Year-round Hereford Genomics

Reviewing the reasons to genomic test your herd for bull sale season.

*by **Jamie Courter** and **Leoma Wells***

In a year with many changes, there has been a constant in the beef industry — the demand for Hereford genetics. As the demand for Hereford genetics accelerates, so has the pace of genomic testing with a 70% increase in 2021. Seedstock producers recognize how genomic tools further validate their selection decisions.

As commercial bull buyers seek out increased assurance and confidence, along with proven progress, they're turning to Hereford. As we march forward into the future, let's review key points from previous *Hereford World* articles.

> "I would tell them that if they want to be in the registered business and help with genetic improvement, it's a necessity."
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> **— John Ridder, Falling Timber Farm from the July *Hereford World's* Genomics – Don't Just Take Our Word for It.**

A year in review

Genomics Bull Buying Guide, *January Hereford World (HW)* — Expected progeny differences (EPDs) summarize the pedigree, performance and progeny information into the currently known genetic potential of an animal. An EPD's accuracy represents the confidence and/or expected change a producer could see as more information enters the evaluation on a given animal. Genomic testing, or genomic-enhanced expected progeny differences (GE-EPDs), increases the accuracy of the prediction and confidence in an animals' genetic potential.

The Time is Now, *February HW* — Knowing genomic sampling turnaround times is critical when it comes to having GE-EPDs available for marketing efforts and sale day. Allflex® Tissue Sampling Units (TSUs) are efficient and able to be processed quickly. Submit DNA samples six to eight weeks before results are needed.

Genomics – Your Competitive Advantage, *March HW* — Genomic testing serves as risk management for the breeder and bull buyer and leads to more accurate decisions and faster genetic gain over time.

Not Just the Bull, *April HW* — Selling bulls with GE-EPDs results in faster genetic progress, but sires only provide 50% of progeny's DNA. For more rapid genetic improvement, genomic test replacement heifers.

Not all Traits are Created Equal, *May HW* — Phenotype collection remains critical for genetic improvement. Carcass traits, for example, need actual data connected to known genotypes to continue to improve progeny equivalents and increase accuracy. If you retain ownership and feed cattle, don't forget to genotype and submit carcass data to the American Hereford Association (AHA).

Genomics – Don't Just Take Our Word for It, *July HW* — In our producer highlight, Falling Timber Farm's John Ridder was candid and heartfelt with a resounding message to the AHA membership: Don't wait; start genomic testing your "keeper" calves and go from there.

What You See - The Importance of Phenotypes, *August HW* — Evaluating animals' external appearance, or phenotype, is important, but there is more under the hide. Using genomic testing, combined with visual appraisal, will lead to faster, more targeted progress.

What You Can't See – How Genomics Can Break the Tie, *September HW* — While a phenotypic sort is important, genomics help learn more about an animal's true genetic potential at a younger age and provide insight that our grandfathers waited years to learn.

Neogen is proud to partner with the AHA, and we look forward to the future as we continue serving the best interests of Hereford breeders across the nation. HW

Editor's Note: Jamie Courter, Ph.D., is the beef products manager and Leoma Wells is the strategic account manager for Neogen Genomics.