

New Zealand

RED DEVON

Cattle Breeders Association

News Letter 🌸 July 2011
www.reddevoncattle.co.nz



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President's comments.

Firstly, I would like to thank Karen Schumacher for the incredible effort she has put in over her two year stint as President. It was Karen, with help from Kevin Fletcher, who did the hard yards in completing the change over to Performance Beef Breeders. We now are very much a professional organization with a published herd book and an effective performance recording system. It is my intention to carry on where Karen has left off, maintaining the same structures that she has put in place. We still have some work to do, so that all members feel comfortable with the new recording systems and what can be got out of them to help in their breeding decisions.

Just a mention here that PBB are about to up grade their recording systems. All pedigrees and EBVs will be up graded every month. See the section on recording in this newsletter.

The AGM at Dargaville on June 11th saw a small attendance which led to a fairly short meeting. A big thank you to David and Sue Dreadon for a very well organized weekend, good venues, good food, good cattle, and good company.

After the AGM we had a council meeting to formalize which role each councillor would take responsibility for, they are as follows.

Wayne Aspin	- Fieldays Coordinator.
Jill Dirksen.	- Newsletter Coordinator.
Graeme Dyke	- Developing Grading Up and/or Commercial Register.
Tuppy Jones/Arthur Beazley	- Promotion/Advertising.
Colin Nash	- Lease with PBB and ABRI.
*Kevin Fletcher	- Continuing as Web master.

*Thank you to Kevin for helping out. He is no longer an active breeder but is still willing to put in a lot of time managing the web site.

Finally just a word about our breeds future. The breeders hold the key to the Devons role in the beef industry. We need to support one another, talk to one another, and visit our fellow breeders. We need to attract new breeders. Good luck with your calving.

Colin Nash.

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Recording Sheets.

Just a reminder of the sequence of recording required for registration of cattle each year. Some of these requirements may seem a little draconian but the reward for good recording is a better understanding and comparison of Devon cattle in Australia and NZ. The quality of the information we get out, is influenced by the amount and quality of information we put in. If you are unable or don't wish to weigh your cattle you still can share the benefits from those who do using the EBV's on Internet Solutions.

1. - Animal Disposal List (ADL) or Cull Sheets.

This is a list of all animals recorded on the computer as being owned by a breeder and comes out in August. A breeder is required to cull, using the appropriate cull codes, any dam no longer part of the breeding herd. It is important to double check this, any cows not showing as being culled will appear on the Calving Sheets. Any female over two years old appearing on the Calving Sheets is charged a Dam fee of \$20/year. The ADL must be returned by the cut off date, otherwise it will be assumed all animals on the ADL are in your herd and you will be charged for every female over two years.

This year ADLs will arrive in August rather than July in a slightly different layout. The changes coincide with the way PBB update our records. To this point the EBV's have updated once or may be twice a year. From now on they will be updated every month, this will shorten the time of converting animal weights received at the office to updated EBV's published on internet solutions from up to one year, to no longer than one month.

2. - Calf Entry Sheets.

These are sent to breeders on receipt of a completed ADL and list all of the cows due to calve in age order. There are columns to enter Sire details, calving information. These should be returned as soon as calving is complete or by the date it is required. Fill out as much information as you can remember some information is essential e.g. Sire details, calf details including horn/poll status of calf. Some information such as calving ease isn't essential but try to fill it out anyway using the correct code.

3. - Weigh Sheets.

These are pre-printed forms that can be obtained from Linda Rule at PBB on request for those who are entering weights into the system. Weights are taken at 200,400 and 600 days. Scanning information can also be added. There is an added cost for entering weights. This consists of an animal charge and a herd fee.

The animal or calf charge is \$1.60 per calf and you can enter up to six weighs (two for each age category). The scanning cost for entering information is 0.60cents per animal.

The herd fee per annum is as follows-

Herd Size	Fee
0 – 10	No Cost
11 – 20	\$150
21 – 40	\$200
41 – 60	\$250
61 – 80	\$275
Over 80	\$300

Registration Certificates.

