

# Do Pedigree Breeders Still Need to Record?

Now that the vast majority of pedigree cattle in the UK have EBVs with reasonable accuracies, some breeders are questioning whether they still need to record.

Certainly the EBVs of a potential calf can be predicted by adding together the EBVs of its sire and dam and dividing by two. However, as embryo transfer work clearly shows full brothers and sisters can vary widely in terms of their characteristics depending on exactly which genes they inherit from each parent.

As a result, although their EBVs might be similar, they will never be identical so that their actual performance has to be recorded to help calculate

their individual EBVs and to identify which has inherited superior genes. This is why all cattle will continually need to be measured/weighed, etc. to ensure future EBVs are as accurate and useful as possible.

A possible exception in the future would be if we were able to accurately measure exactly which genes each animal has inherited, a science which has already started with the commercial availability of gene markers. If we can accurately and easily measure exactly what genes the animal has inherited then there will be no need to monitor its performance providing we know exactly how each gene affects the performance of the animal.

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