The ambitious Northern Breeding Program of CRC II is now well underway and looking good. A major aim is to evaluate the effect of selection for carcase traits on fertility and other "adaptation traits". The large group of genetically known cattle being generated for this, will also provide a base for many other studies.

A total of 6,000 Brahman and Tropical Composite cows are involved for two joinings. They will provide approx 2,400 progeny for the CRC.

Heifers will stay in Qld on CSIRO and QDPI research stations (Toorak, Belmont, Swans Lagoon and Brians Pastures). These will provide the base breeders for the ‘fertility/carcase study’ outlined above.

Steers will be divided, half staying in Qld and half sent south to NSW for finishing. An extra aim here is to try to understand a fat deposition difference which came to light in CRC I. [Northern cattle sent south at weaning, grown out quickly, then feedlot finished had higher marbling and yield than the same cattle staying North for a slow backgrounding, then grain finish in a Northern feedlot. This study will test if the difference was in the Northern backgrounding or finishing.]

Major industry herds are closely involved in the project, providing their cows for two joinings: Brahmans - Stanbroke; Consolidated; Tartrus; Cona Creek and Belmont. Composites - NAPCO; AA Co; Mt Eugene and Belmont. Note: while the composites vary a little in breed content, they have common breed groupings of 20-30% Brahman, 20-30% Sanga and the remainder British breed.

Sires being used are from CRC1 and the industry herds. They were selected on divergent carcase EBVs, DNA mark-

Feed efficiency - mobile test unit

Studies on the genetics of feed efficiency continue to be a major part of CRC II. They include the selection line herd at Trangie Research Centre, steer lines tested at Tullimba feedlot and also gene marker work. The results continue to be encouraging, but also challenging.

- Net Feed Intake (NFI - the trait used) is of similar heritability to growth.

- While there appear to be no major genetic antagonisms, a couple need watching in some production systems eg. Efficiency is associated with slightly leaner cattle. This could have longer term implications for female fertility. Similarly, the slightly negative association with marbling (see p12) could be of concern for some breeders.

- These antagonisms fortunately seem to be only 'moderate', so they can be 'bent' with careful selection (eg. weaker genetic correlations than Birth Wt to Final Weight). To do so however, we need good EBVs on NFI, and - to obtain these we need lots of data - which is costly to the stud breeders! Although some pioneering studs have started, a lot more is needed, and I'm worried the innovators may give up unless across herd EBVs come soon.

To test ways of assisting the stud industry collect NFI data, NSW Agriculture with MLA support, has set up a new mobile unit. This has two Rudd self feeder/intake recorders - which can be transported to participating studs. Participating studs have to provide feed, install the units on a sound pad and collect the data. The project will initially cover other costs, in an endeavour to 'kick start' this important initiatve. Priority will be given to herds well linked to other testers ie. to assist across herd EBVs. Interested people should contact Steve Exton at Trangie - (02) 68887404 or their Breed Society.

Brian Sundstrom

A Rudd intake recorder installed at "Bald Blair" Angus stud
The genetics of marbling continues to be unraveled. Recent work has shown the heritability of intramuscular fat percent (IMF%), a chemical measure of marbling, is 0.38 in both temperate and tropically adapted breeds used in the Beef CRC straightbreeding project. IMF% is positively correlated with other measures of fatness and conversely, negatively related to retail beef yield%. The genetic expression of the trait is enhanced by grain feeding and to heavier weights but the genetic correlations between the different treatments were very close to one. This means that little re-ranking of sires is expected when their progeny are finished to different market weights, from pasture or grain, or in a temperate or sub-tropical region (on grain). The bull who produces superior marbling progeny in the feedlot will also be the best bull if his steers are finished on pasture.

**Key CRC Results:**
- IMF% is about 35 - 40% heritable. The genetic variance of IMF% in temperate breeds is twice as much as tropically adapted breeds.
- IMF% is negatively genetically correlated (-0.40) with retail beef yield%.
- IMF% is positively genetically correlated (0.2-0.3) with carcase fat depth.

**Effect of Market on genetic expression:**
- Greater genetic expression of IMF% at export weight carcases compared to Domestic weight but very high genetic correlation for IMF% between markets (0.92-1.0).
- Very high genetic correlation for IMF% between grain and pasture finishing (0.96-1.0).
- Very high genetic correlation for IMF% between regions (0.94). (Tropically adapted breeds only).

