

DAFF ARC National Best Elite Cow Awards

SPONSORED BY FARMER'S WEEKLY

This year is the 36th anniversary of the Best Elite Cow Awards.

Farmer's Weekly first sponsored the awards in 1979, and has presented a total of 433 trophies, including this year's awards, since then.

The awards will be presented to the owners of 25 cows on 28 August.

DAFF ARC National Best Elite Cow Awards are presented to cows which, on the basis of reproduction, performance test records and breeding values, have proven themselves genetically superior in all economically important traits. These include reproduction, maternal ability and pre-weaning growth rate (weaning weight).

The physical appearance of the cow plays no role in the selection process.

This year the ARC - Animal Production Institute took the decision to consider cows of all beef breeds eligible for the awards, irrespective of which service provider

(ARC, SA Stud Book or Breedplan) the relevant breeders' society uses for registration, performance testing and breeding value estimation.

To qualify for a DAFF ARC National Best Elite Cow Award, a cow must comply with the following requirements:

REGISTERED BREEDS

- The cow must be alive on the evaluation date.
- The cow's age at first calving must not exceed 39 months.
- The cow's average inter-calving period must not exceed 425 days.
- The cow must have calved normally during the 18 months before the evaluation date.
- The cow must not have more than one calf without a valid weaning weight after the first calf with a valid weaning weight.

BREEDING VALUE REQUIREMENTS

- Wean direct breeding value must be within the best 50% of the active females in the breed.

- Wean maternal breeding value must be within the best 50% of the active females in the breed.
- Birth direct breeding value must be within the lowest 99% of the active females in the breed.
- Birth maternal breeding value (where available) must be within the lowest 99% of the active females in the breed.
- The cow must have a minimum of seven calves with reliable weaning weights.
- The cow may not have previously received an Best Elite Cow Award.

COMMERCIAL HERDS WHERE NO BLUP BREEDING VALUES ARE AVAILABLE

- The breeding value requirements are replaced with the following:
- No calf may have a weaning index below 90.
 - Average weaning index of calves must be at least 100.
 - No more than two calves with a weaning index below 100.

The following aspects of the qualifying cows (see above) are evaluated to identify the Best Elite Cow per breed:

- Birth and weaning breeding values of the cow.

- Average efficiency index (if available).
- Approval ratio (percentage of her progeny approved for registration by the breeders' society concerned), considering the sex and herd book status of each calf.
- Average inter-calving period and reproduction index.
- Percentage of performance tested calves with valid birth and weaning weights.
- Number of calves with valid weaning weights in relation to the cow's age.

The 2014 DAFF ARC National Best Elite Cow Awards are listed in Table 2 and the owners' details are shown alongside the photos. Congratulations to each owner on an outstanding achievement.

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Table 2: The 2014 DAFF ARC National Best Elite Cow Awards

