thinking about the past. What I can do — what we all can do — is honor his legacy and the breed’s legacy by promoting our world-class product.

### Enduring efficiency

Beef month is a good reminder to promote our brand and to tell our rich history, which has shaped the beef industry to what it is today. Our story needs to be told year-round, though.

There is good reason why the Hereford breed has existed since 1881. The same convenience traits of longevity and docility with unparalleled efficiency shine as brightly as they did 140 years ago. Our breed has reached an exciting time in this business because of great breeders and their adoption of progressive tools.

Hereford genetics are needed and desired. This year’s sales show an impressive 19% increase in average price per bull over last year, with a 5% increase in total bull lots sold. Beyond these impressive statistics, the great story we need to tell is beef’s sustainability. Turn to Page 44 to learn how U.S. beef production is the most efficient in the world.

Hereford’s efficiency story is even stronger, as we can do more with less when it comes to feed conversion. The great cow efficiency data from Dave Lalman, Ph.D., and his team at Oklahoma State University supports this claim. As the Duke says, “We are burning daylight.” We must tell our great Hereford beef story! **HW**

### Register now

Registration is now open for the 2021 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Research Symposium and Convention. This year’s event will be hosted in person, June 22-25 in Des Moines, Iowa. The deadline for early registration is May 15. Visit [BIFSymposium.com](http://BIFSymposium.com) and save \$50 with early registration. **HW**

