Recording Buffalo Fly Lesion Scores

BREEDPLAN

TIP SHEET

Buffalo fly is recognised as a serious pest to cattle producers in northern and coastal grazing enterprises that can causes serious production losses. Research has shown that variation exists in buffalo fly hyposensitivity between animals, and that a proportion of this variation is due to genetic differences. The submission of buffalo fly lesion scores will assist in the development of a Trial EBV for buffalo fly resistance once sufficient data has been collected.

WHY SHOULD BUFFALO LESION SCORES BE RECORDED?

Buffalo fly irritate cattle, interrupt feeding and cause lesions, especially when infestations are high. A small parasitic worm (*Stephanofilaria spp.)* is associated with buffalo fly bites and causes skin lesions. These lesions result in permanent hide damage, decreasing the value of the hide and may restrict access of stock into the live export trade.

Trials in the wet tropics have shown that buffalo fly can reduce beef cattle production by up to 16%. Beef CRC results have also shown a correlation between high fly lesion counts and reduced lifetime fertility in Brahman cows. Hyposensitivity to buffalo fly 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 BUFFALO LESION SCORES BE RECORDED?

Buffalo fly lesion scores should be taken in late summer through to early autumn when the buffalo fly numbers are at their greatest. Buffalo fly lesion scores can be recorded on animals of all ages; however fly scars will be more prevalent on older animals. Multiple records at different ages (one per animal per year) are encouraged.

BUFFALO FLY LESION SCORING METHOD

Buffalo fly lesion scores are recorded using a 1-5 scale as per the table below.

WHAT CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD BE MADE WHEN RECORDING BUFFALO FLY LESION SCORES?

- There needs to be some variation in buffalo fly lesion scores for these to be used effectively by the BREEDPLAN analysis. That is, scoring all animals in a group with the same buffalo fly lesion score will not identify any genetic differences.

Buffalo Fly Lesion Score	Description
1	No visible lesions.
2	One to two lesions less than or equal to 7cm diameter.
3	Three to six multiple lesions.
4	Seven to ten multiple lesions or at least three sites such as neck, belly and withers.
5	Multiple lesions more extensive than score 4.

- A management group should be assigned for any animal or group of animals that have been treated differently. For example, animals that have been administered different buffalo fly treatments should be placed into separate management groups.
- When recording buffalo fly lesion 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.

HOW DO I SUBMIT BUFFALO FLY LESION SCORES?

Buffalo fly lesion score measurements should be submitted to your BREEDPLAN processing centre. The buffalo fly lesion scores should be submitted with a trait code of BL.

Buffalo fly lesion 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 the buffalo fly lesion 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 buffalo fly lesion score information, or EBVs in general, please contact staff at your BREEDPLAN processing centre.

Buffalo Fly Lesion Score 2

Buffalo Fly Lesion Score 4

Buffalo Fly Lesion Score 5

*Scan the QR code or click **here** to view a short video on recording this trait*