

How Northern Breeding Business (NB2) works

The [Northern Breeding Business \(NB2\)](#) strategic RD&A partnership is a joint initiative of North Australia Beef Research Council (NABRC) and MLA which aims to improve the long-term viability and sustainability of the north Australian beef industry by:

- reducing calf wastage in breeding herds
- improving the financial viability of northern beef enterprises
- increasing the adoption of proven management practices and technologies

NB2 is projected to yield \$20M in net benefits per annum to the northern beef industry through increased production of 10M kg live weight of sale cattle by 2027. This will be delivered through 250 northern beef businesses engaged with NB2, each with at least 800 AE of cattle ($\approx 13\%$ of an estimated 1,900 businesses), collecting and using objective data to inform business decisions and adopting proven management practices and new technologies.

What does the project involve?

The NB2 program is supported by four pillars:

1. An adoption focused **Pathway to Practice** pillar will actively engage northern beef enterprises in the use of objective data to inform management decisions and provide a direct conduit from research and development outcomes to changes in business practice.

Pathway to Practice pillar will support northern beef businesses to:

- Collect and analyse standardised beef business records to establish baselines for sustainable production, performance and financial outcomes.
 - Promote and support awareness, development and adoption of business practice innovation.
 - Set the direction for, and engage in, on-property research, development, extension and adoption.
2. The **Herd** pillar will focus on enhancing breeding herd performance and efficiency through improved management systems and interventions.
 3. The **Feed-base** pillar will have a focus on optimising feed production, supply and utilization for the breeding herd in order to achieve the desired performance, in a cost effective manner.
 4. The **Environment** pillar will explore issues related to the managing the rangelands and the environment, and the long-term sustainability of the northern beef industry.

The NB2 program will be piloted by four producer groups, each with a minimum of five producer collaborators, who have agreed to participate in training, peer to peer learning and adoption activities.

Participation requirements

Participation requires:

- the commitment of animals, at a scale that could range from a cohort/management group to whole-of-herd, and resources to service these activities.

- producers to collect and store prescribed data and information in a standard format and manner. All data collection, storage, analysis and use will be compliant with the National Farm Data Code (2020) and will remain confidential. Annual outputs will provide each Pathway to Practice partner business with up-to-date analysis of the productivity and profitability of their herd and business, including analyses of the efficacy of systems used or being evaluated, by comparing with like businesses.

Collaborating producers will be supported by a beef producer co-ordinator identified from within each group and employed part-time to assist collaborators with the activities required by the program.

Specific training or assistance will be provided by the NB2 program, this may include:

- Business EDGE;
- Breeding EDGE;
- Nutrition EDGE;
- Grazing Land Management programs; and
- The engagement of a third-party consultant, conference attendance or participation in other MLA approved training opportunities.

Producer group requirements

- A minimum of five (5) collaborating producer members, with separate and independent beef businesses
- An identified producer co-ordinator from within the group.

Requirements for individual producer members (of producer groups)

- A genuine commitment to investigating opportunities to use objective data to inform business decisions, adopt proven management practices and trial new technologies to enhance the productivity, profitability and sustainability of their beef enterprise
- The ability to commit a minimum herd size, whole or part of the breeding herd and associated pastures of 800 adult equivalents (AE) to the NB2 program
- Be able to provide details of:
 - The physical location of their beef enterprise
 - Herd size
 - Breed/genotype
 - Business objectives/target markets
- A commitment to participate in the NB2 program for at least 3 years
- Willing to invest up to \$2000 per annum in the NB2 program, which can be matched with MLA Donor Company funds to support on-property advancements in practice, on-property research and development, business development and peer to peer learning activities

Requirements for paid producer group co-ordinators

- Meet the requirements for individual producers (as above).
- Able to commit 4 days per month to co-ordinating the activities of the producer group (to be remunerated at a daily rate of \$500 per day (excl.), plus travel costs and expenses).

After expressing an interest in participating in the study producer groups will be contacted to discuss the benefits of participation, project objectives and requirements of the project. Beef enterprises collaborating with the NB2 program will be required to enter into a formal agreement with MLA, in which all aspects of the NB2 program are agreed in detail prior to commencement.

Requirements for facilitators

- tertiary qualifications in a relevant discipline

- experience in beef business support, particularly in the context of the northern beef industry
- experience facilitating small group activities to achieve defined goals
- able to commit approximately four days per month to facilitate producer group activities.

Potential facilitators will also need to:

- align with an established beef producer group
- work with producers to establish a group which specifically aligns with the Pathway to Practice pillar of NB2, or
- Indicate an interest in participating in the Pathway to Practice pillar of NB2 with a view to being aligned with a producer group.

Interested?

NABRC and MLA are calling for Expressions of Interest (EoI) from northern producers and potential facilitators to participate in one of four producer groups; two in Queensland, one in the Northern Territory and one in the Kimberley/Pilbara region of Western Australia, to participate in the pilot of the NB2 project. If you're interested, head to mla.com.au/NB2