

S01(T)-OP-02

**Nordic breeding values for beef breed sires used for crossbreeding with dairy dams**

Emma Carlen<sup>1</sup>, Freddy Fikse<sup>1</sup>, Ruth Bønløkke Davis<sup>2</sup>, Jukka Pösö<sup>3</sup>, Gert Pedersen Aamand<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research & Development, Genetic evaluation unit, Växa Sverige, Uppsala, Sweden

<sup>2</sup>Livestock Innovation, Seges, Aarhus, Denmark

<sup>3</sup>Faba Co-op, Vantaa, Finland

<sup>4</sup>Nordic Cattle Genetic Evaluation, Aarhus, Denmark

The use of beef semen in dairy herds has increased considerably during the past years in Denmark, Finland and Sweden. More and more dairy farmers inseminate those dairy cows, that are not needed to produce replacement heifers, with beef semen. This has created a need by the dairy farmers to be able to, in a better way, select the beef breed sires best suited for crossbreeding with dairy cattle. Therefore, Nordic Cattle Genetic Evaluation (NAV) has developed joint Nordic breeding values that will aid farmers in their choice of the right beef sires to use on their dairy cows. The evaluation utilizes data on beef × dairy crossbred calves born in Sweden, Finland and Denmark. An important feature of the breeding values is that they are comparable across sire breed and country of origin. Breeding values are currently estimated for seven traits belonging to one of two trait groups: calving- and carcass traits. For calving traits, breeding values are estimated for calf survival and calving ease based on cows in 1st and later lactations, respectively. For carcass traits, breeding values are estimated for daily carcass gain, carcass conformation score and carcass fat score. Development work on combining the traits in a total merit index has been nearly completed and will be implemented during this year.

**Keywords:** breeding value, crossbreeding, beef x dairy