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BEEF TALK

Taking stock of your future

FutureBeef website

The grazing industry's go-to tool for information

Product labels

What are they saying?

**QUEENSLAND
Country Life**

IN THIS ISSUE

Grazing essentials

Pasture spelling benefits everyone

Drought declaration changes

Legumes get a big tick for Brigalow Belt

Tri-Solfen—A practical
solution for pain management

Product labels—what are they saying?

Plan for spring burning

Anthrax risk in southern Queensland

Buying bulls that perform

Welcome to *Beef*talk 52!

As we approach the end of the dry season, now is the time to be thinking about management practices that will benefit your pastures during the upcoming wet season.

To help you, this issue features articles on how to plan for a spring burn, the benefits of wet season spelling and the potential for tropical pasture legumes in the Brigalow Belt and other regions of northern Australia.

August means bull buying season is well and truly upon us.

Do you want to get more bang for your buck when buying bulls?

The 'Buying bulls that perform' article looks at the tools available to producers to assist in making informed and objective purchasing decisions.

Graziers in southern Queensland are being urged to be aware of the anthrax risk in their area, after recent cases around the Dirranbandi–St George area.

As anthrax occurs most commonly in late spring to summer, now is a good time to put preventative measures in place.

Recently, there have been a number of changes to the drought declaration status of shires throughout Queensland.

However producers in these areas who believe they are still experiencing drought conditions can apply for an Individually Droughted Property declaration.

Have you visited the recently updated FutureBeef website?

futurebeef.com.au provides essential information to assist graziers with making on-farm changes that improve business performance.

In this issue we speak to organic sustainability advisor Chris Cosgrove about why he is an avid fan of the FutureBeef website.

Other great reads featured in this issue include articles on how to understand product labels and commercially-available pain relief for livestock husbandry practices.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Beef*talk and as always we would appreciate your feedback on and suggestions for future articles.

Please email us at info@futurebeef.com.au.

Happy reading!

The *Beef*talk team.

Grazing essentials: Loading ramps, fences, watering points and the FutureBeef website

OBE Organic sustainability adviser Chris Cosgrove is just one of thousands in the Australian grazing industry who use the FutureBeef website as a go-to tool for information.

Chris said companies like OBE Organic, as a world leader in supplying organic beef to consumers across the globe, had a commitment to continual improvement and best practice.

"The grazing industry needs to continue to improve its productivity and to meet the expectations of stakeholders at the same time," Chris said.

"The FutureBeef website contains a range of best practice information to do this—from environmental information for grazing land management, to animal welfare, to the people and business aspects of running a successful grazing business."

Chris has been using the FutureBeef website for more than three years and he intends to continue to increase his dissemination of information.

"We use it to help research best practice, to plan the training workshops we deliver to graziers and, in the future, we want to circulate more information to OBE Organic's producer network by sharing links and fact sheets on OBE's social media platforms," he said.

Since its inception in 2012, the FutureBeef website has provided Australia's grazing



Sustainability consultant Chris Cosgrove is a keen FutureBeef website fan.

industry with a link to the latest scientific discoveries and research and beef business information. Users can also subscribe to a free monthly eBulletin.

There is also a calendar of events so graziers can take advantage of field days, workshops and other activities that are occurring in their production area.

The FutureBeef website, futurebeef.com.au, provides essential information that graziers can apply to boost the performance of their enterprises—creating more jobs and more opportunities for regional and rural economies.

FutureBeef is a partnership between the Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australian governments and MLA.



Pasture spelling benefits everyone

Research continues to find that spelling pastures for six to eight weeks after good rain during the growing season is the first step to improving set stocked pastures.

If the season is reasonable, this time allows the most palatable pastures to go to seed in a paddock that may otherwise be continually grazed.

You can make a year-by-year plan to spell all paddocks on the property over the growing season every two to four years.

Often in a drought the temptation is to throw all the gates open and let stock find what they can, but for pastures to recover they need a spell to re-establish a healthy root system.

A healthy root system is the basis for future productivity.

Generally, a grass plant can only sustain a root system that mirrors its growth above ground.

