American Brahman Breeders Association

Research & Breed Improvement Committee Meeting Agenda

May 14, 2026, at 4:00 PM
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Chairman Rodney Roberson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. CST.

Present
Rodney Roberson
Todd Schindler
Josefina Lecuna
Bruce Alford
Steve Wilkins
Charles Long
Milton Charanza

Staff
Mark Allan, PhD
Allison Hajny

The committee reviewed, discussed and made some corrections to improve the accuracy to the minutes from the December 4, 2025, meeting.

Todd Schindler moved to approve the corrected minutes. Bruce Alford seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The committee received an update regarding research funding previously allocated to Dr. Claire Gill's horned/polled allele research project. It was reported that $7,500 in funding, which was donated through private contributions and the Brahman Foundation, remains undisbursed due to administrative delays. Staff reported that efforts are underway to ensure the funds are delivered to Dr. Gill without overhead deductions so that the project may proceed.

The committee also discussed a previously approved $2,500 discretionary research allocation that was not utilized during the fiscal year and subsequently reverted to the Association's general fund. No action was taken.

Chairman Roberson introduced the need for ABBA to incorporate DNA genotypes from all approved laboratories into the Association's genomic-enhanced EPD evaluations. Dr. Mark Allan presented information regarding the use of Helical Company Ltd., a third-party genomic data management provider currently utilized by several beef breed associations. Dr. Allan explained that Helical would provide a centralized database capable of integrating and managing genotype information from multiple laboratories, including Neogen and Zoetis, thereby allowing all available high-density genotype data to be incorporated into genetic evaluations.

The committee discussed the importance of genomic-enhanced EPDs in maintaining the competitiveness and relevance of Brahman cattle within the beef industry. Dr. Allan reported

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that approximately 1,500 to 1,600 high-density genotypes generated through Zoetis during the past two years are currently not being utilized in genomic evaluations.

The committee also reviewed the projected costs associated with implementation, including an initial setup cost estimated between $10,000 and $15,000 and an ongoing fee of approximately $1 per genotype added to the database.

Todd Schindler moved that the Research and Breed Improvement (RBI) Committee strongly encourage the ABBA Board of Directors to support the commitment for the principles justifying this effort as the number one priority of the committee. Advancing industry relevance of our Brahman cattle will also require a financial commitment to this effort. The RBI committee urges the Board to contract with Helical to provide services necessary to advance the production and use of genomic-enhanced EPD for the Brahman breed. This motion was seconded by Milton Charanza. The motion passed unanimously.

The committee discussed the possibility of upgrading existing parentage-only DNA tests to high-density genomic profiles. Members reviewed the ongoing transition of Neogen's DNA business to Zoetis and discussed exploring whether historical parentage-only tests could be upgraded without requiring additional sampling. No action was taken.

The committee discussed opportunities to increase participation in high-density DNA testing as part of the breed's long-term genetic improvement strategy.

It was noted that only a small percentage of registered calves currently have high-density genomic information included in evaluations. Committee members discussed the possibility of requiring high-density DNA profiles for AI sires, ET sires, and donor dams prior to the registration of offspring beginning in a future implementation year. The committee agreed to continue studying the proposal and develop recommendations for future consideration.

Allison Hajny and Dr. Mark Allan provided an overview of ABBA's DNA-based parentage verification procedures.

Discussion focused on addressing member questions regarding the verification process and improving member understanding of how parentage verification is conducted. The committee agreed that additional educational materials should be developed to explain the process and reinforce confidence in the system.

The committee discussed opportunities to streamline DNA sample submission and processing. Allison Hajny explained that greater use of Digital Beef-generated submission forms would significantly reduce staff processing time and improve efficiency. The committee also discussed future opportunities for further automation as Digital Beef transitions to the 701X platform.

The committee discussed the feasibility of reinstating an Association-sponsored centralized bull test. Members reviewed prior efforts and the challenges associated with feedyard participation, billing, and management logistics. Several committee members expressed the opinion that

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modern EPDs provide a more valuable and efficient method of genetic evaluation than centralized testing programs.

Discussion then shifted to the importance of collecting carcass data for use in genetic evaluations. Committee members agreed that obtaining meaningful carcass performance information remains an important objective for the breed.

Dr. Charles Long noted that historical carcass data collected through the Texas A&M Overton Center may be available for review. Dr. Allan agreed to evaluate the data and determine whether it may have value for future genetic evaluations.

The committee reviewed the Association's current maternal and terminal selection indices. Members discussed previous committee concerns regarding the effectiveness of the existing indices and agreed that meaningful reproductive and maternal performance measures must be developed before improved indices can be created.

Dr. Allan agreed to assist the committee in evaluating potential measures such as heifer pregnancy, productive longevity, and other fertility-related traits that may be incorporated into future genetic evaluations and selection tools.

Chairman Roberson and Dr. Allan presented information regarding whole herd reporting systems currently utilized by other breed associations.

The committee discussed the importance of comprehensive inventory-based reporting for the development of reproductive and maternal trait evaluations. Members reviewed examples of mandatory and voluntary whole herd reporting systems as well as incentive-based programs designed to encourage breeder participation.

The committee agreed that whole herd reporting and enhanced reproductive data collection will likely become a major area of focus in future committee efforts as the breed seeks to improve maternal and fertility evaluations.

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:25 p.m.

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