



## Informing New Zealand Beef (INZB)

### Quarterly Progress Report: April – June 2024

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#### 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:

1. 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,
2. 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,
3. create a new approach to extension design with the goal of increasing farmer engagement across the beef industry.

#### Summary of progress during this quarter

##### Mid-term programme review completed

The INZB programme mid-term review was carried out by Scarlatti to evaluate how the programme is progressing towards outcomes and to make recommendations for the remainder of the programme. Sixteen programme stakeholders were interviewed as part of the review – across the Programme Governance Group (PGG), Industry Advisory Group (IAG), Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and INZB management team. Review findings will be made available once they are signed off by the governance group.

##### Selection index development

Maternal, terminal and dairy-beef selection indexes were updated and finalised based on feedback from the IAG and TAG. The INZB team is currently deciding on how best to roll these indexes out to industry.

In addition to these selection indexes, AbacusBio is carrying out work to develop economic values for new traits – feed intake, cow body condition score, facial eczema resistance, teat and udder score and parasite resistance. This will allow us to identify the impact of including these novel traits in selection indexes.

## **New trait development**

Fertility ear tag trial work continues on our two pilot farms – our Kepler Beef Progeny Test site and Newhaven. This year, ovary scanning will be undertaken as part of the trial, to help correlate ear tag data with the biological changes in the animals.

The Body Condition Score (BCS) genetic evaluation is almost complete, with the results currently being validated. Once we have complete BCS datasets from breed societies we will be able to estimate BCS EBVs for industry.

In Q3, a research trial for feed intake and GHG was planned – this work will involve Kepler BPT animals, as well as Te Mania and some Hereford breeder animals being measured for feed intake and GHG and will be carried out in Q4.

## **INZB's South Island commercial farmers get together in Canterbury**

An in-person commercial farmer day was held in Canterbury in May with 21 farmers representing 13 farms, in attendance. The group visited the Xcell Breeding centre where they talked about artificial insemination (AI) and toured their facilities. Following this, there were presentations/discussions on:

- the nProve tool – covering what it will look like for beef (see nProve for sheep here - [nprove.nz](http://nprove.nz))
- commercial farmer reports
- data collection – how to get data off Tru test and Gallagher solutions (with experts for both companies present to answer questions).
- Q&A with B+LNZ's Dr Jason Archer, Head of Genetics.

A North Island commercial farmer in-person meeting is planned for next year.

## **Extension work – focus on artificial insemination adoption**

During Q3, interviews were undertaken with farmers, AI technicians and dairy farmers to understand the current challenges that exist for AI adoption in commercial beef herds. Analysis of interviews and insights have identified key areas of interest for potential AI adoption, particularly at the beginning of the process for farmers going through this for the first time. Work will continue in this area, with a workshop focussing on this planned for Q4.

## **Key highlights and achievements**

- 11 regional Better Beef Breeding workshops – with an average of 25 people attending each workshop
- Independent mid-term review of the INZB programme
- INZB commercial farmer meeting

## **Upcoming**

- Kepler heifers going to Te Mania for feed intake and GHG measurements (alongside Hereford breeders/Te Mania cattle)
- Bulls selected for Beef Progeny Test matings
- Extension design workshop to support artificial insemination uptake
- IAG and TAG meetings

## Investment

<b>Investment period</b>	<b>Co-investor contribution</b>	<b>MPI contribution</b>	<b>Total investment</b>
During this Quarter	\$481,671	\$321,114	\$802,784
Programme To Date	\$4.82m	\$3.22m	\$8.04m