Swin & Kathy Hudson (pictured right) manage the Tremere Belmont Red Stud based at Moura in central QLD which includes 550 BREEDPLAN evaluated females. The Hudson’s are extremely focused on breeding cattle with the most economically profitable combination of traits. They demonstrate a strong commitment to genetic evaluation in order to accurately achieve this objective. In total Tremere join 1100 females annually.

Performance recording is nothing new at Tremere with weight ratio’s in use prior to the development of the BREEDPLAN model and its introduction in 1986. When asked why they use BREEDPLAN Swin simply replies “because it gives you the information you need to make accurate selection decisions”. Swin also highlights that after the visual assessment is complete and decisions are down to performance then BREEDPLAN reduces the workload. Swin estimates that 35% of the selection decisions at Tremere are based on EBVs but feels that with the availability of other traits in the future such as days to calving, this could be increased to 50%.

Tremere record birth weight, 200 day weight, 400 day weight, 600 day weight, scrotal circumference, as well as undertaking ultrasound scanning for eye muscle area, rib fat, rump fat, and intramuscular fat. Joining details have been recorded since the Stud’s inception, much of which is being used in the Days to Calving EBV available in the 2007 Belmont GROUP BREEDPLAN analysis. Over the past three years flight time measurements of all weaner stock have been recorded. Swin cites flight time as a trait of ever increasing importance both for it’s correlation with meat tenderness and as a useful tool to quickly identify temperamental animals for culling.

Tremere’s selection policy for replacement sires and sale bulls starts most importantly with visual appraisal of structure. Semen testing including morphology is also undertaken to remove any individuals not up to standard in this regard. Swin then uses EBVs to identify what are sometimes referred to as “curve benders”. These are animals that defy the trend; for example animals that have a high 600 day weight EBV but a low birth weight EBV. These animals are often retained for within herd use at Tremere to produce ease of calving whilst maintaining genetic progress for growth. Swin also uses EBVs in bull selection to identify animals meeting minimum fat coverage levels and to a lesser extent selects for increased intramuscular fat.

The genetic trends for 600 day and birth weight in the Tremere herd are graphed in figure 1. Notice that significant gains in 600 day weight have been consistently made over time whilst the birth weight EBV demonstrates only a slight increase. This has only been possible through Tremere’s accurate identification of animals that defy the trend and have superior growth as well as moderate birth weight genetics. The accurate identification of these unique genetics is an example of one of the distinct benefits of BREEDPLAN.
When it comes to female selection Swin identifies the birth weight EBV as an important selection criteria as well as flight speed, 600 day weight EBV and of course structural soundness.

In regards to the use of EBVs Tremere has in the past set the prices for paddock bulls based on their growth EBVs and this carries a few principles that Swin feels need to be better educated to the commercial industry. “EBVs enable the buyer to identify the performance group most suited to their operation. The selection of the individual sire is then taken from within that group. eg. Low birth weight EBV’s for Maiden Heifer Sires”.

An example of the Tremere females