



Herefords Australia Board Update to Members

The Herefords Australia board has responded to the key challenges faced by modern cattle breeds by supporting key resolutions in the October board meeting that will underpin the future developments of the breed. Members should be aware that many of these resolutions had long and active debates and that all board members participated in these debates to ensure that all views of members across Herefords Australia would be recognised.

The board is pleased to announce that Herefords Australia is leading the way on progressive performance recording by using genomics to determine breed integrity and percentage.

Herefords Australia has resolved to record the breed percentage of Hereford (0-100) on every animal on the breed's database, and those untested to be recorded as "untested".

Chairman Pat Pearce said the commercial market place would determine the minimum Hereford content required.

The present registration rules will stay in place, that is, a registered Hereford must be the progeny of a registered sire and dam.

Mr Pearce said the new policy effective from this month will allow the breed to move forward with accurate progressive performance recording.

Based on advice from management the board encourages Hereford breeders to test all bulls that are current sires to get a full understanding of the genomic profile of the breed and to ensure that breeders have the opportunity to look at breed percentage in an open and constructive manner.

Mr Pearce said genomic testing would also identify the ancestral makeup of each individual animal that has been tested. This ensures that as accurate as possible relationships are known between animals which improves genetic evaluations and also helps breeders make more informed breeding decisions.

"The policies are not being developed to apply a big stick approach at any historical inaccuracies or to single out any individuals," he said.

"It is accepted the vast majority of our members have always registered animals with the utmost integrity and even with best practice, inaccuracies can occur.

"These issues are not unique to Herefords Australia or Herefords in general as it will have some impact on all Hereford breed associations across the world.

"It is something all breed societies in all countries will need to address if they want to move forward. "We are leading

the way on this and showing breed societies around the world we are serious about the future of the Hereford breed.”

Chief executive officer Dr Alex Ball said Hereford Group BREEDPLAN was important as a tool for maintaining breed genetic evaluation, however now that combines with genomics it is a much more important tool to enable faster rates of genetic gain and more accurate breeding information. Genomics also opens the opportunity for larger and more accurate international Hereford genetic evaluations which will assist Australian Hereford breeders.

“These new scientific tools will assist with performance recording but as a side effect, they will be able to confirm where there are inaccuracies in traditional paper pedigrees – this will occur both domestically and internationally,” Dr Ball said.

He said under single step that genomic enhanced breeding values would be available to those animals DNA tested with a Low or High Density Genotype.

However, the whole breed will benefit from increased accuracy resulting from using genomic relationships.

Herefords Australia has resolved to conduct genomic parentage verification on any animal at the society’s expense. If the genomic pedigree does not equal the ancestral pedigree, the ancestral details will be removed from the pedigree, however, the animal will not be de-registered.

If the genomic pedigree is re-confirmed, the new ancestral pedigree will replace the previous ancestry.

From 2017, all sires having progeny to be registered will require a minimum of a low density SNP genomic test and be genomically sire verified.

The board also approved a key resolution that will assist in ensuring that registrations occur in a timely and efficient manner. It has been resolved that the registration of all Hereford animals from January 1, 2017 is to occur within a 10-month time limit following the date of birth. A late fee will be imposed of animals that not registered within that period.

Another significant debate was held on a user pay principle concerning genetic evaluation. A number of members had indicated that the BREEDPLAN should be an optional service that that the costs of BREEDPLAN should be directed towards those that use the service. As of 1st January 2017 BREEDPLAN membership will be replaced by a user pay system with a \$10 entry fee for all Registered and Hereford Performance Registered (HPR) bulls and females (steers are free) recorded in BREEDPLAN.

The board resolved to introduce a \$20 registration fee on all Registered and HPR bulls to be used in breed marketing which will be activated again from the 1st of January 2017.

“A large number of members have called for funding to be directed towards marketing and promotion of the breed, and this registration fee allows Herefords Australia to have the resource to achieve that,” Mr Pearce said.

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