2002 sees the introduction of the new Version 4.2 BREEDPLAN, with several major enhancements. Those watching marbling and yield % will notice significant changes – a bigger range of IMF% EBVs and more consistent yield % EBVs. These improvements have been possible due to final analysis of carcase data from the 12,000-odd CRC progeny test cattle 1994 – 2001. (See page 14).

Another change in V4.2 is a link between leanness (low fat depth EBVs) and lower female fertility. This has long been talked about by breeders and suspected by researchers, but only recently did the AGBU geneticist have sufficient data to include this in the BREEDPLAN model. Other changes include: Net Feed Intake EBVs for Hereford and Angus and exciting research on a blood test to assist estimation of this trait (Page 15); Docility EBVs for Limousin now in the main BREEDPLAN analysis, allowing EBVs for cows and young cattle (Page 8); Improved Mature weight analysis.

For breeds/regions where calving difficulty is an issue, we have long advocated BREEDPLAN recorders weigh calves and obtain calving ease and birthweight EBVs. I was sorry to hear last year of serious injuries to two breeders in calf weighing incidents. Compared to the large number of people involved, this is a low proportion, but needs careful watching. Several new types of calf weighing equipment are now available. These and other ideas are discussed on page 17.

Internet options and usage to search for BREEDPLAN information are multiplying rapidly as discussed below. This is probably the biggest change I have seen over the past year.

Happy reading, and your feedback is welcomed.

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