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EDITORIAL

As we face another winter here in Australia, we can, at least be thankful for the much better returns that are finally coming the way of the beef industry. However, we must also remember our fellow producers who are not able to take full advantage of these more affluent markets because of drought etc. and I hope that their situation changes before there is too bigger downturn in the market in the future.

There has been a growing amount of publicity recently in regard to the introduction of DEXA (Dual Energy Xray Absorptiometry) into the Australian cattle industry. What this device does in simple terms is measure the amount of bone muscle and fat in a carcass. There seems to be a fairly good acceptance of this technology, or at least, the theory behind it, by a wide cross section of the industry and this in itself is encouraging. These machines have already been used in trials with lamb carcasses and it is hoped that at least one processor could have one operating in their abattoir for cattle by the end of the year. What this should mean for the producer is that they will finally be paid for producing meat rather than bone and fat. Many producers I have spoken to over the years are only interested in producing big cattle regardless of how much bone they may have.

We at CLMS have been advocating payment to producers on a basis of saleable meat yield since day one. Our own small amount of research has shown that cattle we class as being tender will yield better than course boned animals. Our work in this area has shown that cattle that grade 2 or better for tenderness will yield over 80% meat, score 3 will average between 75% - 80%, 3.5 will be 70% - 75% and 4 and 5 under 70%. What we hope this translates to is that producers who have been selecting their cattle on the CLMS system will be the first to benefit from the introduction of this method of payment. We would also hope that more producers will then see the benefits of our low cost evaluation system to give them the opportunity to fully benefit from this new payment system. It will also be very gratifying for us to see the producers who have supported us so well over the years reap some early rewards for their commitment.

WHAT'S (BEEN) HAPPENING

* We completed the final three days of the evaluation course at Armidale on the 28th. – 30th. April inclusively. Whilst the feedback from those who attended was both positive and encouraging, it was somewhat disappointing that we had three attendees having to withdraw at the last minute for various unforeseen reasons. The logistics of holding the course in two separate parts did not work well for us from an organisational perspective despite knowing that at times it is difficult for busy producers etc. to get the time away from their business to be able to attend.

* I would like to thank Naomi and Jason Simmons and their sons for again making their property, “The Gums” just out of Armidale, available to us as a venue for the course and for the way they welcomed us onto their property. They also made available their cattle for us to use as guinea pigs for the practical evaluating part of the course. Unfortunately, the Simmons cattle all grade well so we didn't have an opportunity to see many cattle with faults. However, there was enough difference between their good cattle and elite for everyone to be able to identify a difference. The facilities there are most adequate for the size of the groups we have had there for this and last year's course.

* I would also like to thank Albert Hancock and Campbell Wolfenden, Guyra, for supplying a variety of other cattle for the course, Derek Smith, Working with Nature Education program and Jason for their soils presentation during the course and again, Albert for his support in leading the course and passing on his vast experience to us all. Thank you as well to Michael Bell, who came up from Canberra again to assist us with the course. Michael is training to be an evaluator and has been attending all our courses and offering support throughout.

* Many thanks as well to those who made the time and commitment to attend the course and I hope that it was time well spent for you all.

* Again, I would like to apologise to those who were intending to attend the postponed Clermont course for any inconvenience this decision may have caused. I hope you have all received some benefit from the rain that the cyclone that led to the course postponement brought. The reschedule dates for the Clermont course now are Mon. July

31st. through to Fri. 4th. of August. I appreciate that these times may not suit everyone, but we are hopeful that most of you who had hoped to get to the postponed course in April can still make it in July/August. We are able to accept more attendees at this stage and would appreciate an indication as soon as possible so that we can arrange for catering etc. We can also provide accommodation details if required.

* I also want to reinforce the note I made in the last newsletter in regard to the considerations we are giving to running a 2 day conference later this year for all who are interested in our system. We are still considering this event and would like some feedback in terms of locations and time. I am asking for you to indicate a time and place that would suit you best so that we can get an idea of the interest and where people would be prepared to travel to. The event would likely feature at least 2 key note speakers on closely related industry matters as well as time spent working with cattle and updating attendees on our latest developments. We are also considering asking commercial businesses who provide services compatible with our production system to advertise their products with stands at the venue and possibly demonstrate their products.

