

Understanding Mature Cow Weight EBVs



TIP SHEET

The weight of mature cows in a commercial beef enterprise has a considerable influence on profitability. In particular, mature cow weight will have a major effect on:

- Cow Feed Requirements – in general, lighter cows will tend to eat less and consequently have lower feed requirements and be less expensive to maintain.
- Cull Cow Values – the major determinant in the value of cull cows in a commercial herd will be live weight. Consequently, heavier cows may provide higher returns from the sale of cull cows.

Achieving an appropriate balance between cow feed requirements and cull cow values is an important consideration for beef producers.

INTERPRETING MATURE COW WEIGHT EBVS

Mature Cow Weight EBVs are estimates of the genetic differences between cows in live weight at 5 years of age. Mature Cow Weight EBVs are expressed in kilograms (kg).

Animals with higher, more positive Mature Cow Weight EBVs would be expected to produce progeny with a higher mature weight than animals with lower Mature Cow Weight EBVs.

What level of Mature Cow Weight EBV is optimal will depend on the individual herd and its breeding objective(s). For example:

- Breeders looking to decrease the mature weight of their cows may look for lower Mature Cow Weight EBVs.
- Breeders looking to increase their returns from the sale of cull cows may look for higher Mature Cow Weight EBVs.
- Breeders looking to maintain the mature size of their breeding cows, while maximising the growth of their progeny, may look for moderate Mature Cow Weight EBVs.

For more information regarding Mature Cow Weight EBVs, please contact staff at your BREEDPLAN processing centre.

