

# THE HORMONAL MAIL

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## EDITORIAL

At the risk of being boring with this newsletter, I would like to touch again on a couple of topics that whilst they are not directly about cattle in themselves, I believe they are important in the overall scheme of our cattle enterprises. Unfortunately, there isn't room in this edition to talk about actual traits to consider when selecting good cattle. I do believe that what we are focussing on in this newsletter is important if we in the industry are going to be competitive in the food market on an international basis. One of these topics I would like to discuss is about how we are evolving our evaluation system. One of the challenges that I have mentioned previously is how we can add more objectivity to our system. I will expand on our current thoughts in this newsletter. Whilst it is a challenge to find how we can be more objective, it is also interesting and rewarding to be able to do so. We are also slowly developing a set of data for breeders to use as a template that we believe will provide a somewhat different, but hopefully a much more practical guide to breed selection than the current Breed Plan (EBV'S) used by studs etc. The other topic is more related to the other "hat" that I wear in my professional life in regard to working with people to consider the life options they have available to them in a range of varying backgrounds, personalities and scenarios. These are, in a sense, not related on a practical basis to actually what you do in the field with your cattle, but more about how you manage yourself in considering every available piece of information available to you in the decision making process around your business. It is about planning to plan differently so that when you change your plan, you get a better outcome. It is more about the process than the content.

## **WHAT'S (BEEN) HAPPENING**

\* Just to update you on how our company restructure is going we have now completed what we planned in regard to the new Classic Livestock Management Services company structure. In regard to the new company called Classic Livestock Investments Pty. Ltd., we are now keen to hear from any of our clients or interest breeders and producers who would like to be involved in this company with us. There will be the opportunity for shares in this company to be obtained through an in kind contribution rather than straight out cash contributions. We have registered the first two new shareholders in this company. There has also been interest from 3 – 4 more client/producers to be involved. The two parties that are shareholders have assisted us in holding field days and referring new clients. Other events and activities that we will provide a shareholding for in kind include events such as those mentioned above, as well as displays and demonstrations at major machinery field days and local shows, community events and providing stock and facilities for us to do further trial work to verify our system and evolve more traits for identifying high performing animals.

As I stated previously, this company will hold a 15% shareholding in the new Classic Livestock Management Services company. Shares in Classic Livestock Investments Pty. Ltd., will also be considerably less than the value of the shares in the parent company, Classic Livestock Management Services. This, we hope, will encourage more people to be involved.

\* As I have also mentioned in our last couple of newsletters, an Information Memorandum is now available for anyone interested in what we are planning and who might be interested in investing in what we believe will ultimately be a very profitable opportunity.

One of the challenges for us is to get things underway as soon as possible, given the speed that technology is being developed in today's day and age. The new company has some quite innovative plans to add electronic technology to our evaluation system that is going to cost quite a large sum of money to develop so we will still need to raise this cash to finance the development. We have adopted a conservative approach in regard to the likely cash flows in the memorandum, but they still highlight a huge potential for what we have planned. I have left this item in this quarter's newsletter to keep encouraging anyone interested in the future of the cattle industry and the broader livestock industries to give me a call because we are committed to finding a way to getting as many people involved and ultimately rewarded for their faith in the CLMS system and in these exciting new developments that we have planned.

\* In regard to the use of ultra-sound images of the jaw and/or rib bone to translate into a score complimentary to our current hand method of evaluating, we have finally had the software agreements signed and are now planning final in-field trials with the new system before we take the final step of introducing it publicly.

\* We are 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 us know and we will get it under way.

\* As I mentioned in the last newsletter, Albert Hancock has agreed to work with us to expand the system and can be contacted to evaluate herds on 0267334666. Many thanks to Albert for his time and the valuable knowledge he has to share with us.

\* During the next three months I will be heading south to Victoria to carry out the final trials with the ultra sound equipment so if there

are any producers in NSW and Victoria who would like to catch up, please let me know so I can make sure I have time to call.

I will also be heading back to Central Qld. to do some evaluations for breeders in that general area.

\* I have left the following comments re meat marketing in the newsletter for another quarter because I see it as a very important aspect of our long term overall success and the number of clients that we have who are disillusioned with the current system. We have always believed that for the CLMS system to reward producers fully for their support to us in using the system that we need to assist in this regard. Currently, the challenge is to be able to have enough producers in one area who can guarantee a 12 month supply to their customers. I believe that we are getting close to being able to do this in at least a couple of areas. I feel that we will struggle if we tackle the current meat marketing system front on. My first approach would be to explore the possibility of on-line marketing. This is a growing market for many products and there are already meat producers using this method successfully. As a company, we will do whatever we can to initiate a marketing system with any interested producers. All we would like is for the meat graded using our system to be identified with a small identifying symbol on the packaging that will tell buyers what they are getting.

