

Simmentales

Targeted News from
The Industry Heavyweights

Issue 19 ■ October 2012

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello from sunny South Otago where calving and lambing are in full swing and the grass is making a valiant effort to keep up the supply of nutrients to all the new mouths. I hope that wherever you are the elements are working in your favour and all is well.

Sarah has covered most topics of relevance in this newsletter but I would like to add a couple more. There has been a bit of talk about the revisions to the Breed Object indices introduced some time ago. There was a significant change to the weighting on Calving Ease compared to the earlier version, and this has caused some consternation. The new version is based on a commercial model crossbreeding with British bred cows (as opposed to Simmental cows in the earlier version), and live calves and early rebred cows are a major profit driver along with growth. As with all indices, they are only a guide and you should always go back to the individual EBV's to check that you are not sacrificing a particular trait necessary in your herd. It is also not compulsory to use them as a breeding or selling tool. I am quite happy to discuss them further if you wish to give me a call.

Sarah mentioned that we have seen a first draft analysis of the docility scores in the system. Almost 1,200 sires have been analyzed, and while Simmental specific parameters have yet to be worked out, the results show a good level of genetic variation. A preliminary trend graph showed a steep improvement in breed docility over the last 7 years which coincides with a heightened awareness of the trait over the last decade. Keep those scores coming in!

Beef Expo is investigating the idea of selling some lots via video link. I think the idea has a lot of merit if it will attract more and better bulls from farther flung parts of the country. Entries would be videoed on farm to a standard format and uploaded to You Tube where they would be accessed by a hyperlink off the Internet Solutions sale catalogue. Buyers (stud and commercial) would have the opportunity to visit the property to inspect, and then bid on the bull in person at Expo or remotely by phone to an agent. Transport, following a successful sale, would be at the vendor's cost as far as Feilding.

Julene and I spent some time in the USA in June and part of that trip involved a week in South and North Dakota visiting Simmental breeders and trying to get a handle on how their industry operates. We visited 10 different studs and one commercial operation in a whirlwind 6 days. The drought in South Dakota was just starting to bite (whereas ND was having a great season) and all were relying on their crops, particularly corn, to feed their cattle for the winter. The beef seedstock industry

is very market led with the Angus brand reigning supreme. Almost all of the Simmentals we saw were solid red or black, and 'spotted' or Fleckvieh cattle were hard to find, certainly in that part of the country. Feedlotters were very reluctant to touch them whereas if they were solid coloured they were 'Angus'. All the Simmentals we saw were bred as maternal cattle to be crossed with Angus. The Simmental added cutability (yield) and milking ability to the Angus' marbling and the cross is very popular. All progeny are HGP'd and fed a high growth ration, and dead before they are 15 months old at 320-330 kg/CW. It's not a commercial model that has great relevance for us in NZ where our cows tend to be used as tools to clean up behind sheep, progeny are finished over a longer timeframe on grass and Simmentals are mainly seen as a terminal sire. And certainly not whilst our meat schedule reflects neither meat yield nor quality (eg marbling) to any great degree.

All the best for the coming season

Garry McCorkindale

Housekeeping Reminders

- DNA sample of bulls used in service.
- Collect hair samples from the boys before they join the girls this spring.
- Score your calves for Docility
- What semen do you have for sale? - Let Sarah Hammond know.



BEEF EXPO

The Expo Committee has been meeting and are planning a re-vamped and re-vitalised event for 2013.



At this stage, council are unable to confirm exactly what classes of cattle will be on offer until we have more feedback from the Expo Committee as to what facilities and infrastructure will be available at the event. But, we are **hoping** to be able to offer a selection of top quality genetics in the following classes: 2yr bulls (led and unled), yearling bull (led and unled), females via the Queen of Hearts sale.

As stakeholders in Beef Expo, Council feels that it is important that Simmental cattle have a physical presence at the event. We are also conscious about making the event equally accessible to all breeders

regardless of their geographic location. So we are investigating the option of auction by video link for some cattle, with the Expo Committee – more details about the logistics of this initiative to come. **“Watch this space”** – we will update you as soon as we have the necessary confirmations from the Expo Committee.

DOCILITY EBV

A big thank you to the studs who have submitted docility data to help with the development of a trial Docility EBV.

At this stage the indications are that correlations are occurring, and that this will be a useful EBV. Like any other EBV, the more data we can get into the system, the more accurate and therefore, useful the outcome. So keep those Docility scores coming in.

BULL SEMEN SALES

Yes it is nearly that time of year again! If you have bull semen you wish to list for sale, you can list it on Internet Solutions. To do this, send the details to Linda Rule at PBB and she will load it into the Semen Sales section of Internet Solutions – just like doing your bull sale catalogues. This page will be linked from our SNZ homepage under the “Sales” dropdown. The cost is \$10 per bull and if you want a photo of the bull loaded, that will be an additional \$5. The listing will stay current until 31st July 2013.

NAIT and SimmentalNZ

With the introduction of NAIT, SNZ has updated the regulation relating to animal identification. It now reads as follows:

“Every animal eligible for registration in a Purebred or Grading-up Register shall, before it is weaned, be tagged with a NAIT compliant RFID tag and corresponding visual tag (best practice is an electronic tag with birth set), tattoo, brand or other approved means in such a manner as the Council shall from time to time require. Calves should be identified as soon as possible after birth”.

NB: A birth set is a RFID tag with a corresponding visual tag.

BREED TOUR and AGM

In 2013, there will be a breed tour to Northland. Planning is underway and you will be kept up to date with developments. There is a great selection of exciting ideas on the table, and this promises to be an event not to be missed. We will notify you of the dates as soon as they are confirmed, to allow for forward planning.

For any information regarding this issue, please contact the Simmental Office:

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www.simmental.co.nz

COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS

Council is conscious of improving our communication with members. We are endeavouring to have a mail out every three months, **“to keep us all in the loop”**.

We always welcome input from breeders, so if you have any items – text or photos, you wish to be included, email the info to Sarah Hammond at: owhata@kinect.co.nz or you can contact any of our council members and they will forward the information on.

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