* I will also be travelling through NSW, to South Australia and to Central Qld. over the next three months.

* As I said above, we are still very keen to hold more field days in localised areas over the next few months, so if you would like one in your area, please let myself, Albert Hancock (0267334666) or other company directors know and we will get it under way. We would like to hold 2 – 3 one day events in Central and Southern NSW later in the year and would appreciate it if any of you in those areas know of suitable locations where there are yard/crush facilities available plus a building suitable for catering and running a power point presentation.

* We remain keen to get some marketing of graded cattle going and are happy to advertise for any of our clients here the newsletter. We are also adding a link to our website that will put prospective buyers and sellers in contact with each other.

* We also have breeders interested in purchasing well-muscled Red Poll, Angus and Red Brahman bulls.

* There will be further information about the upcoming courses distributed as we decide when and where to hold them. We are very keen to hold field days or 5 day courses in any region where the interest is high. We would like to be as flexible as possible in our future planning and would welcome and appreciate any input that you can provide for us. The gift of your time to do this is most appreciated.

BREED OF THE QUARTER

AUBRAC

The Aubrac breed of cattle originated near Aveyron on the Plateau de l'Aubrac in the Central Massif area in the south of France. This is a mountainous area and so ensured that the Aubrac developed as a hardy and versatile breed. They have a number of similarities to last quarter's breed of the quarter, the Bazadaise.

Development

Their development started during the 1600's at the Benedictine Abbey of Aubrac and the breed was the result of a controlled breeding program practised until the Abbey was destroyed during the French Revolution. Following that, selective breeding was promoted between 1840 and 1880, with Brown Swiss blood used to improve the breed. Limited cross breeding also saw the introduction of the now extinct Mezine breed up until the end of the Second World War and then from 1945 until 1975 with the Maraichine and Parthenaise breeds. The breed had been used for draught work prior to the second World War, but the introduction of tractors after the war saw a decrease in their numbers.



Characteristics

The Aubrac are a dual purpose breed, with excellent maternal traits and meat producing ability.

*They have a wheaten or fawn to brown coloured coat, with black skin and black hooves, black muzzle, tongue, switch, and natural openings. Bulls are usually a darker colour. The horns are lyre-shaped and tipped with black. They are a naturally horned breed. The horns have a slight curvature towards the cattle's back. Bulls weigh about 850 – 1100kg; cows weigh about 580 - 700kg.

*They are a docile breed, with high fertility and cows that produce many calves during their lives.

*Their gestation period is shorter than some breeds, usually averaging around 281 days. They get back into calf easily and have a great longevity and ease of calving. They are easy to manage and handle and this allows them to be adapted for milking quite easily.

*They produce good quality milk with an average butterfat of over 4.2% and an average of about 2250 kg of milk.

*The cows have a well-shaped pelvis area as a rule and this lends to easy calving of calves that usually weigh between 35 and 45 kg.

* The breed is relatively disease-resistant, with a high immune system. This is great for farmers who want to maintain a healthy, strong herd. The usual bovine illnesses are rarely found in Aubrac cattle.

* The Aubrac breed is a good beef producer, with high kill-out weights with well marbled meat. They usually yield quite highly with a lot of dense meat and an excellent ratio of beef against waste products like bone and fat. Male Aubracs finish quite early, making them suitable for producers running a shorter production process. The progeny of these cattle are in high demand for feedlots, and they are efficient feed-to-weight converters.

* They have been bred to do well even when fed from poor-quality pastures. They can store energy in times of plentiful food which they can then reserve for tougher times.

International distribution.

Aubrac cattle were popular in France up to World War II, but saw a decline in the post-war era. In the late 1970's they were first exported to North America. Today, the population of Aubrac has

increased worldwide, and are appreciated for their easy-keeping, grass foraging qualities, and for producing lean, high-quality carcasses. There is now an estimated 170,000 head of Aubrac cattle in the world. One of the main importing countries for Aubrac cattle has been Ireland since 1996.



