Implementation of 2025 National Breeding Objective Review

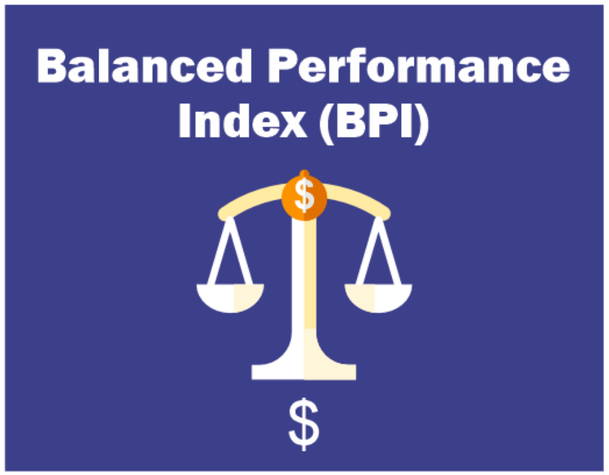
Thuy Nguyen
Stakeholder Relations Manager

Interbull Meeting

Verona | 2026

DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development

Increasing net farm profit through...



Eg. BPI of 300

On average this animal returns $300 more income over feed/herd costs. The average is 0.

Eg. HWI of 280

This animal is 280 units greater for health and fertility traits.

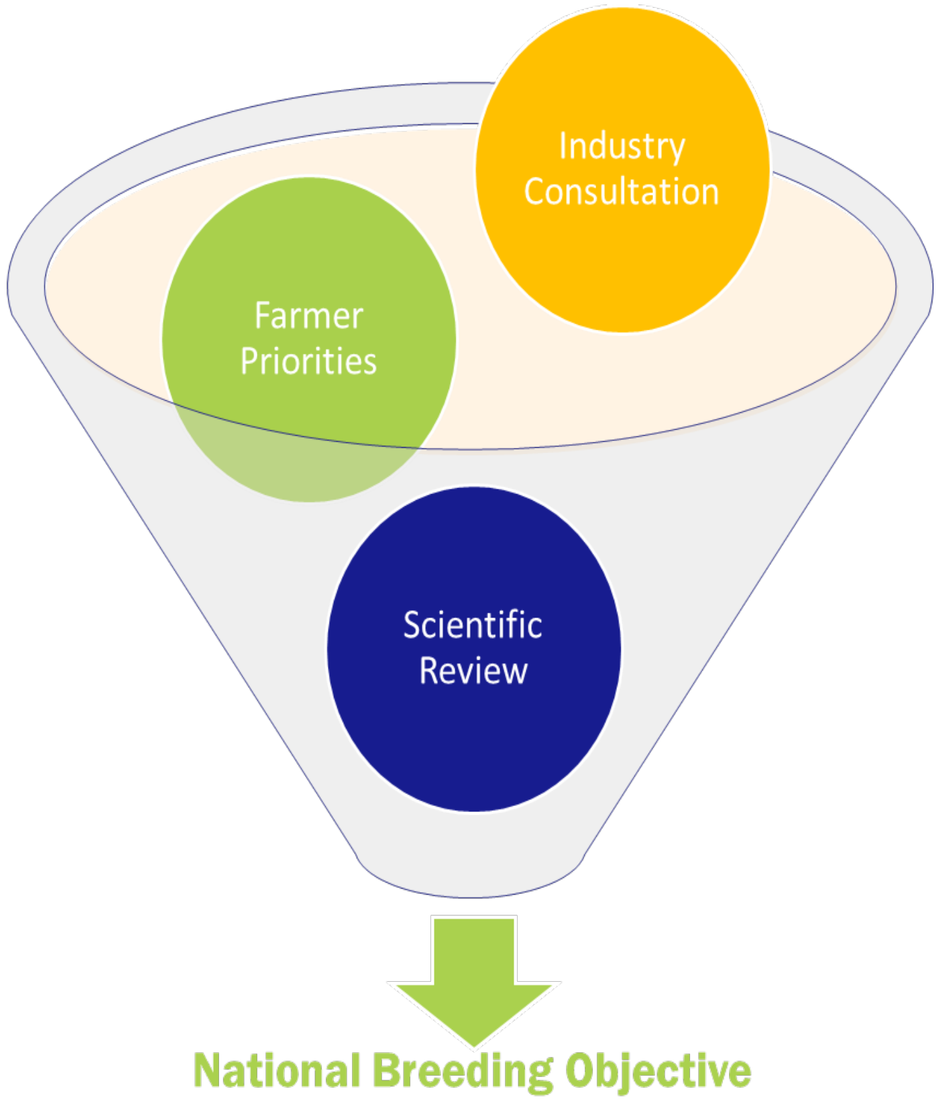
Eg. Sustainability Index of 250

This animal is 250 units more efficient for emissions intensity than average. The average is 0.

