

STEVEN SKINNER



Steven Skinner completed a Bachelor of Agricultural Economics at the University of New England in 1980, before undertaking a seven year appointment in applied agricultural economic research with the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in Canberra. Steve then spent five years managing a sheep and cattle property, before joining the Agricultural Business Research Institute (ABRI) in 1993.

Throughout his 30 year span at ABRI, Steve played an integral role in the delivery of ABRI's products and services to the beef cattle breeding industry around the world, including the BREEDPLAN genetic evaluation service, Breed Secretariat services and breed registry software. Initially employed as a BREEDPLAN processor, which overlapped with a three year stint as Executive Officer of the Australian Brangus Cattle Association Ltd, Steve was promoted to numerous roles, including manager of the Pedigree/Performance section (appointed 1997), manager of the International Beef Recording Scheme (appointed 2011) and Chief Operational Officer (appointed 2015). Steve also spent eight years as Executive Officer of the Australian Registered Cattle Breeder's Association (ARCBA), representing the interests of ARCBA's breed society members and their breeders.

Throughout his career, Steve worked extensively with ABRI's Australian and international beef breed society clients to maintain the integrity of their studbooks through their use of the Breed Secretariat service and/or breed registry software, and to facilitate genetic improvement within their breeds through the use of the BREEDPLAN genetic evaluation. Always outcome focused, Steve's appreciation for and understanding of the commercial realities of beef breeding was bolstered by his previous experience in managing beef properties. Throughout Steve's career, there have been numerous enhancements made to the BREEDPLAN genetic evaluation, and to the use of DNA technologies in cattle breeding. These include, but are not limited to, the introduction of new traits into the BREEDPLAN genetic evaluation, revisions to selection indexes, and the emergence of DNA technology with applications for parentage verification, management of genetic conditions and Single-Step BREEDPLAN. Steve led ABRI through these changes, ensuring that both he and ABRI staff were ready to assist breed society personnel and seedstock producers understand these new technologies and how they can best be utilised in their own businesses.

In addition, Steve has been a mentor to numerous others in the cattle breeding industry. Throughout his career, Steve has been an advocate for young people in agriculture. He facilitated work experience opportunities for those completing university degrees in agriculture and employed numerous personnel who were newly graduated and/or in the early stage of their career. Many of those employed by Steve early in their careers have gone on to have their own successful careers in the cattle breeding industry (for example, moving on to positions with Meat and Livestock Australia, Australian beef cattle breed societies, state Agricultural Departments and/or service provider roles).

In 2024, Steve was awarded the RW Vincent award by ARCBA for his outstanding service to the Australian cattle breeding industry. For his outstanding contribution to genetic improvement of the Australian cattle industry, the Association for the Advancement of Animal Breeding and Genetics is pleased to elect Steve Skinner as a Fellow of the Association.