*If you are interested in introducing the Aubrac breed to your property, then you could contact:
Mr. Paul Butler , Burns, Wyoming, USA.
graybull@beefpower.com. - <http://aubracbeef.com>
Phone - 307 701 0009

FEMININITY

This is one of the key traits/characteristics that we look for when we are grading cattle. I know I have discussed it previously, although maybe not in isolation from other traits we have discussed that are influenced by or influence femininity. This trait is a key to getting the balance we look for in our cattle because of its connection to so many other traits. The really soft, feminine females will hit you in the eye when you see them in the herd because the features that we discuss below are so evident. One key factor to remember when selecting bulls, even though it may sound like a contradiction, is that the more masculine, fertile and hormonally active bull produces the more feminine females.

CHARACTERISTICS.

- The head, neck and shoulders, along with the rump and udder provide the main keys to this trait.
- A cow needs to have a wide and deep rump and a front that will support the rump area. The shoulder width and rump length should be the same. When this happens, it almost always means that the other main traits are in balance.

- The neck length of the cow should be one third of her total body length meaning that a well-balanced cow will be a third rump, a third back and a third neck.

- The flank is also a key indicator of femininity, fertility and maternalism. The rear flank should be at least 5 centimetres larger in circumference than the girth. A deep flank is a good indicator of milk production and cows with a deep flank will produce maternal daughters.

- It must also be considered that femininity is a trait that is important from the male perspective as well. If the trait for femininity is not strong on the male side then the result is cows that look like bulls, or at least, steers. Again, this is a situation where balance within traits is so important and highlights the need for a grading system like the CLMS system

Figure 1 shows an animal with fine, sharp, clean features and a long angular neck that is neatly tucked into the shoulders. She will also have a long, angular, deep frame with a sloping rump and a neat, well-attached udder with evenly spaced and length teats. These are desirable characteristics of a beef cow.

Figure 2 highlights an animal that carries the main femininity traits to an extremity and are more characteristic of dairy breeds than beef breeds.

The third figure features an animal that is shorter and has far less stature elongation. The head is coarser and the ears rounder and hairier. The neck is short and thick. The rump will be squarer with no angularity. The udder has poor attachments, especially at the front and the teats are short and unevenly spaced. She is tucked up between the navel and udder and the brisket falls forward. Both these features indicate low hormonal activity.

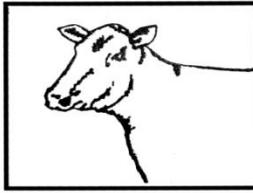


FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2



FIGURE 3

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AROUND DEPRESSION

I hope you will bear with me as I put my other hat on and discuss something that is not directly related to raising cattle, but it does, at some stage, play a role in the lives of most of our cattle producers. It is also something that many of us don't want to talk about or more likely, don't know how to talk about it. Fortunately, depression is a topic that is slowly receiving more publicity and therefore more information is being made public so that we can all learn more about it. The more we know about it, the better we are able to manage it. I don't believe that there is a cure for depression and related conditions such as stress, anxiety, panic etc. They are part of our emotional "system" and therefore everyone has them as one of their emotional parts and they all have a positive and negative part. Fear, for example, is great protector, anger can be a motivator etc. Most of us don't have any great trouble talking about our physical injuries and especially those that can be seen easily. However, this has not traditionally been the case with psychological injuries. Usually, in both cases, treatment and care will ensure a full recovery.

I have mentioned the importance of our senses and being able to use them to implement change in a

previous newsletter. Our senses also play an important role in managing our psychological health. Our emotions are the internal part of our feeling sense where things that we touch and feel are the external parts.

Whenever we change states (or emotions) there is a physical change in our bodies and developing an awareness of the earliest sign of this change is very important in managing our emotions. When something happens that changes our state, it is usually a trigger that interrupts our current thought or activities pattern. It is first noticed by us unconsciously. Our unconscious then prepares us physically to respond to that change whether it be from sad to happy, calm to excited, calm to angry, relaxed to frightened etc. so hence the fight or flight type responses we experience. The critical thing is to firstly, become aware that something has changed physically for us. Is it butterflies in the stomach, muscle tenseness in various parts of the body, clenching ones hands/fists, a tightness in the chest, a pain in the neck, a tension in the head or neck or what?