DataGene reviews the NBO every 5 years to ensure it remains relevant for Australian dairy farmers.

DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development

How we develop the NBO

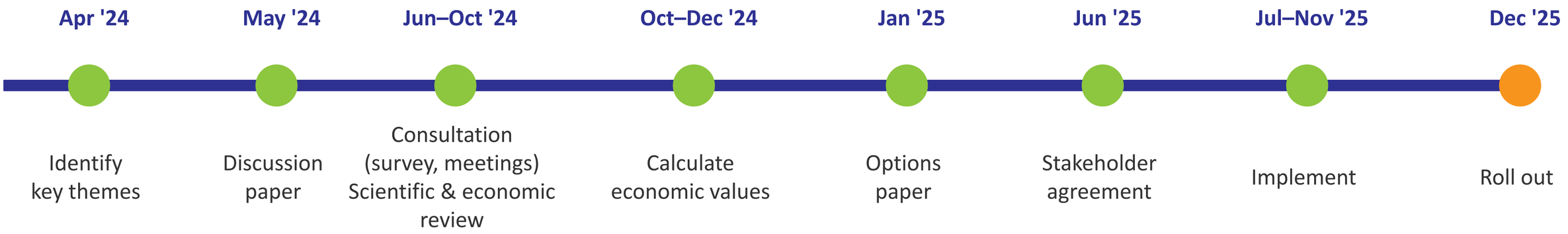


- Farmer Priorities — what traits matter most to producers
- Industry Consultation — engagement across the supply chain
- Scientific Review — economic values & genetic statistics

…and we continue to evolve, as farmers do.

DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development

Review & Implementation Timeline



DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development

Scale of Consultation

255

Survey participants

Broadly aligned with national demographics

20

In-depth interviews

Focused qualitative sessions

217

Dairy farmers

Phone & online survey

138

Stakeholder meetings

28 events across Australia

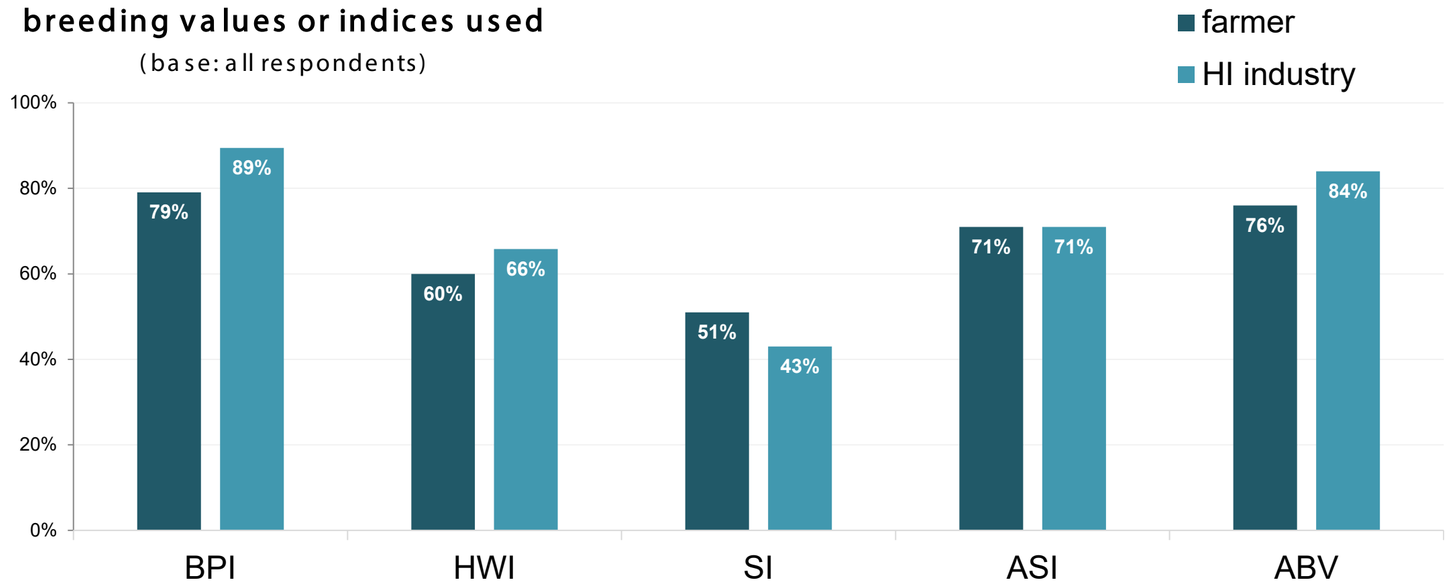
DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development

Use of Australian indices

88% dairy farmer

92% HI personnel

respondents use at least one of the BPI, HWI, SI, ASI or ABVs when selecting AI sires.



