



Informing New Zealand Beef (INZB)

Quarterly Progress Report: October – December 2024

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

nProve for beef scheduled to be rolled out to industry in March 2025

Over the last quarter, significant progress has been made in the development of nProve for beef, with four breed societies actively participating in trials and providing invaluable feedback. This marks an exciting milestone for the New Zealand beef industry. For the first time, within-breed bull EBVs and B+LNZ indexes will be accessible in one centralised platform – nProve for beef.

Already a trusted tool in the NZ sheep industry, nProve for beef will empower farmers to identify and select the best bull genetics for their herds more efficiently. Best of all, nProve is free for commercial farmers to use, requires no registration, and offers helpful tips to guide users in driving genetic gains and improving herd productivity.

The official rollout is planned for March this year, supported by a range of extension and communication activities to ensure widespread adoption and success. This is a transformative step forward for beef farming in New Zealand

Beef Breeders Forum to be held in March

Planning is well and truly underway, with registrations open for the Beef Breeders Forum, which will be held in Christchurch on the 18th March. The day will cover the development of selection indexes as part of the INZB programme, research on methane and feed efficiency, innovation in beef genetics, and a significant focus will be on nProve for beef – with an interactive workshop on nProve for beef. In addition to these sessions, Simon Kenny, Head of Impact and Communications at McDonald's New Zealand will talk about the company's global commitments and direction as a significant buyer of NZ beef.

Selection indexes

Following finalisation of the prototype B+LNZ indexes (B+LNZ Terminal, Maternal and Dairy-Beef indexes) in 2024, focus has shifted to implementation of the indexes. Work has focused on adjusting the indexes for NZ Simmental, who are using a genetic evaluation delivered by a different provider to the other Breed Societies. These adjustments have been made and testing of the adjusted index is underway to support implementation of the index by NZ Simmental in Q2.

Work is also underway to adjust the indexes for additional NZ breeds.

Kepler and Lochinver Beef Progeny Test (BPT) sites

Calving occurred at both Kepler and Lochinver BPT sites in Q1. At Kepler, 215 calves out of artificially inseminated (AI) cows were born, with a birth date and calving assistance score recorded by farm staff. The calves were tagged, DNA sampled and weighed in November. Additionally, pre-mating Mature Cow Weight and Body Condition Score (BCS) were recorded for the Progeny Test cows.

In December, 320 cows were artificially inseminated at Kepler from both Hereford and Angus bulls. Sires included 13 bulls selected from Angus and Hereford breeders across the country as well as two international Hereford bulls. These bulls will be used at Lochinver in January, alongside Simmental bulls. At the Lochinver Site, calving started in October and continued through into early December, resulting in 335 calves from AI sires.

Commercial herds

Currently there are 36 commercial farmers taking part in the INZB programme and recruitment of the next cohort of farmers for year 5 is underway.

A call for expressions of interest for the commercial herd project was put out in Q1. In total, 25 farmers expressed interest in being part of the programme in the year 5 intake and 16 interviews are scheduled for Q2.

Key highlights and achievements

- Four breed societies commit to presenting bull Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) on public nProve
- Artificial insemination carried out at Kepler
- Calving at Kepler and Lochinver BPT sites
- Annual industry impact assessment of the programme by Scarlatti

Upcoming

- Beef Breeders Forum
- Artificial Insemination at Lochinver BPT site
- nProve rollout

Investment

Investment period	Co-investor contribution	MPI contribution	Total investment
During this Quarter	\$362,956	\$241,971	\$604,927
Programme To Date	\$5.93m	\$3.96m	\$9.89m