

Red Breeds genomic boost



KEY POINTS

Genomic Australian Breeding Values (ABVs) are now available for red dairy cattle breeds.

Red breeders will be able to access genomic ABVs for traits such as milk, fat, protein, and cell count.

DataGene and red breeders will continue to collect more data to boost the reliability and offering of genomic ABVs.

Australian Reds chairman and Numbaa NSW dairy farmer, Sam Graham, said the recent breeding development was a great “starting point” to develop a full genomic reference set for the breed.

“Aussie Red farmers have been collecting tail hair samples for six to seven years, even longer, and continually herd recording, now we are seeing the results and it’s very exciting for the breed,” he said.

“It will motivate people to keep going because we are seeing the results for the hard work.”

Sam said the addition of genomics would also help advance his breed, having seen the impact on genetic gain in Holsteins and Jerseys.

“The other breeds have been able to use genomics to select their best heifers and bulls for use in their herds,” he said. “Those breeders have been shortening the generation gap, using the latest young genetics and now, thanks to genomic ABVs, we now have the ability to do that with Australian bulls.”

Although the red dairy breed genomic ABV dataset isn’t complete, Sam said it would weed-out the “stinkers” when it came to bull selection, by making it easier to identify the better sires.

“We will have more confidence using young bulls knowing that the lower performers aren’t going to be in the mix,” he said.

South Gippsland Aussie Red breeder, Nerrena farmer, Paul Cocksedge, has already considered breeding his lowest heifers to beef to diversify his income and ensure his replacements are progeny from only elite animals.

“Genomic data means I will be able to make more informed decisions, be able to select better quality bulls and it also means I will be selecting the better-quality heifers,” he said.



Greg Goulding



Sam Graham



Paul Cocksedge

“I will be more certain that I’m making the correct decisions.”

For Cohuna, Victoria Aussie Red breeder Greg Goulding the addition of genomic ABVs will improve his herd and help to objectively prove the value of the breed.

“Genomics will definitely give our herd a big boost, we’ll be able to genomically test heifers, off-load that bottom end group and use the top end to breed replacements for quicker genetic gain,” he said. ■ ■



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DataGene is an initiative of Dairy Australia and the herd improvement industry.

Talking points ABV release, August 2021

The results of the August release of Australian Breeding Values (ABVs) is now available.
[Click here for latest figures.](#)