We consider our support to any of our clients to establish their own market will otherwise be part of our service.

\*We are planning to do some Warner Bratzler shear force tests on meat samples over the next few months and taste tests of the same samples. The main reason for this is to fine tune the tenderness part of our grading system still further. The main focus will be on identifying any tenderness variations when there is a difference in the bone shape on one side of the jaw to the other or variations in

shape between the jaw and the rib. We know these differences exist so we feel we need to quantify these more accurately.

\*We would also like to do more trials with hair samples to identify cattle that carry the a2 milk genes. However, we have had difficulties finding a laboratory who will do them. We have contacted several recently as well as the A2 Company. The feedback we are getting is that unless we are looking to supply the A2 company with milk, they cannot do the test for us. However, we will keep looking because again we would like to quantify the differences in bone shape and the milk analysis across a wider range of bone shapes as well as tail flakes, ear wax and neck wrinkles. We have also taken some brix meter readings and hair samples from some of the Coodardie Brahmans and would like to see the comparisons with these evaluations.

\*We are keen to get some marketing of graded cattle going so we are happy to advertise for any of our clients here in the newsletter.#

#We have a client with 21 Red Poll x Droughtmaster heifers for sale for \$650.00 each. They are all graded as 3.5 and 3, are now around 27 months old and average weight around 400+ kg.#

#We also have a client looking for some graded Brahman females so if anyone has any for sale we would be happy to put you in touch with our buyer.#

#Another client has 20 CLMS graded Angus heifers for sale. These are an even line of consistent young females that would be ideal to use to build a herd on.

#We have breeders with some Red Poll x Brahman bulls for sale. This cross is fairly new in Australia and there have been some impressive animals bred over the last 2 – 3 years. There are also breeders interested in purchasing well-muscled Red Poll bulls.

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## **BREED OF THE QUARTER BLONDE D'AQUATAINE.**

Blonde d'Aquitaine is a breed of beef cattle originating from the Aquitaine district in south west of France including the area of the Garonne valley and the Pyrenees. The breed is a combination of three local strains, the Garonnais, the Quercy, and the Blonde des Pyrenees. Blondes were predominantly draught animals until the end of the Second World War. This resulted in their muscle development, hardiness and docility. They are valued for their meat and milk production. It wasn't until around the early 1970's that the breed started to spread to other parts of Europe and countries such as Canada, Australia and the USA. They are known for their lean muscling, high growth rate, docility and calving ease due to a high tail setting, large pelvic area and light bone. Cows are about 140 cm high at the withers, and weigh from 700 to 1000 kg. Bulls are about 150 cm high at the withers, and weigh from 1000 to 1400 kg. Blondes show some variation of color ranging from almost white to tan with short, smooth hair and are the third most popular beef breed in France behind Charolais and Limousin and are growing by 5% annually.

Some heads of this breed have horns, but there are also genetically hornless varieties. Blondes are docile cattle, and are quite easy to handle. This feature flows on into both the feedlot and grass finishing situations where quiet cattle, which take to feed quickly, are needed to reduce costs and finishing time.

Blonde d'Aquitaine cattle adjust very well to various environmental conditions. Sweat glands are active and the animals have the ability to move muscles under the skin point wise similarly to Brahmans and horses. Despite their large size, Blonde d'Aquitaines have no

greater problems with labour. Calves are born weighing 35 kg to 55 kg. Mothers are very protective, with a strong herd instinct. After weaning, calves put on weight quickly. They do require intensive feeding and compensate for it with high weight gains so have been a popular breed with feed lot operators. The most important advantage of Blonde d'Aquitaine's is an ability to generate high muscle mass, without excessive fat deposition. Their milking capacity is low, therefore there are few problems with mastitis.

Blondes are having a strong impact in the prime cattle market today and have also performed very well in carcass competitions. In Australia and New Zealand, there are over 2000 active purebred females spread throughout both countries, and stud calf registrations have been steadily increasing every year.

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## **PRACTICE, NATURE AND THEORY**

The decision that we, as a company, took to consider ways of evaluating cattle was certainly not done lightly. Originally, nearly all our evaluation was based on what we saw when an animal presented itself or what we felt when we touched an animal. All of this data, if you like, was what we had learnt over many years of involvement in the livestock and cattle industry, in particular. This information has been supported over the years as we meet and talk with cattlemen, often with more insight and knowledge than we as a group have and read older books and documents on breeding and selecting livestock. We fully believe that the information that we have formulated into our system is based on generations of breeding selection expertise from a practical and successful foundation. It is designed to produce the most efficient converters of grass to milk and meat. The system is as close to meeting a goal of producing such an animal as we can

possible and humanly make it at present. That is not to say that we are not learning and adding to the system as our experiences grow. The one unknown in all of this is of course Mother Nature. Despite our best efforts to get as close as possible to the ideal, nature always has a spanner waiting to throw in the works. Whether this be in the form of human error or a genetic, nature founded abnormality, we have experienced a lot over the years and so try to be always ready for these and ready to show Mother Nature the respect that she deserves. Certainly, we can question these things and look for reasons and correlations. However, I don't believe that we should believe that we can change what Mother Nature has designed.

