

New Rules around Hypotrichosis Testing & Premier Hereford Sales

Premier Hereford Sales rules around Hypotrichosis

As of October 2022 – all Males & Females entered into both the Spring and Autumn Premier Hereford Sales must be tested Hypotrichosis Free (HYF).

What is livestock Hypotrichosis?

Hypotrichosis is a genetic defect that is found in Hereford cattle and several other beef breeds. Hypotrichosis is a congenital condition in cattle that consists of partial or complete absence of hair follicles, with or without associated developmental defects. It expresses itself as complete or partial loss of hair. Calves are often born with no hair but will grow a short curly coat of hair with age. A recessive gene causes hairlessness.

When is Hypotrichosis a major problem?

The main issues arise when Hypotrichosis carrier (HYC) males are mated with a Hypotrichosis carrier (HYC) females. The chances of the progeny being Hypotrichosis carriers (HYC) is much higher in this instance.

How to test?

Weatherbys currently carry out testing for this trait among others using the Genotype chip produced from the hair sample already provided for genotyping for sire verification. When this test is completed, results will be denoted as either; Hypotrichosis Free (HYF) or Hypotrichosis Carrier (HYC). These tests are only carried out once every month by the lab so it is important for breeders to organise testing early. Please contact Weatherbys direct with the details of the animal to organise testing. Weatherbys can be contacted at; (045) 879 979. The cost for testing Hypotrichosis alone is generally €10 per animal (subject to change).

What should I do with a HYC animal?

Breeders are advised to adopt a testing programme if they are concerned about an animal or a particular bloodline that may be HYC.

Other Genetic Defects potentially affecting Herefords.

There are currently three other genetic defects that could potentially arise as an issue in the future; Idiopathic Epilepsy (IE), Diluter (D) & Maple Syrup Urine Disease (MSU). These combined with Hypotrichosis, are known as 'four traits' and all four traits can be tested for by Weatherbys. Depending on when the animal was genotyped, the current chip from that genotype may suffice or a new hair sample may have to be provided to the lab to carry out testing for all four traits. The cost for all four tests may vary.

UK Hereford Society Rules on HYC & other traits.

Currently in the UK, all Hereford cattle that UK breeders import into their herds must be four traits tested free before they are allowed entry into the UK herdbook. All bulls used for Pedigree breeding within the UK must be genetically tested for hypotrichosis with the results lodged with the society.

All bulls and females (with the exception of calves sold with dams) entered in officially recognised society sales must be DNA profiled and genetically tested for hypotrichosis with the results lodged with the society.