Feed Efficiency Studies

Feed efficiency studies continue at the CRC, in tropical and temperate areas. One emphasis is to find more about traits which may be influenced by selection for efficiency. As reported in previous issues, fatness is one trait, with more efficient cattle being a little leaner. Other areas being investigated are possible links with tenderness and fertility. It must be stressed that these genetic correlations are not particularly strong, there are plenty of animals which go against the overall trend. If all traits are watched, it will be possible to breed progeny with improved efficiency and acceptable in the other traits. These correlations await more research before inclusion in the BREEDPLAN model which calculates Net Feed Intake (NFI) EBVs. Until then, people using these EBVs should carefully watch all these EBVs. One of the main CRC northern research programs to provide some of the answers is nearing completion. It is outlined on page 9 and some heifers pictured below. In the interim, the heritability and importance of feed efficiency has been further proven. For example the Angus society progeny test at Trangie research station (see image below).

Brian Sundstrom

CD Rom
CRC Genetics: findings and outcomes

A CD ROM has recently been released of GENETICS findings of the Beef CRC. I was the editor, drawing on my 10 years experience with NSW Agriculture doing tech transfer for the CRC. The other lead authors are David Johnston, Peter Parnell and Wayne Upton. As a lot of this research has been used to enhance BREEDPLAN, and we have all worked in this area, the CD contains a lot of information relevant to BREEDPLAN users.

The CD has simple introductory summaries, through to scientific papers and slides. Most slides have notes to assist their use in presentations.

The material is arranged in the following areas:

- Background: Introducing the CRC. There is also a video on carcase assessment and specifications for various markets, explaining terms used in the CD.
- Straightbreeding project: Results from a major progeny test with 7 breeds, including: heritabilities; correlations; effects of grain V grass finish; moving cattle North South; sire rankings for crossing V straight breeding and for different market weights.
- Northern crossbreeding project: Nine sire breeds over Brahman cows, with progeny finished on grain or grass to different weights.

Cattle from these experiments were also used for other studies with the findings commercialised/adopted in mixes with other technologies. These outcomes are included in sections of the CD including: Enhancing BREEDPLAN carcase EBVs; Multibreed EBVs; Ultrasound for carcase prediction; Gene markers; Feed Efficiency; Docility effects on meat quality and feedlot performance.

A short version can be viewed on http://www.beef.crc.org.au/genetics/

A second CD in the series with Health and Welfare; Meat Science and Growth and Nutrition outcomes, will be available shortly.

Brian Sundstrom

Obtaining the CD: $10

This low price includes GST and postage, aiming to get the material out as widely as possible. Cheques payable to NSW Agriculture, (the former name of DPI, still used this financial year for ABN and GST reasons).