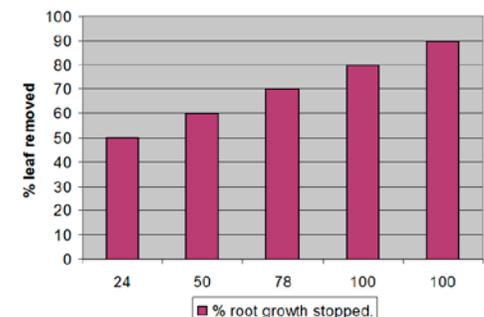
In some cases, if growing conditions are favourable, a spell may only need to be six weeks before the pasture has gone to seed and stock can re-enter the paddock.

Successfully spelling a paddock where there are large macropod numbers and rainfall is isolated is always a problem.

However, spelling is always worthwhile when there has been more general rain.

US research showed that removing 90 per cent of a plant's foliage totally stopped root growth for up to 17 days in cool and warm season grasses.

The study also found that continuous grazing can stop pasture root growth for the whole growing season.



Effect of varying amounts of grass leaf removal on root growth (adapted from Crider 1955).

Grass plants that are allowed to develop a deep root system are more resistant to dry periods and can cycle more nutrients into the grazing system.

This also benefits ground cover and soil microbiology.

A CSIRO and Department of Agriculture and Fisheries study of various grazing systems on nine properties in Queensland found the main key to healthy pastures on these properties was a system of regular wet season spelling.

Spelling a different paddock each year can have long-term benefits in maintaining pasture diversity and increasing ground cover levels, resulting in a healthy pasture that will respond to any rainfall received.

The productivity thought to be lost by resting a pasture will be recouped in better productivity in the longer term.

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Drought declaration changes

There have been a number of changes to the drought declaration status of shires in Queensland.

The recent annual review of drought-declared areas by local drought committees saw a reduction in declared areas across the state from 66 per cent to 57 per cent, including the revocation of eight local government areas and three part-shire revocations.

Local drought committees found that pasture growth was good following welcome rainfall in the western portion of the Banana Shire Council, Bundaberg Regional Council, Burdekin Shire Council, the northern part of the Charters Towers Regional Council, Fraser Coast Regional Council, Gympie Regional Council, North Burnett Regional Council, Tablelands Regional Council, Townsville City Council, the declared portion of the Mareeba

Shire Council and the Western Downs Regional Council.

Based on the existing conditions, the local drought committees recommended these areas have their drought declarations revoked effective 17 May 2018.

Any producers who are located in one of the revoked areas, or in any council area that is not drought declared and who believes they are still experiencing drought conditions, can apply for an Individually Droughted Property (IDP) declaration.

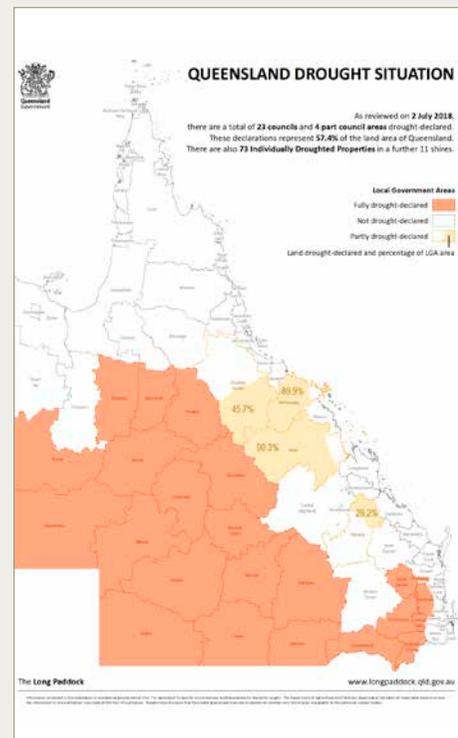
An IDP provides the producer with the same level of drought support as producers in a drought declared area.

To apply, download the IDP application form from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries website or request a copy by calling 13 25 23.

The map to the right shows the current Queensland drought situation.

Updated maps showing the current drought status of full and part declared shires including boundary descriptions can be found at longpaddock.qld.gov.au.

Information on the State Drought Assistance program and the Drought and Climate Adaptation program is available online at daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/environment/drought or by phoning the Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23.



