

New traits help bottom line at Gundowring

Dairy farmer: Patrick Glass

Region: North-East Victoria

Topic: Australian Breeding Values (ABVs) for health traits

The dairy farming profitability equation is simple for Patrick Glass.

“The fewer cows we have to replace each year, the more profitable our business is,” the North-East Victorian Holstein breeder said.

“The more cows we get in calf each year, the more profitable our business is as well.”

For Patrick, the new traits released by DataGene in April will help with both business goals.

Patrick and his family milk about 550 cows at Gundowring in a seasonal calving system.

He’s hoping to use sires based on Australian short gestation data now the local industry has a breeding tool to help manage late calving cows.

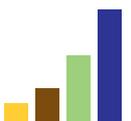
“Now we will have more trust in the claims made in Australia about gestation length,” he said.

“For us, in a seasonal calving situation, using shorter gestation length sires means cows inseminated in the last three weeks of artificial insemination have a better chance of getting in calf to AI next year. It’s because they will have another 5-to-10 days between calving and joining and this is a great animal welfare outcome.”

The Gestation Length ABV identifies bulls whose calves



Patrick Glass says the new Gestation Length ABV will be useful for selecting sires to use over late calving cows.



are born earlier than their expected due date. A shorter gestation means cows calve earlier and are in-milk for more days before re-joining and this gives them more time to recover after calving.

To understand the breeding value, every 1 ABV unit is about 1-day shorter gestation.

With cow retention underpinning on-farm profitability, Patrick said improvements to the Type ABVs would also assist in breeding cows with better physical structures.

“The better structured cows, they last longer,” he said.

DataGene has updated the model for Type ABVs and it’s applicable for Holsteins, Red Breeds, Guernseys and Ayrshires. This update makes it easier for farmers to identify animals with strengths for specific type traits.

The new and updated ABVs are the result of DairyBio research, drawing upon records supplied by Ginfo herds. DairyBio is a joint initiative between Agriculture Victoria, Dairy Australia and the Gardiner Dairy Foundation. Thanks also to the farmers and software providers who supply data used in genetic evaluations.

Read more at:

[Gestation Length Fact Sheet \(for a quick read\)](#).

[Gestation Length Tech note \(for people wanting more detail\)](#)

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Patrick Glass, Gundowring, North-East Victoria,
550 cows, Holstein



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