Normally these will be sent out by PBB from any rising two year male/female approved by the breeder for registration on their ADL. Animals can be registered at an earlier age. For example if animals are sold prior to two years or yearling bulls are used for breeding. There is no cost for registration.

Transfer Declarations.

If an animal is sold to another breeder, a Transfer Declaration must be completed and sent to the office within 30 days. There is a transfer fee of \$20 per animal.

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The Association would like to welcome three new members :-
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Mike & Jenny Donovan, and
Leslie Kellick,

Web master

Kevin Fletcher Ph 06-324 8263 lunanbay@gmail.com

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RED DEVON CATTLE BREEDERS AGM & FIELD TRIP TO DAVID AND SUE DREADON PENCARROW STUD 11th-12th JUNE 2011

By Jill Dirksen

A small but enthusiastic group of members met at David and Sue Dreadon Pencarrow Red Devon Stud on a very damp but happily for all those attending a fairly fineish mild June morning. David and Sue live in a very picturesque part of the Dargaville area. We travelled past two very prominent points as we headed towards Dreadon Road. One of the outcrops named Tokatoka is a very steep 179m high. A little further on we passed a very impressive 222m Maungarahoe, which according to David is easily climbable (maybe another day!)

We all finally arrived for a 9.30am start welcomed by David and Sue and some of their family, we had a very welcome cuppa and snack before heading out to view the Cattle it never fails to impress when you see a good sized herd of Red Devons,



Joy checking out the yearling Bulls



Some of the Registered herd on home Farm

David and Sue currently have 130 spring calving cows including a few crossbreeds. The House where we all met up was built in 1900 by David's Grand father, their son is renovating it as he finds the time, so there is plenty of Dreadon history here. The stud name 'Pencarrow' came about as there is a Castle named Pencarrow near Bodmin in Cornwall, UK where the Dreadon ancestors were believed to be tenant farmers prior to arriving in New Zealand.

David's father started the Devon herd in 1961, with the purchase of a bull from Mr Dodd of Maungaturoto

and used him over milking Shorthorn cows (the family was Dairying in those days) David's Dad later bought Bulls from Messer's. McKay, Ramsay, Squire and some females from the Holmes family of South Island origin. He also initiated some AI using Potheridge Semen.

Since the mid 1980's David and Sue have continued developing the herd to where it is today using Bulls from other Breeders, and AI with English and Australian Bulls.

They currently have the Registered Herd and Bulls on the Home Block so we looked over these first before heading 3kms up the road past the Home where David and Sue live, built by David's Father in 1960 to view the Commercial herd. This was quite an exciting trip some of us travelled on the back of David and Sue's Landrover the rest went with George Blakley in his 4x2, which turned out to be just that, as we got onto the track heading up to the Commercial Herd it became



*Greg, David Harrison & Wayne
A view from the Deck*

a little stuck... So after some conferring amongst the blokes it was decided to leave the Ute where it



*Wayne, Colin, David, Arthur & George
Deep in discussion*

was and we'd sort it out on the way back down. What a lovely site as the girls came crowding round us looking for hay of course, but as usual for Red Devons they don't often turn tail and head in the other direction, the Scenery was spectacular up there too, if you can get too the Field trips which the Society hold after the AGM it is very worth while, where else can you get the opportunity to see the rural heartland of New Zealand. After a very enjoyable visit with the Herd we headed back to rescue the Ute which didn't turn out to be too much drama a few blokes on the front and a few on the back bouncing up and down did the trick.

David gave us a short ticky tour round the Lime Quarry they run also on the Property. Then back to the old Homestead for a very delicious feast put on by David and Sue with the help from their family. Thank you very much David and Sue for your wonderful hospitality and organisation of the Weekend, we thoroughly enjoyed our time in Dargaville and the visit to your Farm, and we wish you many more years on your lovely property. The Red Devons were truly a wonderful site.

We all made our way back to our destinations after a great catch up with the members who were able to attend.



Traction needed here!



AGM Dinner who wants BEEF!





SPRING CALVING ON MANU RED DEVON STUD

By Jill Dirksen

It's fast approaching again, for those of us who are Spring Calving. So here is how we do it on our farm.

