



# Murray Grey Newsbrief

## President's Message

### Dear Fellow Members

Welcome members to my first attempt to keep you up to date with the happenings in the NZ Murray Grey world. Our first meeting of the council at the beginning of June was very productive. Tony Powell is going to look after our website and update information from NZ and around the world. If you have any interesting news or photos Tony would be very interested in hearing from you.

Carolyn McIntosh from Silver Fern Stud in Southland has been co-opted onto the Council and will take over compiling the Progress magazine. Wayne Allerby will be looking after the finances and Trevor Clarke will be the liaison person with PBB. If anyone has any questions in these areas please don't hesitate to contact one of the council members.

Mike Phillips has resigned as a council member and we thank him for his contribution over the last couple of years. He will be helping to run our online sale which is going to be held in early September.

In closing I hope the coming winter is kind to you all and that you have a trouble free calving season.

**GEORGE CLIMO**  
President

### Online Sale

This years online sale will be held in early September and run by StockX. We think that this time of the year will be positive for bull sales and the Council are going to be targeting beef breeders for their heifer mating.

StockX only charge 2.5% commission as against 9% by PGG Wrightson On-line. They will also help with advertising. All those interested in listing cattle please contact Mike Phillips or George Climo. We will put more information on our website and in July there will be a special newsletter with more details of this sale.

### Ear Tag

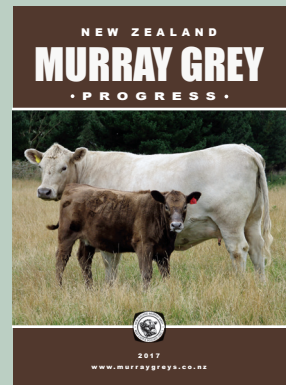
Just a reminder that if you are purchasing tags for the coming season the MG Council recommend you purchase these through PBB. They provide an excellent and quick service. By using PBB the Murray Grey Society also benefit.

### CA Testing

Just a reminder to all breeders to take DNA samples from bulls used for mating cows whose calves you are intending on registering. Bulls that you have purchased should have already been DNA profiled.

Calves registered after 1 June 2015 must have their sires DNA profiled and CA tested. Only sires of registered calves need to be tested.

If in doubt about any of this information just contact a councillor to get clarification.



### Progress Magazine

I hope you all received your copy and enjoyed the read. Thanks to all of those you supported the magazine by advertising or sponsoring pages. Next year Carolyn McIntosh is going to organise the magazine and will run a photo competition for the cover, so members get those cameras out and start clicking.

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**Please contact a councillor if you would like any help with your Murray Grey business, especially if you're a new member.**



Genetic improvement should be the key objective for a stud breeder. Genetic improvement occurs when the sire team you select are of higher merit than the cows in your herd and ultimately breed calves that are superior to their parents.

In order to select sires of higher merit (and create genetic improvement in a herd) we must record our animals. It is the difference between animals (known as variation) that is the important stuff we work with. We can only select the better animals for parents if we are objective in our measurement and sniff out the variation between them.

The eye is important. But unfortunately, many of the economically important traits in a beef herd must be measured objectively- because in using the eye we can only guess their value. An example is that it's hard to tell if a bull will have fertile daughters by just looking at him, just as it's hard to tell if his calves will have good marbling by just looking at him also. This can be overcome by recording these traits.

Imagine; you go along to a multi-vendor sale and raw data is presented for all of the different bulls for sale. The bulls have come from all sorts of different farms and feeding, there is much as 3 months' age difference between them, some are out of heifers, some have been drenched and others have not. You are meant to try and work out which is going to breed the best calves using the weights of the bulls in front of you as reference. Sounds difficult? Well it is and nearly impossible on the back of a cigarette box on sale day. These things are all non-genetics factors. They are responsible for much of the differences between the bulls at this sale and are the same things we must account for when collecting data for genetic evaluation. If you don't performance record and account for all of the factors that influence the way an animal performs then it's going to be impossible to work out what the animal will pass on to its calves. Hence the need to performance record.

**Question:** If you don't measure how do you know where you are at or where you are going?

**Answer:** You don't

Well that's almost true with breeding. In fact, you don't actually HAVE to record a trait in order to receive an

EBV. If you used to record the trait- say last year, or you are recording other traits that are correlated, then BREEDPLAN will in fact reward you with the breeding value anyway. But, that doesn't make it particularly reliable. Some would say Rubbish in = Rubbish out. For example, if you record 200 Day Weight then you will automatically get a Birth weight, 400 Day, 600 day and Mature Cow weight EBV. From a science standpoint we can estimate what the given animal is going to pass on to its calves from correlations- but can you do so reliably in your breeding programme?

## What is accuracy?

Accuracy shows how close an animals EBV is to its 'true breeding value'. We never get a trait to full accuracy as we can never be sure (with absolute certainty) that an EBV will pass on all of its benefit every time. Accuracy ISNT whether an EBV is toss of a coin correct or not. Most breed societies observe the minimum 20% accuracy threshold to report an EBV

If you have seen the EBV bar graph tool on internet solutions you may have noticed there is another graph, this is called the standard error graph. It visually depicts the range we can expect an EBV to fluctuate at a given accuracy. As a breeding value lifts in accuracy the range narrows. This is a reflection of how much information is contributing to that EBV. Traits that are well recorded and of higher heritability have smaller ranges- like growth traits.

