

over 200 animals.

Recent developments in Beefplan have included updating some of the correction factors involved in the program together with a move to combine pedigree and performance recording in the one system. Considerable progress has been achieved and the new system will commence for calving in 1979 with the majority of breed societies being involved.

The sequential computerised recording system adopted for Beefplan in 1973 has outgrown its original facilities. The National Beef Cattle Improvement Council has recently agreed to changing Beefplan on to Data Base. Progress is well in hand on this development.

It can be seen that Beefplan, since it was introduced, has had a rather difficult period to face due mainly to its complex structure and the involvement of many independent bodies together with a fluctuating economic climate for beef over these years. With the recent developments in Beefplan and the likelihood of an increase in involvement by pedigree breeders, the system has been given encouragement allowing it to continue providing a dynamic recording service to beef breeders in New Zealand. Present users number over 400 (30,000 cows being recorded) and are being serviced on farms by 28 Sheep and Beef Officers supported by 12 Animal Husbandry specialists from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

In conclusion, it is my belief that the concept of a Livestock Improvement Organisation should evolve over the next few years to co-ordinate all systems of livestock improvement, encourage better use of computer facilities and staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and Livestock Improvement Associations and to obtain the full-time services of a geneticist.

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PERFORMANCE RECORDING: A CATTLE BREEDER'S VIEWPOINT

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INTRODUCTION

The methods of performance recording preferred in any herd will be determined primarily by its breeding and commercial objectives, and by the ability and commitment of the owner/manager to take and maintain adequate written records. Performance recording should help one to cull animals, rather than identify the few outstanding stock. The only commercially worthwhile justification for having a "herd book" or breed society is to help in the process of providing superior sires for the improvement of the commercial beef producing industry.

Measurement of liveweight gain is only one aspect of performance recording, although an important one. Others relate to mating and calving. Carcass classification and grading systems should be used to provide a payment system based on the expected yield of saleable meat products. Secondly, they should provide feedback to beef producers to help them breed cattle yielding the highest return for their own production environment and resources (e.g. the Canadian blue tag system).

BREEDING OBJECTIVES

Three different breeding situations will be discussed, with the objectives being defined for each.

1. Commercial Hereford Herd in the Western District of Victoria

The market is for ten month weaner steers and fat dry cows. We wish to maintain net calf crop percentage during autumn calving, in the face of wide variation in pasture quality and quantity, and the present minimal calving problems. We wish to improve early conception rates and mothering ability. Bulls are to be purchased with above average progeny weight performance to the yearling stage, free from structural defects and producing progeny with good top line and back end muscling, length and scale to provide scope for the fattener.

2. Upgrading of Limousin Crossbred Cattle to Domestic Purebred Status

Selection pressure needs to be directed at improving post-weaning gain and cow mothering ability, to eliminate poor temperament and late sexual maturity and to maintain calving ease (50 kg maximum birthweight). No selection is required in relation to carcass characteristics.

3. Upgrading of Charolais Crossbred Cattle to Domestic Purebred Status

Primary selection objectives are to develop an easy calving strain and keep birthweight below 55 kg. Other priorities are mothering ability, good structural attributes, particularly feet and legs and the elimination of deformities. We seek to achieve maximum muscling and growth rates consistent with the above constraints.

USE OF PERFORMANCE RECORDING

The following table illustrates how performance recording needs vary with differing breeding objectives:

Characters Recorded	Type of Enterprise		
	Commercial Herefords	Limousin Upgrading	Charolais Upgrading
Result of mating	Essential for all even if no written record. Cull if no calf unless nutrition wholly inadequate e.g. drought.		
Calving Birth Weight	Not required	Essential	Essential
Problems	Not required	Essential	Essential
Abnormality	Unlikely	Essential	Essential
Progeny Weaning Weights	Probably not justified except for first calves	Essential for dam Valuable for sires if adequate comparative data available.	Essential for dam
Post-weaning Gain	Not available for store cattle producer	Essential	Desirable
Ultimate Destination	Not worth recording for individuals	Essential	Essential
Conformation Assessment Bulls	None retained	Important if selling bulls	
Steers	Probably a luxury in all cases		
Females	Feminine traits (e.g. udders)		
Femininity in Heifers	Will cull themselves as poor performers	Essential	Essential
Temperament	Eliminate bad temperament progeny. Eliminate blood lines involved if recurring.		
Carcass Qualities	Would be useful to have Canadian system on feedback	Not required except for public relations	Not essential except for public relations
Comparison of Milking of Female Progeny of Bulls Used	Not worth trying under multiple mating	Valuable if your records cover enough animals over a long enough period.	

RECORDING REQUIREMENTS

For commercial Herefords, tagging and weighing of all calves is of doubtful commercial benefit. Our local State Department of Agriculture extension officers provide an adequate weighing and analysis service to allow us to identify the bottom 25% of heifers for mothering ability.

For both the Limousin and Charolais situations, the NBRB Basic Unit is inadequate as it makes no provision for birth weight and calving ease analysis. This has led to the development of improved systems by NBRB for the Simmental and Limousin Breed Societies. These are already in operation, and the Charolais Society system will begin on 1st January, 1980.

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