

THE REGISTRATION SYSTEM.

You got here so that's a very good start. A few sessions and you will be an expert. Easy, that's the idea.

WHY?

A Herd Book is a historical document summarising the breeding efforts of members of a breed organisation. Such efforts are epitomised by a pedigree. This is built up over many generations from records entered into a data base such as this one. On line computing makes both entry and recalling records fast and simple. However, data as collected in this system goes back to about 1949 and there have been many changes in the way records have been kept and the codes used, particularly when the recording was done manually on index cards.

There are some 350,000 entries in this data base going back to the Angora Goat records of the old Dairy Goat Society, then the AMAA, ABS, AMBA and now Mohair Australia. In the late 1980's there was a move by many to "On Farm" record animals, thus reducing the breeders' costs and effort filling out laborious paper application forms. This option was allowed under the rules that required breeders to be able, if asked, to produce pedigrees tracing completely to "Registered Angoras" (one's with a Herd Book Number). This was in line with the concept of "Purebred" (an animal whose parents were in the book). Clearly this definition has a flaw, but the idea was to demonstrate that animals had been bred from a group of acceptable animals for a long time, and not just a few generations of crossbreeding from feral or milk goats. Now crossbreeding was approved of as long as only crossbred females were used and 5 generations of crossing and back crossing were undertaken. Crossbred does had a XD or G4 up to an XA or G1 in the Herd Book Number and were referred to as Appendix animals.

Mohair Australia still allows the use of "Stud Doe" as the dam of "numbered" does but requires all bucks to have both parents identified by a Herd Book Number. Using "Stud Doe" is taken as a declaration that the breeder can provide a complete pedigree back to numbered animals.

In 1984 animals from the Texan Angora Goat Raiser's Association were imported into Australia. These animals were registered in Texan. The parents of these animals were entered into the Herd Book in Australia and animals born in quarantine from then till the release in 1992 have a tattoo including the code letters "TI". The records of the imports of African Angoras (beginning in 1992) are not as clear but most have some reference to particular animals in the embryo importation by the 5 known programs.

Most animals now bred in Australia relate almost entirely to importations made from Texas and South Africa.

With the decline in demand and stock values breeders were concerned about the cost of registering bucks prior to sale and were offering animals as "Register-able". This however was a "proscribed interest" and illegal without a proper prospectus. Mohair Australia introduced a "progeny recording" loop in the registration process which at a low fee demonstrated that animals were Register-able. Animals were given a preliminary R number which could be upgraded to a full Herd Book Number if a transfer was required. Some

animals remain in the data base with R numbers and these are now considered to be fully recorded.

Historically the pedigree has been seen as a mark of quality and a means of identifying superiority, presumably because sires used are assumed to be superior, and indeed many were or are show champions. Unfortunately, the concept of quality is in the eye of the beholder and while some characteristics like kemp fibre, for example, can be assessed visually, others are not so easy and some simply can't be assessed accurately by eye and require measurement.

For this reason, Mohair Australia is considering plans to implement a performance recording system in the Herd Book System. This will allow measured performance and some visual assessment to be collated on-line and the results of calculations returned in the form of a Animal Performance Form and a Progeny Test Form. While performance recording is not new, this may perhaps be the first time that a breed organisation has attached PR to its Herd Book. It is hoped that breeders will use at least part of the performance system and thus provide a means of improving their animals in measurable terms.

Because of the move to facilitate performance recording and general use of the Herd Book as a record system for members, the system is now referred to as a Recording System, and animals are "Recorded", rather than "Registered". Recorded animals can have an Animal Record Form printed which gives a pedigree, ownership information and the number of progeny recorded with Mohair Australia. Upon Transfer, a Herd Book Certificate is printed with the name of the buyer printed on the document. Only one HBC is issued upon a transfer and is proof of ownership. When implemented, Animal Record Forms which include performance information and sire progeny tests will be available, but only for the actual breeder. Performance information is regarded as confidential to the breeder of particular animals.

In a world of greater reliance of information and the use of readily available complex mathematics, automated data entry and calculations offer the new breeder many opportunities that were restricted to geneticists and mathematicians only a few decades ago. The Mohair Australia system is here to be used.

SYSTEM OUTLINE

The Mohair Australia Herd Book System is housed on a server in the Mohair Australia office and is available 24 hours a day. Access to the Herd Book will be via the front page of www.mohair.org.au/ and a link from the Herd Book to the main site is available from the front page of the Herd Book system. At present the beta test access is from the Animal Registration drop down menu and clicking "Herdbook". You can go direct to the Herd Book by using <http://herdbook.mohair.org.au/dnn> (that's this site so it's not presented here as a link).

