

LRF NEWS

Congratulations to Kira Sieber!

We are thrilled to announce that Kira Sieber (LRF Technical Assistant), has successfully completed her Master's degree in Animal Breeding and Genetics with distinction. Kira's thesis, titled "Variance Component Estimations for the SA Merino Sheep Breed for Application in Genetic and Genomic Evaluations," focused on estimating genetic parameters, breeding values, and genomically enhanced breeding values for the SA Merino sheep breed. Through her research, Kira gained extensive experience in software applications within the field of quantitative genetics. She hopes to continue this valuable work with beef cattle in the future.

Having recently moved to Bloemfontein, Kira is looking forward to working and interacting more closely with breed societies. Additionally, she is embarking on an exciting project in collaboration with the University of the Free State, aiming to enhance feedback on the genetic merit of animals belonging to emerging farmers. We are incredibly proud of Kira's achievements and look forward to seeing her continued contributions to our team and the field of animal breeding and genetics. Well done, Kira!

LRF Annual General Meeting (AGM) Recap: A Successful Start to 2025

The LRF is pleased to announce that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) was successfully held on February 19th in Bloemfontein. The event marked a significant milestone for our organization, offering an excellent opportunity for members to stay informed about our performance, strategic direction, and future plans. Our esteemed Chairman, Johan Styger, delivered a detailed Chair Report, highlighting the achievements of the past year and outlining the goals for the coming year. His report emphasized the importance of continued innovation, collaboration, and commitment to excellence within our organization.

The AGM provided a platform for meaningful discussions, allowing members to engage in dialogue about the company's progress and future initiatives. It was great to see our members and communicate face-to-face, reinforcing our shared dedication to the livestock industry.

Following the AGM, we held the first members' meeting of the year. We appreciate the active participation and valuable contributions from all members. Your involvement is crucial in shaping the future of our organization. The insights and feedback shared during the meeting will play a vital role in guiding our efforts and ensuring our success. As we move forward, we look forward to continued collaboration and success in the year ahead. The LRF remains committed to supporting our members and driving positive change within the industry. Thank you to everyone who attended and made the event a success! Your dedication and support are the cornerstones of our achievements.



Exciting Updates from RMIS: Key Initiatives and the Importance of Traceability

Following the LRF AGM, Dr. Phillip Oosthuizen from Red Meat Industry Services (RMIS), delivered an insightful presentation highlighting key developments and initiatives within the industry. Dr. Oosthuizen elaborated on the RMIS 2025 project proposal, showcasing the projects and budget that RMIS will focus on the beef value chain for the year 2025. Some of these exciting projects include Traceability Data Exchange, Meat Safety and Public Health, Biosecurity Marshals Animal Public Health, Producer Development & Communication, and Inclusive Growth.

Dr. Oosthuizen reminded attendees to register their farms as part of Phase 1 of the Traceability Program. He explained that the Traceability Program has three phases. Phase 1 involving identifying your production unit on the RMIS platform and receiving a unique Geo-Location Number (GLN) linked to your location.

Phase 2 entails selecting one of the accredited industry record-keeping systems, such as HerdMASTER, and using your production unit number within the chosen system. Phase 3 involves recording animal movements between production units through your selected record-keeping system, with minimum movement data (animal ID, production unit number, GPS location, and date) being shared with the platform.

Dr. Oosthuizen emphasized the importance of this traceability project, highlighting its significance in national disease management, stock theft prevention, and improving access to both commercial and export markets. He also engaged in a detailed discussion and answered questions from attendees, providing further insights into the benefits of the RMIS Traceability Platform.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Dr. Oosthuizen for his comprehensive presentation and to all attendees for their active participation. Your involvement is crucial in driving the success of this vital initiative.

Click on the link below to register your farm today and play your part in enhancing traceability within the industry!

[Register your Farm Today!](#)

Monthly Tipsheet and Video Series: February Focus – Calving Ease

Last month the LRF introduced a new monthly tipsheet and video series, where each month we focus on a specific trait, why you should record the trait, how to record the trait and how to submit your records to your breed society. Each month, a one-page tipsheet and video will be released covering all the information you need to know! For January, our focus was on birth weight. If you missed it, don't worry, access the one page tipsheet and 2 minute video below:

[Birth Weight Tipsheet](#)

[Birth Weight Video](#)

For February, our focus is on Calving Ease:

What is Calving Ease?
An estimate of the genetic differences between animals in their ability to calve without assistance

Why is it important to record Calving Ease?
Calving difficulty can have a negative impact on the profitability of a farm through increased calf, heifer and cow mortality, slower re-breeding performance and additional labour and veterinary expenses.

How to record Calving Ease?
Calving difficulty should be recorded at birth using a 1 to 6 scale. To access the scale, click on the link below:

[Scale to record Calving Difficulty](#)

How to submit Calving Ease recordings to the society:
Submit with calf registrations.
Use the supplied Excel spreadsheet or a compatible herd management program, such as HerdMASTER.

Interpreting Calving Ease EBVs
BREEDPLAN produces two Calving Ease EBVs; Calving Ease Direct and Calving Ease Daughters. Both EBVs are reported as differences in the percentage of unassisted calvings and higher. For both EBVs, more positive EBVs are favorable.