Key Findings – Farmer Survey

Strong support for BPI

Farmers value the balanced approach to profitability

Seasonal calving index wanted

Include calving ease and gestation length in seasonal calving index

No Jersey-specific index

Low level of support; existing indices considered adequate

Production is still important

Keep it simple — don't over-complicate the indices

Feed Saved ABV is not well understood

Naming and expression of the trait is confusing to some

Interest in regional and system-specific indices

Indecisive regarding the TMR-specific/subtropical index

DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development

Update 1

Update Pricing for Milk Components & Inputs

1 Forecasted milk prices

Use 2025–2029 projections to better reflect current market conditions

2 Protein : Fat ratio

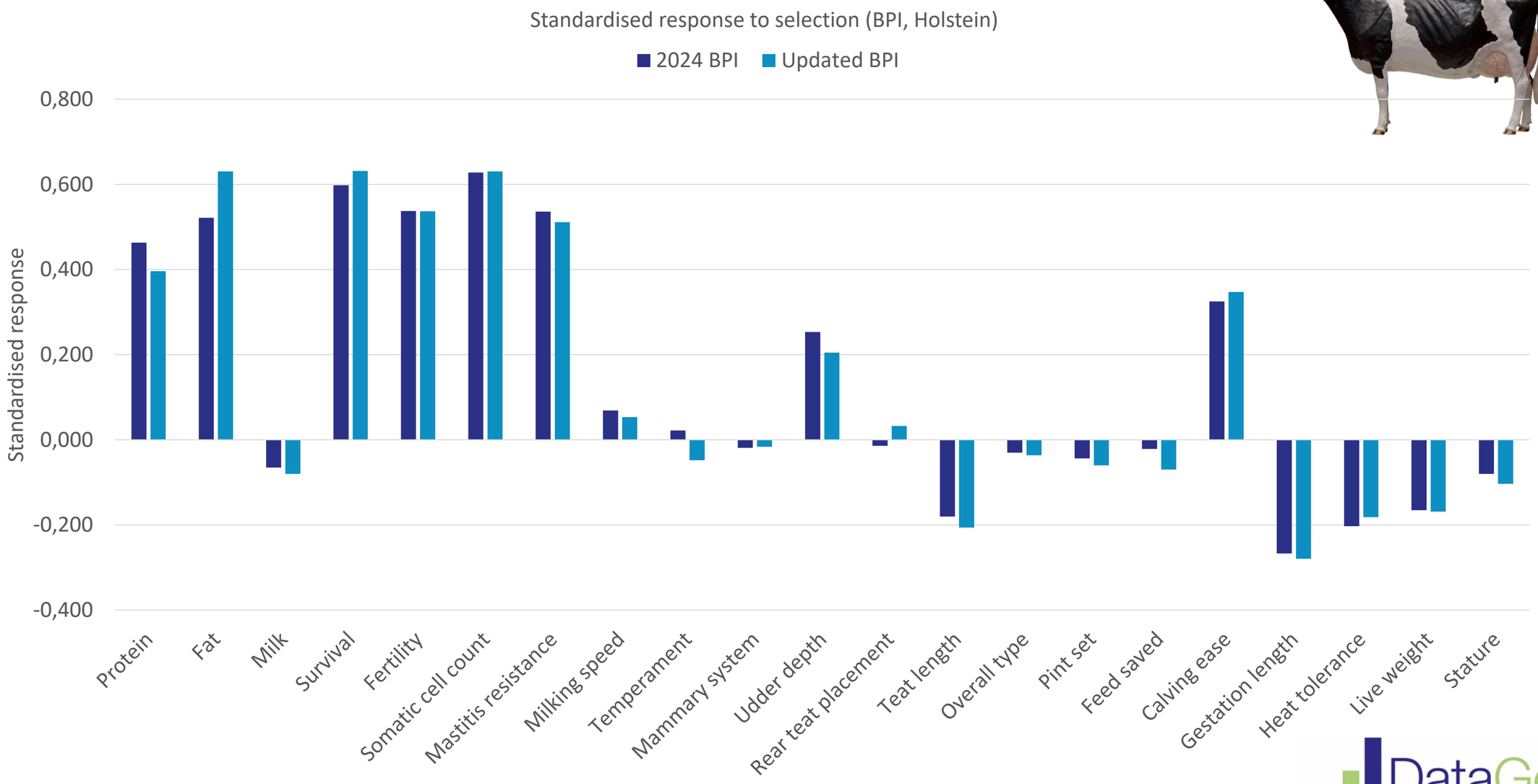
Rebalanced from 2:1 → 1:1 to reflect evolving market values