Usually from approx 6 weeks out from Calving its usual to give a Magnesium Bullet or Dusting to the Hay or Pasture to help alleviate the nasty occurrence of Milk Fever, Grass Staggers etc., we start to restrict pasture intake more at this stage, so about 4 weeks out from estimated Calving dates the Cows are maintained so as not too increase in weight too much, so close scrutiny is required depending on the season as to how much feed they get we use Hay as our supplement here this keeps them contented between moves. I have been told that the older a Cow gets the more predisposed to these Metabolic problems, we have not encountered this yet but keep a specially close eye on the more senior members of the Herd.

Depending on which part of the Country you live in the vagary's of the Weather will be more severe than other areas, so attention to where the Cows will possibly drop the bundle is really important too, so a bit of attention could save a precious Calf from being lost due to a Drain or big Puddle or Blizzard conditions, of course every year there tends to be something different to deal with it all adds to the Journey of learning.

As soon as possible after the Calf has arrived we do our first weigh for performance recording. In most cases our Cows are quite approachable for this, but we are always very mindful of the wonderful Maternal instinct and judge each Cow carefully before doing this, we take our Gator out into the paddock usually so it is close by just in case and slip the little weigh platform to the ground and one of us lifts the Calf and stands on the little Weigh Platform while the other person takes the reading keeping from getting between Cow and Calf this has been working very well. Any we find difficult we will take to the Cattle Yards and Weigh there.

Soon after this in our situation we need to move Cow and Calf out of the ladies in waiting group to an area of lovely lush saved winter grass where she can settle down to her job of rearing an awesome Red Devon Calf. The Ear tagging is done on the day we do the De Horning, Methylated spirits is used to sterilise the Tags before application and after Tags are in place a spray with Iodine is applied for extra protection from possible infection from Tags. We do our own De Horning by applying a caustic type paste called Hornex to the Horn Buds, we find this the easiest in our situation with the least stress to all involved usually at around a week old. It's a matter of separating in the yard Mum from baby for no more than an hour. It needs to be done on a fine day,

as the Caustic solution can run. One of us holds the Calf while the other cuts round the Horn bud with little Scissors then shaves round so the caustic solution can be spread round and on the Horn bud with no hair in the way, the Calf is left for usually ½ hr until you can see that the paste has penetrated, it looks red but this very soon heals over and unless the Calf rubs the Horn area with Hoof or the like it is most often a very successful procedure just a bit of patience required, Mum of course gives a big lick round the area and keeps it clean once they are back together.

The Calved Cows continue to get Magnesium dusted onto the Hay Silage or Pasture for a few weeks after Calving as a precaution. The addition of Molasses is a great energy boost when times are tough so this is sometimes used here also. Any cow who does not release her Afterbirth is monitored and after approx a week of retention the Vet is contacted to get advice, or attention to this issue is sought. This would be a good topic for another article as to why Cows retain Afterbirth. Even after a seemingly trouble free Calving. If any one would care to comment on this or contribute and do an article it would be great.

Good luck with your 2011 Calving season the more Red Devon's we can get out there the Better!



Jill getting acquainted with a new addition on Manu

Why Should You Record With BREEDPLAN?

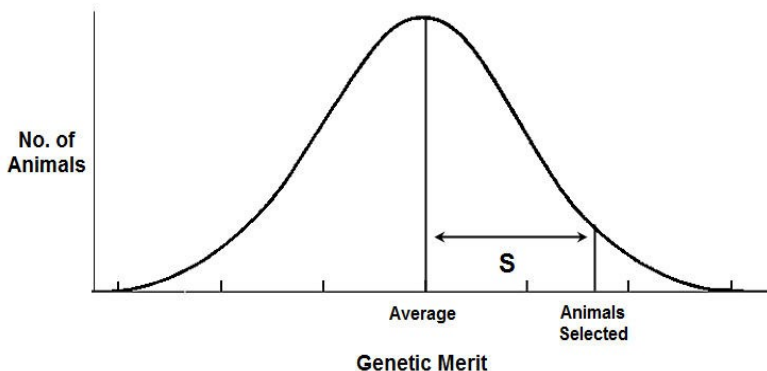
Several Red Devon seedstock producers have recently asked the question, “Why do we need BREEDPLAN?” Other comments have been made proclaiming that any competent cattleman can select cattle by eye far more successfully than BREEDPLAN can. So let’s explore this topic. Why should Red Devon seedstock producers performance record their animals with BREEDPLAN? Firstly, we need to discuss some general concepts regarding genetics.

