

Three years ago, genotyping arrays of approximately 50 thousands (50K) markers were developed in cattle. These tools allowed the breeders to apply genomic selection but also to implement fine-mapping much more rapidly. In 2010, chips having much more markers (600K-1000K) are expected to be launched, which will likely impact the cost of older 50K chips. In parallel, whole genome sequencing costs are steadily decreasing. Further, low density marker panels for screening larger portions of the cattle population at lower costs are under development. This paper will compare the properties of these different panels in terms of cost and genome coverage (measured as the linkage disequilibrium with ungenotyped SNPs). Both costs and prediction accuracy of missing markers (imputation) when using lower density panels determine which marker panel would be the most cost effective in genomic selection. With marker panels (60K) it is possible to obtain an allelic imputation error rate close to 0.5% and results show that error rates further decrease with higher marker densities. On the contrary, allelic imputation error rates increase when using lower marker density panels: ~3% with 3,000 SNPs. The error rate is a function of the relationship between the animals genotyped on the lower density panels and the animals genotyped on the higher density panels. With both parents genotyped, allelic imputation error rates are close to 0.5%, even with 3,000 SNPs (and still lower at increasing densities). Finally, the precision of genomic selection for different traits genotyped on different chips will also be presented.