

Recording Weight Information

BREEDPLAN currently calculates three growth EBVs – 200 Day Growth, 400 Day Weight & 600 Day Weight. These EBVs are the best prediction of the animal's ability to grow to weaning (200 day), yearling (400 day) and later ages (600 day). The Growth EBVs are expressed in kilograms (kg) and are calculated from the live weight performance of animals when they are between 80 and 900 days of age.

1. Why should weight information be recorded?

Within the Australian commercial beef industry, the major determinant of the price received for an animal is live weight. Consequently, in most economic analyses, positive emphasis on increasing live weight is warranted, with higher live weights leading to higher profitability.

2. What weight information do I record?

The Growth EBVs are calculated from the live weight performance of animals when they are between 80 and 900 days of age.

Within this age range, BREEDPLAN will use the age of the animal at weighing to determine whether the particular weight is used in the calculation of the 200 Day Growth, 400 Day Weight or 600 Day Weight EBV.

| Trait | Age Range |
|----------------|----------------|
| 200 Day Growth | 80 – 300 days |
| 400 Day Weight | 301 – 500 days |
| 600 Day Weight | 501 – 900 days |

The live weights of animals need to be recorded to generate Growth EBVs. Ideally, 2 – 3 weights should be recorded for each animal.

3. What considerations should be made when recording weight information?

- ❑ Weights should be recorded to the nearest kilogram.
- ❑ Weights should be recorded using appropriate (and accurate) scales. Do not guess/estimate weight or use measuring tapes to calculate weight. Either weigh the calves using appropriate scales or don't record weights.
- ❑ Breeders should choose weighing dates that fit in with their management and are also reasonably close to when the average age of the group of calves is approximately 200, 400 or 600 days old (depending on the respective weight being taken). BREEDPLAN provides suggested weigh dates to assist you when making this decision.

- ❑ Do not submit weights for heifers that are more than 3 to 4 months pregnant at weighing, unless they are at a similar stage of pregnancy and have been pregnancy tested. This is particularly relevant when submitting 600 day weights for heifers that are being calved down at 2 years of age.
- ❑ BREEDPLAN can analyse up to two weights in each age range (ie. 2 x 200 day weights, 2 x 400 day weights & 2 x 600 day weights). Generally speaking, it is only necessary to record one weight in each age range, however in some circumstances, recording more than one weight in each age range will improve the accuracy of the Growth EBVs.
- ❑ A management group should be entered for any calf or group of calves that have either been treated differently or exposed to significant non-genetic influences since the previous weighing. For example, calves given a supplement should be recorded in a different group to those without a supplement. Consideration should also be given to variations in pasture quality, stocking rates, water quality, etc. Note that blank is a unique management group.
- ❑ To ensure the maximum number of calves are analysed in the same management group, you should try to weigh all the animals from one management group on the same day. BREEDPLAN will automatically split your management groups if you weigh on different days.
- ❑ Ideally, calves should be weighed when they are in as large a group as possible. Consequently, try to weigh calves before any of the calves in the management group are treated differently. For example, weigh before you castrate some of your bull calves or before the show team is separated out from the rest of the group.

4. How do I submit weight information?

Live weight information should be submitted directly to the BREEDPLAN office at ABRI.

The main method of submitting live weight information is by completing the BREEDPLAN “performance recording forms”. Performance recording forms will be sent to you shortly after you record your calves with your Breed Society/Association or can be requested by contacting staff at BREEDPLAN.

Alternatively, live weight information can be submitted electronically via either:

- ❑ a BREEDPLAN compatible herd recording computer program
- ❑ the performance submission facility offered on some Breed Society/Association websites
- ❑ the BREEDPLAN compatible Microsoft Excel template

For more information regarding how to record live weight information, or Growth EBVs in general, please contact staff at BREEDPLAN.