**Gene markers to BREEDPLAN**
Research is underway to incorporate genotypic information into BREEDPLAN. The GeneSTAR marbling test has provided AGBU scientists with the first direct gene test from which to develop models. It is expected that several other genes will be identified over the coming year. Several methods of utilising the information are being examined. The final model will depend on the size of the effect of the gene on currently recorded BREEDPLAN traits and the number of animals in a breed that are genotyped.

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**BreedObject on the Web**

The BreedObject web site (http://www.breedobject.com) has now been active for almost 12 months. The site encompasses a listing facility for sale bulls and semen, and use of BreedObject technology to rank bulls for profitability for different commercial production purposes. Facilities are available, and under development, to customise rankings to the needs of individual users.

The functionality of the site was extended in 2000 with the aid of funding from the Information Technology On-Line (ITOL) program of the Commonwealth Department of Communications, Technology and the Arts. NSW Agriculture, the Agricultural Business Research Institute, MLA and the Performance Beef Breeders’ Association provided further in-kind support.

The site is active in eight breeds. Thirty-seven sale or semen catalogues were listed in 2000. Over much of Spring 2000 the site attracted visits at a rate of 600 per month (20 per day), representing about 8000 hits per month. The 600 visits are from an average of 460 different users. Users are mostly Australian, but with strong interest as well from the USA, Canada, Europe and South America.

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**AGBU and ABRI**

On the occasion of AGBU’s 25th Anniversary, Hans Graser paid tribute to the Unit's special relationship with ABRI. ABRI is the main source of beef data that we utilise in our research. Some of our projects, eg. validation project, have generated considerable data and additional demand on the development of the NBRS database. ABRI has successfully commercialised BREEDPLAN on an international market. This has generated additional R&D opportunities for AGBU. ABRI has also been able to service new clients (breed societies) and implement BREEDPLAN in a whole country (ACIAR projects in Thailand and Philippines) with our assistance. AGBU gets new challenges in R&D when assisting ABRI in servicing these clients. Much of this client-oriented R&D will in the future benefit the operations of BREEDPLAN in Australia and either improve its accuracy or make it more affordable.

The close interaction between ABRI and AGBU has allowed a speedy transfer of R&D results from the researcher to the industry. The use of Beef CRC data in the genetic evaluation of beef cattle and the subsequent early implementation of improved models for carcass traits is but one example. AGBU's interests are in research to create new knowledge and new software that benefits Australia's livestock industries. ABRI's interest is in putting this knowledge and software into a commercial world with a break even of cost and income. By combining these interests we are able to provide a powerful team approach.”

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**Staff news**

Meridy Kadel joined the beef research team in December last year. Meridy hails from a farming and grazing property near Roma, where her interest in beef cattle production was founded. After completion of year 12 she joined the workforce for two years working as a Jillaroo, Stud groom and as an Advertising Representative (Bull sales specialist) for the Western Star Newspaper. In 1999 she graduated from the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Science (Molecular Biology and Genetics). This was followed by a year of study at the University of New England, from which she graduated with first class Honours. Meridy joins the beef group at AGBU as a Research Assistant and looks forward to furthering her career in beef cattle genetics.

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**David Johnston**

* AGBU is a joint facility of NSW Agriculture and the University of New England. They are responsible for developing and maintaining BREEDPLAN software.

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**Hans Graser**

“... ABRI's interest is in putting this knowledge and software into a commercial world with a break even of cost and income. By combining these interests we are able to provide a powerful team approach.”
TGRM the next genetic tool

BREEDPLAN significantly increases the opportunity for genetic improvement by supplying information on most of the economically more important traits. Weight, carcase and fertility traits are all addressed by BREEDPLAN EBVs. The challenge is to make best use of this information - which EBVs are most important to profit and what mating plans will maximise progress without greatly increasing inbreeding.

Two tools developed for use with BREEDPLAN can assist. - BreedObject and the newer one, TGRM (Total Genetic Resource Management). TGRM has been developed by the Department of Animal Science at UNE with financial support from MLA.

BreedObject uses EBVs, market specifications and production details from a commercial beef herd to rank, in $index terms, animals most suitable for that scenario (see also p12, 15 and p17).

