



## LRF NEWS

### Get Ready for the 17th LRF Stockman School!

We are thrilled to invite you to the 17th LRF Stockman School, an unmissable event that will take place from 8th to 10th October 2025. This year, we're embracing the theme **Smart Stockmanship: Back to Basics**, focusing on the fundamental principles of livestock production while incorporating practical, forward-thinking strategies to meet today's challenges.

This incredible three-day event promises to be packed with insightful lectures delivered by leading experts from South Africa and around the globe. From cutting-edge research to tried-and-tested practices, these sessions will offer something valuable for everyone. In addition to the lectures, attendees will enjoy hands-on practical sessions where theory meets practice. These activities are designed to deepen your understanding and give you actionable skills you can take home and implement straight away. For those looking to delve deeper, we'll also feature engaging breakaway sessions where smaller groups can explore specific topics, interact directly with experts, and exchange ideas with fellow delegates.

The LRF Stockman School is more than just a learning event—it's a chance to connect with passionate individuals, exchange knowledge, and gain fresh perspectives to elevate your stockmanship skills. Space is limited to 200 delegates, so make sure you secure your place!

Bookings will open at the end of April 2025.

For more details on the LRF Stockman School and what to expect, click on the link below. Let's get back to basics and discover smarter ways to approach stockmanship—see you there!

[LRF Stockman School](#)



### The LRF Technical Services Newsletter is Here!

The LRF is excited to announce the release of its latest bi-annual Technical Services Newsletter, and it's brimming with invaluable insights and updates. In this action-packed edition, we cover an impressive variety of topics ranging from the latest advancements in genomic selection and a deep dive into BREEDPLAN traits and EBVs, to practical advice on setting up your breeding objectives for future resilience.

Readers will find expert guidance on essential traits like Days to Calving, valuable tips for assessing carcass traits using Real-Time Ultrasound scanning technology, and insights into embryo transfer techniques. Alongside these, the newsletter provides updates on the LRF, exciting happenings at the Stockman School, and news from Namibia that's sure to inspire and inform.

The LRF is excited to feature the Limousin breed in this issue – highlighted on the front cover and with an article titled "Much More Limousin: The Breed in Brief". Packed with knowledge and practical applications, this edition is not to be missed. Click the link below to dive into this comprehensive and fascinating resource today!

[LRF TS-Newsletter](#)

### LRF Dr Michael Bradfield Bursary 2025/26

The LRF is inviting nominations for the esteemed Dr Michael Bradfield Bursary for the 2025/26 calendar year. This bursary celebrates the legacy of the late Dr Michael Bradfield, a leading genetics consultant who dedicated over 20 years to revolutionizing genetic evaluation systems like BREEDPLAN and HerdMASTER across southern Africa. Designed to support postgraduate students in Animal Breeding and Genetics, the bursary reflects Dr Bradfield's passion for advancing education and fostering excellence in the field.

We are proud to highlight that the inaugural bursary for 2024/25 was awarded to Maxman Gomo, setting an inspiring standard for future recipients. Maxman has registered to pursue his doctorate in Animal Science at the University of Pretoria under the tutelage of Prof Carina Visser. His study focuses on the genetic characterization of Mashona cattle, an indigenous breed that originated from Zimbabwe and remains underutilized in commercial production due to limited recording and a lack of detailed genomic analyses.



Maxman Gomo

For more information and to access the nomination form please click on the link below. Kindly note that the closing date for nominations is 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025. Please submit the completed nomination form and documents to [herdmaster@lrf.co.za](mailto:herdmaster@lrf.co.za).

[Dr Michael Bradfield Bursary](#)

### Monthly Tipsheet and Video Series: March Focus – Days to Calving

Each month, the LRF focuses on a key trait, explaining why recording matters, how to record accurately, and how to submit your records to your breed society. It's all the information you need, presented in an easy-to-follow one-page tipsheet and a concise video!

February's spotlight was on **Calving Ease**. If you missed it, don't worry—catch up now! Access the one-page tipsheet and 2-minute video below to stay informed and up-to-date.

[Calving Ease Tipsheet](#)

[Calving Ease Video](#)

### For March, our focus is on Days to Calving (DTC)

#### What is Days to Calving?

DTC is a measure of female fertility and is the number of days between the start of the joining period and the subsequent calving.

