

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

by Keith Miller

**T**his issue of the February Hereford Link is reaching over 12,000 commercial customers through an agreement between the Canadian Hereford Digest and the Canadian Hereford Association. In addition, there are 2,300 commercial customers receiving this issue that the BC Hereford Association is sponsoring through an agreement with the Digest. The reason the BCHA feels so strongly about getting this issue to our customers and potential customers, is because we know that we have Herefords that are raised in BC for BC conditions.

While some may snicker at that statement, the Hereford is the backbone of most commercial herds in this province and that has not been by accident or good luck. It is because the breeders who have gone before us realized there is rugged and scarce grazing in many regions and most of the pastures are vast, requiring good feet and legs to begin with. Any poor footed cow or bull does not last more than one season. A bull has to have enough libido to find the cows and get them bred so he requires muscling as well.

Mothering ability and fertility are a must and Herefords excel in that quality. Our breeders have paid particular attention to the milking ability of what they are breeding and now, some Hereford cows in BC almost milk too well, if that is a problem.

The latest fad that has come down the tube is marbling. Marbling has been around for a long time and some years ago it was not "cool" to have too much marbling because all the health critics called for the consumers to eat lean meat. So every breed started to try for lean and mean, and I mean every breed. Some tried to get taller by bringing other breeds into the mix, while others sought only the taller animals already in the breed, for-

getting about the fact that a calf had to be produced and good feet and legs were necessary. I know I sound jaded, but over the years I have seen cattlemen jerked from one thing to another and I am wondering where does the good old cowboy who raises honest cattle that do well on the range and the feedlot fit into this whole picture. Good Herefords have always been tender when butchered and when any shear testing is done on a Hereford, the results are satisfactory to excellent. Now, there are some who are trying to discount by colour again and I see that as another method of stealing from the producer.

To see where the Herefords fit into the marbling need, our breeders in BC are doing a lot of testing by ultrasound for marbling on Hereford bulls and replacement females. The results will be interesting, but I am going to venture a guess that the upper middle of the road Hereford that many of our customers have been wanting for years will still give a satisfactory marbling score when slaughtered. While it involves an added cost for our breeders, it is necessary to have the data for our buyers. Some will have the information for you at the spring bull sales.

Another one of our long-time breeders and a Hereford booster passed away recently after a long illness. Martin Ruby of Don Mar Polled Herefords at Salmon Arm died after being in a coma for a few days following another stroke. Martin was a football player with the Regina Roughriders and owned an Esso service station in Regina before deciding to come British Columbia to settle down and raise Polled Herefords in the Salmon Valley. He was active in the Thompson Valley Hereford Breeders Club and served as their president for short time.