



## LIMOUSIN PERFORMANCE RECORDING

### Muscle and Backfat Scanning

Ultrasound scanning services provide cattle breeders and buyers with the opportunity to assess carcass quality by measuring muscle and fat levels in the live animal. This information is then analysed to identify breeding animals with superior genetic merit for these traits.

#### Why use ultrasound to assess muscling?

Unlike growth rate, it isn't easy to identify cattle with superior muscling across the loin. Ultrasound images enable breeders to select animals with superior loins and avoid those with high level of carcass fat.

While this measurement simply reflects muscle depth across the loin, research tells us that selective breeding for muscle depth can greatly enhance total muscle yield.



#### Raw Data or Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs)?

As with any raw performance data, muscle and fat depth measurements are affected by non-genetic factors, such as age at scanning and herd nutrition. It is important that breeders select on the basis of muscle and fat depth EBVs, rather than on the raw data alone.

#### What is involved?

Cattle are scanned between 350 and 500 days of age. Liquid paraffin is applied to the hide to assist acoustic contact and the technician places the transducer across the last rib and the third lumbar vertebrae to get two images.

As each image is taken the picture is frozen and linear measurements of muscle and fat depths taken on the screen. A single measure of muscle depth and eight measures of fat depth are taken. These measurements are then submitted for inclusion in the forthcoming breeding evaluation.



#### Muscle/

## **Muscle and Backfat Scanning - Accredited Operators**

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