## What is completeness of recording?

You may have noticed on internet solutions under 'Download files' you have a report for your herd called Completeness of recording. This provides you a score and Star Rating of how complete the collection of your pedigree and performance information is to date. Gold, 5 star herds are the industry benchmark.



# Tips For A Better Recorded Programme



For information on how to record a given trait; hop on to the BREEDPLAN website and check out 'Tip sheets for Performance Recording'

## 1. Base your recording around your management

MANAGEMENT	TRAITS TO RECORD	EBVS GENERATED	TO NOTE
<b>Calving</b>	Weigh calf + DOB, Score calving difficulty, collect Tissue sample for DNA parentage and tag	Birth Weight, Calving Ease Direct/Daughters, correlated growth traits (200D, 400D, 600D, MCW, CW)	
<b>Calf registration</b>	Bull in + Bull out date/mating type, cow fate	Gestation Length (if you A.I), Days to Calving (if you don't A.I)	
<b>Weaning</b>	Weigh calf, weigh ALL cows and if you're keen: Body Condition Score ALL cows, Docility score ALL calves	200 Day Weight, Milk (and correlated growth traits), Mature Cow Weight, Docility (not available for all breeds)	
<b>Summer</b>	Carcase Ultrasound Scan for: Eye Muscle Area, Rib Fat, P8 Fat, Intra Muscular Fat. Weigh (bulls and heifers), Scrotal Circumference	Eye Muscle Area, Rib Fat, Rump Fat, Intra Muscular Fat, Retail Beef Yield, Scrotal Size, 400 Day Weight (and correlated growth traits)	Austins Ultrasound will collect for you and send in to BREEDPLAN- you just have to get the cattle in once and get 6 traits back! Do both sexes
<b>Autumn</b>	Weigh 18 month cattle (heifers and bulls)	600 Day Weight (and correlated growth traits)	

Get the cattle in once and do as much as you can at that time. We are lucky in New Zealand to have a single carcass Ultrasound Scanner and one that will help you collect Scrotal Circumference and 400 Day Weight at the same time- and even send in to BREEDPLAN for you. It doesn't get any easier than that.

## 2. Run big mobs and group them well

Do all cattle of a group (and both sexes) rather than some of them. In thinking statistics- the more animals we can compare for a trait the better. In the same vein, if some animals were treated differently i.e. fed better or have been removed from the main mob due to illness- then you need to let PBBNZ know this. If we lump all animals that have been treated differently in together- without letting the evaluation know, then we will be giving bias to some. This is known as management grouping and is essential for genetic evaluation (to account for the non-genetic factors).

## 3. Use your EID tags

Electronic data capture is seamless and reduces error. Tru-Test and Gallagher have slick gear that makes the process simple (once you've got your head around it). Just because its digital doesn't mean its automatically going to be hard, don't get left behind with this kit it has real benefits and there's good customer support on the end of the phone. In the words of the wise Mark J Young 'Don't let the opportunity in technology become a challenge'.

## 4. Get a herd recording software

This will help when you improve your data capture to utilize your EID tags. You can make smooth selection decisions by pulling off all the information you have on a given animal from the same place.

## 5. Use DNA parentage

It's amazing how often cows swap calves or we make errors in recording sire at mating. DNA parentage is ideal for multi-sire mating and gives a mostly error free guarantee of who the sire is. It also makes EBVs stronger and more valuable. If we have the wrong sire assigned to a calf, then we will give it the wrong EBVs.

## 6. Use Genomics

For a price, you can 'record without recording'- 16 BREEDPLAN traits using a simple DNA test by inspecting the animal's genes. Genomics relies on good phenotypes (on farm data collection) and good genotypes on the same animals to assist its effectiveness. Without good performance records you don't have genomics. DNA parentage goes hand in hand with Genomics in strengthening EBVs and their quality. Currently this is only available for Angus breeders, but if other breeds are keen to jump into genotyping their animals then later in the year (with an improvement to the BREEDPLAN evaluation in incorporating genomic information) you will also be able to use genomics to assist in predicting performance of young animals from a simple DNA test. Genomics will enhance accuracy of your EBVs and improve your rate of genetic gain.





Photos from AGM farm visit

The AGM was held in the King Country area this year and was well organised by Mike Phillips. This included two farm visits to Mike Phillips property (Paradise Valley) and Atkins Family Filmaree Murray Grey and Hereford Stud. Both of these studs had outstanding lines of both male and female cattle. It was truly enjoyable to see such great animals which were a credit to both breeders.

Mervyn Mitchell stood down from the council after five years as president. During this time our online auction started under his guidance and this has gone from strength to strength. We wish Merv well for the future and thank him for his positive involvement to the breed. George Climo was elected as the new president.



Another top bull at Paradise Valley



Wise heads viewing Paradise Valley bulls



Bulls at Paradise Valley



**Filmaree 502** HB 2549150502 at 19 months of age.  
**Sire** Kilradie 387 HB 0710100384  
**Dam** Filmaree Belinda 51 HB 2549070051  
**EMA 105. IMF 2.8**

