

# American's Country report 2020

## 2020 American Hereford Association Update

The American Hereford Association (AHA) is capitalizing on the documented strengths of Hereford genetics to provide new opportunities for cattle producers looking to improve their marketing and management.

"As the U.S. cowherd continues to improve in quality, the American Hereford Association is committed to providing more opportunities to market superior genetics," says AHA Executive Vice President Jack Ward. "Our focus is to create the opportunity and the kind of genetics and the tools our members need to have to support improvement in the industry."

Breeders have made vast strides in genetic improvement. For instance, since 2008 Hereford breeders have improved calving ease by 17%, growth traits by 20%, 86% in ribeye area and 150% in marbling.

"It's time for the industry to come home to Hereford," Ward says. "We have much to offer the commercial industry."

## Breed Improvement

The AHA continues to embrace technology to strengthen the core foundation of its genetic evaluation to provide the strongest breed improvement tools for its members and for the commercial cattle industry. Fiscal year (FY) 2020 marked a historic year within the area of breed improvement as Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™) celebrated 20 years of being the backbone of the AHA's genetic evaluation. Through this robust program, the AHA has collected a very precise and unbiased set of phenotypes to form and to predict an extremely accurate suite of expected progeny differences (EPDs).

The AHA currently has more than 115,000 genotypes in its database, up 28% from last fiscal year. These genotypes aid in improving the accuracy of an animal's EPDs. With this, the AHA upgraded to the high-density GGP 100K chip to continue to identify key genetic markers of interest for continued improvement and research. FY 2020 also marked the first recognition award year for the Platinum TPR breeder recognition. Thirteen breeders from eight states were recognized with the highest performance award available to members showing their commitment to going above and beyond collecting whole herd phenotypes and genotypes.

To further highlight the strength of the AHA's genetic evaluation the National Reference Sire Program celebrates 21 years. More than 420 bulls have been tested through this program, building on the AHA's strong inventory of birth-to-harvest phenotypes.

Also, in FY 2020 AHA began a research project, collaborating with David Riley, Ph.D., Texas A&M, and Dorian Garrick, Ph.D., Massey University, New Zealand, to identify genetic markers to predict eye pigment. Previous research suggests markers may exist to assist in predicting an animal's eye pigment. The AHA looks forward to gaining a better understanding of the genetic markers driving pigmentation in the Hereford breed.

Reinitiated in 2019, the Pan-American Cattle Evaluation (PACE) genetic evaluation was updated July 6, 2020. This global evaluation includes data from the U.S., Uruguay and Argentina and is updated on a yearly basis. Conducting a global evaluation like PACE speaks volumes to the technological advancements and the opportunities of extended commerce between all countries involved. The AHA is thankful for the great relationships with our PACE partners and we look forward to making genetic evaluation advancements in the future.

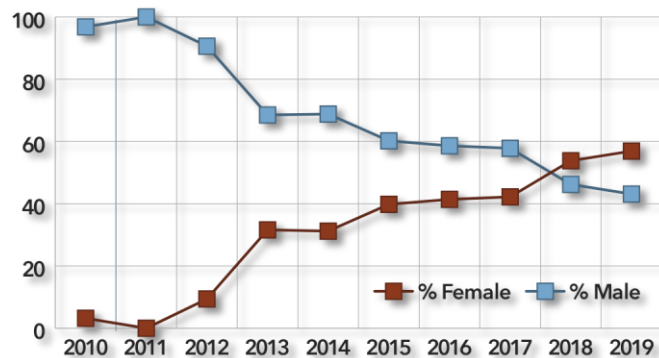
## Focus on the female

In FY 2020 the AHA added the Marker Effects Model (MEM) utilizing Biometric Open Language Tools (BOLT) to our maternal traits to incorporate the genomic information for Sustained Cow Fertility (SCF), Milk (M) and Calving Ease Maternal (CEM) EPDs. This feat was accomplished because of a successful cow herd project that rounded up more than 10,000 female genotypes and the continued effort of breeders who have increased collecting female genotypes in their respective herds. Female genotypes accounted for 57% of the 25,000 genotypes collected in FY 2020. This is definitely a progressive trend by AHA breeders showing their investment in breed improvement.

