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Research for B&W bull calves

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Overview

- **How things were**
- **Recent progress**
- **Options for the future**

How things were

- 35 years of genetic selection for milk yield
- Introduction of Holstein genetics
- Legislation on veal production
- Public pressure on calf exports
- Pressure on beef production costs

Recent progress

- Recognition of the ethical, economic and environmental value of B&W bull calves
- Research into:
 - Opportunities to enhance carcass quality
 - Options for dairy farmers to rear bull calves to 14 weeks for sale to beef producers
- Markets developed for beef from B&W bull calves

Possible futures

- Breeding for carcass quality
 - Impact of increased muscling
 - No wish to increase size of the cow
 - Recording
 - Shown possible by collection of abattoir data
 - Selection Indices
 - Incorporation into £PLI
 - Genomics
 - Increased specificity

Genomic Evaluations

- Estimating genetic merit from animal's DNA
- Using genetic 'marker posts'
 - 54,000 SNPs
- Linking 'markers' to bull PTA
- Combine DNA info with 'traditional'
 - Information looks the same as normal bull proofs



Summary

- Research moving forward to improve B&W bull calf conformation
- Significant ethical and environmental benefits
- Contributes to global food security
- Only effective if market and pricing structure is responsive

References

- Rearing Holstein bull calves
 - <http://www.holsteinbullcalves.co.uk/index.php>
- Muscling on Holstein
 - <http://www.dairyco.org.uk/farming-info-centre/research--development/completed-projects/muscling-on-holsteins.aspx>
- Recommendations on heifer rearing
 - <http://www.dairyco.org.uk/farming-info-centre/research--development/completed-projects/reducing-heifer-wastage-in-the-dairy-herd.aspx>