



## LRF NEWS

### 18th LRF Annual Stockman School: Early Bird Registration

The 18th Annual LRF Stockman School is set to take place from 7–9 October 2026 at the beautiful Aldam Holiday Resort in the Free State. This year's theme, "Unlocking the Beef Value Chain", promises to deliver fresh insights into one of the most vital sectors of livestock production. Attendees can take advantage of the early bird ticket special — save R500 on full registration tickets if purchased before 31 July 2026.

Widely regarded as a highly anticipated event, the Stockman School draws both local and international speakers and participants, making it a hub of knowledge-sharing and networking. Known for its educational depth and practical focus, it equips attendees with tools and strategies they can apply directly in the field. If you're passionate about the beef industry, this is an event you simply won't want to miss.

View the programme and access the registration form off of our website or contact Charmaine Alberts for more information:

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 FREE ONLINE COURSE

[www.lrf.co.za](http://www.lrf.co.za)



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[Stockman School  
 Registration Form](#)

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**18th LRF STOCKMAN SCHOOL**  
**7-9 October 2026**  
 Aldam Holiday Resort

# Unlocking the Beef Value Chain

*Early bird special*  
 Save R500.00, ends 31 July 2026  
 (only applicable on full registration)

Registration forms available on the LRF website ([www.lrf.co.za/stockman-school](http://www.lrf.co.za/stockman-school))

Contact person:  
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### Monthly Tipsheet and Video Series: April Focus – ABREEDPLAN guide to Genetic Improvement

We are excited to announce the next monthly tipsheet and video for our 2026 series. Each month, a one-page tipsheet and video will be released covering all the information you need to know! For March, our focus was on Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs).

Access March's one-page tipsheet and 2-minute video below to stay informed and up-to-date.

[EBV Tipsheet](#)

[EBV Video](#)

For April, our focus is on **ABREEDPLAN Guide to Genetic Improvement**

- Success in stud breeding is measured by genetic improvement.
- Genetic improvement boosts herd performance and profitability.
- Genetic Improvement is achieved when offspring have better genetics than their parents.
- The amount of improvement depends on how superior the offspring are compared to the parents.

#### Factors influencing genetic improvement (R):

The Response to selection equation applies to the genetic improvement that is made for a trait, selection index or overall breeding objectives.

$$R = (i \times r \times \sigma_g) / L$$

Where:

R = Response to Selection  
 i = Selection Intensity  
 r = Accuracy of Selection  
 $\sigma_g$  = Genetic Variation  
 L = Generation Length

#### Selection Intensity (i):

- The difference in the average genetic value of the animals selected for breeding versus the average genetic value of all animals in the population from which they were selected.
- The higher the selection intensity, the higher the rate of genetic improvement that can be achieved.
- When a large proportion of animals are selected as parents, the resulting selection intensity will be small.
- Conversely, when a smaller proportion of animals are selected as parents, the resulting selection intensity will potentially be large.
- Reproductive technologies, such as artificial insemination (AI) and embryo transfer (ET), are tools that can increase the selection intensity of bulls and dams, respectively.
- By increasing selection intensity, these reproductive technologies can be used to increase the overall level of genetic improvement within the herd.

#### Selection Accuracy (r):

- Influenced by heritability of a trait, the quantity and quality of information available, the availability and accuracy of selection tools.
- The higher the accuracy, the more informed and correct selection decisions will be, and the more genetic improvement can be achieved.
- Accuracy of selection can be maximised by:
  - Performance recording and measuring all animals within the breeding program. Measuring as many traits as possible.
  - Utilising genetic tools such as BREEDPLAN EBVs and selection indexes when making selection decisions.
  - Using proven sires as opposed to younger bulls.

#### Genetic Variation ( $\sigma_g$ ):

- The amount of genetic variation that exists within the population of animals that are available for selection within the breeding program influences the amount of genetic improvement that is possible, with greater genetic variation providing a greater potential to make genetic improvement.
- The degree of genetic variation can be increased by expanding the gene pool from which animals are selected, such as through sourcing genetics from herds or bloodlines not previously utilised or from overseas countries.
- Strategies such as crossbreeding can also be used to increase genetic variation, particularly in commercial operations.

#### Generation Length (L):

- Is the average age of the parents in a population at the time that their progeny are born, with a shorter generation length resulting in greater genetic improvement being achieved.
- Cattle are constrained by contrast to other livestock species (e.g. poultry) due to an older age of puberty and longer length of gestation.
- Strategies to reduce the generation length include strategies such as retaining a higher proportion of replacement heifers, ensuring heifers have their first calf at two years of age and the use of yearling sires.

Access April's one-page tipsheets and 2-minute video below to stay informed and up-to-date.

[Genetic Improvement  
 Tipsheet](#)

[Genetic Improvement  
 Video](#)

## LRF Online Courses

### April's Online Course:

On the 14th of April 2026, the LRF hosted its fourth free online course of 2026, delving into the topic: Setting up Breeding Objectives: Making Genetic progress not just genetic gain, presented by Dr Boyd Gudex from ABRI. This course highlighted that genetic change takes discipline, breeding objectives must fit your system and market, indexes are powerful tools when used correctly as well as a balanced, whole system selection will drive profitability.

In case you missed the live session, catch up with the course recording on our YouTube Channel

[April Online Course Recording](#)

### Next Free Online Course: 19 May 2026

Make sure you don't miss out on our next free online course on Genomics: What am I missing out on? Presented by Catriona Millen from ABRI.

**Date:** 19 May 2026

**Time:** 10h00 – 11h00

**Presenter(s):** Catriona Millen

**Where:** ZOOM (Online)

**RSVP:** Please fill out the Google form: [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#)

[RSVP May Course](#)

## HerdMASTER/BREEDPLAN NEWS

### HerdMASTER

#### HerdMASTER is at NAMPO

We're excited to announce that the LRF will be at NAMPO from 12–15 May in the Auction Complex alongside RMIS.

Come meet us in person and discover more about HerdMASTER — one of the livestock management systems integrated with the RMIS traceability platform. This integration means that producers using HerdMASTER can seamlessly record animal movements and contribute to national traceability directly through the system they already work with.

Don't miss the chance to engage with us and learn how HerdMASTER and RMIS are helping shape the future of livestock management and traceability.