While other pages can be included in the Herd Book System only the front page, the Herd Book itself, this Help page, the By-law page and the News sheet page are currently available.

The system includes membership, animal records, herd lists, transfers, manual edit/entry, transaction log, invoicing, and various reports including ARF, HBC, progeny lists and membership lists. Not all functions are available to all users.

Non-members may see membership information and animal's information but cannot enter data or edit data.

Breeder (Full) Members may update their herd and individual animal status, enter new animals, edit existing data for animals they breed and recorded, transfer animals to other breeder members (issuing a Herd Book Certificate HBC), and view and print progeny lists, Animal Record Forms (ARF's) and membership lists.

The Administrator/Registrar may enter new members, edit membership information, issue new passwords, enter and edit animal information for members without computer access, grant admin status to specific people, examine the transaction log, backup the system and print animal and membership reports.

There are several "superusers" with overseeing roles and these people can access the system code and update the program. Technically they have the same status and access as the Registrar but can fill their function at a distance from the Mohair Australia office.

GETTING STARTED

The home page gives access to a number of pages including the Herd Book itself. The Herd Book provides a number of command buttons to carry out specific tasks, the number of commands available depends on the password status and members are required to log in (top right) and give their password before gaining higher level access. To obtain an initial password you need to contact the Mohair Australia office (on Thursday or Friday only). Use this password to gain entry to the Herd Book. Your "user name" will appear next to the logout command (top right).

Clicking the user name after logging in allows the user to change his/her password.

Clicking the centrally placed "Herd Book" returns the user to the command buttons. Likewise by clicking blue "Herd Book" once to highlight and once to go there. Likewise, for other pages.

The browser "Back" button often returns a "Page Expired" message. Unfortunately pages are constructed with many sorts and filters set by the user. This makes it difficult to construct a "Previous Page" command and this feature is not included in this program. In any event such a facility would not speed things up because the server would still have to redo the search/sort/download sequence. Sorry.

GENERAL ROUTINES

Usually clicking a command button starts a set of screens which have additional command buttons. In general, you highlight a record in a list (it turns yellow after clicking) and go to the bottom of the list and click "view" to view the entry. After carrying out a task you click "save" and the screen will refresh with the changes and a "successful" reply in green, or an "unsuccessful" message in red explaining what went wrong. Information in grey cannot be edited or changed. At any time you can return to the front command page, logout or close the browser without damage, though unless you get a green successful message that piece of work not be saved. All transactions are logged so attempts to manipulate the system can be tracked.

In many places where lists are provided, clicking the heading of a column lists the data in alphabetic order of that column.

FILTERS

Lists can be one record long or up to 200. There are a number of boxes at the top of list screens which allow you to narrow the scope or order the list in a particular way. In general, if you type a particular name or number and search, what is listed will be everything which contains that criteria, not just that which starts with the criteria. Eg if you type in PARK in the stud name search you may get Camden Park, Parkview and Parkhurst but you can then choose the one you are interested in.

In the membership report you may wish to find people in your area. You could ask for your postcode. The first 3 numbers in your postcode would widen the response and the just the first number would give you the whole state. When searching for animals you may have a tattoo number in mind (eg "CUD A" will give you up to a thousand Cudal animals in the A series). You can use multiple criteria. For example, asking for animals of one sex, born in a particular year.

Wild cards. You can use the wild card approach to indicate "any character" in a search criterion. In DotNet Nuke the wild card is a "%". This may be helpful in some circumstances. However, for those that ask, "how do I get the next 200 entries?", the answer is you don't. Refine the criteria. If you want all the animals in your Herd, use the Herd Report command. It will give you whatever sort and filter you wish. The question is why? When you get your herd down to the current holding you can use it as a stocktake. Before that you can use it to identify what animals you need to deactivate. Try and work through the list by drop and by sex.

LOOKING FOR BREEDERS AND ANIMALS

It is in the nature of Herd Books that breeders come and go. Because the animals remain in the system for use in pedigrees the breeders and their stud names and brands have to be retained in the records. There are some 13,000 members and ex-members in the Mohair Australia system.

Even the casual surfer can look for people and animals using the two list commands available at the lowest level of access. Enter the surname, use the dropdown box to indicate surname and click "Search". Or for animals, the stud name, or Tattoo, or Herd Book Number and click "Search". You may well get a group of names with some details. For more information click on a record and when it is highlighted in yellow, click the view button at the bottom of the list. This will give information on the member or animal requested.

For casual surfers the information will be in grey and cannot be changed.

