



LRF NEWS

Join Us for the 17th LRF Stockman School – October 2025

Get ready for an unforgettable experience at the 17th Annual LRF Stockman School, taking place from 8th to 10th October 2025. This year, we're focusing on "Smart Stockmanship: Back to Basics". 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!

For details on the 17th LRF Stockman School programme, [click on the link below](#). Let's get back to basics and discover smarter ways to approach stockmanship—see you there!

How to Register for the 17th LRF Stockman School:

Bookings are now open! Secure your spot at the 17th LRF Stockman School by clicking the link below to book. To confirm your booking, complete the registration form and submit your proof of payment to Charmaine Alberts. Take advantage of the early bird registration: register before **31 July 2025** to receive a **R500 discount** on your booking fee! Bookings close on **1 October 2025** or earlier if capacity is reached.

Email: charmainealberts8@gmail.com / Phone: +27 82 922 3747

[Stockman School Programme](#)

[Register Here!](#)

LRF Stockman School Competitions

Southern African Santam/LRF Stud Producer of the Year

Entries are now open! The LRF, in collaboration with Santam, invites all cattle stud breeders, irrespective of the breed you farm with, to enter for this prestigious award. The winner will walk away with R25 000 in cash and a free ticket to attend the LRF Stockman School 2026. The runner-up will receive R10 000 in cash. Entry forms are available in both English and Afrikaans and must be submitted to Prof Frikkie Nester by the 18th July 2025.

E: nesterfw@ufs.ac.za T: +27 51 401 2211

[English Entry Form](#)

[Afrikaans Entry Form](#)

Make My Bull Famous Competition

Would you like to see your top bull on the cover of Veeplaas magazine? Then enter the Make my bull famous contest! The number of likes of the top three entry posts by 10h00, 31st July will be reviewed by the organising committee of the LRF Stockman School. They will assess the finalists and select the winner. To enter this competition post a photo of your bull on your Facebook OR Instagram page and tag @Livestock Registering Federation and @PlaasMedia. Use the hashtags #Makemybullfamous2025 and #LRFStockmanschool2025



Monthly Tipsheet and Video Series: May Focus – 200-Day Weight and Mature Cow Weight

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!

April's spotlight was on Carcass traits. 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.

[Carcass traits Tipsheet](#)

[Carcass traits Video](#)

For May, our focus is on 200-Day Weight and Mature Cow Weight.

200-Day Weight:

What is 200-Day Growth

- The live weight of an animal at approximately 200 days after birth.
- A measure of the animal's pre-weaning growth from birth to 200 days (weaning), measured in kilograms.

Why record 200-Day Growth

- Live weight is an important economic factor.
- Recording 200-Day Growth enables BREEDPLAN to calculate 200-Day Growth and Milk EBVs.
- Weight EBVs (Birth Weight, 200-Day Growth, 400-Day Weight, 600-Day Weight and Mature Cow Weight) are genetically correlated.

When to Record 200-Day Growth

- Measured within the age range of 80 to 300 days after birth to accommodate management practices.
- A weighing date should be chosen such that the average group age is approximately 200 days after birth and before calves are physically weaned.
- Weigh ALL weaner calves on the same day.
- BREEDPLAN will correct for the number of days prior to or post 200 days within this age range.

200-Day Growth EBVs

- Estimates of the genetic differences between animals in live weight at 200 days of age due to their genetic potential for growth.
- Reported in kilograms (kg).
- The larger the group of animals weighed together for 200 Day Growth, the more accurate the 200 Day Growth EBV.

How many 200-Day growth measurements does BREEDPLAN use?

- BREEDPLAN analyses up to two 200-Day Growth measurements to calculate the 200-Day Growth EBV.
- It is not required to record two 200 Day Growth measurements, however this will increase the accuracy of the 200-Day Growth EBV and it is particularly beneficial for the calculation of Milk EBVs.
- If two 200-Day Growth measurements are recorded, BREEDPLAN recommends a minimum of 30 days between each measurement and that all animals in the group are weighed both times.