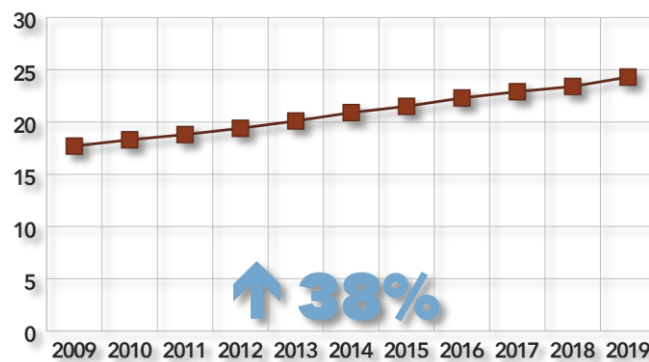
Adding the genomic component to SCF, M and CEM helps to accurately determine a sire's maternal contributions earlier in his lifetime, as opposed to waiting for results until he has multiple daughters in

production. In fact, genotyping a nonparent animal for M EPD alone provides the equivalent accuracy of a sire with 15 daughters already in production.

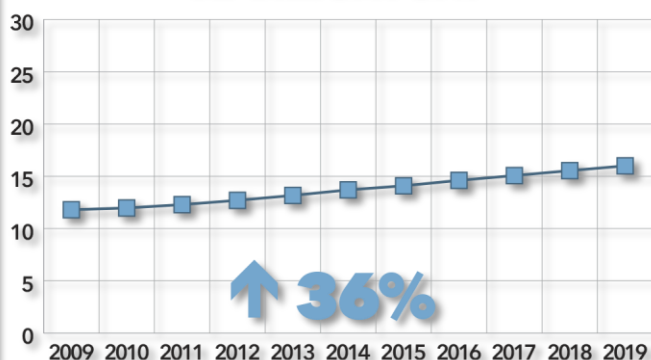
**Genotype breakdown**



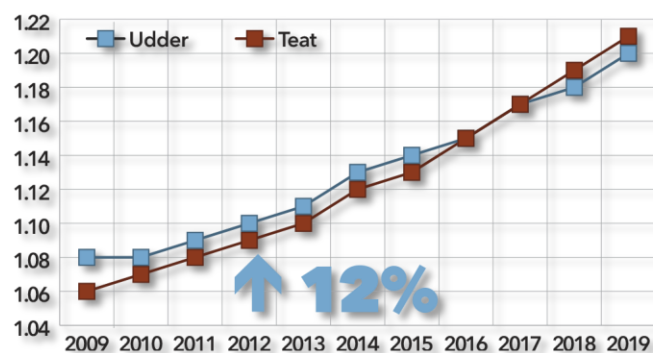
**Milk trend 2009-2019**



**SCF trend 2009-2019**



**Udder and Teat trend 2009-2019**



## Hereford genetics and cow efficiency

	Straightbred black cow	Black baldy cow
Body condition score	5.5	6.0
Dry matter intake	30 lb./day	28 lb./day
Annual basis (lb.)	10,950 lb./year	10,220 lb./year
Annual basis (tons)	5.5 tons/year	5.1 tons/year
Annual hay cost (\$125/ton)	<b>\$688</b>	<b>\$638</b>

**Hereford advantage: \$50 savings per cow, per year**

Research provided by Dave Lalman, Ph.D., Oklahoma State University. Lalman's research allowed for the following assumptions:

1. On average, baldy cows had a 0.5 higher body condition score than straightbred black cows.
2. On average, baldy cows consumed 2 pounds less of voluntary forage intake per day than straightbred black cows.

