

Improving the performance of the Welsh beef herd through genetic improvement is one of HCC's long term goals. In order to enjoy a sustainable future the Welsh beef industry must continue to improve the quality of the product and efficiency of production. The Welsh Beef Quality Improvement Project has provided a valuable platform for Welsh farmers to build on.

Profitability is the key to the success of the Welsh beef herd and HCC is working closely with the beef industry to develop and implement technologies to create a modern beef industry and ensure a thriving future for generations to come.

HCC currently supports the following activities:

Performance recording

To ensure that the best animals are selected for breeding and are made available to commercial beef producers, HCC provides support for pedigree beef breeders to performance record their animals. This will be through part funding of ultrasound (muscle and backfat) scanning, weight recording and membership of beef recording organisations. This enables farmers to select animals based on EBVs (Estimated Breeding Values) for traits such as growth rate, conformation and calving ease.



Artificial Insemination (AI) and Embryo Transfer (ET)

AI and ET can be utilised to maximise the impact of stock with superior genetics. HCC will assist pedigree breeders to increase the rate of genetic progress through AI and ET by providing support

in selecting and breeding from top performing stock ensuring that the best stock is produced.

Genetic markers

Gene marker testing can provide extensive information about an animal's genetic potential including:

- production traits (feed efficiency and yield),
- meat quality traits (tenderness and marbling),
- parentage verification.

This information can then be utilised to make selection and breeding decisions to maximise herd performance.

Training

Support is provided to commercial farmers on the value of selecting bulls with superior genetics, through publications and attending farmer meetings and events. Increasing commercial farmers' awareness of the benefits of using bulls with superior genetics will help ensure the uptake of top quality bulls.

Training will also be provided to pedigree breeders on how to make best use of the information gained through performance recording and gene marker testing to enable EBVs and genetic technology to be used as effective tools for genetic improvement and herd development and as a marketing tool to sell breeding stock.

For more information on any of the above activities please contact HCC on 01970 625 050 or visit our web site www.hccmpw.org.uk.

