

# Adding Dollars with Hereford

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Economics of the business have created a dynamic resurgence in the use of Hereford genetics across the country. Hereford cattle have always been known for their quiet disposition, ease of fleshing, great mother ability and adaptability under harsh conditions. Today there are other reasons why the American cowman has reason to take a hard look at the Hereford breed.

Over the last thirty years, the nation's cowherd has changed from the predominantly Hereford base that once covered America's landscape. The 1970s and early 1980s brought about an explosion of Continental European breeds. From the late 1980s up until now, Continental cattle have crossed most of their lines with Angus in order to make them more British in type and black in color. On the other hand, many cowmen have abandoned crossbreeding all together in favor of straight Angus genetics. As a commercial operator, you may think your breeding program and productivity is in good shape. However, you could be looking forward to a tremendous bonus once you decide to work Hereford genetics into your crossbreeding system, as many are beginning to find out. The heterosis components of Hereford cattle and the breed complementarity, which has been documented in the baldy cow, have created a financial opportunity not realized in many cowherds for a number of years.

Many cattlemen wisely take a "wait and see" attitude when considering modifying their genetics and breeds of choice. You want to make sure that the product you are buying is reliable. The "NEW HEREFORD" offers a great deal of reliability building upon its inherent strengths over the last few decades. The Hereford breed has been extremely hard on itself the last thirty years with the most extreme culling pressure ever seen in a purebred breed. Mother Nature herself couldn't be any harder on a population of livestock. The end result is a seedstock product that has been molded, shaped and improved over three decades into one of the most reliable, quality driven breeds in the world. The American Hereford Association (AHA) prides itself in the development of Expected Progeny Differences for 11 traits and four breeding system profit indexes derived from a database of over six million performance animal records and 21 million pedigrees. The development of whole herd Total Performance Recording adopted by the AHA in 2000, has paid dividends for the breed in terms of reliability of breeding values. Over 110,000 cows are enrolled each year into the structured performance program generating a wealth of information.

Furthermore, the Hereford breed is focusing on enhancing carcass value. The growth of the Certified Hereford Beef program, which is now attracting demand for over 400,000 Hereford and baldy cattle annually, is driving the improvements that have been made in Hereford carcass value.

Very few decisions you make outside of management decisions will affect your bottom-line more dramatically than the decision to crossbreed. Make Hereford your choice to maximize hybrid vigor, drive efficiency, and create a product demanded by most all of the branded beef programs in the country.