



technical brief

Good Genetics Makes Good Sense

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The old adage that “90% of the breeding goes down their throat” might have had some credibility a few decades ago before value based marketing became the norm, but it doesn’t hold true any more.

Genetics is the blue print or engine room of the beast, nutrition is the fuel that will let the engine run to its capacity.

For sure, the genetic potential of a beast won’t be fully realised unless nutrition is adequate to meet its needs, but unless the animal’s genetics are in-line with the market specifications, all the feed in the world won’t guarantee compliance.

With the help of objective tools such as Breedplan EBVs describing genetic merit for some 17 growth, fertility, carcase and maternal traits, together with Selection Indexes for major Shorthorn markets including the Domestic Supermarket Trade Index, the Domestic Restaurant Trade Index, an Export Maternal Index and the SB# Carcase Index, selection of breeding stock has never been so closely focused towards breeding the right animal for the market. (for more information about Shorthorn Indexes see – *Shorthorn Indexes* and *Understanding Shorthorn Selection Indexes* on the Shorthorn Beef website)

The benefit of using genetically superior bulls doesn’t stop when the progeny leave the farm, The flow on effect of a sire’s daughters to the herd over the next 10 years is the real pay-off for the cow-calf breeder, whilst the backgrounder, finisher and processor all benefit from animals that better meet their needs. Just how much of the flow-on advantage of good genetics the breeder captures depends on your marketing strategy.

Sell on the commodity market and you get commodity prices, but develop marketing alliances further down the supply chain and your investment in improved genetics pays a bigger dividend.