The Hereford breed has long been known for being fertile, efficient, and easier to handle than the other breeds, but data gathered over the past several years backs this up conclusively, and also shows that the Hereford breed excels in meat quality, too. More and more, the industry is waking up to realize that this great breed of cattle does indeed have what it takes to be a vibrant part of the beef industry and is poised to improve the beef cattle herd as a whole in the United States and around the world. Efficiency is the buzzword, and the Hereford breed has compiled the firepower in data to prove that we are the most efficient breed in the industry. Efficiency is inherent to Herefords, and we prove it every day.

In data collected through the Genetic Outreach Program and more recently the National Hereford Feedout, the Hereford breed shines through in gain, efficiency of gain and in meat quality. The GOP was started in 1994 by the American Hereford Association (AHA) and has been administered every year since then, currently being managed by the Kansas Hereford Association and the AHA. With over 12 years of data collected on over 7,000 steers, the results show that Herefords had an average daily gain of 10% better than the Kansas yard averages of the time frame, converted dry matter feed at a 9.2% better average and also had a more than 9% overall advantage in cost of gain. What is more interesting is that over the time of the test, the Herefords actually have improved against the averages in all of these categories. We have indeed made significant progress through the diligent breeding practices of Hereford breeders. These cattle were efficient way before $4.00 corn and $100 grass hay. It proves that efficiency goes hand in hand with Herefords, so let’s take it to the industry now. The facts are in.

In meat quality these cattle have also shown to do quite well. Ribeye area has steadily improved along with the marbling scores. Yield grades have consistently been exactly what the industry wants with an overall average of 3.15. This shows that the genetic trends in the Hereford breed are right on target with industry needs. In recent studies conducted by independent entities, preliminary
The results that were reported on at Kansas State University’s Cattlemen’s Day showed that Hereford cattle have more DNA markers for tenderness than any other breed. These preliminary studies also show that Hereford beef eats as good and is as tender and juicy at the Select grade as other breeds are at Choice. These studies seem to show what the Hereford breed learned in the Colorado State trials that were run in the early ‘90s that started Certified Hereford Beef. Less fat with just as good of an eating quality should be touted as a healthier product for the consuming public.

Recently, Iowa State University released the results of a study on temperament and how this relates in the beef industry and how this affects the final product of the beef cattle of today. These studies seem to show what the Hereford sired female that we all know about and has been proven time and time again. The data revealed in this article, collected and time again. The data revealed in this article, collected and time again.

Furthermore, the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center’s recent Germplasm Evaluation Progress Report No. 22 adds even more proof to the Hereford’s claim of as the leader in feed efficiency. Six harvest points were evaluated for performance per unit of feed energy consumed comparing Hereford, Angus, Red Angus, Gelbvieh, Limousin, Charolais and Simmental genetics against each other. These were the most feed efficient for all the breeds tested. When fed to a marbling endpoint of Small 35, Herefords came in third behind Angus and Red Angus and were substantially more efficient than the Continentals. Finally, when fed to a retail product endpoint of 456 lbs. of red meat yield, Herefords came in 4th, but easily outperformed Angus and Red Angus genetics as well as outperforming the Gelbviehs.

The data revealed in this article, collected over time, should be the selling point in today’s modern beef industry as to why Hereford genetics are the smart way to go when making selections to improve the beef cattle of today. These trends enhance the position of Herefords and add to the time-honored and many times proven range efficiency and fertility of the Hereford sired female that we all know about and has been proven time and time again.

These studies and trials are being backed up every day by studies being conducted in the U.S. and around the world, but here are results that can be used now to show the industry what we have and how it can benefit the beef industry.