Calving Ease Direct are estimates of genetic differences in the ability of a sires' calves to be born unassisted from two-year-old heifers.

For Example:
A bull with a Calving Ease Direct EBV of +5.0% would be expected, on average, to produce 3% fewer difficult calvings from two-year-old heifers than a bull with a Calving Ease Direct EBV of -1.0% (6% difference between the sires, being halved as they only contribute half the genetics).

While Calving ease daughters are estimates of genetic differences in the ability of a sire's two-year-old daughters to calve without assistance.

For Example:
A bull with a Calving Ease Daughters EBV of +4.0% would be expected to on average produce two-year-old daughters that have 3% less calving problems than the daughters of a bull with a Calving Ease Daughters EBV of -2.0%

To access the one-page Calving Ease tipsheet and the two-minute video on recording and understanding Calving Ease, click on the links below.

[Calving Ease Tipsheet](#)

[Calving Ease Video](#)

LRF COURSES

Exciting Start to 2025: Our First Free Online Course Recap

We are thrilled to share that our first free online course of 2025 successfully took place on February 5th, with over 100 participants attending. The informative session, led by Izaan Du Plooy and Kobus Bester from the LRF, focused on "Understanding and Interpreting EBVs."

Izaan Du Plooy delivered an in-depth exploration of the theoretical aspects of Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs), providing a solid foundation for understanding their importance. Complementing her presentation, Kobus Bester contributed practical, real-life examples that illustrated practical interpretations of EBVs effectively. This combination of theory and practice offered participants a comprehensive understanding of EBVs and their crucial role in making informed breeding decisions and improving herd genetics.

The course covered fascinating insights into enhancing livestock performance and productivity, leaving attendees equipped with valuable knowledge for their breeding programs.

If you missed the live session, don't worry! You can access the recording on our YouTube channel

[Understanding and Interpreting EBV Course](#)

Next Free Online Course: ABC's of Animal Performance Recording

Date: 4th March 2025
Time: 17h30 - 18h30
Presenter: Izaan Du Plooy (LRF) and Derick Le Roux (Limousin breeder)

Unlock the essentials of animal performance recording with our upcoming free online course, held on Zoom! This informative session will cover the fundamental aspects of performance recording, providing you with the knowledge and tools to enhance your understanding and application in the field.

Performance recording is a critical component in the management and improvement of livestock as well as the estimation of genetic merit of an animal. By accurately recording and analysing performance data, farmers and breeders can make informed decisions based on accurate estimates of genetic merit that lead to better animal health, productivity, and overall efficiency. This course will help you understand the basics of performance recording and why it is essential for the success and genetic improvement of your livestock operations.

RSVP: Please confirm your attendance by filling out the Google form below

[RSVP ABCs of Performance Recording](#)

HerdMASTER/BREEDPLAN NEWS

HerdMASTER HerdMASTER 5 Online Training

We are thrilled to announce our upcoming HerdMASTER 5 Online Training sessions. This training program is designed to help you master the latest features of HerdMASTER 5, ensuring you get the most out of this powerful tool for managing livestock data.

Module 1, scheduled for the 11th of March, will provide an introduction to HerdMASTER 5, covering essential topics such as general tools and property setup. You can attend this module in either of the two available time slots: 9h00-11h00 or 18h00-20h00.

Module 2, set for the 25th of March, will focus on recording and electronic submissions of traits, treatments, and general reports. Similar to Module 1, this session also offers two convenient time slots: 9h00-11h00 or 18h00-20h00. The cost for both modules is R900, including VAT.

Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your skills and improve the efficiency of your breeding and management practices. RSVP by filling out the Google form

[RSVP HerdMASTER Training](#)

HerdMASTER
Herd Management Software

HERDMASTER 5 ONLINE TRAINING

- R900 INCL. VAT
- BOOK NOW ON GOOGLE FORM

2 TIME SLOTS PER MODULE:
9:00 – 11:00AM
18:00 – 20:00PM

MODULE 1
11 MARCH 2025

- INTRODUCTION
- OVERVIEW
- SITE OPTIONS
- CONCEPTS AND GENERAL TOOLS
- PROPERTY SETUP
- WORKSHEETS AND FILTERS
- RECORD MATINGS
- RECORDING PREG TEST
- RECORDING CALVES (ADD ANIMALS)
- ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS OF REGISTRATIONS TO SOCIETY
- RECORDING FATES/CANCELLATIONS
- ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS OF CANCELLATIONS TO SOCIETY

MODULE 2
25 MARCH 2025

- RECORDING AND SUBMITTING DAYS TO CALVING INFO
- RECORDING WEIGHTS AND ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS
- RECORDING TRIALS AND ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS
- CREATING AND USING ACTION TEMPLATES
- RECORDING MULTISIRES
- RECORDING AND USING EMBRYOS
- USING YARDSHEETS
- ADDING ANIMAL MOVEMENTS
- TREATMENTS
- UNIVERSAL FILE IMPORT UTILITY
- REPORTS

For advertisements in the LRF/BREEDPLAN monthly newsletter, please contact Mrs Izaan du Plooy at office@lrf.co.za.

Vir advertensies in die LRF/BREEDPLAN maandelikse nuusbrief, kontak gerus vir Mev. Izaan du Plooy by nuus@lrf.co.za