

Blast Off!

Hereford excitement launches 2026.



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Growing Hereford momentum across commercial and seedstock sectors was crystal clear as 2026 began, from strong demand for Hereford-influenced feeder calves in the Midwest and competitive showings in Oklahoma City and Denver to exceptional buyer interest at the first bull sales of the year.

Commercial cattlemen continue to value Hereford bulls for their ability to add maternal value without sacrificing market acceptance.

Reputation demand

The 19th Greater Midwest Hereford-influenced Feeder Calf Sale in Carthage, Ill., Jan. 3, once again proved the market's appetite for load-lot groups of high-quality feeder calves that deliver consistency and profitability. The sale included more than 1,200 steers and heifers, mostly straight Hereford with a few baldies.

The American Hereford Association (AHA) thanks Brent Lowderman — founder of the Greater Midwest Sale and owner of Carthage Livestock Auction — along with the Lowderman family and crew for their ongoing dedication to growing demand for Hereford-influenced feeder cattle

Elite form and function on display

Congratulations to all exhibitors, consignors and buyers who made Cattlemen's Congress and the National Western Stock Show such a powerful start to 2026. The open and junior shows were stout with quality and excitement. Judges of the various shows praised the quality and Hereford breeders' success in keeping cattle structurally sound as they embrace genetic evaluation tools and genotyping to propel breed progress. Added excitement at Cattlemen's Congress came with the Hereford junior show champion also winning supreme champion among all breeds and the champion horned Hereford bull also being named supreme champion over all breeds.

Likewise, the pen shows at both events and the carload show in Denver ran deep with cattle quality, enthusiastic crowds and strong buyer interest. The AHA served about 400 Certified Hereford Beef® (CHB) steakburgers during the pen show in Oklahoma City. Thanks to the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association and 4T's Market, Hennessey, Okla., for their support. Among the many Denver highlights were the seven carloads of competitive bulls across all ages. Many bulls in the Denver Yards show sold in the National Western Hereford Sale.

Buyer demand surges

Hereford and Hereford-influenced sales were spectacular in Oklahoma City and Denver, underscoring expanding breed opportunity.

The Hereford Night in OKC sale grossed \$542,250, showcasing 27.75 lots of herd bulls, bred and open females, herd picks and frozen genetics. The National Western Hereford Sale featured 34 lots and grossed \$1,128,000 — the 12 bulls averaged \$53,208.

Likewise, the Hereford influence shone bright in the Maternal Merit Sale in Denver, which featured 94 bred commercial females that averaged \$5,701. Another 19 open heifers averaged just over \$4,000 for a total sale average of \$5,441.

This year's Maternal Merit Sale included a set of purebred commercial Hereford females for the first time, as well as a set of straight Angus females bred to calving ease (CE) Hereford bulls. The commercial Herefords sold for more than the sale average and the black females bred to Hereford bulls outsold their contemporaries bred to Angus CE bulls.

Finally, hats off to the staff and directors of both events for their commitment to building the new facilities, which enhance exhibitors' opportunity to showcase their genetics. **HW**