Global Hereford Genetic Evaluation

As part of the recent 14th World Hereford Conference, an international genetic linkage project was undertaken. The main goals were to generate linkage across countries (Australia, Canada and USA) to gain a better understanding of how Hereford genetics perform in different environments and to lay the foundation for a possible global evaluation.

Steer progeny were grown, finished and had full carcase evaluation (see Australian bred steers, below). Results for the growth traits were presented at the conference, and demonstrated that rankings for Australian and North American sires were similar across hemispheres. Following the presentation of these results, delegates voted to take the next step towards a Global Hereford Genetic Evaluation.

Representatives from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Uruguay and USA met in October 2004 to discuss implementation of the evaluation. It is planned to launch the Global Hereford Genetic Evaluation at the 15th World Hereford Conference, in Denmark in June 2008. Prior to this, it is hoped to have a Pan American analysis as a first step in 2006 and the preliminary world analysis in 2007. Argentina, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Uruguay, UK and USA all have data analysed in BREEDPLAN and will participate in the evaluation. They account for over 95% of Hereford performance data globally, however other countries may join the project.

The global evaluation will allow Hereford cattle around the world to be directly compared on the basis of genetic merit for key traits. There are also some similar initiatives underway for Charolais and Shorthorn.

Stacy Sanders visits ABRI

Stacy Sanders is Director of Computer Records with the American Hereford Association (AHA). In March, 2005 he spent a week with the ABRI and AGBU to fine tune facilities provided within AHA’s implementation of the BREEDPLAN International System. In preparation for the Global Genetic Evaluation of the Hereford breed, the AHA has engaged AGBU to re-estimate genetic parameters for all of their recorded traits. Stacy reviewed this work. He also made a number of suggestions for enhancing Internet Solutions. When implemented, this may lift the enquiry rate to AHA’s site beyond 300,000 pages per month (see p. 4).

Stacy appreciated the opportunity to meet with Warren Clark of the Australian Poll Hereford Society and to visit Grant and Jo Nivison at Yalgoo.

Brian Sundstrom