TGRM is a mating program ‘designer’ to maximise genetic gain while controlling inbreeding. The breeder tells the TGRM operator which animals, males and females, are available for mating, including semen, or if ET will be used, and selects the market-production scenario (which index). TGRM then maximises the index value of the progeny within given constraints such as: only three mating paddocks or imposing a maximum birthweight. (note: If control over EBVs is exerted at the sire level eg. ignore sires below or above accepted ranges, some improvement could be foregone. Such sires, used over the right cows - remember half the genes come from the cows - may produce acceptable progeny.)

A strength of TGRM is that it operates at the progeny level predicting their EBVs from the parent’s EBVs. TGRM juggles the available sires and dams within the given rules, to optimise the mating program.

TGRM was recently used in three Angus herds to allocate matings. They all use the standard Angus longfed index as their primary selection criterion. The increase in index value of $3.00 per year for these herds, showed their excellent progress since starting to use BREEDPLAN in the late 80’s. If TGRM selected the sires and organised the matings, the average index for the 2001 progeny could theoretically increase by more than $10. In reality this is only achievable if there are no constraints on sires used (ie plenty of semen available and it is affordable) and if AI has 100% success. The true outcome will be somewhere in between, but the potential benefits from such smart tools is impressive.

To date 10 herds from four breeds have investigated the value of TGRM. MLA is developing a marketing plan and looking for service providers over the next few months. In the meantime interested people should contact me.

Wayne Upton
Ph: 02 6773 3141
wupton@metz.une.edu.au

AGBU 25th Anniversary celebration

AGBU was established in 1976 by the New South Wales State Department of Agriculture and the University of New England to carry out research, development and training in the genetic improvement of livestock for the benefit of Australian agriculture. From a small beginning of two scientists, one extension specialist and one secretary, it has grown to a team of 20 scientists, postgraduate students and support staff. It has an excellent international reputation and as a consequence, an active program of visiting scientists.

AGBU’s achievements include:
- BREEDPLAN, PIGBLUP and OVIS genetic evaluation systems which have been widely adopted by the beef, pig & sheep industries, respectively;
- BreedObject Software to calculate economic weights and selection indices tailored to individual requirements;
- Recognition as a leader in methods for the prediction of breeding values through these genetic evaluation systems;
- Leadership of the Beef CRC’s genetics R&D funding bodies in particular the MLA & PRDC and the ongoing support of UNE and NSW Agriculture.

AGBU’s work has greatly assisted the improvement of livestock through breeding in Australia and overseas. A vibrant scientific program continues with regular publication of research results in Scientific Journals. However, its main purpose is to meet ongoing demands from Australia’s livestock industries for research, development and training in genetics.

AGBU has had three directors. Pictured (from left) Keith Hammond (founding), Hans Graser (current) and Mike Goddard, at the 25th Anniversary celebrations.
MLA’s planned investment in genetics

MLA plans to invest in continuing genetic improvement in the Australian beef industry.

There is significant national investment into beef cattle genetics R&D. MLA provides support for the Animal Genetics and Breeding Unit (AGBU), projects with the Beef Quality CRC, and a range of projects across the southern and northern Australian beef industries.

In addition, many other organisations make substantial R & D investment in genetic improvement of beef cattle notably the Commonwealth government through the Beef CRC and State Departments of Agriculture. Delivery of R & D outcomes is further supported by substantial commercial investment. This includes investment through breed societies, genetics companies and service companies such as ABRI that underpins the national herd improvement effort.

MLA has reviewed its past investment into beef genetics R, D & E as part of a comprehensive rebuilding of the on-farm R&D portfolio. The Genetics Review highlighted the critical role that genetic evaluation and improvement can play in continuously improving industry productivity, and suggested ways that greater gains could be made from genetic improvement. The review process included considerable consultation with all sectors of industry and with the full range of organisations who are actively involved in our national beef cattle genetic improvement effort.

The main messages that have come out of consultation are:

- We need to achieve much better understanding of the power of genetics for commercial cattle enterprises and for their supply chain partners (such as feedlots, processors and retailers),
- We need to achieve higher rates of genetic improvement in traits contributing to profit in all cattle breeds,
- We need to maintain our edge in genetic technologies like BREEDPLAN, BreedObject, TGRM and gene markers.

Clear these must be done together.

The revised MLA Beef Genetics R&D plan is now nearing completion. It focuses on 5 key areas:

1. Improved use of existing technology to deliver higher rates of genetic improvement in profit traits in the seedstock sector.
2. Improved understanding of the profit impact of genetics in all commercial enterprises leading to increased demand for bulls with BREEDPLAN EBVs and $Indexes
3. Further development of our core technologies (BREEDPLAN, BreedObject and TGRM) particularly to allow optimal use of new information sources such as gene markers
4. Strategic R&D concentrating on further development of markers for traits such as...

