

Pump Up the Volume

More commercial producers are ready to hear the Hereford story.



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Baseball season is in full swing, but I must admit I'm ready for the Chiefs to start playing football again; my beloved Royals are hard to stomach. I enjoyed the Royals' walk-up songs for each batter at a recent game more than their playing abilities.

I'm not sure who came up with the idea of blasting a player's favorite pump-up or hype song as he walks to the batter's box, but it makes you think something exciting is about to happen. Listening to those songs made me think about our Come Home to Hereford national marketing campaign and some of its individual ads: "WHOA," "SHHH" and "KACHING." These simple words have strong meaning since they are backed by years of data proving Hereford heterosis brings pounds, efficiency and fertility to commercial crossbreeding.

As a breeder, what is the hype song or slogan you hear when marketing your bulls, females, or more importantly, your customers' calves? Is it similar to one of the national Hereford ad slogans or something else? Staying in front of prospective buyers with an authentic, powerful slogan is important year-round. You must build relationships with individual buyers. Inherently, building these relationships also builds trust in your product. This assumes you have a product demanded by customers and one you are proud to stand behind.

Genetic progress is attainable if focus and discipline are applied. Genetic heritability is moderate to higher for almost every trait in our suite of expected progeny differences (EPDs), meaning that genetics have more impact than environment. Of course, there are some traits like milk and fertility that are relatively low in terms of genetic heritability.

To me, that means once these traits are interjected in a herd, both good and bad, they're hard to breed out. Feet and legs — soundness traits — are also lowly heritable. These lowly heritable traits are not impossible to change, but it takes a disciplined, focused plan.

Play it loud

Glaring deficiencies and inefficiencies in the nation's cow herd have flung open the door of opportunity to gain market share. Everything from poor feet and unsound structure to subpar fertility and lousy disposition. Inherent Hereford genetic advantages provide the solution for each of those challenges and lots more.

Are your genetics positioned to take advantage? If not, identify traits for selection emphasis that will position your program favorably.

Evaluation and selection tools Hereford breeders built over the years with the unmatched power of Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™) reporting provide such opportunity. Just look at results from the National Sire Reference Program each year, conducted at Olsen Ranches.

Then again, maybe you have the product, but not that memorable, powerful slogan or hype song. If that's the case, you're in luck. It's likely something your customers already say about your genetics and customer service; it's what they tell anyone who asks them.

Build on what is working and make it better. Then, play it loud, because many in the commercial industry are ready to listen. Happy Fourth of July, and keep them sound! **HW**