

Can I just record my best animals and forget the rest?

Significant problems also arise when only a selection of animals in a contemporary group are performance recorded. For example, only the performance for the best animals in the contemporary group is submitted to BREEDPLAN. In this situation, the performance information for an animal will only be compared with the “selection” that has been recorded. If this “selection” is not an accurate reflection of the entire contemporary group, then BREEDPLAN can not make adequate comparisons and the EBVs produced may be biased or misleading.

The table below provides an illustration of the problems caused by selective recording.

Animal	200 Day Weight (1)	200 Day Weight (2)
A1	255	255
A2	238	238
A3	261	261
A4	205	X
A5	187	X
A6	265	265
A7	237	237
A8	195	X
A9	258	258
A10	228	X
Average	233kg	252kg

The problem caused by selective recording is demonstrated if we consider animal A7. In the first scenario, all 10 calves in the contemporary group have been recorded and A7 is 4 kg heavier than the average of the group (237 kg vs 233 kg). This is an accurate reflection of how this animal ranks compared to his peers.

However, in the second scenario, the weights for the lightest 4 calves have not been recorded. A7 is now 15 kg lighter than the “average” of the group (237 kg vs 252 kg). The selective recording of this group has resulted in the performance of A7 being compared against a misleading average. As BREEDPLAN can only calculate EBVs based on the information that has been recorded, the subsequent EBVs that are calculated from this performance will also be misleading (i.e. biased).

What should be done is:

- **Adopt a whole herd recording strategy**
- **Record all calves with your breed society**
- **Always record performance for all calves in a contemporary group and submit this performance to BREEDPLAN**
- **Record performance on all available animals (i.e. heifers, bulls & steers, rather than just bulls).**