Queensland drought situation as reviewed on 2 July 2018.

Legumes get a big tick for Brigalow Belt

If legume pastures have such huge potential in northern Australia as cattle feed, then why aren't larger areas of Queensland's Brigalow Belt planted with them?

Toowoomba-based Department of Agriculture and Fisheries principal pasture agronomist, Gavin Peck, posed that question during a Beef Australia 2018 seminar in Rockhampton.

Mr Peck highlighted that the Brigalow Belt covers 15 per cent of the grazing land in northern Australia but runs 30 per cent of the beef herd.

Pasture legumes have been identified in multiple studies as offering the best opportunity to increase production and returns in the Brigalow Belt.

However, there are few paddocks with adequate legume content within competitive sown grass pastures such as buffel.

For example, leucaena is one of a number of tropical pasture legumes currently available to graziers that are suitable for clay soils in the Brigalow Belt and other regions of northern Australia.

Around 8.5 million hectares in Queensland are suitable for growing leucaena however, to-date, only 125 000 hectares are sown with the plant.

In contrast, in southern Australia 29 million hectares have been established with sub-clovers and 20 million hectares with medics.

Leucaena has historically been considered a risky pasture to plant.

But with an emphasis placed on good establishment agronomy and good grazing management, leucaena has become one of the most reliable legumes to establish.

Establishing pasture legumes into existing grass pastures in the Brigalow Belt has been unreliable due to a challenging climate that is moisture-limited throughout the year, having aggressive sown grasses to compete against and using poor planting methods.

Young legume plants face stiff competition from sown grasses, like buffel, which have large root systems compared to the small roots of a young legume seedling.

Trying to plant legumes directly into buffel grass requires proper preparation for success.

Perennial legumes are not something that can just be thrown out and expected to magically

look after themselves to grow into strong, healthy plants.

They need access to moisture and nutrients and no competition from other plants.

Producers considering planting legumes should select the right paddock, the right legume, the right sowing method and prepare a good seedbed.

The best results for productive pastures are achieved when legumes such as leucaena, desmanthus or coatinga stylo are sown into a prepared seedbed with stored soil moisture on fertile land and allowed to thicken up in the first season.

There are a variety of legume species available for many of the soils in the Brigalow Belt.

Mr Peck and two DAF colleagues, principal economist Fred Chudleigh and principal research scientist Maree Bowen, participated in one of Beef Australia 2018's seminar panels.

The session looked at improving beef enterprise performance in northern Australia through the feed base and other interventions.

All three agreed on the value that legumes could add to the northern Australian beef industry.

Dr Bowen said the most profitable strategy for the producing both feeder and slaughter steers running on buffel grass was to give them access to leucaena after weaning.

The benefits of including legumes in pastures has been widely proven, however, doing it right the first time is the trick to gaining the most from the investment.

In the worst cases, it can take a few years to recover the costs of planting and establishment but that is deemed an investment worth making if it works.

The cheapest establishment approach is not always the best especially if it involves wasting time and money on seed that does not grow into a productive pasture.

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Tri-Solfen®—A practical solution for pain management

In June 2018, the pain relief product Tri-Solfen® was registered for dehorning and disbudding in addition to castration for beef and dairy calves.

This means graziers can now purchase Tri-Solfen® off the shelf at their local rural reseller.

Tri-Solfen® offers graziers a practical solution for pain management when carrying out necessary husbandry procedures.

Tri-Solfen® is a local anaesthetic and antiseptic spray gel that provides instant pain relief, minimises bleeding and protects against infection.

The spray gel was originally developed for the sheep industry to provide pain relief during mulesing with more than 80 per cent of Australia's flock now understood to be treated.

Proven pain relief benefits include reductions in mortality, quicker recovery time and lower stress levels resulting in improved animal production outcomes.

The product's gel base adheres to the wound acting as a barrier to environmental contaminants and helping to improve wound healing.

The blue gel contains two topical anaesthetics, fast-acting lignocaine and long-acting bupivacaine.

Adrenaline included in the product helps to reduce shock and stress of blood loss and prolong the anaesthetic action.

It also contains the antiseptic cetrimide which provides protection against bacterial contamination.

