Performance Matters

Hereford Front and Center

by **Shane Bedwell**

More producers recognize the breed as a solution.



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The annual Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Research Symposium in Idaho last month reflected how Hereford and its breeders continue to drive innovation and create new industry opportunity.

During the two-day event and subsequent tours — including stops at Colyer Herefords, Bruneau, Idaho, and Shaw Cattle Co., Caldwell, Idaho — heterosis, especially maternal heterosis, permeated presentations revolving around everything from cow efficiency to managing costly animal health challenges, such as bovine congestive heart failure and bovine respiratory virus.

Randall Raymond, DVM, director of research and veterinary services for Simplot Livestock, provided the exclamation point with his presentation about how the organization leverages genetic decisions across the value chain. Hereford is a key component of Simplot's disciplined, complementary crossbreeding program.

Colyer Herefords was named the BIF Seedstock Producer of the Year. Another Hereford stalwart, Jensen Ranch, Courtland, Kan. was one of three finalists for the coveted award. Autauga Farming Co., Autaugaville, Ala., was named BIF Commercial Producer of the Year. This fifth-generation operation's closed cow herd utilizes a three-breed terminal rotation of Hereford, Angus and Charolais.

An added bonus came with the Certified Hereford Beef® tri-tip served during an awards luncheon, which received rave reviews.

New red meat economics

Red meat yield research was another key topic at this year's BIF event. As detailed on Page 42 in this issue, this research will transform how fed cattle and carcasses are valued, likely sooner than later. Hereford is at the forefront of this research, leveraging the National Reference Sire Program (NRSP). Far as I can tell, Hereford will have the first pedigreed cattle represented in the foundational data.

Time and time again the NRSP continues to deliver value well beyond the original vision of utilizing commercial test herds to validate the genetic merit of young sires.

Congratulations to Grace Stott and Bella Hewitt for being selected as interns this summer for Olsen Ranches Inc., Harrisburg, Neb., the NRSP linchpin. What an extraordinary opportunity the Olsens and the Hereford Research Foundation have provided for these bright young ladies.

Stamping the future

I had the privilege of serving on the BIF board the last six years. It was an inspiring experience to be at the forefront where science, industry and producers come together to improve beef genetics. Hereford has been heavily involved in BIF since it began in 1968, including its leadership. Kevin Schultz of Sandhill Farms, Haviland, Kan., is a recent BIF president. Jack Ward, American Hereford Association (AHA) executive vice president, replaces me on the BIF board.

I can't remember a time when demand was as strong across cattle and beef sectors, and one could argue that the best is yet to come. I have no doubt that Hereford will continue to carve an even larger role in America's beef industry because of what Hereford brings to the nation's cow herd. I'm so proud of the additive values signified by the white face Hereford carries and stamps on progeny. As you will see on Page 67 in this issue, it's the driving force behind the AHA's exciting new advertising campaign.

While the U.S. celebrates 250 years of independence, I cannot think of anything more American than a strong Hereford bull standing in the pasture. He is stamped for more, and he is stamping the industry's future.

As always, keep them sound. HW