

Efficiency Pays Everywhere

Australian visit illustrates common ground shared by cattle producers around the world.



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Shane Bedwell and I traveled to Australia in May to attend Beef Australia 2024 in Rock Hampton, Queensland, and the Herefords Australia National Show and Forum at Wadonga, Victoria. Beyond these events, we visited several commercial and seedstock operations across the country along with a feedyard. It was an incredible experience. We saw some great cattle and visited with some wonderful producers who have a deep passion for the industry, just like we see here in the United States.

Beef Australia 2024

Beef Australia takes place every three years and draws international attention. The approximately week-long event includes live cattle shows and sales, educational meetings and a massive trade show. More than 100,000 people attended this year.

The breakfast forum we attended the first day featured speakers who touched on everything from environmental concerns and gene editing potential to local and national politics. The discussion even included the 2024 U.S. presidential election.

Herefords Australia and U.S. Livestock Genetics Export Inc. (USLGE) each had a booth in the trade show where we were able to meet cattle producers from Australia and other countries, as well as media, to share information about Herefords in the U.S., our nation's beef industry and specifics about American Hereford Association (AHA) programs.

You could see every type of technology at the trade show, including innovative cattle working and fencing systems, equipment and software. Like here, you could also find systems for measuring individual animal feed intake and greenhouse gas emissions. The Australians are committed to

collecting every type of information pertaining to sustainability.

The grounds were full of good cattle, and we enjoyed watching the shows of all breeds, which took place in a football-style stadium where as many as six shows were in progress at the same time. Bos Indicus breeds accounted for the largest shows, given that the event occurs in a more tropical part of the country.

I had the opportunity to judge the Beef Australia Hereford show with a very impressive young breeder, Mitch Taylor, serving as associate judge.

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Jack Ward (left) American Hereford Association executive vice president judged the recent Beef Australia Hereford Show. Australian breeder Mitchell Taylor, MT Livestock (center), New South Wales, served as associate judge. Mitchell's sister, Emily (right) owns Eclipse Polled Herefords, New South Wales.



Pictured (l to r) are: Michael Crowley of Herefords Australia and James Pearce, YavenVale Stud, New South Wales, with American Hereford Association (AHA) staff members Shane Bedwell and Jack Ward.



Andrew Turvey (left) with AHA staff members Jack Ward (center) and Shane Bedwell. Turvey manages the Juandah Plains portion of Willinga Pastoral in Queensland, which utilizes Hereford genetics in a disciplined commercial crossbreeding system.



Hereford cattle grazing at the Juandah Plains portion of Willinga Pastoral in Queensland.

Herefords in action

Following Beef Australia, we visited the Juandah Plains portion of Willinga Pastoral in Queensland, a sprawling commercial operation that utilizes Hereford genetics in a disciplined crossbreeding system and retains ownership through harvest. Andrew Turvey manages this impressive operation, which uses Hereford genetics for efficiency, maternal traits, disposition and end-product merit. Andrew's wife, Courtney, is also an integral part of the operation.

Willinga Pastoral focuses on profitability while working to make the ranch more environmentally sustainable. Interestingly, Willinga Pastoral also hosts one of the nation's largest campdrafting events. It's similar to what we in the United States know as a cutting horse competition and features some of the top competitors in Australia.

Hereford seedstock Down Under

From Queensland, we headed to New South Wales where we visited Hereford seedstock producers: James and Nicki Pearce and family's YavenVale Stud; and Ian and Diana Locke's Wirruna Stud. Both operations focus on producing bulls for seedstock and commercial producers. Both operations also utilize U.S. Hereford genetics. Severe drought conditions prevailed in some of these areas, but the Hereford cattle were handling the tough conditions well.

Herefords Australia National Show

The final stop of our trip was the Herefords Australia National Show and Forum in New South Wales. Shane and I spoke at the forum about various ongoing AHA research projects. Shane also judged their national bull show, which featured a deep, stout offering. The bull Shane chose as grand champion topped the next day's national sale.

This also provided the opportunity to invite our hosts to the 2025 World Hereford Conference, Oct. 23-26, 2025, in Kansas City, Mo. You will likely have the chance to meet a number of these Australian Hereford breeders at the conference. **HW**