

The B.C. Hereford
BULL-ETIN**Keith Miller**

Like every other province in Canada, or for that matter it seems the world, BC is about two or three weeks behind in the growing stages of the crops. In many areas the cows went to grass at least three weeks late, and that makes for a strain on the feed supply.

Having just returned from the CHA Annual Meeting at Lindsay, Ontario I can safely say that Herefords are alive and well in Canada. We discussed a lot of things and, most of all; the conclusion was always the same. We need to listen to our commercial customers and ask what can we do for them. Too many of us like to tell our customers what they should do, failing to remember that they are the ones who are still in the business after many years so they must be doing something right.

One of the items our province put on the table for discussion was a fee schedule that would take into account the fact that many of our breeders are small scale, less than ten head. Now I realize that there are some out there that say the hobby farmer has no place in the business, but they also purchase females, semen, fence posts and tractors, plus they register and transfer animals. Better to keep them as members than lose them altogether because they feel the cost of doing business is too high. Some may go to a breed that has a smaller membership fee and we do not need that.

The Ontario Hereford Association had a panel, as part of the annual meeting, of three people, a feedlot and order buyer, a commercial cattleman and a feedlot operator, who also raises a few Herefords on his own. The latter is almost by default, as he married a girl who was a former president of the Canadian Junior Hereford Association and had become a vet as well. In any event the comments of the feedlot operator said he felt we had strayed from what has made the Hereford strong and there were plenty of genetics in the breed to get back to the basics of width and substance. He did not see any evidence of prolapse or some of the other problems we had in the past and felt the breeders had done a good job of addressing that problem. He said that feed conversion was one of the strong points we should be stressing for the Hereford breed and not get carried away on a single trait selection such as marbling.

The commercial breeder had the same message. The Hereford breeders had best remember what made them the maternal breed that could be used as the basis for any program and the order buyer said we needed to get more butts on the breed and that the Herefords that did have enough substance would get as good a price as any other animal.

By the time you read this, Bonanza 2002 will be history and it will be recorded as a success. Much of the credit for that can go to Don Richardson, our CHA Director, who has been doing the fund raising and also to Simon and Pam Shaw at Salmon Arm, who, along with their committee of a few, have been working tirelessly, making the arrangements needed to have the whole thing work. Incidentally, Don Richardson DVM is also the new Vice President of the Canadian Hereford Association. Don has done a great job on the Board in the short time he has served BC and his nomination to the position of vice president shows the confidence the rest of the Board has in him. Congratulations also to another young fellow from Manitoba, Rod Guilford, on becoming president. The Canadian Hereford Association is in good hands. Incidentally, Rod's dad was president about 11 years ago.

British Columbia made a motion a few years ago that all the CHA Annual Meetings are held in Calgary. By that we meant the business portion dealing with financial statements etc., and the provinces would be encouraged, when their turn came, to host some educational and interesting, fun events that would attract breeders and other interested parties. I believe we all can attest to the fact that not many show up for the Annual Meeting, and now that all constitutional changes are made by mail-in ballot, it gives less reason to show up, except for the banquets etc. There are likely plenty of interesting and fun things that each province could do to attract existing and potential breeders. Possibly there should be a brainstorming session on that topic.

Have a great summer.