U.S. PREMIUM BEEF® UPDATE

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BUILDING VALUE WITH DATA

With so many unprecedented factors transforming the industry, producers are looking for new ways to improve and stay profitable. For Bruce Mershon of Buckner, Missouri, the answer has come through disciplined genetic progress, retained ownership and a long-standing partnership with U.S. Premium Beef (USPB).

Mershon, his wife, Tracey, and their family operate a commercial cow-calf herd and carry their steers all the way through harvest, a decision that requires confidence in both cattle quality and marketing strategy.

Alongside their cow-calf enterprise, they manage an extensive bred heifer operation. Their commercial females are enrolled in the American Simmental Association herdbook, which provides EPDs on those females to make data-driven breeding decisions. Over time, that commitment to measurable genetics has shaped a herd designed not just to perform in the pasture, but to excel on the rail.

"We've worked really hard at improving our genetics and net retained ownership, and we want to be rewarded for that investment," Mershon says.

The Mershons delivered cattle to a feedyard in Scott City that marketed fed cattle through USPB. Through that partnership, the Mershons began marketing on USPB's value-based grid. For producers who had invested years into improving genetics, that marketing outlet was a way to capture even more value, reflecting the effort behind each generation of improvement.

Generational improvement was catapulted with detailed carcass data USPB provided on each head harvested. "What's so wonderful about USPB," Mershon shares, "is we capture all that carcass data in a user-friendly way to help us get better every day." That information becomes a feedback loop to inform future breeding, selection and management decisions, instead of guessing which genetics worked or which management decisions paid off.

Another layer of value comes through benchmarking. Through USPB, the Mershons receive reports showing how their cattle compare with others in the system. That broader perspective shows where their operation is competitive and highlights opportunities for further refinement.



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>
> — **Bruce Mershon,** *Mershon Cattle*

As they look ahead, Mershon Cattle expects to grow by using the right tools and strong relationships that elevate their program.

"I expect that 20 years from now we'll still be partners with U.S. Premium Beef," Mershon says. "We continue to want to grow, and with our son returning to the farm after retiring from the military, we couldn't be more excited about the future." ◆