

Repronomics - 2021

Howdy everyone! I have finally managed to cross the border and get myself back into the swing of things. It has been a solid year of getting on with recording. Thankfully we are having a cracking season with an excellent start to the wet with well above average November rain. The cattle are in excellent condition so we are expecting good conception rates across our herds. Unfortunately, COVID impacted things and prevented us having our annual get-together but fingers crossed we can hold it mid-next year.



Spyglass – game of hide 'n seek

Cohorts churning through the system

As we roll into the project the new cohorts are streaming through the system with ease across our Queensland and NT research herds. Ovarian scanning of our heifers and first-calvers continues to generate our signature traits and the data is pivotal in driving the single-step genomic BREEDPLAN evaluations for our tropical breeds.



#21 Douglas heifers - in for their ovarian scan

NSW-sister project hitting its straps

Our sister project the Southern Multi-breed Project has just completed its 2nd calving and the Year 1 Brahman and crosses from Grafton are now in UNE's Tullimba research feedlot measuring feed intake and methane. The heifers have been ovarian scanned and are currently in mating. Hybrid vigour is clearly at play and it will be exciting to see how our Brahman sires stack-up. We have generated additional linkage with more semen going to NSW and we are using one of their bulls in our AI program this year. Back in March I spoke about our project at their field day at Grafton research station.



Grafton Southern Multi-breed cattle on display.

Key traits under the microscope

Kirsty is putting the final touches to some analyses of our birth weight and gestation length data. All that hard work catching calves and running AI programs is about to be rewarded with a very powerful publication of the genetics of those traits in tropical cattle. This is becoming increasingly pertinent as we observe increasing birth weight (and calving difficulties) in our tropical breeds and this work will inform our genetic evaluations to improve selection for these important welfare traits.

Producer meeting at BEEF

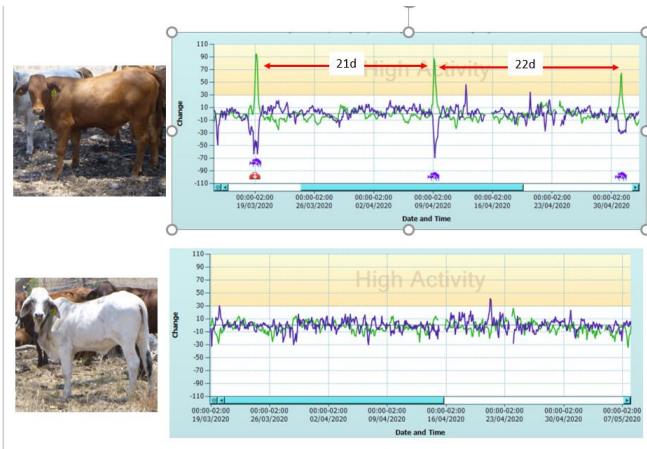
We took the opportunity to get collaborating breeders together during Beef 2021. At our early morning breakie meeting we presented loads of new results and released the first-ever project multi-breed EBVs.



Seeing multi-breed Project EBVs for the first time

Collar data

We continue to collect mountains of data from our Allflex collars at Brian Pastures. We have completed the data collection of puberty and mating of the #19's and just last week completed the assessment of calving. We have generated huge amounts of amazing data but we need to develop some clever machine learning algorithms to help us interrogate the data. Early analyses are looking very promising and thank the efforts of the team at BP, especially Mel.



24-7-365d monitoring of #19 BP heifers

Comings and goings

This year we have seen the departure of some project long-termers. Sean leaves us after a long and very successful stint at Spyglass – big thanks also to the huge contributions of Corina. Tracy has moved on after many years of handing our masses of data. She leaves an indelible legacy of data accuracy and integrity to all the techies that follow.

Scott left BP, Ian is moving on from Spyglass and Whitney departed from NT DPI. To each one of you, thanks for your tremendous commitment and efforts, and all the best in your new endeavours. Welcome to Brad and our new techies this season - Kim Hubbard at BP and Celeste Ogg at Spyglass.



Sean – you're going to need some longer shorts!

First sexed-semen

This year sees the first use of sexed semen in our AI program with a US Brahman bull from ST Genetics. This exciting development hopefully allows us to generate more daughters, and if we can achieve good conception rates it may serve as a demo for broader use in northern AI industry.



Mr Kallion – only daughters on the way!

Thanks everyone

Thanks everyone for your efforts this year, especially Tim G. and Tim S. for keeping things going during this challenging year. Our project continues to gain both scientific and industry profile and is being sought after to overlay additional research. Plans are underway for next year with a field day and see you all at our project meeting! Have a restful and happy holidays.

.....cheers Johnno