

What's ahead in this ABV release

December 2024 ABV Release Update

HIGHLIGHTS

- National Breeding Objective review
- Herd '25
- Can we help you to connect industry reports and the central data repository?
- Early onset muscle weakness

Note animal rankings are not official until 1 pm Monday 9 December

National Breeding Objective review

The initial consultation phase has been completed for DataGene's review of the National Breeding Objective. The key findings include:

- There is reasonably widespread support for separate indices for seasonal/pasture-based and hotter regions (while acknowledging the value of 'keeping it simple').
- Views about the value of a TMR-specific index are mixed with some TMR farmers indicating support for an Australian TMR index.
- There is not strong demand for a Jersey-specific index.
- General support among the herd improvement industry for updating the base.

The consultation process involved an online survey in-depth interviews with farmers and a series of discussion meetings with industry stakeholders.

Next steps: The findings from the consultation phase have informed the analysis and modelling process. The independent genetics consultancy firm, AbacusBio, has been briefed to undertake this analysis in conjunction with DataGene. An output of this process will be economic values for several indices. The results will be presented in an options paper early in 2025.

Read more:

- [NBO consultation findings fact sheet](#) (a quick read)
- [Updating the base tech note](#) (with technical detail)

Herd '25

Registrations are now open for Herd '25 which will be held on 12-13 March at All Seasons Resort Bendigo.

Don't miss out! [See the program](#) [Book now](#)

Connecting data pipelines

Dairy businesses with GEA on farm software are invited to join the [DataConnect](#) project which will link their data with DataGene's Central Data Repository.

Connected businesses can access more accurate meaningful herd and animal reports on DataVat. Some data will also be used in the industry's genetic evaluation system, so the connection will contribute to more accurate (and potentially new) Australian Breeding Values and indices. For more information contact [Peter Thurn](#).

Early onset muscle weakness

Cases of early onset muscle weakness in Holsteins have been reported in Australia recently. This is a genetic condition where otherwise healthy animals are unable to stand at birth or lose the ability to stand shortly after birth. Most calves do not survive beyond six weeks of age but a few recover. It's also referred to as calf recumbency and Holstein Muscle Weakness (HMW). At this stage it has not been reported in other dairy breeds.

DataGene has prepared a fact sheet explaining the issue, and included a section on it in a tech note on haplotypes.

Read more

- [Early onset muscle weakness fact sheet](#) (a quick read)
- [Haplotypes tech note](#) (more details)

New board members

DataGene's AGM on Thursday 21 November saw the election of two new members to DataGene's board.

Dr David Barber and Josie Zilm were appointed to fill vacancies made by retiring board members Graeme Gillan and Daniel Meade. Gippsland dairy farmer, Tim Jelbart was appointed as Chair of the board. [Read more](#)

DataGene’s Annual Update

DataGene’s Annual General Meeting was held on 21 November. If you missed it, catch up on DataGene’s work throughout 2023/24 in the [2024 Annual Update](#).

Congratulations Beth

Congratulations to PhD student, Beth Scott who’s 2021 paper placed in the top 100 most highly cited papers published in the Journal of Dairy Science since the beginning of 2021. That’s quite an achievement given the JDS has published 40,000 papers in that period.

B.A. Scott, M. Haile-Mariam, B.G. Cocks, J.E. Pryce, How genomic selection has increased rates of genetic gain and inbreeding in the Australian national herd, genomic information nucleus, and bulls, [Journal of Dairy Science, Volume 104, Issue 11, 2021, Pages 11832-11849](#)

Good Bulls App now has haplotypes

From December, users of the Good Bulls App will be able to view and filter haplotypes.

Genetic Progress Reports

Just a reminder that Genetic Progress Reports are updated after every public ABV release. They are published on DataVat and available for herds that herd test or genotype their animals.

2025 ABV Release Schedule

| | Release | Bull rankings |
|---|---------|---------------|
| April 2025 | Tue 1 | Mon 7 |
| August 2025 | Tue 12 | Mon 18 |
| December 2025 | Tue 2 | Mon 8 |
| Full details: 2025 release schedule | | |

Recent journal articles

Haile-Mariam M, Khansefid, Axford M, Goddard ME, Pryce JE (2023) Genetic parameters and evaluation of mortality and slaughter rate in Holstein and Jersey cows. [Journal of Dairy Science, 106\(11\) 7880-7892](#)

More information

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Acknowledgement

DataGene is an initiative of Dairy Australia and the herd improvement industry. DairyBio provides the research pipeline to develop and maintain Australian Breeding Values.