

Understanding Docility EBVs



TIP SHEET

Docility in cattle is the way cattle behave when being handled by humans or put in an unusual environment such as being separated from the mob in a small yard. What we define as poor docility is a survival trait in the wild – fear of anything unusual and the desire to escape. In domesticated cattle it is exhibited as flightiness. Importantly, docility is a highly heritable trait and can be improved genetically.

Docility EBVs can assist beef producers to identify those animals with poor temperament, allowing them to be removed from breeding programs. More docile animals (i.e. better temperament) can lead to improved ease of handling and safety for beef producers.

INTERPRETING DOCILITY EBVs

Docility EBVs are estimates of genetic differences between animals in temperament. Docility EBVs are expressed as differences in the percentage of progeny that will be scored with acceptable temperament (i.e. either “docile” or “restless”).

Higher, more positive, Docility EBVs are more favourable. For example, a bull with a Docility EBV of +20 would be expected to on average produce 15% more progeny with acceptable temperament than a bull with a Docility EBV of -10.

For more information regarding Docility EBVs, please contact staff at your BREEDPLAN processing centre.