For Full members, their own animals can be edited though this will raise a flag and a note on the ARF and HBC. Edits should be done with great care and not after progeny have been recorded and transferred. If you find a long standing and serious error (like, for example, a wrong sire) contact the Registrar who will initiate what may be an extensive correction process. In most cases this will not be necessary since the only time such an error would be of importance would be if progeny have been sold and HBC's issued with incorrect pedigrees.

ANIMAL RECORD FORMS (ARF's)

This is the main "output" document of the system. It is requested once you have selected and viewed a particular animal. The form gives a pedigree and details about ownership of the animal. It is produced as a Acrobat pdf file which can be saved to your computer and printed whenever you wish. ARF's could make up a sale catalogue or be displayed at sales in place of the Herd Book Certificate which can now only be produced upon the transfer of an animal.

Mohair Australia recommends you use "Firefox" as your browser for this site. Firefox can be downloaded and installed for free from Google. Acrobat 5 and above will work simply with firefox. There are however, conflicts with Internet explorer 6 and 7 and Acrobat versions below version 8. If you wish to use IE6 or 7, please install Acrobat Reader 8.

HERD LIST AND STOCK TAKES

A feature of the new Herd Book System is the provision of dropdown lists of animals in the herd. This will greatly reduce errors and will prevent incorrect sexed animals, and dead or sold animal appearing in the parent fields. However, you should keep this information up to date using the "List Herd" Command.

The "List Herd" command can only be issued by a logged-in breeder and will list all animals bred by and purchased by the breeder since 1995. You can ask for "inactive" or "dead" animals if you want to look further back or back enter old animals. Note. An animal has to be "active" to appear in the dropdown sire and dam lists.

The clean-up task may be a little daunting because you will have to compare your current flock to that from the List Herd. Each animal in the Active list has a fate button which you can use to deactivate animals no longer in the flock. (Note you can re-activate animals if you need to, but you can't reverse transferred animals (which are automatically deactivated from your flock on transfer).

This clean up task is recommended as the first major activity of all breeders when starting with the new system. Each year when you cull old stock or do your mating lists, you should do a stock take and update your Herd List. You may care to print off a herd list at the end of each financial year for your accounting records.

If you require a stocktake list you should use the List Herd command, use the Tattoo order heading to list in tattoo order, deactivate animals not in the flock, save, and create (and print) the **Herd list report**. You may wish to restrict the list to one year drop and one sex before creating the report.

Don't deactivate animals until you have recorded their kids.

ADDING NEW ANIMALS

This might be done at weaning or at first shearing when you are sure you have an active animal to record.

How this is done depends somewhat on how you keep kidding records. There are a number of data items which need to be brought together in the recording process. Some breeders use a card system, others a day book, but it is recommended that if you keep a day book to record kidding details, you record the dam and the sire against the kid(s) each day of kidding. This will facilitate new animal entries.

When you click “Add new animal” command you will get a “blank” animal information screen with your stud name and tattoo brand filled in (in grey). You can enter a name (which could be the tattoo number) in the name field. (The Herd Book Number will be created automatically when you submit the animal by saving the entry.)

Note: By convention the stud name precedes the individual animal’s name but it is already there, so you don’t have to type the stud name again.

Choose the sex and Birth type (litter size) appropriate to the animal from the dropdown options.

Choose the sire and dam from the dropdown lists. They are listed by tattoo brand, number and name in alphabetic order.

If the sire or dam do not appear in the list it is possible that the parents have not been recorded, been sold or deactivated. You can use the “Herd Book” control at the top centre to try and a) find the animal and its current owner or b) record it first or c) reactivate it from the inactive animals in the List Herd screen.

Note: The active animals include sires for 148 days after they have been sold. Dams can’t have more than one kidding (litter) a year. You can only record the number of progeny up to the Birth type number (litter size).

Choose the birth date from the calendar and click “save”. If you get a green “successful” message you might make a note of the animal’s HB Number and then you can click “another new animal”. From “successful” you can also exit the entry system. You might care to print an Animal Record Form (ARF) which will give you a pedigree and a current owner confirmation.

Each time you achieve a successful entry your Mohair Australia account will be debited with the recording fee.

Dates. You can use the calendar to choose dates, but it may be easier to enter the date manually in the D-MMM-YYYY format where D is the day of the month, MMM is the three letter abbreviation of the month, and YYYY is the year. This works for all dates.

CASE

Traditionally all entries in the Mohair Australia Herd Book have been typed in upper case. This even goes back before computerisation and of course, the original computers only used upper case as well.

While you may well type entries in lower or proper case, all output is converted to upper case to provide consistency. You can imagine what a pedigree might look like if entries were made in a case preferred by each individual breeder.