## **Adding Marketplace Value**

In response to industry demands for cattle backed by documentation, the Hereford Advantage feeder cattle marketing program now incorporates vaccination history, BQA certification and genetic verification components, as well as source and age verification. With the credibility of IMI Global's third-party oversight, the Hereford Advantage is a vehicle to get information to buyers while giving producers using the best genetics and proper management techniques a voice in the marketplace.

The program's genetic component requires a minimum of 50% Hereford genetics, a bull battery ranking in the top 50% of the breed for the CHB\$ profit index and transferred ownership.

"The requirements and components of this program really help to add value to these cattle to gain confidence from buyers, and we're excited to see this program grow," says Trey Befort, AHA director of commercial programs.

### **Hereford Feedout Program**

To provide producers an opportunity to learn more about their genetic merit and to expand marketing avenues, the AHA has partnered with HRC Feed Yards, Scott City, Kan., to offer the Hereford Feedout Program. Participants in this program will have the ability to collect valuable carcass and performance data, while gaining first-hand experience in the cattle feeding industry. Participating cattle are also given the opportunity to be marketed through an industry-leading U.S. Premium Beef® marketing program as *Certified Hereford Beef* candidates, giving producers large and small a great avenue to directly connect with the brand. The information gained from this program not only helps the participants to improve their genetic quality, but also helps to strengthen the AHA's genetic evaluation and expected progeny difference accuracies. In its first year approximately 300 head, representing producers from eight states, were fed through the program.

### **Feeder cattle marketing**

The AHA is now offering a unique opportunity for Hereford producers to access more marketing outlets for their feeder cattle through a partnership with S= Cattle Co., a cattle-buying business owned and operated by Nolan Stone and based in Eaton, Colo.

AHA field representatives will have the opportunity to locate and source Hereford-based feeder cattle to be marketed through Stone, with the aim to increase marketing avenues for commercial Hereford producers — and drive additional value for the breed. Both parties will also help locate backgrounding opportunities for feeder cattle and will work to organize locations across the country to pull small loads of cattle to get them weaned, vaccinated and sorted into marketable, uniform groups.

### **"Come Home to Hereford"**

To mark the beginning of fiscal year (FY) 2020, the American Hereford Association (AHA) unveiled its new national advertising campaign, "Come Home to Hereford." The campaign's goal is to promote the advantages of Hereford genetics in the marketplace supported through research showing the economic advantages of the breed. The AHA partnered with Grant Company, St. Joseph, Mo., to develop and to grow the campaign.

# SHHH.

THERE'S A LOT OF VALUE IN A QUIET,  
GOOD-DISPOSITIONED COW.

No broken fences. No busted gates. No injured people.

Herefords lead the way when it comes to the  
silent traits — and increase profitability  
by more than \$51 per cow per year  
at the same time.

**COME HOME TO HEREFORD.**





## Allied partners in education

The American Hereford Association (AHA) has partnered with industry-leading organizations to provide educational opportunities for members and cattle producers. These partnerships offer the latest information and tools to help operations develop strong animal health and genetic programs.

Merck Animal Health (known as MSD Animal Health outside the United States and Canada) has committed to a five-years partnership with the AHA to educate cattle producers on the importance of animal health programs in maximizing cattle's genetic potential. Through the partnership, Merck Animal Health will lead educational sessions at the AHA's Annual Membership Meeting and Conference, as well as at the association's in-person and online educational opportunities.

Similarly, AHA members will now have expanded access to expertise from the Neogen Genomics team to make the best use of the rapidly evolving genomic tools available to them. Educational opportunities for producers will be available at in-person AHA-sanctioned conferences and other meetings, as well as via on-line events and resources. There will also be educational opportunities for junior members to learn about the concept of genomic testing for genetic improvement.

## National Junior Hereford Association

The future depends on today's experiences and even amidst social distancing guidelines and a global pandemic, Hereford youth continued to take advantage of scholarship and educational opportunities through the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) in FY 2020.

