

NZ Herefords 2020 Year

What a year NZ Herefords has had! We always knew it would be an incredible year, hosting the Boehringer Ingelheim World Hereford Conference but we could not have imagined half of it.



Colin Corney - President of NZ Herefords

NZ Herefords council, staff, Hereford Prime and breeders worked together to host 450 visitors from 18 countries. We enjoyed showing the large contingent from the Hereford Cattle Society, our country, and cattle and sharing our hospitality. Lifelong friends amongst breeders were reacquainted and for myself, created. Phil Barnett (Chair of WHC Operations) and I enjoyed every minute of the conference and tours, which started on the 27th February, prior to any covid cases being identified in NZ. Unfortunately for everyone

who attended the conference, the dark cloud of covid hang over us all immediately on dispersal of Queenstown, however it's testimony to the breed the way everyone stayed calm with staff and NZ councilors when there was so much global alarm and fear. On behalf of all the council and staff, I sincerely thank the UK breeders for travelling the distance to attend WHC and for your understanding, patience and support while the realization of a global pandemic unfolded.

Our aim for the World Hereford Conference was to ensure everyone had a message to take home to their own business in their own country. We dispersed theatre sessions with farm visits which challenged us all with science and data, such as scanning animal for carcass traits and deciding what to do with the information. A day was also committed to focusing on the environment and soils, which was extremely thought provoking and topical. Combined, it made us question what we are required to do, to be the breed which is looked upon as protecting the environment and the soils, while delivering an outstanding product. By scheduling top speakers and providing the opportunity at many social events for transfer of knowledge, I feel confident we met our aim, however undoubtedly it was the Young Breeder Competition that added energy, fun and confidence that the Hereford breed will continue to prosper in the future. I loved the cross over that the conference had with the Young Breeder teams during the conference week and it was uplifting to see the comradery amongst them and the genuine fun and passion they instilled within immediate contact of any of them. Their incredible knowledge, professionalism and enthusiasm of the breed and farming was regularly commented on and I believe they all grabbed the opportunity they were given by their countries to make the most of the experience.



Earsncleugh bulls at Field day



Field Day at Earsncleugh Station

Like everyone else shortly after the WHC we went into lockdown which was just prior to our National Sale. For the first time in many years, NZ was unable to hold a National Sale however we were in a fortunate position this year that we did not have bulls on a grazing unit. Studs with Autumn bull sales quickly changed their plans and moved their sales to either an online sale or a hybrid sale with limited purchasers present in line with the group restrictions at the time. Whilst covid marginally affected prices, it is believed that the drought and reduced demand from processors due to their enforced manning restrictions, had a greater effect for farmers across NZ. Most breeders were pleased to have clearance at their sales and were realistic that this would not be the year of records being broken. Spring yearling bull sales were less effected with continued strong demand for yearling bulls with high calving ease, low birth weights and strong growth traits for finishers.

During lockdown Zoom became our new medium of communication and NZ council utilised their time to update the NZ Herefords strategic plan and have governance sessions. NZ Herefords, like UK, adopted a new brand and are further focusing on their hybrid vigour campaign, 'Hereford X' which markets the benefits of using Hereford sires to the commercial beef and dairy farmers.

Whilst Hereford Prime has been hit hard by the high-end restaurant closures and the demise of the tourism industry, we are all extremely proud of the latest Beef + Lamb Genetics NZ Progeny Test carcass trait results. Beef Progeny Tests compares bulls under NZ commercial farming conditions, with the steers assessed on their finishing performance and carcass traits, while replacement heifers are tracked for their maternal characteristics.

Limehills Streaker 150368 and Orari Gorge Station Patton 150051 along with Ardo Ajax 5014 are listed as three Hereford bulls ranking highly in IMF, EMA and rump fat compared to bulls from three other breeds, with Limehills Streaker ranked first for rump fat, rib fat and IMF, three traits which previously have been seen as dominant in another breed.



Scanning



Limehills Streaker

Recently we have been on the road with a team from registry and DNA to upskill our existing members and welcome our newer members. We realise we are in a fortunate

position that we live in place where we have freedom to do this. We also have a herd tour planned for March, a Youth Development forum in April and a hybrid helmsman National Sale planned for May. Whilst no international trips or visitors are on the horizon we are hopeful that we will be able to view some great genetics in picturesque NZ scenery next year.



Education Day