

## Measure of Strength

Protein production indicates prosperity and progress.



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Our travel guide announced we were passing the local hospital, a stop she hoped we would not have to make. I gazed out the coach window as we crawled down the main street of Vang Vieng, a well-known backpacker town in Laos. Mopeds and tiny cars littered the hospital's dirt lot, and patients wandered about with fluid bags strung to bamboo sticks.

*Bamboo.* That scene was one of the most humbling in my lifetime. Nevermind the toilets without running water, the food stored at random temperatures or the lack of traffic control. No, the thought of lying in a hospital bed hooked up to an IV on bamboo left me indescribably thankful for our country's luxuries.

Travel teaches tolerance, a saying I believe wholeheartedly. Though perhaps a better phrase is "travel teaches respect." Respect for other cultures, and respect for your own.

### The luxury protein

After a month in Southeast Asia, I can count on one hand the number of meals I had which included beef. Protein was offered in the form of poultry, eggs and seafood (and snake and rat in Vietnam). The few times I enjoyed beef were at nicer restaurants catering to Western tourists, usually in the form of a hamburger.

Countries like Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam depend on tourism to drive their economies. While these nations will always offer their traditional diets, I bet beef will become a staple in regions where infrastructures are growing to support Western tourism.

At this time, America's food production and health and safety protocols are second-to-none. It's amazing — a miracle, frankly — that we have access to *safe* food year-

round. The evolution of our beef production system is astounding, and Americans should be proud to lead the world in efficiency. Our beef industry indicates our nation's success. It's a product of education, financial stability, technology and sovereignty. It demonstrates our sophistication. It shows our strength.

### Beef up

In this issue, the *Hereford World* joins the celebration of National Beef Month to help readers "beef up." We kick off our featured section on Page 28 with the "Steak" of the Union and the direction of the Certified Hereford Beef® (CHB) brand. Study the CHB Sires of Distinction on Page 30 and learn about the role carcass phenotypes play in improving beef quality on Page 26.

We invite you to celebrate Hen House Markets, CHB's 2020 Retailer of the Year, on Page 36. This Kansas City-based retailer was the first in the country to adopt the brand's Premium program. Next, flip to Page 44 to see how U.S. beef production stacks up on the global scale, and how Hereford genetics contribute to these efficiencies. Finally, see what happened with Colorado's "MeatIn Day," a pro-beef and agriculture movement that garnered national attention, on Page 48.

For those heading to the "Hereford Spectacular" Junior National Hereford Expo, check out a special preview section starting on Page 62.

As this column draws to a close, so does my time as editor of this historical publication. I am proud to have my name included in its list of editors, and I am grateful for every experience this path brought. Thank you, loyal readers, for your support and patience in this beginning stage of my career. May our futures be bright and our smiles brighter. **HW**