

Newsletter 2:

7 December 2015

Dear Beef Genomics Program Participant

In the first newsletter we introduced participants to the fact that the beef societies worldwide have entered into a genomics era. As one of our international guest speakers mentioned at the Stockmans School in 2010, producers whom do not enter the genomics era cannot expect their herd to be relevant in the future. Whilst there was some scepticism about the role that genomics would play ten years ago (similar to the scepticism when the internet started), this scepticism has now been replaced by the reality that genomics is here to stay and many societies have now rolled out genomic EBV's. As a matter of interest BREEDPLAN was the first genetic evaluation system to bring out a genomic evaluation in 2008.

Unprecedented drought

The unprecedented drought that we are experiencing is going to make it difficult for many producers to AI animals as is requested in your plan this season. As with all hurdles we need to work out a practical way to overcome this hurdle. If you are unable to do an AI program this year then it is not a catastrophe. However, you will need to put yourself in a position to see if you can do it in the next year's breeding season (winter or summer). Your principles need to remain the same however ie;

- Choose the cows that will be part of the genomics program this year
- Identify the weaners that you intend to send to the feed station (minimum 10 and preferably 12, of each sex)
- If your society plan is to slaughter 6 weaners ensure that you identify the 5 - 6 that will be slaughtered

If the AI component takes place next year we will still be able to link the herds and feed stations to one another on this year's calf crop. However the AI component needs to occur as soon as possible to ensure efficient linkages across herds and feed stations across each other.

Genomics in other parts of the world

The South African program is unique in that we will be combining a "sire referencing scheme" (where bulls are used across herds) with a Beef Information Nucleus (where as much information on animals for the difficult to measure traits are obtained) with a genomics program. One of the advantages of being a late starter is that we can learn from what other countries have already done. Some countries for example run all 3 these components separately because of historic reasons. The below article describes the Brangus Program.

View full article at :

http://www.southernlivestock.com/articles/genetics_and_performance/brangus_genomicenhanced_epd_11012-sls

"Genomic-enhanced EPDs are the tool of choice in breed improvement strategies in the livestock industry today," says Dr. Tommy Perkins, IBBA executive vice president. "It is our role to give International Brangus Breeders members the most current tools to make improvement in beef production. GE EPDs will allow Brangus breeders to make the most accurate and rapid genetic improvement available."