AI, ET AND PERMITS

The animal entry screen has a check box to allow entry of sires and dams not in your flock. This might occur if you have more than one stud and a purchased animal was not recorded as being transferred to each stud (common under the old scheme), or because you actually used purchased semen or embryos.

In such cases you can check the box(s) and enter the Herd Book Number of the real sire and dam. There is a permit fee for this function and it may be cheaper to transfer a sire to joint flocks than continue to pay the permit fee for each kid recorded.

Of course, you have to have a legitimate reason for using the permit facility. The owners of these animals will become aware of misuse of their animals.

TRANSFERRING ANIMALS

This is a new function for the on-line system. Transfers must be done by the Owner at the time of sale. Usually vendors have 60 days to do the transfer allowing plenty of time for cheques to clear and office work to get done.

A member may use the "Transfer animal" command to open a screen and find the appropriate animal.

In the buyer's box a drop-down list of members is available to select the purchaser. Once found **click the "add buyer"** command and the name will appear above the buyer's box. You can add further syndicate owners to the list by repeating the process. It is important to include all syndicate members in the buyers so that the animal is included their respective flocks.

Should the animal be resold the job of doing the second transfer falls to the first member on the list.

Clicking the submit button does two things. It prints a Herd Book Certificate with the new owner printed on it and it changes the ownership of the animal removing it from the control of the vendor. The vendor should print the Herd Book Certificate fill in the mating details (if any) sign and post the Certificate to the Buyer.

Should an error be made and the wrong animal is transferred, or after 60 days the transfer has not been done, the Registrar is able to reverse the transaction (or carry out the transaction).

Fees are debited against the Vendor.

Note: You should record all progeny of an animal before transferring it to the new owner.

PROGENY LISTS

This command appears at the bottom of the "List Animal". You must select an animal first (click a record to make it yellow). The command allows you to list the progeny of the particular animal. Most animals have few progeny but some bucks can sire a large number of progeny by AI. Select the animal by name, tattoo or HBN and view. This facility might be handy when naming new progeny, finding dispersed progeny and later, when looking at performance characteristics.

MEMBERSHIP

Adding new members and updating membership information is a task for the Mohair Australia office. This is usually achieved by transferring information from a membership application form to the computer data base, or the processing of membership renewals.

The Registrar can access the membership screen and carry out these tasks. Because there are many thousands of stud names and tattoo brands which can't be repeated the Herd Book System makes duplication impossible, so more than one name and brand is needed as options. There is a further complication since similar names can be confusing or deceptive. The Registrar will attempt to detect and prevent similarities though this is a difficult task. Potential members may care to look for stud names using the Membership list and search on stud names which might be misinterpreted.

Membership details have been simplified in the new system. Surname and First name (or initials) have been selected rather than titles. Company and property names may be used but potential members should be aware of the difficulty alternating usage of property and surname is in membership listing and communication. Voting name may well follow the Surname, First name protocol.

Membership number incorporating the state of origin in the first digit is a particularly annoying carryover from manual systems. This practice will be retained but again, the data base is structured to avoid duplications.

SECURITY, SUPERVISION AND BACKUPS

While very little of the information held in the data base is confidential (at the moment), this might change when and if Performance Recording becomes part of the system. Passwords are the key to access at particular levels, but programming code and logs are also involved.

Perhaps of greater concern is accidental and even malicious misuse of routine functions. The data received from ABRI had a high degree of integrity and Mohair Australia is concerned that this integrity is retained, even though the data is more accessible to breeders. All computers have an event log and the Herd Book System has a specific transaction log which will be monitored independently by several people. Unauthorised access and attempts to do edits will be observed. Routine backups, both in house and off premises will allow restoration of uncorrupted files though this may require a call for re-entry of data by breeders from a particular date. It is hoped that this will not be necessary.

There is always the chance of an unforeseen error occurring. Beta testing of the system will be extensive and so obvious errors and inconsistencies should have been discovered. Users might however be aware of and report to the Registrar any problem or strange reaction to a command. Undoubtedly, phone line drop-outs and a very occasional line fault may result in a particular error. The best solution to an apparent problem is to close the browser, turn your computer off, wait 20 seconds and restart. All computers on the internet should be running anti-virus software but any strange message should result in a quick closing of the computer and discussion with technicians. Do not persist with trying to do things which fail. You may be making the situation worse by leaving the virus or whatever, running. Never open an email from an unknown sender, or respond to unsolicited offers, or calls for personal information. "Delete" is your friend and protector but even that still leaves code on your machine.