



The Whiteface

HEREFORDS — THE EFFICIENCY EXPERTS

FEBRUARY 2007

Hereford Testimonials

At the American Hereford Association and Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) LLC, we're proud of our product. When we find people to listen, we talk their ears off about Hereford advantages on and off the plate.

Usually though, cattlemen — like most people — need to see to believe. While it's hard to truly "see" the effect of Hereford genetics in a newsletter, we figure third-party testimonial is the next best thing. And so developed this, the third issue of *The Whiteface*, themed "Hereford Testimonials."



Across the industry, people are taking note of and talking about Hereford performance, product and programs. More importantly, commercial cattlemen are enjoying success by incorporating the efficient whiteface animal in their herds.

So if you don't have time to take a gander at the neighbor's Hereford herd or to listen to Association staff talk about breed benefits, take these folks' word for it. There is a whiteface advantage.

— Craig Huffhines, AHA executive vice president

S.D. Cattleman Sees Whiteface Advantage

Craig Sargent is a third-generation rancher from Winner, S.D. At age 23, this young man has taken over his family's commercial cattle ranch and reintroduced Hereford genetics to the herd.

Craig's parents used to own a few Hereford cows, along with their larger Angus-based herd. They bred their heifers and Hereford females to Angus bulls, and ran Charolais bulls with the rest of the cows.

As Angus grew in popularity, the family went all Angus — black on black, Craig explains. "And the calves started to get smaller," he admits.

Looking around at some of his neighbors' operations, Craig noticed that the Hereford-influenced calves were bigger, longer and had more muscle than the straight Angus. Craig had been using Angus and Maine Anjou bulls on his still Angus-based cow herd, but decided to try a Hereford in the 2005 breeding season. Marshall Ernst, Windsor, Colo., sold him a bull at the Nebraska Cattlemen's Classic in Kearney.

The first calf crop hit the ground in the spring of 2006, and Craig has now had the chance to evaluate his decision. When asked if he's going to be buying Hereford bulls again, he says, "I sure am. The baldie calves were really gentle and on average 20-50 lb. heavier than the all-black calves." In addition, the Hereford bull was prolific, breeding many females.

When Craig worked the calves at weaning, several neighbors were over to help. They were impressed with the calves from a conformation and size perspective and also with how easy to work they were. "It's crazy how much gentler they are," Craig says. "You

put them in the chute, and they just walk right out."

It's this undisputable advantage in disposition as well as fertility and increased pounds of weaned product that have earned the Hereford business a new customer.

"The baldie calves were really gentle and on average 20-50 lb. heavier than the all-black calves."

— Craig Sargent



A long-term U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (MARC) heterosis project noted that weaning weight per cow exposed increased 8.5% by raising crossbred versus straightbred calves. MARC research also explains that due to Hereford purity, heterosis is greater in whiteface crosses than with many other *Bos taurus* breeds.



Pictured is a sampling of Hereford bulls produced by the Beef Resources Partnership of Iowa. With feedlot backgrounds, David Trowbridge and Mike England have built a base herd to deliver carcass-oriented sires. They feel the demand for Hereford genetics in commercial programs will only continue to grow due to the industry call for efficiency.

Feedlot Folks Act on Hereford Demand

David Trowbridge and Mike England of Iowa created the Beef Resources Partnership in 2005, a joint effort to raise Hereford bulls that excel especially in carcass traits, while maintaining other Hereford strongholds such as efficiency, fertility and longevity. Why did these two men, who had been strangers most of their lives, decide to together pursue a Hereford venture? They both recognized whiteface demand in the commercial cattle industry.

David has managed Gregory Feedlots Inc., Tabor, Iowa, for 30 years. The feedlot has a capacity of about 8,000 head and is highly involved in the Certified Angus Beef program. Consequently, David's dealings are primarily with Angus-based herds. As his customers tried a variety of crosses with mostly Continental breeds, David explains that many expressed dissatisfaction with the resulting offspring.

So, David began seeking Hereford bulls for his customers to create the tried and true — the baldie that grades well and is moderately sized.

Taking it to the next level, David and Mike, who is an animal health company feedlot industry specialist, decided to start raising



their own Hereford bulls. “We felt there was a great deal of opportunity to market bulls with calving ease, good growth and superior carcass traits to the many Angus-based herds in the country,” Mike says.