The plan sets high targets for achievement over the next 5 years. Recognising the breadth and depth of experience, technical expertise and focus clearly apparent across the beef genetics industry, we are confident that great results will be achieved.

MLA looks forward to working with the beef cattle genetics community to further strengthen the competitiveness of your beef industry.

Limousin release EBVs for docility

The Limousin breed has now published EBVs for docility for about 120 of their most widely used sires. These EBVs were calculated from some 12000 scores on individual animals provided by breeders over the last five years.

The animals are scored on a simple five point scale: 1 (docile) 2 (restless) 3 (nervous) 4 (flighty) and 5 (aggressive). The score is normally based on the behaviour while being handled through a crush.

It is important that animals are scored at a young age (6-10 months) before too much handling by humans. Variation between scorers is taken out by the analysis, as animals are only compared within a contemporary group. (same previous handling and same scorer).

Staff at AGBU recently calculated the heritability of docility scored by Limousin breeders at 0.31 which compares favourably with other estimates of temperament heritability, such as the objectively scored flight speed.(see p10 Ed)

EBVs range from about +30 to -30 and reflect the difference in the proportion of progeny that will be scored as 1 or 2.

Example:

Sire A has a docility EBV of +20 compared to Sire B with a docility EBV of -10. As the sire contributes half of the genetics to it's progeny, these EBVs indicate that compared to Sire B, 15 per cent more of the progeny of Sire A will be scored as docile or restless.

There is considerable genetic variation in temperament for all breeds, so this scoring system could be used by any Taurus breed to identify “bad” sires and improve overall docility.

Alex McDonald
CEO Limousin Society

Robert Banks
Genetics Co-Ordinator, Meat and Livestock Australia, ph 02 6773 2948.

Marbling, NFE, disease resistance, further improvement of advanced reproductive technologies, and investment into functional genomics for cattle.

5. Industry-wide monitoring and benchmarking of genetic improvement so that industry (breeders, breed societies, R&D organisations and investors) has clear, practical information on how we are performing.

MLA looks forward to working with the beef cattle genetics community to further strengthen the competitiveness of your beef industry.
Animal search and mating predictor

Murray Scholz has outlined (page 2) the rapidly expanding range of options to search Society databases. Searching for animals with particular characteristics, is one of the most used features. I thought an example, with a few tips, may be of interest.

Animal search - getting started: A list of the web addresses of participating societies is given on page 2. Alternatively go in via the BREEDPLAN site http://breedplan.une.edu.au, then links will take you to most Societies using BREEDPLAN. Participating Societies will have something like: EBV search, Animal search and Online sales catalogues. Taking a Hereford example, if you selected EBV search and then specified: Published Sire; BWT<4.5; 600d WT>70; Milk>10; EMA>2.3, you would be listed:

Note the four right hand columns give the $ indices for various markets calculated by BreedObject for scenarios specified by Bob Freer for the white faced breeds.

Another popular feature of the system is the ability to search for animals across all currently listed sale catalogues. This enables potential bull buyers to analyse sale animals currently available in their state or region. Simply choose the 'Animal is for sale' criteria, together with any other criteria, to see this in action.

Tips: When searching for an individual animal, you only need to specify sufficient criteria for the animal to be located in the database. If you know the animal identity, then just specify this, otherwise just specify all or part of its Name. By specifying too many items eg: Identity, Sex, Calving-Year etc, you may have a slight error in one of your criteria, resulting in not selecting anything.

Mating predictor - a new option

Australian Angus has pioneered a new service to save some of the pencil work in deciding which cows to mate to which bull. Through MATING PREDICTOR you can nominate a group of cows, and test mate them to various sires. Predicted EBVs for the progeny are listed (see above). This is just the Sire and Dam averaged, but can save a lot of time.

Note this example has only one Sire - Trangie 126, joined to three cows, but groups up to 100 cows can be selected.

Brian Sundstrom

Heather Frazier has just joined the ABRI team as our Graphic Design Consultant. She completed a degree in Graphic Design at the University of Newcastle in 1999, and has worked in a Sydney studio as a Designer and Production Manager for a rural newspaper.

Layout and design of this year’s BREEDPLAN News is only one of many print media works that she is working on. They can range from corporate identity to brochures, posters and booklets. Multimedia design work is also part of her portfolio, with the maintenance of existing web pages, and the creation of new web pages.

