Southern Beef Technology Services
Update - November 2006

Southern Beef Technology Services (SBTS) has had a busy time since the project commenced in early 2006. This newsletter provides you with an overview of what the SBTS team has been up to during its inaugural year and outlines the main activities that are planned for 2007.

2006 Workshop Series
BREEDPLAN & Related Genetic Technologies – “Getting Back to Basics”

The 2006 SBTS workshop series was titled “BREEDPLAN & Related Technologies – Getting Back to Basics” and comprised a total of 18 workshops across Australia. The workshop series specifically concentrated on the fundamentals of BREEDPLAN, BreedObject & Internet Solutions and successfully achieved a 64% increase in participants’ perceived understanding of BREEDPLAN.

A combined total of 355 people attended the workshop series with workshop participants ranging from long term users of the BREEDPLAN technology to producers looking to record their cattle with BREEDPLAN for the first time. Feedback from the workshops has been very positive with producers leaving with a much better grasp of the fundamentals involved in BREEDPLAN, BreedObject and Internet Solutions.

One long term BREEDPLAN member who participated in the workshop series was Roger Hann from Courallie Herefords at Bellata in north-western NSW. When asked about the workshop, Roger explained “I believe all producers could benefit from the SBTS workshops, as the back to basics day I attended answered most of my questions about BREEDPLAN. The knowledge and encouragement I have acquired through the SBTS workshop will improve my BREEDPLAN management techniques”.

In addition to the 18 workshops, a series of property visits (90 in total) were also conducted to give seedstock producers the opportunity for one-to-one assistance. The property visits were very well received and have provided producers with more detailed advice regarding issues specific to their enterprise. One who took the opportunity for a property visit was Matt Parker (pictured below). Matt is involved in the management of Waterfront Simmentals in South Australia and the property visit answered a few questions that he had about fine tuning his BREEDPLAN performance recording.

Benita Davis talks to Matt Parker during a property visit to Waterfront Simmental Stud in July.

The SBTS team would like to thank everyone who participated in the workshop series during 2006. While the “Getting Back to Basics” workshops are not currently planned for 2007, SBTS would be prepared to consider re-running one of the workshops if a particular group of breeders were interested.
Planned SBTS Activities in 2007

SBTS will be offering a variety of services to members throughout 2007. More specifically, these will include a new series of workshops, a new client day package and the provision of ongoing technical assistance.

Workshops

The 2007 SBTS workshop series has been titled “Getting the most from BREEDPLAN” and will specifically concentrate on the considerations seedstock members need to make in order to maximise the returns from their investment in performance recording.

In particular, the workshops will discuss:
- the information that is used to calculate each EBV
- how to ensure you are recording “good quality” performance information
- new BREEDPLAN developments such as the proposed “Data Quality” herd rating system

The workshop will be available to members of participating Breed Societies for a cost of $55 (inc. GST). This fee will cover attendance at the workshop, morning tea, lunch and an information kit.

Any member that wants to fine tune their performance recording is strongly encouraged to attend one of the workshops. Further details regarding the 2007 workshop series will be circulated shortly. For more information, please consult the SBTS website (http://sbts.une.edu.au).

Client Days

In addition to the workshops, SBTS will also be offering a package titled “Closer to your Clients” throughout 2007. This package will comprise a one day workshop that seedstock producers can host to demonstrate what their bulls can contribute to the breeding goals of their commercial clients. It will also provide you with a great opportunity to get closer to your clients by learning more about their needs and expectations as commercial cattlemen. The day will be conducted by the SBTS team and will be a mix of practical discussion and yard demonstration.

More specifically, the client day will include:
- Discussion on the effective selection of breeding cattle
- Overview of the genetic selection tools available
- Practical demonstration of how to use EBVs and selection indexes when choosing your next bull.

More information regarding the “Closer to your Clients” days will be available shortly.

Ongoing Technical Support

Members will also have access to ongoing support and assistance in the use and understanding of the genetic technologies that are available, such as BREEDPLAN, BreedObject Selection Indexes, Internet Solutions, TakeStock & Gene Markers. This support will be provided by a designated member of the SBTS team (see next page for details) and will be primarily delivered through phone and email consultation. Property visits may also be carried out when required.
SBTS Contact Details

SBTS provides members of participating Breed Societies with access to ongoing support and assistance in the use and understanding of the genetic technologies that are available, such as BREEDPLAN, BreedObject Selection Indexes, Internet Solutions, TakeStock & Gene Markers.

The following is a current contact list should you require any assistance. Please note, while SBTS offers technical support, all BREEDPLAN collection and submission queries should still be directed to the relevant BREEDPLAN Processor at ABRI.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breed</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blonde D'Aquitane</td>
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*** New SBTS Website ***

SBTS launched its website during 2006. The website not only contains all the upcoming SBTS News & Events but a comprehensive range of technical brochures that will assist you with your use and understanding of BREEDPLAN. The SBTS website address is http://sbts.une.edu.au.

Upcoming GROUP BREEDPLAN Analyses

A number of GROUP BREEDPLAN analyses are scheduled for Breed Societies participating in SBTS in the coming months. Please do not hesitate to contact the SBTS team should you require any assistance or advice in the lead up to these GROUP BREEDPLAN analyses. A summary of the cut off dates for submitting performance information to ABRI is provided in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breed</th>
<th>Cut-off date for data submitted on paper forms</th>
<th>Cut-off date for data submitted electronically (eg. email, web, excel)</th>
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<td>Murray Grey</td>
<td>November 17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Limousin</td>
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<td>December 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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“Technically Speaking” – Interpreting EBV Accuracies

What is Accuracy?

By definition, an EBV is an estimate of an animal's true breeding value. The “accuracy” figure produced with each EBV provides a measure of the stability of the EBV and gives an indication of the amount of information that has been used in the calculation of that EBV. The higher the accuracy the lower the likelihood of change in the animal's EBV as more information is analysed for that animal, it's progeny or it's relatives.

How is Accuracy Reported?

Accuracy figures are reported as a percentage (%) between 0 – 99.

In most cases where an EBV is presented, the accuracy of the EBV will be reported in either the column immediately following the EBV or the row beneath the EBV.

How to Interpret Accuracy?

The following guide may be useful for interpreting accuracy:

less than 50% accuracy - the EBVs are preliminary. EBVs in this range will have been calculated based on very little information. These EBVs could change substantially as more direct performance information becomes available on the animal.

50-74% accuracy - the EBVs are of medium accuracy. EBVs in this range will usually have been calculated based on the animal’s own performance and some limited pedigree information.

75-90% accuracy - the EBVs are of medium-high accuracy. EBVs in this range will usually have been calculated based on the animal’s own performance coupled with the performance for a small number of the animal’s progeny.

more than 90% accuracy - the EBVs are a high accuracy estimate of the animal’s true breeding value. It is unlikely that EBVs will change considerably with addition of more progeny data.

Although the accuracy of an EBV should be considered, animals should be compared on EBVs regardless of accuracy. Where two animals have the same EBV however, the animal with the higher accuracy would normally be used more heavily than the bull with the lower accuracy because the results can be predicted with more confidence.

Remember, all information that is known about an animal and its relatives is considered in the calculation of its EBVs. Subsequently, the EBV will be the best estimate available of an animal's genetic merit, regardless of accuracy.