Designed to provide pain relief for 24–36 hours, it is best suited to calves aged between 6–8 weeks.

Treatment cost is between \$1 and \$1.50 per animal.

A commercially available pain relief option is a great step forward in ensuring on-farm husbandry practices meet consumer expectations for animal welfare.

Further product details including information regarding withholding periods can be found on the Bayer Grow Solutions website growsolutions.com.au.

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Product labels—what are they saying?

When buying feed it is often difficult to understand the label.

Knowing what nutrition information to look for can ensure you are getting bang for your buck when purchasing products. Let's look at an example of a protein dry lick label.

Example analysis (as fed)

Total crude protein	50.0%
Equivalent crude protein	28.8%
Crude protein	21.2%
Urea	10.0%
Calcium	4.0%
Phosphorus	2.0%
Salt	15.0%
Sulphur (S)	2.0%
Copper (Cu)	300 mg/kg
Iodine (I)	30 mg/kg
Zinc (Zn)	500 mg/kg
Monensin sodium	300 mg/kg

A key consideration is to determine if the analysis is on an 'as fed' or 'dry matter' basis.

This is especially important for high moisture feeds such as silage and liquid supplements.

'As fed' or 'wet' refers to the percentage of a nutrient in the feed with the normal feed moisture included.

'Dry matter' is what the nutrient percentage would be if the moisture in the feed was completely removed.

If the analysis is on a dry matter basis, the percentage dry matter will be listed on the label.

If percentage dry matter isn't listed then the analysis is most likely on an 'as fed' basis. If in doubt ask your supplier.

As an example of the impact of moisture content, pit silage is usually around 70 per cent water and 30 per cent dry matter. Therefore, 1kg would contain 700g water and 300g dry matter.

A total of 30g of crude protein in 1kg of 'wet' silage represents 3 per cent crude protein on a wet basis (30g crude protein/1000g) or 10 per cent crude protein on a dry matter basis (30g crude protein/300g dry matter).

Using the wrong number in the calculation of a ration can cause a significant error – in this example, up to three times.

'As fed' is simpler since this is how feed is bought, fed and eaten.

If a weaner eats 100g per day of the example lick with 50 per cent crude protein, they get 50g of protein.

If the analysis was on a dry matter basis and was 90 per cent dry matter, then a weaner eating 100g per day would only get 45g crude protein.

That is, 100g of lick is 90g dry matter (10g water) of which 50 per cent is crude protein.

Total crude protein is the total amount of protein in the feed. In this example 'total crude protein' (50 per cent) = equivalent crude protein (28.8 per cent) + crude protein (21.2 per cent).

Therefore 100g of lick has 50g of crude protein. Total crude protein may also be listed as 'crude protein' or 'protein'.

Equivalent crude protein is the proportion of total crude protein derived from nitrogen sources like urea and GranAm®.

Rumen microbes use the nitrogen to form microbial protein.

The equivalent crude protein is calculated by determining the amount of nitrogen in feed and multiplying it by 6.25.

For example, urea is 46 per cent nitrogen, therefore its equivalent crude protein content is $46 \times 6.25 = 287.5$ per cent. GranAm® is 20 per cent nitrogen so its equivalent crude protein content is $20 \times 6.25 = 125$ per cent.

Our example lick has 10 per cent urea so its equivalent crude protein content is 287.5×10 per cent = 28.8 per cent (rounded).

Crude protein is the true protein from plant sources such as meals or grain.

Urea is the total percentage of urea in a ration.

Sulphur (S) is used by rumen microbes with nitrogen to form protein, they need it in a ratio of 10 nitrogen (N) to 1 sulphur (S).

Nitrogen can be derived using our formula above where $N \text{ per cent} \times 6.25 = \text{crude protein per cent}$.

In this case $8 \text{ per cent N} \times 6.25 = 50$ per cent crude protein. So the lick has 8 per cent N and 2 per cent S giving a ratio of 4N to 1S. There is ample sulphur relative to nitrogen.

Calcium (Ca) is used in balance with phosphorus (P) with a desired total dietary ratio ranging from 1Ca: 1P for maintenance to 2Ca: 1P for high performance.

Phosphorus (P) is an important ingredient in phosphorus-deficient areas, particularly for breeders.

