# Informing New Zealand Beef (INZB)

## Quarterly Progress Report: October - December 2021

### Background

Beef + Lamb New Zealand with the support of Ministry for Primary Industries is leading the Informing New Zealand Beef (INZB) programme. The overall aim of the seven year programme is to improve profitability and enhance sustainability across the beef industry through the development and adoption of improved genetics.

The objectives of the programme are to:

- develop a beef genetic evaluation system that includes traits that are important to NZ beef farmers and supports a sustainable beef farming industry in NZ,
- create easy to use tools which enable data to be efficiently collected, managed, analysed and used by farmers to make profitable decisions for their operation,
- create a new approach to extension design with the goal of increasing farmer engagement across the beef industry.

### Summary of progress during this quarter

**Beef Progeny Test matings carried out**

*Angus and Hereford calves bred at our Beef Progeny Test across-breed evaluation test site at Te Anau (Kepler).*

As part of the Beef Progeny Test, each year bulls are mated to cows. For the INZB programme, this is done via artificial insemination (AI). Data can then be generated on the progeny to help inform the genetic evaluation process. In December 2021, AI was undertaken at the across breed beef progeny test site at Pamu's Kepler farm. In total, 493 Angus and Hereford heifers were mated – consisting of 244 maiden heifers (2020 born) and 249 re-breeding heifers (2019 born).

This was the first year this Progeny Test put out a 'call for bull nominations' - enabling breeders from around the country to nominate a bull of their choice and there was strong interest from farmers. Of those nominated, the selected sires consisted of five Angus and five Hereford bulls.

**Including commercial farmers in the programme**

There has already been interest from commercial beef farmers from both the North and South Islands about being involved in the INZB programme. The INZB team has started onboarding these farms and we will look to recruit a further 5 commercial farms throughout the year. Work has begun on progressing a framework to follow for farm visits including standard operating procedures, data collection requirements and subsequently data management. This data will contribute to the development of the genetic evaluation system.

**Genetic evaluations to support farmers and a sustainable beef industry**

Work continues on the development of the genetic evaluation system, which is in two main workstreams:

1. Prototype evaluation – testing is being performed, using our existing beef progeny test data, to assess the performance (pro & cons) of different genetic evaluation implementation options.
2. Integrating outside evaluations – a high level investigation is underway to assess the feasibility and methods available to use data from external third party genetic evaluation providers.

**Communication and extension plan to facilitate uptake of genetic tools**

For farmers to realise the benefits of the INZB programme, and for the programme to achieve it's objectives, farmers need to be engaged in the process and understand and use the genetic tools developed as part of the programme. To help achieve this, a comprehensive communications and extension plan has been developed that focusses on raising awareness of the programme and tools developed. The communications and extension plan is directed at farmers, influencers and the wider industry using various media channels. As the programme progresses, the communications and extension plan will shift from an *awareness* focus to an *understanding* and *uptake* focus.

In order to track how well the programme is performing in facilitating awareness, understanding and uptake of tools developed there needs to be regular check-ins with industry to measure this. For this purpose, an industry survey has been developed, with the first survey undertaken to provide baseline figures this quarter. A dashboard has also been developed to allow tracking of results as the programme progresses.

## Key highlights and achievements

- Artificial insemination carried out at the across breed progeny test site on Pamu's Kepler Farm
- Comprehensive communications plan developed to facilitate awareness and understanding of INZB programme and to influence uptake
- Baseline survey to assess awareness and understanding of programme carried out and dashboard developed

## Upcoming

- Continue onboarding commercial farmers in both the North and South islands to contribute data into the programme's genetic evaluation
- Advertising for second progeny test site

## Investment (ex GST)

| Investment period | Industry contribution | MPI contribution | Total investment |
|---|---|---|---|
| During this Quarter | $279,264 | $186,176 | $465,440 |
| Programme To Date | $949,069 | $632,713 | $1,581,782 |