Making Genetic Improvement

The primary objective of the seedstock producer should be to make genetic improvement. Genetic improvement occurs when the average genetic value of the offspring (eg. the current calves) is higher than the average genetic value of the previous generation from which the parents were selected. In other words, the calves that are produced are superior to their parents. Genetic improvement can be made for either an individual trait or across a range of traits. Leading seedstock producers will be concentrating on making genetic improvement for a large range of traits simultaneously, with the relative importance given to each trait determined by the influence that the trait has on the profitability of the beef enterprise.

Several key factors influence the rate of genetic improvement that is made in a seedstock herd. Seedstock breeders need to appreciate how these factors interact in the dynamics of their breeding herd to ensure that long term sustainable genetic progress is achieved. The factors that determine the rate of genetic improvement that is achieved are defined in countless different formulas within the different genetic textbooks that are available. Undoubtedly however, these factors focus on two key areas.

The first and most important area influencing the rate of genetic improvement that is achieved relates to the genetic superiority of the animals that were selected to become parents. The higher the genetic merit of the animals selected to become parents relative to the animals that were available for selection, the higher the genetic improvement that can be achieved. In simple terms, the greater the genetic superiority of the parents, the greater the genetic improvement that will be achieved. This is often referred to as “selection intensity” or the “selection differential”.



Caption: One of the key factors influencing the amount of genetic improvement that is achieved is how genetically superior the animals are that are selected for inclusion in the breeding program.

The second key area influencing the rate of genetic improvement relates to the average age of the animals that are selected to become parents. If genetic improvement is being achieved in the herd, the younger the age of the parents that are used, the greater the genetic improvement that will be achieved. This is a result of the younger animals being of higher genetic merit than the older animals in the herd. This is often referred to as “generation length”, with a shorter generation length being associated with greater genetic improvement.

Selecting Animals for Use in a Breeding Program

Given the relationship between the genetic superiority of the animals that are selected to become parents and the rate of genetic improvement that is achieved, it is imperative that the most genetically superior animals available are selected for use within a breeding program. So how do we identify which animals are genetically superior? If we are selecting a bull to join from a mob of yearling bulls, how do

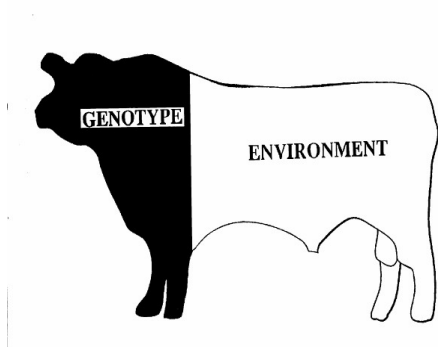
we ensure that the bull we select will be the one with the best genetic package so that the subsequent genetic improvement is maximised?

The first complication that can cause difficulty when trying to select the most genetically superior animal is the fact that it is challenging to “see” many of the traits that influence the profitability of a beef enterprise. For example, it is hard to tell what level of marbling a bull’s progeny will have or how fertile his female daughters will be compared to another bull simply by assessing them visually. In reality, for a lot of the important traits, visual selection only allows us to select animals on what we think is there.

The challenge of not being able to “see” many of the important traits can be overcome somewhat by objectively measuring the performance animals (eg. using an ultrasound scanning machine to measure the amount of marbling a bull possesses), however the second complication that needs to be considered when selecting animals for use within a breeding program is that the performance of an animal is influenced by not only its genetic merit but also a raft of non genetic factors. These include things like nutrition, disease status, and age just to name a few. The implication of this is “what you see is not necessarily what you get” and so it is imperative that selection decisions are based on the genetic differences between animals if genetic improvement is to be achieved.