You can contact Heather about any design job that you require on 02 6773 3555 or email her at heather.frazier@abri.une.edu.au
gene flow in australia

understanding the flow of genetics

i am often asked about the breed composition of the australian beef herd, the contribution that the registered sector makes to beef improvement and the market penetration of breedplan. let me try to fill in the landscape a little.

in the commercial beef industry most mating continues to be by natural service. this also means that the strongest contribution to genetic improvement comes from the bulls used. around 100,000 new bulls are introduced into the national bull battery each year. of these, our surveys show that around 80,000 come from herds run by registered breeders. the registered sector therefore has a very strong influence on the genetic progress of the commercial herd. in many breeds, artificial breeding is widely used in the registered sector and breeders are able to select sires on performance from an international catalogue of semen. for example, 34.3% of registered angus calves are by ai, 27% of limousin calves and 11% of brahman calves.

british breeds hold numerical dominance of the registered sector with 62.5% of total registrations in year 2000, followed by tropical breeds with 24.8%, european breeds 11.7% and 1% in other breeds (eg. wagyu).

over the last five years british and tropical breeds have marginally increased their market share at the expense of european breeds as (shown below).

it is important to note that the percentage composition of the registered sector is quite different to the breed composition of the whole of the beef industry (figure 1).

british breeds account for 41.1% of the national beef herd and so with 62.5% of the registered sector as british breeds, the commercial herds are very well serviced with pedigreed seedstock. of course, it is logistically simpler to run a pedigree herd in the more intensive southern areas which are well populated by british breeds than in the extensive northern and pastoral areas.

tropical breeds account for 24.8% of registration numbers but 31.9% of total cattle. there are some large bull breeding operations in the north which do not register their calves or register only a portion of them. the population of high blood percentage registered herds, are recorded on breedplan per year. this leads to around 45,000 bull calves receiving ebvs ie. about 45% of bulls entering the national bull battery each year. this impact is magnified by some of the larger bull breeders which supply breedplan bulls from their elite herds to multiplier bull-breeding units.

the participation in breedplan recording in registered british breed herds is

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</table>

(table 1: participation of five main british breeds in breedplan)

european bull cattle in the australian beef industry is low - about 2.4%, but european breeds make up 11.7% of registered cattle. european beef bulls tend to be targeted at crossbreeding and make a significant contribution to the 24.8% of crossbred cattle in the national herd.

around 120,000 calves, mainly from
ABRI celebrates its 30th Anniversary

On June 30, 2000 the ABRI celebrated its 30th anniversary. To mark the occasion, ABRI's Chairman, Edward Wright AM, hosted a function in Armidale which was attended by representatives of the beef industry from many parts of Australia.

ABRI's Foundation Director, Mr Arthur Rickards, traced the development of the Institute from a three-person team in 1970 to today's 180-person team which provides technology services into 20 countries. BREEDPLAN continues to be a flagship product for ABRI with data now being combined across many countries for some key breeds.

Arthur Rickards welcomed recent advances in quantitative and molecular genetics, the establishment of across-country databases of beef cattle performance and enhancement of international communication capabilities through the world wide web. By integrating these technical advances, ABRI will soon be able to provide its clients in extensive livestock industries with opportunities for genetic improvement that were previously the exclusive province of the intensive livestock industries.

This bottleneck is expected to be overcome as the new technology for crossbred EBVs gains wider adoption. The level of BREEDPLAN recording in Tropical breeds has doubled in the past five years assisted significantly by the activities of Richard Apps in the Tropical Cattle Technology Services project. The new target is to increase this level of BREEDPLAN recording in Tropical breeds from 38% to 70% over the next five years.

In summary, the registered sector and the BREEDPLAN service are both playing key roles in genetic improvement and profitability of our beef herd. Closer integration of the registered and commercial sector is required to optimise the national beef industry benefit for genetic improvement - particularly if the MLA's goal of doubling the rate of genetic improvement in five years is to be achieved.

Arthur Rickards

Figure 2: Genetic Progress in Profitability in Angus - for high quality export markets.
Source: AGBU

calculated by applying BreedObject to the genetic trends of Angus for growth, fertility and carcase. Profit has increased by $36 per cow over the base breed the percentages of registered cows enrolled in BREEDPLAN lie at around 38%. Because European breed bulls tend to be used in crossbreeding, their EBVs do not meet the same high demand as with British breeds which are used more in straight breeding.