Breed	Cow ID No	Age (years)	Number of calves	Age 1st calving (months)	Av. ICP ¹ (days)	Reprod index ²	Average weaning index ³		Birth weight EBV ⁴		Weaning weight EBV ⁵	
							Dir ⁶	Mat ⁷	Dir ⁶	Mat ⁷	Dir ⁶	Mat ⁷
Afrikaner	MC 00 0391	14	10	35	368	111	113	0,89 ²⁶	0,50 ⁴⁶	11,685	11,061	
AfriSim	UG 04 0003	10	7	-	368	115	104	0,71 ⁷⁴	0,50 ⁵⁴	8,2 ⁶⁵	4,2 ²⁹	
Angus	ZDW 01 0292	13	11	24	357	119	110	1,32 ⁸⁹	-0,16 ⁷⁵	17,1 ⁶³	12,5 ⁴⁵	
Beefmaster	HU 02 0109	12	10	28	360	117	114	1,66 ⁸⁷	1,07 ⁶⁶	14,9 ⁸²	10,8 ⁴⁹	
Bonsmara	GZV 98 0008	16	14	25	365	117	108	1,14 ⁹⁰	0,99 ⁷⁹	12,4 ⁸⁸	10,2 ⁸¹	
Boran	CFH 06 0351	8	7	-	336	123	106	0,84 ³⁹	0,31 ²³	7,1 ⁶²	4,4 ⁵⁰	
Braford	TH 00 0122	8	11	37	362	-	-	1,80 ⁸⁴	-	11,0 ⁶⁹	2,0 ⁶³	
Brahman	NM 99 0225	15	12	33	366	-	-	0,90 ⁸²	-	18,0 ⁸⁰	9,0 ⁷⁶	
Braunvieh	FJNH 05 0004	9	7	26	338	122	104	0,99 ⁸¹	0,67 ⁶³	5,8 ⁵³	8,7 ¹⁹	
Charolais	ESC 03 0112	11	8	31	371	112	105	1,27 ⁸⁷	0,81 ⁷²	14,4 ⁸⁰	3,0 ⁵⁰	
Drakensberger	SS 03 0032	11	8	25	371	117	107	0,51 ⁸⁷	0,06 ⁷⁰	9,6 ⁸³	11,7 ⁷³	
Gelbvieh	GG 03 0168	11	9	30	388	110	109	2,11 ⁸⁶	-0,02 ⁷¹	15,3 ⁸²	2,4 ⁵⁵	
Hereford	TW 02 0038	12	9	37	365	110	121	0,17 ⁸⁷	1,19 ⁷⁰	9,2 ⁸¹	21,1 ⁵²	
Hugenoot	SFF 01 0007	13	7	-	383	112	112	-0,32 ⁷⁴	0,10 ⁵²	8,1 ⁶⁵	5,5 ²⁷	
Limousin	DK 02 0076	12	10	24	366	-	-	1,70 ⁸⁶	-	15,0 ⁸⁵	11,0 ⁸⁰	
Nguni	FF 02 0045	12	10	25	366	117	112	0,62 ⁶²	0,53 ⁵³	11,8 ⁸⁵	2,7 ⁶¹	
Pinzgauer	PGJ 04 0143	10	7	36	373	-	-	1,01 ⁸⁵	0,20 ⁶⁸	14,5 ⁷⁸	3,0 ⁴⁸	
PinZyl	PZ 03 0057	11	9	-	360	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Santa Gertrudis	DJW 02 0004	12	10	32	363	-	-	0,00 ⁷⁷	-	17,0 ⁷²	7,0 ⁶²	
Simbra	JJF 00 2B	14	12	30	358	-	-	1,10 ⁷⁵	-	18,0 ⁶⁹	6,0 ⁶³	
Simmentaler	PHN 00 0016	14	12	23	359	-	-	1,50 ⁷⁹	-	15,0 ⁶⁹	6,0 ⁶⁵	
South Devon	BL 03 0072	11	8	35	364	111	102	-1,83 ⁸⁶	1,95 ⁶⁹	20,7 ⁸²	2,5 ⁵³	
Sussex	TZ 04 0087	10	8	25	361	118	103	1,19 ⁸⁸	0,66 ⁷⁴	15,7 ⁸³	9,6 ⁵⁶	
Tuli	AM 03 0007	11	8	31	353	115	99	1,53 ⁸²	1,00 ⁶⁸	5,9 ⁷⁵	8,4 ⁴⁵	
Wagyu	BA 04 0044	10	5	32	368	-	-	-	-	-	-	

1. AV. ICP - AVERAGE INTERCALVING PERIOD

2. REPROD INDEX - REPRODUCTION INDEX (BASED ON AGE AT FIRST CALVING AND AVERAGE ICP)

3. AVERAGE WEANING INDEX - AVERAGE WEANING WEIGHT INDEX OF CALVES

4. BIRTH WEIGHT EBV - ESTIMATED BREEDING VALUE FOR BIRTH WEIGHT

5. WEANING WEIGHT EBV - ESTIMATED BREEDING VALUE FOR WEANING WEIGHT

6. DIR - DIRECT EBV (accuracy)

7. MAT - MATERNAL EBV (accuracy)