#### Why is it important to record Days to Calving?

Female fertility has a large influence on herd performance and is a major determinant of profitability. Recording DTC is a useful way to identify females that conceive earlier in the mating season and calve earlier in the calving season.

#### Information Required for Days to Calving EBVs

- Joining details of all females (heifers and cows) mated (whether successful or not):
  - Bull-in date - the date the mating program began
  - Bull-out date - the date the bull was removed
  - Bull IDs - individual bull or multisire IDs
- Details of all females removed from the herd.
- Details of all calves (dead or alive) that are born as a result of these joinings.

**This information must be recorded in mating lists and sent to the society using either of the following BREEDPLAN compatible options:**

- 1. Microsoft Excel spreadsheets**
  - a. Submitting DTC Information - Natural & AI Joinings. Used for: Providing natural joining and/or AI program information to BREEDPLAN. Often submitted: At completion of joining.
  - b. Submitting DTC Information - ET Programs. Used for: Providing ET program information to BREEDPLAN. Often submitted: At completion of joining.
  - c. Submitting DTC Information - Preg Test Results. Used for: Providing pregnancy test results. Often submitted: At completion of pregnancy testing.
  - d. Submitting DTC Information - DTC Disposal Codes. Used for: Providing DTC Disposal Codes for any female that left herd between joining and calving. Often submitted: At completion of pregnancy testing and/or subsequent calving.

Access the joining information template by clicking the link below:

[Joining Information Template](#)

#### Interpreting Days to Calving EBVs

DTC EBVs are estimates of the genetic differences between animals in the time from the start of the joining period until the subsequent calving and are expressed in days.

Females with shorter DTC EBVs tend to reach puberty earlier and return to oestrous sooner after calving. DTC EBVs identify cows that calve earlier in the season, compared to those that calve later in the season while cows that do not calve are penalised. Lower, or more negative, DTC EBVs tend to be more favourable.

**For example:** A bull with a -5 days DTC EBV is expected to produce daughters that conceive earlier in the joining period. Differences in the time taken for females to conceive after the start of the joining period is one of the major factors contributing to the variation seen in DTC.

To access the one-page Days to Calving tipsheet and video with all the details you need to know, click on the link below:

[Days to Calving Tipsheet](#)

[Days to Calving Video](#)

## LRF COURSES

### Mastering the ABCs of Performance Recording

On 4th March 2025, the LRF hosted its second free online course of 2025, delving into the **ABCs of Performance Recording**. Presented by Izaan Du Plooy from the LRF and Derick Le Roux, a Limousin breeder, the course explored traits for which BREEDPLAN provides Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs), the recommended performance recording timeline, and the significance of recording key traits like **birthweight, calving ease, weaning weight, mature cow weight**, and more. Participants also learned about the *when, why, and how* of recording each trait to ensure comprehensive data collection and estimation of genetic merit.

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

[ABCs of Performance Recording](#)

### Next Free Online Course: Contemporary Groups and Genetic Linkage

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025

**Time:** 17h30 - 18h30

**Presenter:** Izaan Du Plooy and Mario Befia (from the LRF)

This course will be presented by Izaan Du Plooy and Dr. Mario Befia from the LRF, bringing a wealth of knowledge to the table. They'll guide you through the ins and outs of contemporary groups and linkages—why they're critically important, how to form groups correctly, and the vital role they play in genetic evaluations. Whether you're an experienced breeder or just starting out, this session is packed with valuable insights to enhance your understanding and skills.

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

[RSVP Contemporary groups and genetic linkage](#)

## HerdMASTER/BREEDPLAN NEWS

### Upgrade to HerdMASTER 5 Today!

Attention HerdMASTER users! We're excited to remind you that HerdMASTER 5 is here, offering improved features and support. Make use of the free migration to seamlessly transition from HerdMASTER 4, as development for HerdMASTER 4 will soon be discontinued.

**Please note:** Windows 10 is required to complete the migration.

While development on HerdMASTER 4 will end, **support will continue** for users unable to migrate immediately.

If you're looking for step-by-step guidance on using HerdMASTER, the HerdMASTER How-to Videos are a fantastic resource. They cover everything from navigating the animal list screen to entering new data, managing contacts, generating reports, and even setting up visual farm representations.

Click the link below to access these helpful videos!

[How-to HerdMASTER Videos](#)