

Recording Coat Scores

Coat sleekness is recognised as an important tropical adaptation. Research has shown that variation exists in coat type between animals, and that a proportion of this variation is due to genetic differences. The submission of coat scores to BREEDPLAN will be used in the development of a Trial EBV once sufficient data has been collected.

Why Should Coat Scores Be Recorded?

Coat scores are a measure of adaptability of animals to tropical production systems, with sleek coated animals being more tropically adapted than woolly coated animals. Beef CRC research on Brahman and Tropical Composites found that there was a negative correlation between coat score and body condition score, indicating that genetically sleek coated animals had better body condition scores compared to animals with woollier coats. Additionally there is a positive genetic correlation between sleek coat and earlier age of puberty in Brahman females. For seedstock herds aiming to sell *Bos taurus* bulls into tropical regions, selecting for a sleeker coat may increase their tropical adaptability.

When Should Coat Scoring Be Done?

In Spring calving herds, coat scoring should be done at weaning in Autumn and Winter to gain maximum variation.

In Autumn calving herds, coat scoring should be done the first Winter following weaning.

How Do I Record Coat Score?

Coat scores are recorded on a 1-7 scale with 1 being sleek and 7 being woolly:

Coat Score	Coat Type	Description
1	Extremely Short	Hairs extremely short and closely applied to the skin. Found in <i>Bos indicus</i> , Tropical Adapted <i>Bos taurus</i> and in some of their crossbreds.
2	Very Short	Coat sleek, hairs short and coarse, lying flat, just able to be lifted by the thumb.
3	Fairly Short	General appearance smooth-coated. Hairs easily lifted, usually fairly coarse.
4	Fairly Long	Coat not completely smooth, somewhat rough, patches of hairs being curved outwards, or whole coat showing sufficient length to be ruffled.
5	Long	Hairs distinctly long and lying loosely; predominantly coarse.
6	Woolly	Hairs erect, giving fur-like appearance. Fingers are partly buried in the coat. Fine hairs of under-coat give soft handle.
7	Very Woolly	The more extreme expression of 6, with greater length and "body", and heavy cover extending to neck and rump.

How Do I Submit Coat Scores?

Coat Score measurements should be submitted directly to your BREEDPLAN processing centre. The trait code for Coat Score is CT.

Coat Score measurements are usually submitted electronically via either:

- ❑ a BREEDPLAN compatible herd recording computer program.
- ❑ the BREEDPLAN compatible Microsoft Excel template.

If you are unable to submit the Coat Score information using these methods, please contact staff at your BREEDPLAN processing centre to discuss the alternatives available.



Coat Score 2



Coat Score 3



Coat Score 4



Coat Score 5



Coat Score 6



Coat Score 7

References

1. Prayaga K.C., Corbet N.J., Johnston D.J., Wolcott M.L., Fordyce G., Burrow H.M. (2009) Genetics of adaptive traits in heifers and their relationship to growth, pubertal and carcass traits in two tropical beef cattle genotypes. *Animal Production Science* **49**, 413–425.

For more information regarding how to record coat score information, or EBVs in general, please contact staff at Tropical Beef Technology Services (TBTS).