Outstanding Growth in Performance Recording

Over recent years the Red Angus breed in Australia has observed outstanding growth in performance recording for genetic evaluation through BREEDPLAN. This is shown through the increase in percentage of calves that have at least one post-birth weight (e.g. 200, 400 and/or 600 day weight) recorded on the Red Angus Society of Australia’s pedigree and performance database. This has increased from 20% in the 2004 calving year to 48% in the 2007 calving year (Fig 1). In number terms, the increase has been from 413 in the 2004 calving year to 1171 in the 2007 calving year.

![Figure 1. Percentage of Red Angus Calves with at Least One Post-birth Weight Recorded](image1)

Similar trends have also been observed in the recording of ultrasound scan traits including eye muscle area (EMA), rib fat, rump fat and intramuscular fat (IMF). The percentage of calves that have ultrasound scan measurements recorded on the Red Angus Society of Australia’s pedigree and performance database has increased from 8% in the 2003 calving year to 22% in the 2006 calving year (Fig 2). Due to the lag time in performance recording (i.e. some traits are not measured in the same year that a calf is born) it is common practice to not display statistics on the more recent calf drops (e.g. 2008 & 2009).

![Figure 2. Percentage of Red Angus Calves with Ultrasound Scan Measurements Recorded](image2)
Given these results, a question worth asking is “does an increase in the level of performance recording lead to an increase in genetic improvement?” To answer this we can look at the genetic trends as measured by the change in the Red Angus selection index values over corresponding calving years (figure 3).

The current genetic trends show that genetic progress is being achieved for each Selection Index, however it is occurring at a constant or even decreasing rate. This is particularly evident in the Vealer and Supermarket Index where a "tapering off" is observed in the later calving years. This should not be a major concern, but it will worthwhile monitoring to see if the rate of genetic progress increases in future calf drops as a function of the increased performance recording level combined with the recent publishing of the Selection Indexes.

You can access further information on performance recording and Red Angus BREEDPLAN from the Red Angus SBTS Technical Officer, Christian Duff (ph: 02 6773 2472 or email: christian@sbts.une.edu.au)

*Article compiled by Christian Duff for inclusion in Red Angus Express, June 2009*