South America: An update

Three years from my last visit to Land of the Tango and in less than 24 hours of touching down in Buenos Aires I was invited to open a bull sale and speak to the media.

BREEDPLAN is without doubt having an impact in one of South America’s most important agricultural sectors.

Ten years ago I took on the role of supporting a small group of Argentinean Angus breeders joining BREEDPLAN. There are now over 30 in this group - passionate about their cattle and totally committed to genetic improvement. Breeders like Beno Bustingorri and Carlos Sackmann are striving to make a difference and for them, using BREEDPLAN helps achieve their end point, more beef/ha. BREEDPLAN interest accelerated in 2000 when Grupo BREEDPLAN Angus Argentino was formed and adopted a fully integrated Pedigree/Performance system. Within 12 months, the newly formed Group was attracting much interest in the industry.

Several other South American breed associations and breeders have also joined, or are in the process. For example, Hereford herds such as Asociación de Monjes Cistercienses - (see image of their monastery) and Fernando Hernández - Cabaña San Edmundo realised that for them to achieve their breeding objectives, they needed to use the technology.

Following my visit in 2001 with Don Nicol, we saw a real need to have a local contact point in Argentina. In 2003, ABRI appointed Dr. María Calafé to help expand ABRI’s services into the Mercosur aligned South American Countries.

Last October, Don Nicol and I included Paraguay in our itinerary. María had received an inquiry from there and we decided to present a BREEDPLAN seminar in the Capital - Asunción. The seminar was organised by Helmut Klassen of Quebracho Genetics. It attracted nationwide media coverage and a very receptive audience. Quebracho Genetics has now contracted with BREEDPLAN to provide services to Paraguayan breed associations.

Maria’s appointment has led to an increase in BREEDPLAN’s exposure and helped in securing contracts such as the above, and a new agreement with Grupo BREEDPLAN Angus Argentino. This agreement includes the Internet Solutions that ABRI has successfully marketed globally and a first for Latin America.

The next 5 -10 years will be exciting times for BREEDPLAN in South America, with increasing exposure and strong opportunities to increase market share.

Michael Beattie