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Beef Genetics for the Dairy Industry

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The dairy industry is about milk

- In 2012/13 (\$6.33 pay-out), milk generated 93.5% of revenue
- Livestock sales generated less than 6% of revenue

The dairy industry is about milk

- Beef bulls result in a higher value calf
- But in a 2004 survey*, 70% of dairy farmers believed that using beef semen would increase the rate of calving difficulty
- The value added by beef bulls is quickly undone if it reduces milk production

* Oliver & McDermott 2005

A window of opportunity?

Fonterra forecast will slash NZ farmer income

GERALD PIDDOCK AND GERARD HUTCHING
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FARMERS
WEEKLY
news

Feeder calf prices good at Frankton



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Beef bulls for dairy farmers

- What is a dairy farmer looking for in a beef bull?
 - Easy calving
 - Short gestation
 - Distinctive calves?

Dairy-beef calves for finishing

- Typically born in last 4 weeks of calving
 - September/October
- Steers/bulls and heifers
- Hand-reared to 100 kg
- Ideally finished before second winter

Desirable traits

- Live weight/growth rate
- Carcass & meat quality

- Not the same wish-list as dairy farmers
- But calves that please both players will take the industry forward

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A few more considerations

- In 2007/08 there were
 - 1.8m Friesians
 - 1.3m Crossbreds
 - 570,000 Jerseys

- In 2014/15
 - 1.7m Friesians
 - 2.3m Crossbreds
 - 520,000 Jerseys



Dairy-beef progeny test

- Hereford and Angus bulls at Limestone Downs
- High merit bulls
 - Calving ease
 - Gestation length
 - 400d & 600d weight
 - IMF%
- Typical unrecorded Angus, Hereford & Jersey bulls
- Cows currently pregnant
- Another mating in 2016

Dairy-beef progeny test

- Cows
 - Calving ease
 - Rebreeding performance
 - Milk yield
- Calves
 - Birth weight
 - Calf rearing (days to weaning)
 - Post-weaning growth
 - Carcass traits
 - Meat quality

Dairy-beef progeny test

- Links to beef progeny test
 - Do the same bulls perform well in both systems?
 - Are all the breeding values derived in beef herds transferable to dairy-beef?
- Holstein Friesian versus Crossbred cows as dams for dairy-beef calves

Calving starts in July 2016, results coming soon...



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Thank you.
