

Collecting Birth Weights

The weights of calves shortly following birth are used to calculate Birth Weight EBVs within Angus BREEDPLAN.

This fact sheet outlines the requirements for the collection and submission of birth weight information.

How to Record Birth Weights?

Many different methods are used to collect calf birth weight. These range from using bathroom scales through to the use of commercially available calf weighing cradles that can be attached to the tray of a utility or the front of a four wheel motorbike.

A few examples of birth weighing devices include:



Measuring Techniques Not Acceptable for BREEDPLAN

When recording the birth weight of calves, it is important that accurate birth weights are collected using appropriate weighing scales.

Birth weights collected using the following methods are not appropriate for submission to BREEDPLAN:

- Visual estimates or “guesses”
- Use of chest or girth tapes
- Use of coronet band tapes

When Should Calves Be Weighed?

The weight of a calf fluctuates throughout the first week of its life. It is therefore important to weigh calves as close to birth as possible. Ideally, birth weight should be recorded within 24 hours of birth, and no greater than 48 hours after birth.

Handy Tips When Collecting Birth Weights

- Birth weights should be recorded for the whole calf drop. Collecting "occasional" measurements, or only collecting birth weights for a subset of calves is of no value and can actually be misleading.
- Recording birth weight for dead calves is particularly important.
- A birth management group should be recorded if there are different treatments of the females prior to calving that may affect birth weight.

For example, where one group of cows have had different feed availability. A separate birth management group should also be assigned if the weight of the calf has been affected by special circumstances (e.g. premature calves, the dam was sick etc.)

- Some breeders have been injured protective cows while weighing calves. It is important to take due care when collecting this information.

Submitting Birth Weights to Angus BREEDPLAN

Birth weights can be submitted to Angus Australia in association with calf registration details.

Alternatively, birth weights can be submitted directly to the BREEDPLAN office at ABRI.

Birth weights can be submitted using either:

- a BREEDPLAN compatible herd recording computer program (eg. StockBook, HerdMASTER, Cattlelink, koolcollect)
- the BREEDPLAN compatible Microsoft Excel template
- the performance submission facility offered on the Angus Australia website
- a paper performance recording form

Further Assistance

For further assistance with the collection and submission of birth weight information for Angus BREEDPLAN, please contact staff at Angus Australia.

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