Delivering between three to eight grams of phosphorus per head per day would be a reasonable target as part of a dry season protein lick.

Salt is generally included to control supplement intake. The higher the salt content the less palatable the supplement and the less cattle will eat, that is after any salt craving has been satisfied.

Other minerals are included to maintain a mineral balance. Minerals are divided into macro and micro minerals.

Macro—or major—minerals such as calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, sulphur, potassium and sodium are needed by cattle in grams per day.

Micro—or trace—minerals such as copper, cobalt, selenium, zinc, iodine, iron and manganese are needed in milligrams per day.

Trace minerals are included to cover the bases, however, the priority remains protein as the primary limiting nutrient.

Monensin sodium is a rumen modifier that improves the efficiency of fermentation within the rumen to improve weight gains and can assist with coccidiosis control. It is toxic to horses and dogs.

Comparing supplements can be done by calculating how much of a particular nutrient is in an arbitrary weight of the product.

For example, 100g of this example lick has 50g of crude protein (mostly from urea) and 2g of phosphorus.

Breeders would need to eat 300g per head per day to get the recommended 150g of protein to stimulate rumen microbe activity.

They would get an ample amount of phosphorus, 6g per head per day, for the dry season.

What are cattle getting? To calculate how much supplement cattle are eating record how many kilograms of lick is given to how many animals and the number of days it lasts.

For example, if 200kg of lick lasts 100 breeders 7 days, then their average daily intake is $200 \div 100 \div 7 = 0.286$ kg or 286g per head per day—close enough to a 300g target.

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Plan for spring burning

September is often seen as the time to burn pasture.

The long-term history of our pasture species shows most are adapted to handling regular fire.

Grasses such as black speargrass can bury their seed below the soil surface to protect it from fire.

Other native grasses, such as kangaroo grass and Queensland bluegrass, are 10 per cent more likely to germinate from seed after a fire.

When burning pasture, always have a clear purpose.

Common aims of burning are to:

- change pasture composition
- control woody and broadleaf weeds
- remove dry, unpalatable grass to give animals access to higher quality, new growth
- reduce the risk of uncontrolled summer fires by burning off extra fuel.

The type of fire will markedly affect the outcome.

A slow, cool fire after a significant rainfall event can be very beneficial to reduce moribund pasture and alter pasture composition.

Burning after rain slows the fire and if the ground cover is still damp it will remain after the fire to protect the soil.

These cooler fires are often patchy in nature which can favour flora and fauna.

In contrast, a hot fire on a dry day can scorch the surface leaving it bare.

Often the pasture recovery time in this situation can be significant and these fires can be damaging to flora and infrastructure.

Most land types in Queensland have recommended burning guidelines to help maintain healthy ecosystems.

Burning intervals range from every two to four years in a speargrass pasture to no fire at all in vine tree scrubs.

Where fire is used for retarding the growth of woody weeds, a hotter than normal fire is needed and it may take several seasons before enough fuel is available for such a fire.

Generally eucalypts need to be smaller than 30 centimetres high to be controlled by fire.

For changing pasture composition in speargrass pastures, burning every three

to four years helps control the invasion of pasture by coarse, unpalatable wiregrasses.

Fires can have many detrimental effects if used too often.

Burning annually can severely reduce the amount of ground litter, which provides soil protection from erosion and a habitat for soil microflora to cycle nutrients.

Managing pastures after fire is also important.

Stock should be kept out of pastures long enough for the plants to develop leaves at least 10 centimetres high or go to seed.

Plants that are continually eaten down straight after a fire quickly lose vigour.

The plants cannot photo-synthesise and build-up root reserves and size, which dictates how much the plant can ultimately produce for the season.

A short-term gain in stock condition by grazing recently-burnt pasture is quickly lost as the pasture, in the long-term, produces less forage available for grazing.

Avoid burning too large an area on your property as a dry spell after burning can cause feed shortages.

In contrast, if only small areas are burned cattle will concentrate on those areas damaging regrowing plants.

If burning is a management tool for your property, it must be part of a long-term plan keeping in mind the need to comply with permit guidelines and notification of neighbours.

