

# Celebrate Our Family

Annual Meeting and Educational Forum highlight breed opportunity and excitement.



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The holiday season is always a time for families and friends to share memories, make new ones and reflect on their many blessings. Being part of the broader agricultural community and the Hereford family are two such blessings. This reality is underscored every time folks gather for an event like the American Hereford Association (AHA) Annual Meeting and Educational Forum, which you will read about in this issue starting on Page 26. In fact, the Educational Forum was expanded by a half-day this year, based on member input.

## **Educational Forum highlights**

This year's Educational Forum revolved around the theme of "Numbers Matter. Efficiency Pays." which underscores the Hereford breed's value and opportunity in the commercial cow-calf sector.

Once again, this year's educational program featured industry leaders at the forefront of their respective fields sharing insights and information about innovative research, cutting edge technology and crucial industry topics.

Participants also had the opportunity to learn more about specific AHA tools and services to help them and their customers.

## *Gene editing*

This year's Educational Forum began with industry leaders providing insights to gene editing — the technology itself, as well as current federal and corporate policies regarding the use of the technology in the U.S. cattle and beef industries, including the current understanding of consumer acceptance. AHA members in attendance fostered a candid, heartfelt discussion about the potential role of gene editing technology in the seedstock business.

## *Hereford and heterosis economics*

There was a lot of excitement surrounding a new economic analysis of Hereford and crossbreeding advantages in the commercial cow-calf sector. Charley Martinez, University of Tennessee Extension agricultural economics specialist, conducted the analysis for AHA. Using documented Hereford advantages from previous research, Martinez modeled the economic difference between utilizing a Hereford bull or an Angus bull on predominantly Angus-based cows over 10 years.

## *Hereford performance and opportunity beyond the pasture*

Garrett Parsons, Midwest PMS consulting nutritionist, and Lee Mayo, HRC Feed Yards LLC manager, presented results from the latest Hereford Feedout Program and National Junior Hereford Association Fed Steer Shootout. They shared insights to how Hereford genetics fit industry value drivers, as well as opportunities for further improvement.

## *Commercial cow efficiency*

David Lalman, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle specialist, explained ongoing research his team is conducting in the area of forage-based cow feed efficiency and how managing mature cow size can benefit commercial producers.

## *Sustainability selection tools*

Mark Enns, Colorado State University (CSU) beef cattle geneticist, shared updates about the collaborative sustainability research project being

conducted by AHA, CSU and AgNext. Individual methane emissions and nitrogen excretion measures are collected at Olsen Ranches, Harrisburg, Neb. Thus far, sire differences explain a majority of the variation. As the research team evaluates the data and the opportunity to develop selection tools, Enns explained they are exploring other ways to leverage data collected through various AHA projects and Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™).

### *Effective customer service*

Mark Core, Vermeer Corporation executive vice president and chief marketing officer, highlighted the power of a thoughtful, deliberate customer service strategy that strengthens relationships and customer retention. He challenged the audience to use meaningful data in the process and to spend more time working on their businesses through marketing. Shayne Wiese, Wiese and Sons Herefords, joined Core to share how he and his family partners

collect and utilize information from past, current and potential customers.

### *Innovative partners*

The AHA is fortunate to have corporate partners who help support the Annual Meeting and Educational Forum.

Tim Parks, ruminant technical services manager, Merck Animal Health — one of our valued partners — highlighted exciting new individual animal health monitoring technology.

Kenny Stauffer, director of key accounts-livestock team USAC, NEOGEN — another valued partner — shared the new DNA test pricing structure for AHA members starting Jan. 1, 2024.

### **Achievers and leaders**

Recognizing outstanding achievement is a high point of each Annual Meeting and Educational Forum. Honors range from scholarships for Hereford juniors and crowning a new National Hereford Queen to recognizing national show award winners.

A new highlight was recognition of the Hereford Commercial Producer of the Year, which went to Circle B, LLC in Bighorn, Mont. This sprawling commercial cow-calf operation focuses on using Hereford bulls to build black baldies.

Perhaps the most anticipated awards each year recognize individuals who have dedicated decades to furthering the breed and the beef cattle industry — Golden and Century Breeders, as well as inductees to the breed's Hall of Fame and Hall of Merit.

Congratulations to all.

This is also the time when state delegates elect new AHA Directors. Thanks to all of the candidates and congratulations to the new Directors: Jerry Delaney, Lake Benton, Minn.; Cindy Pribil, Hennessey, Okla.; and Scott Sullivan, Grannis, Ark.

Merry Christmas to the family! **HW**