

Powering Ahead

Hereford stands out again and again.



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Cattle market optimism surged to start the year with historically high cattle prices, including fed cattle topping \$200 per hundredweight. Buyers bid aggressively to acquire dwindling supplies of calves and feeders. The recent USDA *Cattle* report points to more of the same with the beef cow herd contracting again last year and no pipeline of replacement heifers to supercharge expansion.

Optimism shone even brighter for Hereford breeders with multiple examples of growing demand and sales off to an extraordinarily strong start. Over the span of eight days in January, Hereford genetics commanded more than \$1.7 million dollars in three sales. Hereford Night in OKC — the National Hereford Sale — averaged \$19,878 on 27.50 lots (\$546,450). Herefords in the Yards at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) averaged \$19,302 on 43 lots (\$830,000). Hereford Eve in OKC grossed \$388,250 on semen, embryos and flushes.

By the way, many of the exhibitors in the stout pen and carload show at the NWSS consigned to the National Western Hereford sale.

Hereford influence also rose to the top with F1 black and red baldies dominating prices in the Best of the Best Maternal Merit Sale in the NWSS Wagner Equipment Co. Auction Arena, which featured 98 bred replacement heifers, four other breed and breed crosses and six reputation programs.

Hermes Livestock of Colorado had the top two high-selling lots, 12 head of F1 black baldies that averaged \$4,350 across two lots, compared to the overall sale average of \$3,966 (see page 74 for other highlights). Kevin Murnin, American Hereford Association (AHA) field representative shared the merits of Hereford-influenced females before the sale. The Stockyards Beef and Wine Festival, supported by the AHA,

rounded out the day. Certified Hereford Beef® (CHB) tri-tip was named the People's Choice for the second year in a row.

Cattlemen's Congress hosted its first commercial female sale this year. It grossed more than \$2 million, highlighted by a number of Hereford-influenced lots.

Crowds and enthusiasm teemed at shows during Cattlemen's Congress in Oklahoma City and the NWSS, with incredible depth and quality displayed in open, junior and pen and carload shows. Exhibitors are commended for their amazing cattle and efforts.

We saw the largest crowd ever at the Cattlemen's Congress pen show. Once again, the AHA served CHB ribeye sandwiches to all who attended. The ticket to lunch came with a chance to win a chute donated by our great friends at WW Livestock Systems. We thank them for their ongoing support.

Thanks to Joe

Celebrating Joe Rickabaugh's retirement was a standout memory of Cattlemen's Congress and the National Hereford Sale. Since Joe has served as lead and sale manager for the national sale, Hereford breeders have sold cattle grossing nearly \$8 million.

After 25 years of an incredible career supporting the AHA membership and leading Hereford Publications Inc., along with the AHA field staff, Joe has decided to enjoy more quality time with family, some extra fishing and hunting trips, and work on the family farm. All of us will miss him, but we are so happy that we were able to work alongside him for so long to learn from him and enjoy his friendship.

As Joe retires, we are excited to welcome Kane Aegerter into this position. We can't wait to see him expand on the tremendous foundation Joe established. **HW**