Caption: It can be challenging to “see” many of the traits that influence the profitability of a beef enterprise when selecting animals for use within a breeding program.



Caption: What you see is not necessarily what you get. Selection decisions can be compromised by selection on differences between animals that are due to non genetic factors.

The influence of non genetic factors on the performance of an animal limits our ability to select animals simply by assessing them either visually or by using objective raw performance measurements in isolation. While astute cattleman may be able to adjust for differences in some of the non genetic effects such as nutrition and age, there are still other non genetic effects that cannot be accounted for that will cloud any selection decision. Research has demonstrated that even when all the known non genetic differences between animals are accounted for, only a relatively small proportion of the remaining differences in performance between animals are passed on to the progeny of these animals. For the technically minded, the proportion of the difference that is observed in the progeny is referred to as the “heritability” and varies from trait to trait.

So how do we get around these complications to ensure that the bull we select will be the one the best genetic package? Remember, we are not trying to select the bull with the best performance, but rather the bull whose progeny will perform the best. This is where tools like BREEDPLAN can be used to assist with our selection decisions.

Using BREEDPLAN to Assist Animal Selection

BREEDPLAN is a genetic evaluation program that compares animals on the basis of their value as parents, that is, their breeding value.

The BREEDPLAN genetic evaluation is run by the Agricultural Business Research Institute (ABRI) at the University of New England in Armidale, Australia and operates through a Board of Management which has representation from industry and technical organisations, as well as producer members.

BREEDPLAN research and development is carried out by the Animal Genetics and Breeding Unit (AGBU), also at the University of New England.

BREEDPLAN is all about increasing accuracy of selection decisions, and when properly understood and used, can be a significant aid to a cattleman's decision making when selecting animals for use within a breeding program. Look through the jargon and long titles and you will see that BREEDPLAN is an industry based service backed by some of the best expertise in the world.

BREEDPLAN considers all the pedigree and performance information that is available on an animal and its relatives to produce an estimate of an animal's breeding value, that is an "Estimated Breeding Value" (EBV). BREEDPLAN is a similar technology to that which has been used by the pig, poultry and dairy industries to make such dramatic production changes over the last few decades. It has worked wonderfully well for those industries, and works just as well for the genetic evaluation of beef cattle.



Caption: BREEDPLAN is a genetic evaluation program for cattle that provides an estimate of an animal's true breeding value.

Benefits of BREEDPLAN

The main benefit offered by BREEDPLAN is its use as a selection tool to assist in the identification of the most genetically superior animals for use within a breeding program from those that are available. As previously discussed, the greater the genetic superiority of the animals that are selected to become parents relative to the animals that were available for selection, the higher the genetic improvement that will be achieved.

By participating in Red Devon GROUP BREEDPLAN, seedstock herds will receive a sophisticated report for their herd which includes Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) for their sires, dams, heifer, and bull and steer progeny, benchmarked against other Red Devon animals in Australia and New Zealand. Amongst other things, this assists with the identification of the animals with the best genetic package, including the ability to identify and select against the normal trait antagonisms. For example increase growth and muscling, while maintaining or increasing fat cover.

Herds recording with BREEDPLAN also receive regular assessments of the change in the genetics of their herd over time relative to the Red

Devon breed, plus access to other genetic tools that assist with animal selection and genetic progress such as Internet Solutions EBV related functions (e.g. EBV enquiry or sale catalogues with EBVs displayed).

In addition to its benefit as a tool to increase the rate of genetic improvement through better selection of animals, BREEDPLAN also offers seedstock producers with a valuable marketing tool through the provision of EBVs on sale animals.

Hopefully the above discussion provides an insight into the answer to the question "Why Should You Record with BREEDPLAN?" For further information on Performance Recording with Red Devon BREEDPLAN, please contact The New Zealand Red Devon Cattle Breeders Association on 06 323 4484 or by email lindar@pbbnz.com. Comprehensive information is also available from the BREEDPLAN website (<http://breedplan.une.edu.au>)

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