

Technical

Murray Grey
BEEF CATTLE SOCIETY

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INFORMATION FOR MURRAY GREY MEMBERS

November 2005

Southern Beef Technology Services (SBTS)

During 2006 – 2009 inclusive, the Murray Grey Beef Cattle Society will be participating in a new extension program known as Southern Beef Technology Services (SBTS).

SBTS is a joint initiative of Meat & Livestock Australia, the Agricultural Business Research Institute and 15 Breed Societies that run the majority of their cattle in Southern Australia. SBTS will provide the members of participating breed societies with technical support that enables them to maximise their understanding and use of the different genetic technologies that are available, in particular BREEDPLAN, BreedObject, Internet Solutions and the soon to be released StockTake genetic auditing tool.

The need for a SBTS project was raised at a Strategic Planning Forum held by the Australian Registered Cattle Breeders Association (ARCBA) in August 2004. At this forum, members of ARCBA identified the declining level of beef cattle technical services available in Southern Australia as a major area of concern. In particular, the retirement of Brian Sundstrom (national coordinator of BREEDPLAN field services), the reduction in technical support offered by a number of the major Breed Societies and the decline in funding for DPI beef extension highlighted the need for the development of an effective field support program.

In response, the MLA, ABRI and participating Breed Societies have combined to develop SBTS. In association with the existing Tropical Beef Technology Services, SBTS will provide national technical support of the available genetic technologies to both the seedstock and commercial sectors of the Australian beef industry.

Over the four years of the project, SBTS will be delivering a range of services to the beef industry in Southern Australia. More specifically, these services will include:

1. Workshops

A series of 64 workshops (16 per year) will be held to give all members of participating societies the opportunity for tuition in the fundamentals of the different genetic technologies that are available. The initial workshops will provide information regarding the fundamentals of BREEDPLAN, BreedObject & Internet Solutions and specifically concentrate on a “back to basics” approach.

In 2006, workshops will be held in the following locations:

Southern Queensland	2
NSW	4
Victoria	3
Tasmania	2
South Australia	2
Western Australia	3

More details regarding the specific locations and workshop programs will be publicised early in 2006.

2. On Farm Visits

Following each of the workshops, two days of on farm visits are planned in each region. The on farm visits will primarily be available to workshop participants and will provide a valuable follow up opportunity for beef producers to gain advice regarding specific issues that they may have. Visits are anticipated to last up to half a day.

3. Technical Support

SBTS will provide technical support to beef producers, Breed Societies and other service providers on an ongoing basis.

- Beef producers will be able to access technical support regarding any of the genetic technologies available. This support will be in the form of both phone and email consultation supplemented by farm visits (which will be limited by available resources).
- Technical liaison will be provided to the Councils and Technical Committees of the 15 participating breeds.
- Technical assistance will be available to other service providers in the beef industry (eg. agents, scanners, veterinarians).

A range of other activities will also be provided by the SBTS project such as technical notes, support material at major events and technical articles for BREEDPLAN publications. Importantly, SBTS will also act as a valuable feedback mechanism to the BREEDPLAN development team in the Animal Genetics and Breeding Unit and the operational team in ABRI.

The services offered by SBTS will be delivered by a team of four technical officers – Benita Davis, Christian Duff, Michael Beattie & Andrew Byrne. All four have a rural background and possess a vast range of knowledge regarding the processing of BREEDPLAN performance data, the running of GROUP BREEDPLAN evaluations, the technical components of BREEDPLAN and related technologies, the extension of genetic technologies, the operation of modern Breed Societies, and the services offered within Internet Solutions.

The team of technical officers will be supported by several experienced beef cattle consultants including Bob Freer, Alex McDonald & Peter Speers. All possess over 30 years experience in the beef industry and provide an invaluable mentoring program that will aid and assist the SBTS project.

The breeds that have been invited to participate in the project include Hereford, Poll Hereford, Shorthorn, Murray Grey, Charolais, Limousin, Simmental, Red Angus, Wagyu, South Devon, Devon, Red Poll, Gelbvieh, Blonde d'Aquitaine and Salers.

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