

# PIGBLUP Online – The Present and Future

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## Introduction

The World Wide Web is a valuable resource in modern society. It is utilised by people all over the world because it offers a vast array of information to people of all walks of life and facilitates communication internationally. A paper by Bunter and Long (1997) gives an excellent description of the World Wide Web and how to get started on the web.

The opportunities that the web provides are changing and growing rapidly. AGBU is embracing this technology and is “updating” the AGBU web site constantly. The PIGBLUP page is a part of the AGBU web site. In this presentation I would like to summarise what is presently available on the web for PIGBLUP clients and discuss what options can be made available to PIGBLUP clients in the future.

## The Present

The main functions of the current PIGBLUP web page are as an information source to interested people in Australia and overseas. The page provides general information on PIGBLUP, information on the main features of PIGBLUP, information on the effectiveness of PIGBLUP, links to the main research bodies involved in the development of PIGBLUP and contact details for interested parties.

### 1. *General Information*

The general information available on the PIGBLUP page includes:

- History of PIGBLUP – **when** was PIGBLUP developed, **who** was involved and **where** it was developed.
- Compatible herd recording systems – Useful to potential clients who are interested in using PIGBLUP but are not sure if their current herd recording system is compatible and also for clients who may be looking for an alternative to their current recording program.
- Contact details – address, phone, fax and e-mail of AGBU.
- PIGBLUP 2000 – information on the Year 2000 compliance of the current version of PIGBLUP. This is not a concern anymore.

- Publicity – Press releases and pictures taken from the previous Pig Genetics Workshop.

## **2. *Main Features of PIGBLUP***

An outline of the main features of PIGBLUP make up the bulk of the PIGBLUP web page. These areas are:

- Calculation of Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs)
- An Economic Index of EBVs
- Graphical Display of Genetic and Environmental Trends
- Genetic Audit
- Mate Selection
- Data Screening
- A study of the Effectiveness of PIGBLUP

All this information is contained in the Frequently Asked Questions section of the PIGBLUP Manual.

## **3. *Audience***

The main audience of the current PIGBLUP page is the potential clients of PIGBLUP. The main function of the web page for current clients is as a source of contact details and links. Therefore, the focus of the future PIGBLUP web page is to involve clients of PIGBLUP, after all, we want you to make the best use of PIGBLUP.

## **The Future**

The future development of the PIGBLUP page can benefit from the input of the current clients of PIGBLUP to ensure that all facilities required are included. A major goal of the new PIGBLUP page is to increase communication between AGBU staff and clients of PIGBLUP and to facilitate communication between clients. Another goal of the new page is to add more information to what is available now. This will include an increased number of links, pig and genetics related. Furthermore, a picture gallery might add a bit of entertainment value.

## **1. Communications**

Communicating via the web can be done in several ways. The two areas proposed by AGBU are:

- A Bulletin Board – facilitating communication between clients.
- A list server – facilitating communication between AGBU staff and PIGBLUP users.

A Bulletin Board is a public area of a web page where anyone can “post” a message for everyone to read. Also, anyone can reply to or make comments. One way that the Bulletin Board can be useful is with new releases of PIGBLUP. Firstly, if you did encounter a problem, you could post a message and another client may have had the same problem, but has found a solution to it and can share the solution with you and others clients. Also, if you find the solution, you could post the message and let all clients know the solution before they encounter the problem. There are many possibilities for what the Bulletin Board can be used for and this is just one.

List servers can be utilised by AGBU staff in communicating information that is relevant to all clients. The “list” would be of all the clients who have access to e-mail. Again, this is useful for a new release of PIGBLUP. If there is any news related to this release, such as problems, good news or even the release itself, an e-mail message can be sent out simultaneously to all clients.

Both these services would be exclusive to clients and would not be available to the general public. The proposed system for this is still in discussion and would appear under the “CLIENTS” section of the new PIGBLUP page.

## **2. Additional Information**

Two ways of including more information on pig related topics have been proposed and they are:

1. An increase in the number and variety of links included in the page. A “LINKS” section has been included already containing links of general pig related sites, agricultural sites and software sites.
2. The Bulletin Board can also act as a general discussion area of current issues related to the pig industry.

## **3. Entertainment**

Entertainment in the way of a picture gallery of pigs (real life, art and comical) is an addition to the new page. This section will be open to all clients of PIGBLUP to send in pictures and to download any pictures AGBU staff might provide.

## **Your Input**

It is AGBU's aim to support PIGBLUP users in as many ways as possible. The Internet provides new opportunities and your thoughts and ideas for the new PIGBLUP web page would be greatly appreciated. After all, you are the people who will be using this page and it should meet your requirements.

## **References**

Bunter, K. and T. Long (1997). Surfing the Net. *1997 Pig Genetics Workshop Notes*, p.52.