

Hereford Bulls Increase Returns on Assets

Economic benefits are multifold and additive.



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

The American Hereford Association (AHA) continues to work with large commercial cow-calf operations and universities to prove the value of adding Hereford genetics and heterosis to a breeding program. Several projects over the years have measured its effect in both the feedyard and cow herd. These projects include working with Simplot Ranches in Idaho, Harris Ranch in California and Circle A Ranch in Missouri.

In 2007, Circle A Ranch agreed to participate with the AHA in a research project designed to determine and measure the advantages of using registered Hereford bulls on commercial Angus cows. These are some of the project details.

- 600 Circle A commercial Angus females were randomly AI-bred to 10 Hereford sires (both proven and unproven).
- The control group included progeny from three proven Angus sires; one was the top Angus sire for registrations in 2008. The average expected progeny differences (EPDs) of the Angus sires placed them in the top 30% of the Angus breed for birth weight and the top 20% of the breed for weaning weight.
- The average birth weight of the Hereford-sired calves was 72

pounds, 3 pounds heavier than the Angus-sired calves. At weaning, the Hereford-sired calves were 11.9 pounds heavier than the Angus-sired calves, even though the Angus sires ranked in the top 20% of the breed for weaning weight EPD.

- Resulting heifer calves were developed and bred at Circle A's Lineville, Iowa ranch. Conception rates were tracked. A portion of the bred heifers was sold through the Circle A Production sale.

Hereford advantages plus heterosis

Results from the Circle A project showed Hereford's efficiency advantage: 7% higher conception rate, along with improved feed efficiency and average daily gain. Commercial producers recognized this advantage, paying an average of \$110 more per head for the baldy females in the Circle A production sale, compared to the straightbred black females. The Circle A crew also complimented the baldy females for having a decidedly superior disposition compared to the Angus-sired heifers.

Plus, the Hereford-sired group accounted for significantly more economic return than the Angus-sired group.

Vern Pierce, then an agricultural economist at the University of Missouri developed a 10-year model, using project

data and incorporating the effects of the cattle cycle on returns to the enterprise.

Bottom line, the modeling indicated using Hereford sires at Circle A returned an average of \$514 net present value for each cow in the herd. That was for the entirety of the 10-year horizon, not for each year. So, an operation with 100 cows, using Hereford sires over a 10-year cattle cycle would have \$51,400 more in one-time net present value on their operation, compared to the same operation using Angus sires. The average rate of return on assets over the 10-year period was 5.77% for the Hereford-sired group versus 2.27% for the Angus-sired group.

Recently, I had a great visit with a good friend, Joe Elliot, of Robert Elliot and Sons in Tennessee. We talked about how commercial cattle producers are asking seedstock producers to put more focus on "foundation" traits, such as fertility, longevity, feet and disposition. Some refer to them as "convenience" traits, but as Joe says, these traits are the foundation to building a stronger cow herd. Combined with the heterosis, utilizing a registered Hereford bull in a commercial cow herd pays huge dividends. Look under the "Commercial" tab on Hereford.org to learn more about the benefits of using Hereford genetics. Come Home to Hereford! **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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