

Black Baldy Heifers Top NWSS Commercial Sale

Buyers chose from an elite group of bred heifers.

by *Wes Ishmael*

Hereford-built black baldy females from Hermes Livestock, Washington County, Colorado, topped the inaugural Maternal Merit Heifer Sale, Jan. 11, in the yards at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver, Colo.

“We have developed a program based on the baldy heifer being the best in the business,” says Anton Hermes of Hermes Livestock. “Where we grow our cattle in eastern Colorado, the environment we’re in, we feel like we have an advantage raising black baldy cattle. The maternal merit of having those cattle on our ranch has proved itself over and over again.”

Sanctioned by ABS, the sale featured 20 F1 black baldy AI-bred heifers from Hermes Livestock, along with four other

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leading seedstock and commercial producers each consigning 20 heifers. The Hermes heifers averaged \$2,650, which was \$82 to \$194 more than the other breed groups of Angus, Balancers, Red Angus and SimAngus. The overall average was a stout \$2,548. The heifers sold to buyers in Colorado,

Iowa, Nebraska and Oklahoma.

“Fertility is the number one factor in our program. We need fertile cattle with good feet and legs, and moderate milk. We also want a good muscle pattern in our cattle because we are selling pounds of beef at the end of the day,” Hermes says.

In terms of performance, he explains heifers like those he sold in the Maternal Merit Sale wean steers at 600-625 pounds and sell alongside those out of mature cows.

Hermes Livestock participates in three production sales each year, and sells cattle private treaty.

Approximately 80% of the heifers they raise go into commercial replacement programs, either their own or those of customers.

“The F1s are always our most popular. We do sell some straight Angus cattle, but the F1s are always our most popular cattle,” Hermes explains. He also notes the growing use of Hereford bulls on commercial Angus cows in his area.

“People are starting to realize the advantage of Hereford on the other half. The heterosis that comes to the table with the Hereford genetics has absolutely accelerated our breeding program, and everyone else is starting to see that value,” Hermes says.

“Three of my closest neighbors are now on a black baldy program. I buy Hereford bulls for them at seedstock producer sales, and they’ve not looked back since they started doing it. At least 50% of their bull batteries are now Hereford, and everyone I talk to and promote that to sees the value of it. Once they try it, they never go back.” **HW**



These were among the Hereford-built F1 black baldy females from Hermes Livestock that topped the Maternal Merit Sale.