BREEDPLAN in Argentina 10 years on

BREEDPLAN in Argentina had its early beginnings with the Bustingorri brothers and NBRS. By 1993 three herds were receiving BREEDPLAN results, interest continued and slowly, more Argentine breeders who supported the breeding philosophies of Beno and his family joined up.

In the late 90’s, ABRI made an offer (which was unreservedly accepted) to the Bustingorri Group to have their own fully integrated society system which enabled them to access the latest V4 GROUP BREEDPLAN software.

June 2000 saw the first ever V4 GROUP results released for ANGUS ARGENTINO. We were soon informed that the ‘new’ EBVs were being well received. I immediately knew that we had reached an important milestone with BREEDPLAN in Argentina which had previously been dominated by US genetic evaluations systems.

The following twelve months saw an exponential growth in BREEDPLAN enrolments and calves processed, up an impressive 100%. Everyone who was directly or indirectly associated with ANGUS ARGENTINO were, to say the least, ecstatic with its progress.

By now, the Group was beginning to establish itself, members were seeing for the first time the real strengths of this technology and were focusing more and more on spreading the BREEDPLAN ‘word’.

In late June 2001, ABRI had just concluded ANGUS ARGENTINO’s second Group Analysis. With more and more publicity being given to BREEDPLAN, it was decided that a visit was well and truly overdue.

Even though ABRI’s first taste of Argentina began a decade ago, the last six years of hard work paid off in October 2001, when I had the opportunity to visit this great country and meet BREEDPLAN clientele for the first time.

My schedule for the two-week visit was completely full. I was fortunate to team up with Don Nicol, an ex-BREEDPLAN field co-ordinator to assist with the Spanish translations and introduce me to many of his contacts that reside in this part of the world. Don’s South American experience, influence and contacts proved invaluable.

The first week of the fortnight visit took us to the Pampas region of Argentina where over 80% of the Argentine 75,000,000 beef herd is located.

We covered over 1200 km, conducting several BREEDPLAN field days, which were divided into two sessions. Theory using a ‘Spanish’ powerpoint presentation and Practical sessions assessing yarded bulls and their figures. Seminars were also conducted at La Plata University and at the headquarters of AACREA (Argentine Association of Regional Consortiums for Agricultural Experimentation). Breeder presence to these seminars was overwhelming. Dignitaries such as our own Ambassador - Ms. Sharyn Minahan, Regional Government Representatives and many of the beef industry’s ‘power brokers’ were also present.

The final week of my visit took me to the Capital Federal – Buenos Aires. Here I met up with several breeders who were interested in using BREEDPLAN technology. I also had the opportunity to hold informal discussions with a Breed Association.

In the fortnight period quite a few on-farm visits were on the agenda. However we soon discovered that several of the farms were difficult to access because of recent flooding (over 8,000,000 Hectares) that had consumed vast areas of the Pampas Plain. I did manage to see a number of farms, even though it meant that I had to wade through 1.5m of water on horseback! Since my return in November 2001, the political and economic plight of Argentina has been a concern to many.

Despite Argentina’s internal problems, interest in BREEDPLAN technology is still very strong.

Michael Beattie