You can develop an awareness of these changes when you are in a quiet place e.g. in bed, by going back to a time when you initially had a significant emotional change and start seeing yourself in your mind's eye just before you changed when you were feeling "normal" or calm and then play the movie of the change in slow motion so that you can stop at the first recognition of the physical change. This is the point when we decide how we are going to respond to the trigger that started this process. Most of us have a pattern that we will use in response to the trigger. At least 80% of what we do, we do to a fairly well used pattern that we have found to be partly useful, at least, previously. However, there may be other patterns that we can introduce that will get us a better outcome and these will vary with different environments.

So at this stage when we stop the movie, we can choose to do some thing(s) differently. This is where we ask our creative part to become active. Imagine that you have TV remote control in your hand and that at present, you only have one channel. Our aim is to introduce more channels or options. At the point that you stop the movie, some of the things that you can choose to do could include the following:-

- a) Take several deep breathes focusing on the breathing process i.e. be aware of the coolness or otherwise of the air you are breathing in and how it is warmer when you breath out, any sounds the air may make as it goes into your body, the expansion and contraction of your lungs etc.
- b) Remove yourself from the current environment
- c) Do something different – anything!!!
- d) Count backwards from 173 in fours (or similar)
- e) Create your own distraction.

Each of these things then becomes another channel on your remote control that you can use to choose a different outcome(s) in the future. The idea is to have different choices for different situations and emotions.

The above doesn't happen automatically. You have probably been using your old pattern for many years and you do it very automatically so take time to practice the new choices to give them a fair chance to be chosen as an option when the time arises.

The above can be applied to any change of emotion including depression. Unfortunately, depression tends to sneak up on us a bit so we need to be on the alert and work out what the triggers for it are and how we have responded previously so that we can choose not to let it control us. That is basically what happens when any of our emotions take control. They take control and we lose it, so we need to develop strategies that will ensure we, as a whole person, maintain control and therefore balance in our lives.

There are some other things to become aware of when we change our state and in the case of depression they can include the following:-

- a) We will find ourselves looking down most, if not all the time and certainly much more than we do when we are feeling good
- b) Our heads will be hanging forward and down
- c) Our shoulders will be slumped forward.
- d) See if you can come up with some more.

Just take note next time you are watching people walk along a street and I think you may well be able to recognise people who are depressed by the above "symptoms".

Remember, when one or two of our emotions, e.g. frustration leading to anger, anxiety leading to panic, or single emotions such as depression take

control, it is probably fairly certain that the rest of our emotional parts are bludging on us. That is fairly normal human nature. It is basically the same thing as happens in groups, organisations, business etc. when one or two people want to have all the say or run the show. Some people will put up a bit of resistance, but (human nature again) most will tend to just say, "well, they want to run the show so we may as well just sit back and enjoy (or otherwise) the ride". Ultimately, when one or two are doing all the work year in and year out they burn out, run out of energy and their batteries go flat. How do you feel after you have had an anger outburst, been overly anxious, deeply depressed etc? I have an inkling that you may feel a little run down or exhausted.

Finally, I would like you to ask yourself what you have ever got out of being depressed. Has it changed your life? If so, how? Are you less healthy because of it? Has your security been undermined? If you hadn't been depressed, what would you have been instead? Don't be frightened to talk to yourself – it isn't the first sign of madness. More likely the last. Ask your depressed part these and other questions.

Remember, when you are depressed, it is not a time to be making serious decisions, especially ones that could be life changing. Wait until all your parts are back pulling their weight and you are in a state of whole balance.

I would welcome any feedback from you on any subject that is discussed in this newsletter. I have had some feedback over the time we have been publishing it and it is most appreciated and helpful. Please keep the feedback and comments coming.

Thank you for your continued interest in our newsletters, our website and our book. Please feel free to order one of our books and become familiar with the CLMS system and the directions we are taking in the overall scheme of animal and food production for human consumption

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US ABOUT ANY ITEMS IN THIS NEWSLETTER, ON OUR WEBSITE OR IN OUR BOOK. WE WELCOME PRODUCER INPUT AND INTEREST AND WANT TO INVOLVE YOU IN WHAT WE ARE DOING.

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