

Repronomics - 2022

Greetings everyone! We've managed to navigate another very successful year for the Project. Thankfully, COVID travel restrictions have gone, but the virus is still impacting our lives. The favourable run of seasons has meant our cow numbers are up and we'll put around 1,200 calves on the ground this year. The Project continues to impact the beef industry with almost 80% of the bulls sold at the Brahman Week sale having days to calving EBVs, up from about 20% five-years ago.



Nature's own Xmas ornaments at BP office

Gayndah field day in April

The highlight of the year was our field day at Gayndah showgrounds. It was a fantastic showcase of our research and demonstrated our industry impact. A massive logistical effort was required, with the pulling in of troops from Spyglass. Tim's skills were put to the test to load the trucks in precision order so they unloaded straight into more than 30 separate display pens. Brad also got the opportunity to show off his old chef skills, with the immaculate cooking of the steaks from our Project steers.



Beef producers getting the latest results

NT visit

In June I managed to finally get to Darwin and spent time with Tim and Gretel at the Katherine, Douglas and Beatrice Hill research stations where the NT herds are located.



NT Composite cows, weaning time at Beatrice Hill

Recording took place on the young bulls for several male traits (e.g. percent normal sperm) and is an important part of the Project, given all males are steered at DAF sites. The visit also included taking on the locals in the pool comp at the Douglas Hotel. Thankfully, the DRF manager brought home the kitty.



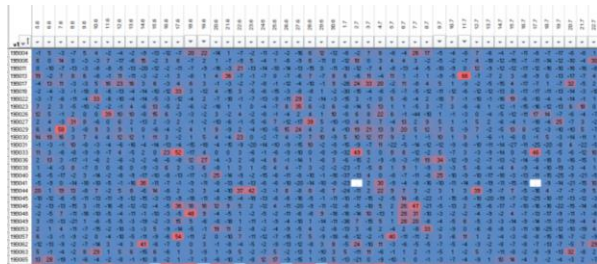
Gretel hard at work crush-side semen evaluation

Expanded experimental design

This year we expanded the AI program to include Angus and Hereford sires - over a subset of the Brahman cows. This strengthens our links to the Southern Multi-breed Project at Grafton, and will allow us to benchmark additional breeds and expand the capacity of multi-breed EBVs. Large numbers of Beefmaster calves are also coming through the system, further adding to our breed benchmarking data.

Collars doing the job

Recently we found time to process and analyse the collar data from the #19's heifers recorded over 530 days. It took big efforts from Mel and Jim to get the massive amount of data prepped. Then a very dedicated team interpreted each heifer's heat map to call her puberty. It was not an easy job, but the statistical analyses showed the collars could reliably call puberty, with the relationship with age at first CL from ultrasound showing a very high correlation. This was a very pleasing result, and further data will now be examined, and new cohorts recorded.



Heat map of #19 heifers collar data

It's a girl(s)!

17 females from 17 calves was the outcome of using the sexed semen of Mr Kallion. The semen had a conception rate of 40% from fixed-time AI over wet Brahms. This was a nice little demo of the technology, and the first results from fixed-time programs. The industry could start to use this technology, but higher conception would be nice.



Mr Kallion's female calf!

Comings and goings

With much sadness Jo Campbell finished up this year after 15 years at BP. Jo was our most senior "Techie". We will greatly miss her experience, dedication, leadership, precision, and mentoring. I understand management was simply following QLD Gov. rules, but when you don't have a choice about what you put into your own body - and that costs

you your career (and much more) I believe it has gone way too far!



Jo in action – doing what she did best!

Brad is moving on from Spyglass. Thanks for your tremendous commitment and efforts. All the best in your new endeavours, Tim will certainly miss your knife sharpening skills. Also moving on is Anastasia Fanning from Brahms and Peter Johnston from head office – both have been staunch advocates of the Project.



Brad in his previous life - before his Spyglass stint!

Welcome back Paul (and Jo) and to our new techies this season - Gabby at BP and Maggie at Spyglass.

Thanks everyone

Thanks everyone for your efforts this year. Next year we will do it all again (and some!), and there's the opportunity for everyone to have an exciting paper at NABRC in Darwin. We might try and coincide with a (long overdue) project meeting at Douglas ...and that will likely be the last one for the project!

See you in the New Year!.....cheers Johnno