3 Feed, input & labour costs

Updated to reflect current on-farm cost structures

DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development

Example change in BPI (Holstein)



DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development

Update 2

Enhance HWI — Increase Seasonal Focus

New traits added to HWI:

+ Calving Ease

+ Gestation Length

Why it matters:

Seasonal calving herds are a key production system in Australia. These changes allow the HWI to better reflect the profitability drivers for those farms.

DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development

Update 3

Update the Genetic Evaluation Base

ICAR guidelines

Include all animals in the Genetic Evaluation System

5-yearly base rolls

Commence regular 5-yearly base updates

What this means for ABVs

- Smaller Fertility ABV values (Holsteins)
- Big drop in Milk ABV (Jerseys)
- Smaller ABV values for most other traits
- Change in animal rankings expected

DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development

The NBO must evolve over time in response to the changing needs of dairy businesses, new knowledge and breeding technologies. As the NBO evolves, so do the indices. DataGene has a policy to review every five years the NBO and the index formulated to meet this objective.

The purpose of the 2024/25 NBO review is:

- To ensure the NBO which is aimed at driving on-farm profit, still remains relevant.
- To maintain an index (or indexes) based on strong scientific principles which are in line with farmer preferences and meet the agreed NBO.

Resources

Fact sheet – NBO recommendations (March 2025)

Options paper (January 2025)

Fact sheet - NBO consultation findings (October 2024)

Discussion Paper - NBO review 2024/25 (June 2024)

Fact sheet - NBO review 2024/25 (May 2024)

Technote - Updates to BPI, HWI and SI 2025

Technote - Updating the base

2019/20 NBO review resources

2014/15 NBO review resources

Key Takeaways

- Extensive 18-month review engaging 255+ farmers, 138 stakeholder meeting participants
- 3 core recommendations: updated pricing, enhanced HWI, and base update
- All changes implemented — December 2025 public release
- Robust communications plan in place for industry and producers

DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development

Thank you!

It's a team effort!

Thanks to the 255 survey respondents, 20 focused interview participants, 138 people participating in the stakeholder meetings

Genetic Evaluation Standing Committee: Tim Jelbart (past Chair), Sam Simpson (current Chair), Daniel Abernethy, Andrew Aldridge, Janet Auchterlonie, Glen Barrett, Steph Bullen, Rohan Butler, Rob Derksen, Thuy Nguyen, Trevor Parrish, Jennie Pryce, Bruce Ronalds, Matt Shaffer, Tim Weller, Bryan Dickson.

Research team: Michelle Axford, Heather McLaren (Dairy Australia), Lee Monks, Jo Newton (Agriculture Victoria), Matt Shaffer, Daniel Watson (Down To Earth), Thuy Nguyen, Gert Nieuwhof, Peter Thurn, Peter Williams, Jo Bills (EverAg), Majid Khansefid, Mekonnen Haile-Mariam, Vinzent Boerner, Mary Abdelsayed, Erica Jewell.

AbacusBio: Peter Amer, Ee Cheng Ooi, Doug Bjelland, Cheryl Quinton, Simon Glennie.

Promotional support: Bridget Black, Michelle DeLisle, Nicki Hart and Bernie Baxter (Dairy Australia), Laura Calder, NHIA, Dairy Australia's Regional Programs, Holstein Australia, Jersey Australia, Australian Red Dairy Breed, and the many companies that promoted the survey via social media.

Data sources: Data processing centres, herd recording farmers, Dairy Farm Monitor Program, EverAg.

Technical support: John Droppert, Eliza Redfern, Alicia Richter (Dairy Australia), Natalie Nelson and Claire Waterman (AgVic) and the Dairy Farm Monitor Project Team, Stephen Bignell and Emily Tan (MLA).

TMA: Loc Ong, Tuan Ho, Hana Vo, Quynh Tran, Linh Pham.

DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development