

# Telling the Hereford Story

by **Taylor Belle Matheny**

In agriculture, “telling your story” connects producers with consumers. Through these stories, people connect with a brand emotionally and gain a better understanding of their values. In animal agriculture, storytelling has been used to help those disassociated with production agriculture better understand the people who are raising the food they purchase from a grocery store. Telling the story is a marketing tool that has been around for a while, but it is one Hereford breeders can use to advance their operation and the Hereford breed.

## Telling the story of a farm or ranch

When developing a marketing plan for your operation, incorporate the story of the people, the ranch and the cattle. Potential customers are intrigued to learn how a family got started in the breed or the history of the land, farm or ranch.

Never underestimate the power of your operation’s story. Consumers and other producers are interested to learn more about the people behind the brand. Sharing your story can help you connect with potential customers.

## Tell the story of the Hereford breed

The American Hereford Association’s (AHA) national ad campaign “Come Home to Hereford” resonates with cattlemen and women across the country. The message behind this campaign aligns perfectly with the goal of this column — telling the story of Hereford cattle. The campaign tells the story of the traits that make Herefords worthy of a homecoming.

As a Hereford breeder, there is no better advocate for the breed than you. Telling others how Hereford genetics impact your success is a powerful marketing tool. As you tell the story of your own operation, I challenge you to also tell the success of Hereford genetics. The Hereford breed can continue to expand its reach and bring producers home to a breed offering added fertility, longevity, efficiency and profitability. It is important to continue sharing the story of Hereford cattle to advance the breed.

## Ways to share your story

The story is the part that comes naturally — it is the people, the place and the brand established by

an operation. Breeders have unique stories to share about their own operation and the role Herefords have in their success. Spend time thinking about these two pieces of the story. They are important to share. These are a few tips on how to begin sharing your story.

Social media may not have been around since the beginning of your ranch, but it is an effective tool for sharing the story of the Hereford breed. Create a monthly content calendar for posting to your website or social media; each post can share more of the story behind the operation or the breed. When thinking about marketing your operation, find a customer who has had success with your genetics and ask them to share their story. These are the stories followers will enjoy reading, and these anecdotes allow them to better understand your farm or ranch.

Not every farm or ranch has a website. As you continue adding marketing avenues to your plan, consider a website. If you already have a website, I encourage you to add an “about” or “our story” page, which shares the message of your operation. To take it a step further, a “testimonial” page with words from customers can be a powerful addition to help you market your cattle and the breed simultaneously.

Marketing and the world around us continue to change, but the stories of ranches across the country and the Hereford breed are here to stay. As a breed, let’s tell the story and honor the rich history and tradition of red and white cattle. **HW**

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Photo by Janet Jones