Interpreting 200-Day Growth EBVs

- Larger, more positive 200 Day Growth EBVs are generally more favourable
- For example: A bull with a 200 Day Growth EBV of +30 kg would be expected to produce heavier calves at 200 days of age (or weaning) compared to a bull with a 200 Day Growth EBV of +10 kg.

To watch the two-minute videos and access the one-page tipsheets on recording and understanding 200-Day Weight and Mature cow weight, click the links below:

[200-Day Growth Tipsheet](#)

[200-Day Growth Video](#)

[Mature cow weight Tipsheet](#)

[Mature cow weight Video](#)

LRF COURSES

May's Online Course: Submitting information to the society – Excel spreadsheets explained

On the 13th of May 2025, the LRF hosted its fourth free online course of 2025, delving into Submitting information to the society – Excel spreadsheets explained. Presented by Izaan Du Plooy from the LRF and Jody Young-Grant from the Simbra Breed Society, the course explained which forms to submit for traits recorded, ensuring that participants fill in the documentation correctly. Additionally, the session highlighted common mistakes to avoid, covering essential do's and don'ts to ensure accurate data submission.

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

[Excel spreadsheets explained](#)

Next Free Online Course: Reports explained: BREEDPLAN report, Completeness of Performance, Outlier report

Date: 17th June 2025

Time: 10h00 – 11h00

Presenter: Dr Boyd Gudex from BREEDPLAN

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

[RSVP to Course](#)

HerdMASTER/BREEDPLAN NEWS

BREEDPLAN:

Enhancements Implemented for South African Braford BREEDPLAN

The Agricultural Business Research Institute (ABRI) announced that Braford breeders across South Africa are set to benefit from several BREEDPLAN enhancements released in the May 2025 South African Braford BREEDPLAN evaluation. These enhancements improve the predictive ability of the EBVs published for Braford animals, ensuring that the pedigree and performance information being recorded by members of the Braford Cattle Breeders' Society of South Africa is used to its full potential.

These enhancements include:

1. Upgrade to BREEDPLAN version 6.2

The operating system on which the South African Braford BREEDPLAN evaluation has been updated to BREEDPLAN version 6.2. This transition to BREEDPLAN v6.2 means a more comprehensive approach to the modelling of genetic groups which allows for better separation of base animals according to Hereford and Brahma breed contributions as well as accounting for other breed contributions represented in the data. Consequently, changes in EBVs may be apparent for some animals, especially those more closely related to the foundation breeds (e.g. first or second cross progeny) and those with one or both parents unknown.

2. Publication of Days to Calving EBVs

For the first time, Braford breeders have access to a new Days to Calving EBV. The publication of the Days to Calving EBV has been made possible following the upgrade to BREEDPLAN version 6.2, which has allowed South African Braford BREEDPLAN to incorporate female fertility data records into the analysis.

Days to Calving EBVs are estimates of genetic differences between animals in the time from the start of the joining period under natural mating until subsequent calving. Days to Calving EBVs are expressed in days, with a more negative EBV being more favourable. A shorter time from the start of mating to calving is mostly indicative of a shorter time to conception. These EBVs are calculated from the natural recording records submitted for both heifers and mature cows.

3. Incorporation of Carcass Data Records

As a result of the upgrade to BREEDPLAN version 6.2, South African Braford BREEDPLAN can now incorporate abattoir carcass data collected at slaughter into the evaluation. This means that Carcass EBVs can now be calculated using both ultrasound scanning information collected on the live animal by a BREEDPLAN accredited ultrasound scanning technician, and carcass data collected at slaughter. Consequently, Braford breeders may see changes in EBVs and associated EBV accuracies for Carcass traits (e.g. Eye Muscle Area) as a result of the incorporation of abattoir carcass data.

HerdMASTER:

All HerdMASTER 5 users can update to the latest version 5.0.0.7.2

The update includes some bug fixes.

Reminder to all our HerdMASTER 4 users to migrate to HerdMASTER 5. We urge all our users to make use of the free migration as development on HerdMASTER 4 will be discontinued.

Process for migrating to HerdMASTER 5 (HM5):

1. Minimum requirements Windows 10
2. Download HM5 using the link below
3. Select the Bundled installer package (Online)
4. Double click the download to install and follow the prompts.

[Download HM5](#)