BREEDPLAN Release “Completeness of Performance” Herd Rating System

BREEDPLAN has announced that a new companion product known as the “Completeness of Performance” herd rating system has been developed and will be released to members over coming weeks. The new system summarises the quantity of pedigree and performance information that has been submitted to BREEDPLAN by each individual seedstock herd and provides a “Completeness of Performance” star rating of between 0 - 5 for each member.

Technical Officer within Southern Beef Technology Services (SBTS), Andrew Byrne said that the new system was similar to the Data Quality Grades currently produced for members of Lambplan by Sheep Genetics Australia and forms one component in a suite of quality assurance products that are being developed by staff at the Animal Genetics & Breeding Unit (AGBU) and Agricultural Business Research Institute (ABRI), in association with both Southern Beef Technology Services (SBTS) and Tropical Beef Technology Services (TBTS), in order to maintain the ongoing integrity of BREEDPLAN EBVs.

Andrew explained that one of the key factors underpinning the accuracy of BREEDPLAN EBVs is the quantity of performance information that has been recorded with BREEDPLAN and the primary objective of the “Completeness of Performance” herd rating system is to increase the amount of performance information being collected by the beef seedstock industry. “Ultimately an increase in the amount of information being recorded on seedstock animals will increase the accuracy of the selection decisions being made by both commercial bull buyers and seedstock breeders, and will result in an increase in the rate of genetic improvement that is being achieved by the beef industry as a whole” Andrew said.

The standard “Completeness of Performance” herd rating system is comprised of two major components.

The first component involves annual distribution of “Completeness of Performance” reports to each individual BREEDPLAN member that provide a summary of the information that the seedstock herd has submitted to BREEDPLAN. A range of statistics are provided within the reports including details of the pedigree, weight, carcase, birth and fertility information that has been recorded in recent years. Andrew explained that the “Completeness of Performance” reports allow members of BREEDPLAN to assess how “complete” the information is for their animals and importantly to identify areas in which additional performance information could potentially be recorded. “Recording information in these areas will improve the accuracy of the EBVs being calculated for their animals”.

The second component is the provision of a “Completeness of Performance” star rating for each BREEDPLAN member and will be implemented at the discretion of each respective Breed Society. The star rating for each herd is calculated based on the proportion of calves within the herd born in a fixed 5 year period that have performance recorded for each trait. Different criteria are used within each individual breed depending on the traits for which EBVs are calculated within the breed. Each herd receives a star rating on a 0 – 5 scale (including half stars) that summarises the “completeness” of their performance information. Herds with a star rating of “5” are considered to be gold standard and are recording “complete” performance information for all animals across all traits for which EBVs are available. Initially, the “Completeness of Performance” star rating for each herd will only be provided to the herd, however several Breed Societies have indicated that they will display the star ratings for each herd on their websites after a trial period of several months.

Andrew said that he expects seedstock members with a high “Completeness of Performance” star rating to start promoting this to their bull buying clients. “While ultimately
EBV accuracy values provide an indication of the reliability an animal's EBVs, where published, the “Completeness of Performance” star rating will provide bull buyers with an indication of how much performance has been submitted to BREEDPLAN by a herd when looking at the EBVs for their animals”. “If EBVs are an important part of their selection decision, then the star rating will enable commercial beef producers to easily identify herds that are recording complete performance information on their animals”.

Andrew indicated that the “Completeness of Performance” herd rating system had been developed over the past two years and had now been field tested with approximately 150 seedstock herds across Australia.

Further information regarding the “Completeness of Performance” herd rating system is available from the “Technical” area of the BREEDPLAN website (http://breedplan.une.edu.au)

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