

Workability: why your records matter

Fact Sheet 6: October 2018

Key points

- Report workability scores on all your 2yo heifers.
- Workability can be reported via HerdData, Easy Dairy, Mistro Farm or direct to your herd test centre.
- Workability data is vital for the calculation of Milking Speed, Temperament and Likeability ABVs.
- Workability traits are included in DataGene's three indices: Balanced Performance Index (BPI), Health Weighted Index (HWO) and Type Weighted Index (TWI).

Every dairy farmer cares about workability. Some cows are a dream to work with. But cows that kick in the dairy are a safety hazard and slow milkers extend the milking routine

Workability traits

Workability refers to three traits that reflect how easy a cow is to have in the herd: milking speed, temperament and likeability. DataGene publishes Australian Breeding Values (ABVs) for these traits to enable dairy farmers to breed for improved workability.

Calculating workability

Having robust ABVs for workability traits relies on everyone doing their part. DataGene relies on workability reports from farmers on how easy their cows are to work with.

Each season, farmers are asked to report on first lactation heifers. It's best to give the heifers a few weeks to settle in – but don't leave it too long as it's easy to forget to make your report.

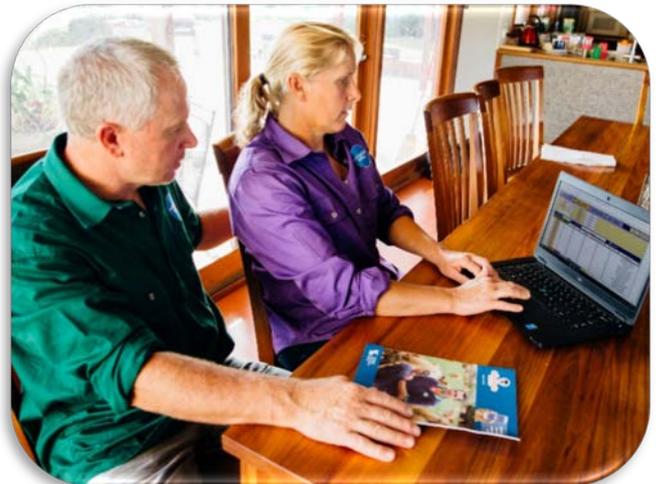
Workability reports are fed into DataGene's genetic evaluation system via herd test centres, on-farm software such as Mistro Farm or Easy Dairy and the Herd Data app.

Help us help you

Whether she is a kicker, slow milker or a delight to have in the dairy, this information is vital for DataGene to calculate workability ABVs.

You only need to report on a cow's workability once – in her first lactation.

The [HerdData App](#) is an easy way to report workabilities. You can also report it through your on-farm software such as Easy Dairy or Mistro Farm; or send to the herd test centre on paper or a spreadsheet.



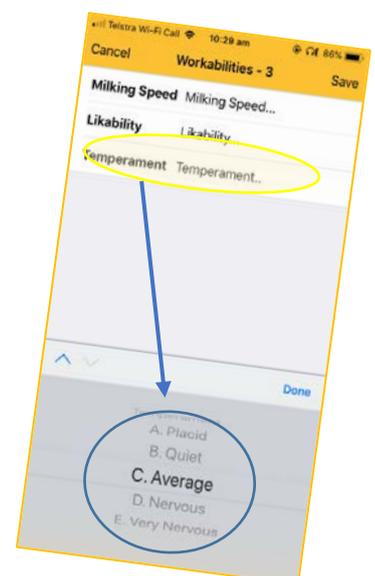
Sharon and Darren Parrish from NSW have been recording workability traits for 2-year-old heifers for 20 years. They use the information in their own breeding decisions and it is also fed back into DataGene's genetic evaluation system to calculate workability ABVs on bulls.

[Click here](#) for a farmer case study about the value of workability data.

Scoring workability

Scoring workability is easy. It's your opinion that matters.

For temperament, just choose the word that best describes the particular cow: placid, quiet, average, nervous or very nervous.



For likeability, tell us if you would like more cows like her: very definitely, definitely, probably, probably not or definitely not.

For milking speed, tell us is she's very fast, fast, average, slow or very slow.

Breeding for workability

Dairy farmers can breed for improved workability using Australian Breeding Values (ABVs) for Milking Speed, Temperament and Likeability. These traits are also included in Australia's three breeding indices - Balanced Performance Index (BPI), Health Weighted Index (HWO) and Type Weighted Index (TWI). If you use any of these indices in making breeding decisions, you'll be improving your herd's genetic merit for workability.

To breed for improved workability, look for Good Bulls with workability ABVs of greater than 100. The Good Bulls App allows you to filter for each of the three workability traits.

Workability ABVs are set to a breed average (base) of 100. A bull with a Milking Speed ABV of more than 100 is expected to have daughters that milk faster than average. A bull with a temperament ABV of more than 100 is expected to have more daughters rated better than average. A likeability ABV of more than 100 indicates more daughters rated satisfactory or better than average.



For more information

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