Ed Wright, Arthur Rickards and Ian Sinclair at ABRI's 30th Anniversary celebration.

Figure 2: Genetic Progress in Profitability in Angus - for high quality export markets.
Saltbush has been looking after agricultural producers' software needs, in Australia and several other countries for over 20 years now. Effective record keeping continues to be an extremely important tool in improving the genetic and commercial aspects of farming operations. More and more people are jumping on board ship so they won't be left behind.

At some recent major 'expos' such as the Meat Profit Day in Adelaide and the Feeder Steer School in Armidale, the messages have been: "be prepared for change, grasp it with both hands, be prepared for some hard lessons but it's time we had sustainable profit on farm, meeting the demands of our consumers." And yes, we are changing and yes, we are achieving those goals.

It is difficult to determine what direction to shift your herd, to achieve your future targets unless you have a good understanding of the base from where you are starting. So I encourage you to start collecting the relevant production data and market feedback information. Record it in a software package, where it is in an organised and logical format. Use the information at your fingertips to make the informed production decisions that are going to put your operation financially and genetically where you want it to be.

**Herd Magic** -
Recording package for seedstock breeders and intensive commercial operations. Herd Magic continues to be a popular and sought after program. It is extremely powerful, with 30 standard reports to help analyse herd performance.

The two big questions on everyone's lips at the moment seem to be,
- Is Herd Magic compatible with electronic scales?
- And can you cater for the National Livestock Identification Scheme (NLIS)?

The answer to both is YES. Currently Herd Magic is compatible with the electronic data collectors for scales, so rather than inputting the data, upload the information directly into Herd Magic. Herd Magic is compatible with the data collectors of Ruddweigh Scales, Allflex/Iconix, Anilogue and Sunbeam/Tru Test scales. Saltbush is committed to this technology and will make changes to accommodate any electronic recording device. Please contact us if your system is not included.

**Stock Recorder** -
Recording Commercial Herds

Stock Recorder is indeed hitting the market place now. As with Herd Magic, Stock Recorder is compatible with electronic data collectors for scales and it also has an area for NLIS recording.

Stock Recorder is a computerised record keeping system for commercial producers. It is a reasonably priced, straightforward livestock program that requires each animal to be permanently identified with a machine-readable NLIS-endorsed device. This may be an ear tag or a rumen bolus/ear tag combination. It provides the framework for a paddock to plate producer trace back system, to help improve on farm management practices. If you are looking to supply the EU market, the utilisation of the NLIS with our fully compatible Herd Magic, will assist you to meet the special protocols stipulated.
records the day to day management aspects on-farm. Stock Recorder allows you to record weights, carcase feedback, health treatments, sales and purchases, stock movements and progeny. Stock Recorder is a tool to keep your records organised and easy to access. These programs are designed to make your life easier - take advantage of it.

If you haven’t been collecting production data and market feedback information then now is a good time to start. Significant opportunities exist for those who are willing to take the time to record management information. Your own understanding of your own herd becomes so much more clear, future goals and objectives expose themselves and you can make the climb of meeting your targets.

For example most commercial producers consider their breeders as the thermometer of their herd. Fertility is paramount, every female needs a calf on the ground each year - that’s profit and efficiency. Calves need enough milk to give them a decent start to their lives. If they grow quickly they can be weaned quickly allowing the female to recover and be ready for her next calving and subsequent joining. If the heifers mature quickly it may mean they can be joined at an earlier age giving you perhaps another years productive worth in her lifetime.

Weights are also important. For example, Allan Every a backgrounder from “Woodlands” at Ben Lomond NSW aims at a growth rate of 0.5-0.6kg/day. These moderate growth rates produce the most desirable feeder steer in terms of performance in a feedlot. Do you know what your cattle are achieving?

If you know where your weaknesses lie, in terms of meeting your markets you are able to determine which genetics you need to change and improve your situation. You may find that taking the time to record this vital information may well place you in a much more positive position than if you didn’t. The choice is yours.

New Saltbush Web Page

If you would like more information regarding our software packages please take a moment to browse through our web page. It has been re designed and updated in January of this year. You are able to check dates of training sessions, what this month’s special might be and also e-mail a message through to the office for a trial program request. The address is http://saltbush.une.edu.au

Otherwise contact our Saltbush office via phone, fax or e-mail. Ph: 02 6773 3310 Fax: 02 6773950 E-mail: Support@saltbush.une.edu.au

Training and FarmBiS

This year we have a vigorous training program being conducted nationwide. The government is encouraging producers to attend training by helping training providers and farmers financially. In most cases you can attend a training course for approximately 25% of the total cost. Please take advantage of it while you can. Saltbush will be applying for FarmBiS funding on your behalf in all states for all training sessions conducted.

