

# Recording Management Groups



## TIP SHEET

The recording of management group information by cattle producers is one of the most important aspects of BREEDPLAN. This tip sheet provides an overview of management groups, while also explaining when and how they should be utilised.

### WHY SHOULD MANAGEMENT GROUPS BE RECORDED?

One of the most important premises underpinning the BREEDPLAN analysis is that **only animals which have had an equal opportunity to perform should be directly compared**. To achieve this, BREEDPLAN analyses cattle in contemporary groups. In doing so, the influence of as many non-genetic factors as possible are removed (e.g. feeding regime, age, seasonality).

The BREEDPLAN analysis automatically creates contemporary groups based on a range of criteria (see the [Understanding BREEDPLAN Contemporary Groups](#) tip sheet, available in the [Help Centre](#) on the BREEDPLAN website). One such criterion is breeder defined management groups.

Breeder defined management groups allow producers to act as “eyes” for the BREEDPLAN analysis. By assigning management groups alongside performance data, breeders are able to inform BREEDPLAN of any on-farm treatment and/or management decisions that may have impacted on the performance of their animals. In this way, breeders are assisting to identify those animals which can be genuinely compared together, and those which should not be compared head to head.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a short video on birth management groups

### BREEDER DEFINED MANAGEMENT GROUPS

There are two different forms of breeder defined management groups:

#### (i) BIRTH MANAGEMENT GROUPS

The birth management group allows breeders to describe differences in the treatment of the **cows** prior to the birth of their calves (especially in the last trimester) that may affect birth weight and/or calving ease when the calf is born.

Common examples include:

- Pregnant cows being run in different paddocks where feed is of different nutritional value. Calves born into a paddock with low(er) nutritional value should be placed into a separate birth management group to calves born into a paddock with high(er) nutritional value.
- A producer owns multiple properties, with pregnant mobs running on each. Calves born on property one should be placed into a separate birth management group to calves born on property two.
- Some pregnant cows are out on agistment, while the rest remain on the home block. Calves born to the agistment mob should be placed into a different birth management group to those born to the home mob, even if the agistment mob has been brought home to calve.

An individual calf should also be placed into a separate birth management group if its birth weight and/or calving difficulty score has been affected by special circumstances, such as being premature, or its dam having been sick prior to calving.

If you are in any doubt as to whether you should assign birth management groups in a given scenario, please contact staff at your BREEDPLAN processing centre to discuss your situation.



## (ii) POST-BIRTH MANAGEMENT GROUPS

The post-birth management group allows breeders to identify animals that have received different treatment and/or management following birth that may have influenced their performance. This treatment may be intentional (e.g. when some of your young bulls receive supplementary feeding and others do not) or unintentional (e.g. when a calf is sick).

Animals should be assigned into different post-birth management groups in any situation where, either individually or as a group, they have **not** had equal opportunity to perform.

Common examples include:

- Where an animal or its mother has been sick or injured and this has affected its performance.
- Where a subset of calves are being supplementary fed and others are not. For example, the show and/or sale teams.
- Where some animals are given growth promotants and others are not.
- Where calves are running in paddocks of differing nutritional value. Please use your judgement when assigning management groups to calves running in different paddocks; if the two paddocks are separated by a fence line and are otherwise very similar, you may decide not to separate calves in these two paddocks into different management groups. However, calves running in paddocks that are clearly different should be placed into separate post-birth management groups.
- Where calves are running together as a single mob but were born on different properties. For example, in situations where an individual producer owns multiple properties or where a producer has had a subset of animals out on agistment which have since returned home. In such a scenario, calves should be split into post-birth management groups that reflect their property of birth as the differences in their early months of life are likely to have affected their later performance.
- Where a bull has been fighting and has clearly lost weight prior to recording.
- Where some yearling bulls have been used for mating and others have not.
- When some heifers are preg tested in calf (PTIC) and others are empty. In addition, PTIC heifers should only be placed in the same management group if they are at a similar stage of pregnancy (see the [Recording Performance Data from Pregnant Heifers](#) tip sheet, available in the [Help Centre](#) on the BREEDPLAN website).
- Where some heifers are spayed and others are not.
- Where animals have been weighed on different scales.
- As the BREEDPLAN analysis assumes that twins are raised as twins, any twin that has been raised as a single calf (i.e. stayed on mum while its sibling was fostered or hand-raised) should be placed into a separate post-birth management group to twin calves that were raised as twins. Fostered and hand-raised poddy calves should also be placed into their own post-birth management groups. Producers with lots of twin, foster and/or poddy calves are encouraged to contact their BREEDPLAN processing centre for specific advice as management grouping in these situations can be complex.

If you are in any doubt as to whether you should assign post-birth management groups in a given scenario, please contact staff at your BREEDPLAN processing centre to discuss your situation.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Management groups can be up to three digits in length. They can consist of letters, numbers or a combination. Some producers will choose to use an abbreviation of the paddock or property name, while others will use numbers or letters in a sequential order. You should use whichever combination makes the most sense to you.



- Animals should only be split into different management groups when there has been different treatment and/or management that has impacted their performance. Calves that are running together and exposed to the same environmental conditions should **not** be sub-grouped solely because of their horn/poll status or coat colour.
- Birth management groups only impact on the contemporary group formation for birth traits (i.e. birth weight, calving ease). That is, they have no impact on contemporary group formation for post-birth traits (e.g. 200, 400 and 600 day weights).
- In contrast, post-birth management groups will impact on the contemporary group formation for the trait that the management group applies to **and any future post-birth performance traits**. Consider post-birth management groups to be like a tree; once the animals are split into separate management groups, they branch off and cannot come back together. In the example

shown below, the male calves have been split into two post-birth management groups for their 200 day weights, A and B, and will be analysed in separate contemporary groups. Even if no management groups are submitted with their 400 day weights, they will continue to be analysed in separate contemporary groups for their 400 day weights **because of their 200 day weight management groups**. For this reason, it is recommended that if you do have to split calves into different mobs, you aim to keep them in the same mob (i.e. avoiding moving calves in and out of different mobs) until you have finished recording all of their post-birth performance.

**For more information regarding management groups, please contact staff at your BREEDPLAN processing centre.**



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a short video on post-birth management groups