More information about fire is available at:

- ruralfire.qld.gov.au – permits and current fire maps
- environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/regional-ecosystems – regional ecosystems information with fire frequency recommendations
- fireandbiodiversity.org.au – all aspects of fire in South East Queensland.

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Anthrax risk in southern Queensland

Alert

Graziers in southern Queensland should be alert to the risk of anthrax and be aware of what to do about it.

Anthrax is an infection caused by the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis* and is spread by contact with the bacterium's spores.

Whilst human anthrax is considered a rare disease in Australia, in livestock anthrax typically presents as sudden death.

The number of affected animals varies from 1-2 to large outbreaks exceeding 100 animals.

Carcasses often bloat quickly and there may be bloody or tarry discharges from carcass orifices.

Anthrax spores remain viable in soil for decades, with the potential to cause further incidents.

Anthrax has been confirmed on grazing properties in the Dirranbandi–St George area of southern Queensland in 2002, 2017 and 2018.

These incidents suggest that an area of eastern Australia with a recognised anthrax risk that extends the length of NSW and into Victoria also extends into southern Queensland.

Properties in the anthrax belt are at risk of having cases of anthrax in cattle, sheep or other susceptible animals.

Anthrax incidents can have significant economic, environmental and animal health and welfare impacts.

As anthrax can affect humans, there are additional considerations to be made to protect people in the case of an anthrax incident.

The actions to manage an anthrax incident, including disposal, decontamination and vaccination requirements, can be costly and time-consuming.

As the risks are preventable, you must take responsibility for implementing prevention measures or managing an incident should it occur.

This is part of your general biosecurity obligation.

Talk to your local veterinary practitioner about preventative measures you can take to protect your property and livestock health.



Figure 1. Map showing the approximate extent of the anthrax belt. Acknowledgement: Adapted from Durrheim, Freeman, Roth & Hornitzky, *Journal of Emerging Infectious Disease*, 2009 May; 15(5): 840–842.

Prevention

In any case of sudden death of livestock, avoid handling the carcass to avoid potential anthrax infection of yourself and others involved.

Call your local veterinary practitioner who can assist you in determining the cause.

Prevention measures include vaccination in at risk areas, keeping livestock away from soil disturbances caused by earthworks or flooding, monitoring stock health and investigating incidents of ill-health especially sudden deaths.

Maintain secure boundary fences to prevent stock straying and control feral animals to reduce soil disturbance, infection of animals on the property and spread of infection to new areas.

As anthrax cases occur more commonly in late spring to summer, now is a good time to put preventative measures, especially vaccination, in place.

All people have a general biosecurity obligation to minimise the risks of animal disease including anthrax.

Given the cases of anthrax in southern Queensland, consider your anthrax risk and take biosecurity measures you consider are appropriate for your circumstances.

A Farm Biosecurity Plan is a great way to consider and document what measures you will take to lessen the chance and impacts of anthrax to your property and livestock.

Further information is available at daf.qld.gov.au.



Buying bulls that perform

When buying a new car, smart people ask the dealer every question under the sun so they feel certain it can do exactly what they want it to.

However, when it comes to buying bulls buyers appear to be afraid to ask seedstock producers in-depth and challenging questions.

Not asking these questions means they are not making the most of the objective information available to help decision making.

Given that your bull selections drive the direction of your herd and influence your profitability for the next 10 to 15 years, it is imperative that you give bull buying the attention it deserves.

In purchasing a bull, you're buying a package of genes.

In order for these genetics to be passed on, the bull must first and foremost be fertile.

Guaranteeing that a bull is fertile is very difficult.

However, a veterinary bull breeding soundness evaluation (VBBSE) or BULLCHECK™ identifies risk factors using a set of standards developed by the Australian Cattle Veterinarians.

Prior to purchasing a bull, it's recommended that you sight a BULLCHECK™ report, which includes an assessment of morphology, so that you have a clear understanding of the level of risk associated with purchasing the bull.

Annual assessment of your existing bulls prior to joining is also recommended.

Keep asking yourself, 'Have I done all that I can to minimise the risk of females not falling pregnant?'

Apart from bulls, other factors that impact conception include nutrition, body condition score, reproductive diseases and current herd genetics.