As you can see our training schedule is quite hectic. We have already conducted training in Launceston, Adelaide, Wagga and New Zealand this year and have received a very clear message that clients have found the day extremely useful. We are here to help you, so please call to check actual dates and make sure you receive an invitation to a training session in your area.


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<td>Oct</td>
<td>Gippsland</td>
<td>HM</td>
</tr>
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<td>Nov</td>
<td>Armidale/Albury</td>
<td>HM/CM/SR</td>
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We will also be visiting Australian Field days, Meat Profit Days and rural shows, throughout the year with Internet in the Bush. Please do not hesitate to come and see the programs in action for yourself. Make a change, you might be pleasantly surprised with the results.

Tina Wright

Saltbush software in action

Herd recording

breedplan contact list...

**Queensland**
- Mick Tierney - Brisbane 07 3362 9563
- Richard Apps - Rockhampton 07 4927 6066

**New South Wales**
- Brian Sundstrom - Armidale 02 6773 3555
- Brian Cumming - Albury 02 6041 6500

**South Australia**
- Michael Milne - Naracoorte 08 8762 9144

**Western Australia**
- John Lucey - Manjimup 08 9777 0124

**Victoria**
- Phil Franklin - Ballarat - 03 5333 6784

**Tasmania**
- Jim May - King Meadows 03 6336 5315

**Northern Territory**
- Andrew Phillips - Alice Springs 08 8951 8140

Enquiries of a general nature should, if possible, be handled by your nearest beef cattle officer. For more detailed information, each Australian State has a coordinator listed above.

Breed specific enquiries should be directed to your breed society, or the appropriate processor at BREEDPLAN Head Office, phone: (02) 6773 3555, fax (02) 6772 5376 or email: breedplan@abri.une.edu.au
Braford BREEDPLAN - “Chadwick Downs”

Last year, the Braford Society conducted its first trial GROUP BREEDPLAN run. One of the main herds involved, was “Chadwick Downs”, near Coonabarrabran in central NSW. The Lill family run 400 registered Brafords, together with a commercial herd. As well as their long standing support of BREEDPLAN, the operation is of interest due to their AI collection and export business. Stephen, Elaine and son Martin are all actively involved. The stud herd produces some 100 bulls a year for sale in NSW and QLD. AI and ET are used extensively in the stud. A fully equipped and licensed AI centre, has allowed the Lills to do their own work and also develop an export business.

This mainly concentrates on “Chadwick Downs” stock, with Martin doing the collection and processing. Stephen handles much of the export sales. Recent successful selling trips, have included Paraguay and Argentina. “As long as we keep costs down, there is great potential”, Stephen told me. “Most of our Sth American clients are city- based owners or their veterinarian managers, and they place a lot of importance on figures. Having our within herd BREEDPLAN EBVs was a help, but a good GROUP BREEDPLAN for our Breed is going to be a much bigger benefit.”

Brian Sundstrom

Shorthorn demonstration herd

The breeding program at the ‘Shorthorn Society Demonstration’ farm near Orange, is progressing well. The 400 cow herd is being used to, among other things, progeny test 11 sires per year.

First calving is this Autumn. Current plans are to grow the steers to around 400-450kg, then slaughter half for the grass finished domestic market. The other half would go to a feedlot for the heavy Japanese trade. They will be scanned pre-sale, and then have full carcase evaluation, including MSA grading. Females will be retained and monitored for calving, reproduction and maternal performance. A decision will be made shortly on the next round of sires to evaluate. A recent in house seminar on the property discussed this and aspects of BREEDPLAN and the project.

Welcome Christian Duff

Christian Duff has recently joined the BREEDPLAN team at ABRI. He hails from Inverell, where his family run a mixed cattle and cropping property.

Christian is a graduate of the University of Queensland - Gatton, majoring in Animal Production. During this time, he continued an interest in steer showing and also worked for six months with a South Queensland meatworks.

His BREEDPLAN responsibilities are the Limousin, Gelbvieh, Droughtmaster, Wagyu and Blonde D’Aquitaine.