

Expanding Opportunity

More commercial producers discover solutions provided by Hereford genetics.

Early-season Hereford bull sales have been fantastic with continued and renewed interest in Hereford genetics by commercial cow-calf producers.

Challenges spawned by drought, escalating input costs and volatile markets are encouraging commercial cattle producers to re-evaluate the importance of heterosis and its direct value to weights, health and efficiency. They also are taking a fresh look at the value of heterosis to the maternal side of the equation.

Research proves that heterosis has its biggest impact and most value when it comes to traits that are more lowly heritable, such as fertility and longevity. That is exactly where a good Hereford bull can have the most impact.



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

Plus, Hereford genetics and baldy females meet the domestic and international demand for high-quality beef.

Hereford genetics are a logical consumer choice

Domestic consumer beef demand last year was the strongest in three decades, according to CattleFax.

As time goes on, consumers are demanding more than quality and a reliable eating experience. More of them want to know their consumption choices contribute to environmental and societal sustainability.

Documented advantages in efficiency, fertility and longevity make Hereford genetics and Hereford-influenced cattle a logical consumer choice.

Hereford-built baldies gain momentum

Moreover, the F1 baldy female built with Hereford genetics is proving to be the cow of choice for many commercial operations across the nation.

Reasons for the choice continue to be documented over time by producers and research institutions, including projects supported by the American Hereford Association (AHA) at Circle A Ranch in Missouri, Harris Ranch in California, Simplot Ranches in the Northwest and Amana Farms in Iowa.

Research data underscores the undeniable advantages in foundational traits of economic importance, such as fertility, longevity, efficiency, gain and health. These traits are crucial to producer profitability. They are also key to cattle and beef being viewed by consumers as a solution to environmental sustainability rather than a challenge.

The Hereford F1 baldy's added value shone through as producers built back from the most recent widespread, long-term drought. Undoubtedly, momentum for them will gain as producers manage through current drought in various parts of the country.

Choose the future

I encourage you to study the genetics, evaluate the expected progeny difference (EPD) profiles and visit with owners of the bulls you will find in the annual AI book that is a part of this *Hereford World* issue. You will find opportunities that fit the unique goals and needs of your operation.

Supply and demand fundamentals favor cattle market strength over the next few years. Part of that has to do with fewer cattle numbers as the national beef cow herd contracts. Opportunity for Hereford genetics will grow even more when the herd begins to expand once again.

Producer demand for documented genetics and verified genetic data will continue to grow. Make selections that will benefit your customers for years to come. That is the true role of seedstock producers. If Hereford breeders remain committed to this goal, then more commercial cattlemen will continue to "Come Home to Hereford."

This is always a very exciting time of year with calving in full swing and bull sale season off and running. Enjoy. **HW**