### Young leadership takes global stage

In March, six NJHA members took the journey of a lifetime and traveled to New Zealand to compete in the Young Breeders Competition during the 2020 World Hereford Conference. Team USA brought home a third-place overall finish, just two points shy of second place. A highlight was the team's first place honors in the presentation module of the competition with a speech about bridging the gap between urban and rural populations. The team's victory earned the opportunity to share their presentation with the 400 attendees at the World Hereford Conference. This global experience is sure to open doors for future networking opportunities with Hereford breeders and junior members from other countries.



NJHA\_WHC\_Speech-module: Team USA finished strong in the Young Breeders Competition, earning first in the presentation module and third-place overall, two points behind the first-place team, Australia Red. Pictured (left to right) are: Abigail Spindle, Keayla Harr, Tyler Allan and Taylor Belle Matheny.



NJHA\_WHC\_show: Six NJHA members represented the U.S. in the Young Breeders Competition. Pictured (left to right) are: Abigail Spindle, Tyler Allan, Keayla Harr, Taylor Belle Matheny, Rylee Barber, Amy Cowan (AHA director of youth activities) and Hannah Williams.



### **2020 VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo**

In spite of all the challenges of 2020, Hereford youth came home to Kansas City, Mo., and gathered this summer at the VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE), one of the industry's biggest stages. But it was much more than a cattle show. It was the strength of rural America on display and the commitment of the Hereford breed to the next generation. In total there were 1,082 entries, hailing from 37 states and Canada. More than 8,000 individuals tuned in to Walton Webcasting throughout the week to watch the Hereford shows and the virtual awards ceremonies.



### **Shootout brings education to the forefront**

BioZyme® Inc. and VitaFerm continued to expand their sponsorship outside the showring to include the NJHA Fed Steer Shootout, and in FY 2020 education was brought to the forefront of this up-and-coming program for Hereford youth. With 111 head of purebred and commercial pens and individual Herefords on feed, contestants expanded their knowledge of the feedlot industry. The comprehensive educational program included a performance portfolio, quizzes and new this year, participants had to complete the online Beef Quality Assurance course to be eligible for the top-five and NJHA Fed Steer Shootout Junior of the Year awards.

### **Scholarship payouts soar to new heights**

The scholarship fund is the cornerstone of the HYFA and countless youth are the benefactors of the mission. Scholarship disbursements soared to a whole new level and as HYFA turned the page on FY 2020, scholarships made headlines with an impressive \$225,000. This allowed junior members to further their education and to travel abroad and represent the U.S. at the World Hereford Conference.

In addition to the travel scholarships, new this year was the inaugural National Hereford Queen scholarship. This was made possible with a joint fundraising effort between the National Hereford Women and HYFA. Last fall, the first MGM/Merry Family Scholarship was awarded to a student pursuing a veterinary degree.



### Foundation female nears million-dollar mark

The Hereford breed is rich with history and the Lot 1 Foundation Female that headlines the Mile High Night sale in Denver is one of HYFA's long-standing traditions. In January, PCC New Mexico Lady 8170 sold for \$70,000 to benefit HYFA's Growing a Lasting Legacy Campaign at the Mile High Night Sale during the National Western Stock Show.

The Lot 1 Foundation Female has highlighted the national Hereford sale in Denver for more than a decade and has raised a total of \$960,000 to support HYFA's mission of leadership and education. New Mexico Lady was donated by Pérez Cattle Co., Nara Visa, N.M., and when the gavel fell for the last time, the female was purchased by Whitey and Weyman Hunt of Innisfail Farm, Madison, Ga.

### Certified Hereford Beef® Brand

2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the Certified Hereford Beef® brand. The *Certified Hereford Beef* team is proud to celebrate a brand that continues to evolve and accommodate the demands of consumers worldwide. The *Certified Hereford Beef* Premium program, introduced to the market in 2017, is currently the fastest growing CHB line with about 10 million pounds being distributed annually.

The Premium program is an upper two-thirds United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Choice and higher quality grade product line. The creation of this line catapulted the brand into the industry and allowed CHB to compete with top brands that dominate the current market.