It is critical that your business has clear written breeding objectives that everyone in the business agrees with.

It is important to know where you want the herd to progress and which traits need emphasis.

Being honest with yourself as to where the herd is really at now in terms of reproductive performance and productivity is essential, along with determining what is actually achievable given your property's environmental constraints.

Having a clear understanding of your target market is also fundamental.

Remember, don't be afraid to ask your prospective seedstock producers about their breeding objectives, how much pressure they put on their females to improve reproductive performance, and what their herd health management program is.

Estimated Breeding Values - EBVs

When someone asks you about the traits you focus on when buying a bull, what do you tell them?

The traits to focus on should be measurable, heritable, have variation in the trait and be of economic importance.

Alarming, big money is still being paid by producers for traits that don't actually increase profitability.

BREEDPLAN, which has been available to Australian producers for more than 30 years, generates Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs), which can be used by commercial and seedstock producers to evaluate an animal's genetic merit for particular traits.

Important points to remember are that EBVs cannot be compared across breeds and a negative EBV is not always undesirable.

For example, for the fertility trait 'Days to Calving', a more negative figure is highly desirable.

The number of traits available to assist with selection will depend on the particular breed in question.

EBV traits generally fall under three broad categories: weight, fertility and carcass.

These three things, in particular fertility in northern Australia, have a major influence on the amount of income generated from your beef breeding business.

The emphasis placed on individual traits will be determined by your breeding objectives, however, it is suggested that selection be based on a balance of traits and not purely focused on a single trait.

Selection indexes take the hard work out of this process for you.

They take into account the underlying profit drivers and place relative weighting on particular traits of importance, taking into consideration genetic relationships.

Anyone is able to look up registered bulls EBVs on BREEDPLAN (breedplan.une.edu.au).

When searching for EBVs on the bulls you are looking to purchase, comparisons should be against the current breed average (presently average for the 2016 born calves).

The EBV percentile graph is a good visualisation tool for making comparisons. Figure 1 shows where to click for the percentile graph.

June 2018							
	Birth Wt. (kg)	200 Day Wt (kg)	400 Day Wt (kg)	600 Day Wt (kg)	Mat Cow Wt (kg)	Milk (kg)	Scrotal Size (cm)
EBV	+4.4	+29	+42	+59	+69	-2	+0.7
Acc	51%	60%	61%	62%	54%	27%	53%
Breed Avg. EBV							
EBV	+2.7	+19	+26	+36	+41	-2	+0.6

Figure 1. An animal's percentile graph can be displayed by clicking on the graph in the red circle (top left).

The EBV percentile graph shows a snapshot of how the animal stacks up for the various traits (Figure 2) relative to the breed average (50th percentile).

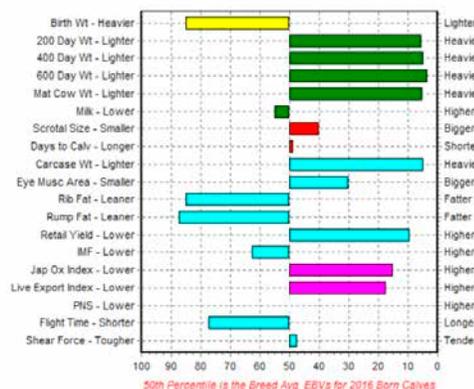


Figure 2. An example EBV percentile graph.

The percentile bands are at the bottom of Figure 2, with the more favourable EBVs mostly being on the right hand side of average.

If you do not want the maintenance requirements of your cows trending upwards and/or you are on lesser productive country, be mindful of the mature cow weight and milk percentile banks. Avoid bars being too far on the right hand side.

Going forward

To take your herd forward, it is critical that you make the most of tools such as BULLCHECK™ and EBVs as they significantly minimise the guesswork and, in turn, reduce risk for improving your herd genetics.

Spending the necessary time assessing structural soundness and temperament is also a must prior to purchasing any animal.

You are now in the driver's seat and have the power to make positive changes this coming bull buying season.

Right now is the time to act.

Review your breeding objectives, spend the time doing your homework, identify those seedstock producers going the extra distance to provide you with all the information required, evaluate your current and potential bulls and be sure to ask for assistance if required.

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