The two, who met through a mutual industry friend, began seeking Hereford genetics to build a base herd, buying from reputable breeders including Knoll Crest Farm, Red House, Va.; Ellis Farms, Chrisman, Ill.; and Huth Polled Herefords, Oakfield, Wis.

There are a number of specific reasons why David and Mike chose to begin producing Hereford cattle. With both men involved in the feedlot industry, performance on the feeding side was definitely a consideration. David says that his experiences have proved that Hereford-influenced cattle are “very good in feed efficiency and rate of gain.” He also notes that he’s been pleased with Hereford ribeye size and general health in the feedlot. Plus, he says that “there is good demand for baldies. The packers love them.”

David and Mike also realize the value of the baldie beyond the feedlot. “The black baldie cow has been the standard of the industry for 50 years,” David says, naming efficiency and longevity as two reasons why. He explains why the Hereford-Angus cross will continue to

be the standard in years to come. “With land costs, corn costs and other feed costs as they are, efficient cows of moderate size will be a big deal in the future.”

On both the range and in the feedlot, disposition is one quality that both David and Mike agree is especially important. “I really appreciate the docile nature of Herefords,” Mike says. “Working with calm cattle is important for better performance and safety for the animal and us.” David adds that temperament has been shown to significantly affect carcass yield and quality grade, thus also affecting feeder profit.

CHB® Draws Customers to Yoke's

Ken Chapin, Yoke's Fresh Market meat director, stepped out on a limb six years ago as he recommended that Yoke's switch their entire Choice commodity meatcase to Certified Hereford Beef® (CHB). This was a bold move for an employee in his first year on the job. Six years later Ken has zero regrets about introducing CHB to the 13 Yoke's stores in Idaho and Washington. He says that customers frequently inform employees that they shop at Yoke's because of its CHB offering.

As a matter of fact, Ken has browsed the meatcase out-of-uniform and been instructed by shoppers to buy CHB, as it's “the best beef in town.”

Ken's favorite testimonial, though, is that of a family traveling from Washington to Montana to spend Christmas with family. On their way, the family stopped at the smallest of the Yoke's stores in Kellogg, Idaho, and bought a rib roast for Christmas dinner. After the holiday passed, the store manager received an enthusiastic call from the family, in which he was told that the rib roast was the best they'd ever had. They asked to order one for next Christmas, and told the manager they'd be through to pick it up on their trip back to Montana a year down the road!

AI Companies Report Growing Hereford Appeal

Chad Ellingson, beef sire procurement manager for Genex Cooperative Inc., says Genex is experiencing a growing demand for Hereford genetics. “We've seen a definite increase in people wanting to go back to breeding Angus cows to Hereford bulls to create baldies,” Chad says, noting the functionality and adaptability of the whiteface. He continues to explain that with higher feed costs Hereford crossbreeding programs are earning attention as opportunities to increase efficiency.

Lorna Marshall, manager of sire acquisition for ABS Global Inc., makes similar observations. She says, “The Hereford breed has made great strides in recent years in putting selection pressure on the economically relevant traits of beef production, and not surprisingly we are seeing a renewed enthusiasm for Hereford genetics as a result. We are also seeing an increased interest in crossbreeding, and the Hereford breed is the British breed of choice to use on Angus females.”

Hereford Verified

Offers Dollars, Data, Relationships



Ford County Feedyard Inc. is a CHB and Hereford Verified participating feedlot in Ford, Kan. Beef Manager Danny Herrmann says the verification process has been exciting, and that it helps producers, feeders and packers build relationships based on solid information.

Initiated in August 2005, Hereford Verified is a traceable program for Hereford-influenced calves that provides producer bonuses and data on cattle that meet Certified Hereford Beef® (CHB) requirements. Lee Butler of B&B Cattle Co., Virgil, Kan., is one producer who's reaping the benefits of the program.

In 2005 Lee sold a group of Hereford Verified (source and age verified) calves that eventually entered the Japanese market. For these calves, he received a \$35 premium above cash market from National Beef Packing Co. LLC. The premium rewarded age verification, as Lee's product met strict Japanese guidelines that require beef to be certified as a product from cattle 20 months of age or younger.

Lee received an additional \$10 per head for retaining ownership through a Hereford Verified participating feedlot. While retained ownership is not necessary for participation in Hereford Verified, it does allow producers to acquire feeder and possible packer bonuses.

As the producer who provided source and age verification, Lee received another \$2 per head. "This alone is enough to pay

for the ear tags," Lee says, referring to the radio frequency identification (RFID) tags that facilitate verification and data return.

