

Recording Tick Scores



TIP SHEET

Tick resistance is recognised as an economically important production trait in grazing enterprises. Research has shown that variation exists in cattle tick resistance between animals, and that a proportion of this variation is due to genetic differences. The submission of tick scores to BREEDPLAN will assist in the development of a Trial EBV for cattle tick resistance once sufficient data has been collected.

WHY SHOULD TICK SCORES BE RECORDED?

Meat and Livestock Australia estimate the annual cost of cattle ticks to the Australian beef industry to be approximately \$146M. Cattle ticks are costly in terms of both loss of production as well as handling and treatment of infected animals.

Resistance to cattle tick is heritable in both Tropical Composite and Brahman cattle as validated by the Beef CRC and previous research by CSIRO at the Belmont Research Station.

WHEN SHOULD TICK SCORES BE RECORDED?

Tick scores can be taken in conjunction with 200, 400 and/or 600 day weights. As a rule-of-thumb, there should be an average tick count (over at least 15 animals) of at least 20 cattle ticks per side. Otherwise there will not be enough variation between animals for BREEDPLAN to calculate EBVs.

TICK SCORING METHOD

Tick scores are recorded using a 0-5 scale as per the table below.

When recording tick scores, please note:

- Only cattle ticks over 4.5 mm diameter should be included in the score (no seed ticks).
- 'Side' is an entire side of an animal including inside flank and legs.

An example of tick score 5 is pictured overleaf.

WHAT CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD BE MADE WHEN RECORDING TICK SCORES?

- Do not score after any recent tick treatment, including dips, pour-ons and/or injectables.
- Animals shed ticks on yarding. To ensure valid comparisons, all animals being assessed should be scored quickly after yarding or, alternatively, scored in the morning following overnight yarding.
- When recording tick scores, it is important that a consistent scoring method is used, and that the same person scores all animals that are being assessed in the herd on that particular day.

Score	Tick Resistance	Estimated number of cattle ticks per side
0	Clean	No observable cattle ticks
1	Very High Resistance	10 or less cattle ticks
2	High Resistance	11-30 cattle ticks
3	Average Resistance	31-80 cattle ticks
4	Low Resistance	81-150 cattle ticks
5	Very Low Resistance	Over 150 cattle ticks

HOW DO I SUBMIT TICK SCORES?

Tick score measurements should be submitted to your BREEDPLAN processing centre. Tick scores should be submitted with a trait code of TS.

Tick score measurements can be submitted electronically using either:

- The BREEDPLAN compatible Microsoft Excel template (available to download in the [Help Centre](#) on the BREEDPLAN website).
- A BREEDPLAN compatible herd recording computer program.

Please see the [Methods of Submitting Data to BREEDPLAN](#) tip sheet, available in the [Help Centre](#) on the BREEDPLAN website, for further

information. If you are unable to submit tick score information using either of the above methods, please contact staff at your BREEDPLAN processing centre to discuss alternative methods.

For more information regarding how to record tick score information, or EBVs in general, please contact staff at your BREEDPLAN processing centre.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a short video on recording this trait



Example of Tick Score 5