



Performance recording options for composite and crossbred bull breeders

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Before considering recording options, it is important to decide which characteristics (traits) will be required – both for selection within the stud and also to describe sale bulls for clients. The type of recording scheme required can then be defined. What emphasis to place on growth, fertility, carcass and other traits within your selection program is a different issue. This paper concentrates on the actual recording options.

There are currently two main ways of obtaining BREEDPLAN Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs):

a. *Enrol directly with BREEDPLAN:*

Any breed/breeder can submit data direct to NBRS BREEDPLAN (National Beef Recording Scheme). EBVs will be set against that herd's base. This may be the best option if the following apply:

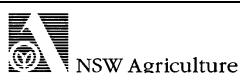
- the composite herd is stabilised, ie a new 'breed', of which the owners wish to only record this 'final herd'. (rather than enter historic data back to original breeds) ;
- pedigree links to a major breed are tenuous ;
- recording fees are an issue (Breed Societies may charge the NBRS fee plus variable costs. In turn they can provide extra services and support in some cases.)

Notes:

- If a herd is enrolled with NBRS, with full breed codes and historic pedigree data, it could later be transferred to the data base of a linked breed. Some charge for the data transfer would apply.
- The EBV base for a composite herd on NBRS will not be zero. Rather, a herd base that is more reflective of current industry standards will be used. This does not mean that the EBVs would be directly comparable to any other EBVs outside the herd. It simply means that the EBVs will be in a similar range of numbers to other industry EBVs.
- If a number of composite herds wish to be analysed together and have good genetic links between their herds, then these herds can participate in a cooperative recording scheme and run a genetic analysis across all the herds to potentially get comparable EBVs.

b. *Record with a Breed Society*

Several breed Societies in GROUP BREEDPLAN now offer options to record composite/crossbred data in their commercial/appendix/multibreed registers. This offers the



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potential to have EBVs reported against the Society EBV base. A Society option would be most attractive if:

- there are good genetic links to the preferred breed;
- using that Breed's base would offer analytical and/or marketing advantages;
- there are perceived benefits in being part of the Society's technical and marketing support – either through consultations or simply being part of the Society's activities.

Note that once data is entered with Societies, it becomes an integral part of their database and is therefore their property. Most Societies have agreements for members to get a copy of the data they submitted if they so desire. If you are concerned about this, check with your society regarding access to submitted data and any costs involved in getting a data extract at a later stage.. however, once data is included in the GROUP analyses, the Societies would naturally not want to “remove” the data from the analysis as it may cause EBV changes to Society animals.

In future, some breeds may progressively move to a common multibreed base at which they will report their EBVs. This would effectively mean that a similar EBV value would indicate similar genetic merit irrespective of which breed reported the animal. Further information on this issue is available in the Breed Note titled “????”. This may eventually make it more important for composites/crossbreeds to be genetically linked to one of these breeds if possible.

Finally....

Whatever recording option is used, there is no substitute for good pedigree and performance data, careful recording of management groups and recording traits that will support the breeding goals of studs and their commercial clients. There are also no free rides. If you need information on a trait to help with selection decisions, data will need to be recorded on that trait. Relying on correlated information generally gives lower accuracy and a poorer progress towards breeding objective. It is therefore recommended that bull breeders spend some time considering their breeding objectives prior to making decisions on recording options and traits to record.



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