The feedlot and carcass data provided to producers via these tags also translates into dollars in-pocket, explains Pat Wilson, Trout Creek, Mont. Pat, along with his wife, Mindi, and parents, Jim and Eileen (retired), operate Bonnie J Ranch, a commercial Hereford operation.

All cows in the Bonnie J herd are artificially inseminated and embryo transfer is used extensively. Pat says that Hereford Verified data helps him evaluate his management decisions, determining which expenses and efforts are worth it. In addition, Pat tells that it's easy to find buyers for his calves, because his program is data-backed.

Pat is one Hereford Verified participant who contracts with Ford County Feedyard Inc., Ford, Kan. Danny Herrmann has served as beef manager at the yard since 1990. Danny says that Hereford Verified is the first breed-specific program Ford County has been affiliated with, and

explains why the supply chain benefits from participation.

He says that the verification and data garnered through Hereford Verified not only make calves more marketable for producers, but also for the feedyard selling to the packer and the packer selling to the retailer. He calls the program a "teaching tool" and a "relationship builder."



How do I become eligible for Hereford Verified benefits?

For cow-calf producers to receive Hereford Verified benefits, the following requirements must be met:

- Cattle are enrolled in the program
- Cattle are identified by radio frequency identification (RFID) tags
- A signed affidavit of source and age is on file with the participating feedlot that is feeding the cattle
- Cattle are harvested at National Beef Packing Co. LLC
- RFIDs are successfully read at harvest

For further eligibility explanation, contact Jim Williams, CHB LLC vice president of supply, at (308) 222-0170 or jwilliams@herefordbeef.org, or visit www.herefordverified.com.

Ranch Manager, Hereford Breeder Work to Increase Efficiency

When Wynn Wiens was hired as manager of M/F Ranch, Mullen, Neb., in August 2001, the 600-head cow herd reflected primarily Gelbvieh and Angus genetics, with some Simmental influence. By the time preparation for the 2004 breeding season rolled around, Wynn was ready to make a change. Feed costs were too high for what was supposed to be a cake and range (no hay until calving) operation.

Wynn says he knew the Angus cattle needed to be crossed with a breed that provided more hybrid vigor and a premium product with less input. "I picked Herefords because of their moderate frame size, feed efficiency, grade ability and gentle disposition," he says.

Wynn began purchasing Hereford bulls from Ken Stephens, KEG Herefords, Valentine, Neb. "I knew Ken was really into feed efficiency, so I went with his bulls," Wynn says. "I've been real happy."

One other management change Wynn made was moving M/F calving dates back from February and March to April and May. The effect of this decision has been a decrease in yearly hay feeding from 600 tons to 200 tons.

And the M/F calves, although now younger at sale time, are extremely marketable. In 2006 Wynn's black baldies and straight blacks topped the Superior Livestock Auction in which he consigned the majority of his calves.

There was only a small group of red baldies in 2006, so Wynn separated them from the rest of the calves with another destination in mind. At this time Wynn says the red baldies

weighed on average 20 lb. more than the average of the combined group of black baldie (45%) and all-black calves (55%).

Wynn sold the red baldies to Ken to finish in the winter 2006 National Hereford Feedout. The Feedout

allows producers from across the country to consign whiteface cattle to be finished at Royal Beef Feedyard in Scott City, Kan.

Feedlot and carcass data are then returned to the producer to facilitate herd and breed improvement.

With the next calf crop Wynn himself plans to retain ownership on a percentage of the whiteface calves to enter in the feedout, as he wants to continue to receive data for the betterment of his program.

Wynn and Ken are a prime example of how Hereford breeders and commercial cattlemen can work together to achieve goals and increase profit for both enterprises. The two men plan to continue business as usual in the future, consistently increasing the efficiency of the M/F cow herd via Hereford-influenced replacements. The first baldie females will be bred in the summer of 2007.

Tell me more about the feedout

The Kansas Hereford Association (KHA) organizes the National Hereford Feedout. Producers can enter Hereford and Hereford-English cross pens in the tests at Royal Beef Feedyard, Scott City, Kan., with just a minimum of five head.

Tom Granzow, KHA secretary-manager, makes sure that each participant gets a graph analysis of his or her cattle ranked in comparison to the others in cost of gain, as well as other performance and carcass data measures. For producers who consign sire groups, this service provides for genetic selection and rapid herd progress.

For more information about the feedout, contact Granzow at (785) 466-2247.

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