With all this in mind, we also hear that many current producers feel that they need some measurable, scientific proof of all they see. Now that may be a pipe dream, but our whole education and cultural basis is now driven in this direction and it does have a place in developing our knowledge of the world around us.

Our system will always have the practical, hands-on approach that we have always used as its firm base. We know that there are important indicators that animals give us of what is happening for them and the ability they have to produce a quality product that is unmeasurable by current scientific means. It is only the experienced stockman using years of observation and practical learning that really knows what is happening for animals.

What our company is aiming to do is to look at areas where today's technology may be able to be adapted and used to measure and record more accurately some of the traits that we know are important indicators of quality products from our animals. We know there are some that we may never be able to use technology to assist us with and that is okay – even maybe the way it is meant to be especially from a nature perspective. We are already using linear

measuring on an increasing basis as more producers and breeders become familiar with it. Whilst it is a measuring method to identify balance in cattle, it took many years of research and trial and error to get it to where it is today. It all started with the basic practical observation skills of Jan Bonsma in South Africa in the 1930's. Bonsma took his mental images of perfection for grass fed animals and then developed his measuring system from there. The fact that it is virtually ignored by today's researchers is not necessarily because it doesn't work. It is probably more about their egos and lack of a practical background in the industry along with the pressure from the feedlot industry to produce an animal that is suitable to their environment rather than a natural grass one.

We have spent around 10 years experimenting with ways of being able to get a clear image of a beast's bone shape so that it can be measured and graded electronically. It is only in the last 18 months or so that ultra sound machines have developed to the stage where they provide a clear enough image of the bone to be able to measure. It must be remembered that the difference between grades in our current grading system for bone shape is about half a millimetre per grade. That meant that any image needed to be very clear to get an accurate result. We have also worked with Gearld Fry when he was using an ultra sound machine to look at eye muscle, fat thickness and intra muscular fat as an indicator of tenderness in meat. Gearld has found that there are anomalies especially in the fat layering as an indicator of meat quality because the ultra sound scans don't accurately pick up the fine flakes of omega 3 fat that are finely interspersed within the meat cells. This means that grass fed animals with higher levels of omega 3 can't be as easily identified and may, in fact, be penalised because it doesn't show up as clearly as omega 6.

At the risk of diverting slightly from the topic, I don't believe that fat thickness has any real influence on meat quality, yet producers are penalised if their animals don't have a fat covering within a specified range. This measurement can only be an advantage to the processor when they financially penalise the producer. If processors were serious about rewarding producers for producing high quality meat, and fat in particular, they would test the fat for omega 3 levels and pay a premium for high levels.

Now, getting back to the ultra sound. We are now comfortable with the image produced by the latest ultra sound machines and that by being able to take a bone image and convert it to a CLMS grade score, it will add credibility to our system. We hope that the encouragement we have had to go down this path will pay off in support from producers in the future. At this stage, we are going to do more work on taking images from the eye muscle for fat characteristics before we use it commercially.

Just how successful ultra sound imaging is will only be determined with the advent of time. Whilst we believe that it will provide us with less means for human error to be used as an excuse to criticise our system, we also feel it will verify what we already know when we look at and touch an animal. It will slow the process down somewhat and then need to be added to the software program we have had designed to convert the reading into a score on our system. However, it will also add flexibility and choice to the system.

We are also working on a way of seeing linear measurements at a glance so to speak. In one sense, it will allow breeders to quickly get an overview of how their herd are measuring. What we are considering is converting the variations in the linear measurements from perfect to fit into the scoring method on our system. Breeders will still get all the linear measurements on their results spread

sheets to study more precisely at their leisure, but they will also be able to have that quick overview.

We are also giving some thought to changing our scoring system to also add more flexibility to the grades and give a larger degree of variation between grades.

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### **WHEN TO CHANGE**

I know I'm pretty well preaching to the converted in this piece. I just wanted to add a couple of thoughts here about why there are just a small percentage of people who are always looking for ways to do things differently, ultimately to improve their lot in life. Having met and spoken with quite a few of you, I believe that many of you fit into this category. I wonder if you know what really drives you to be the way you are and why so many of your neighbours and friends just accept things as they are and keep doing what they have always done regardless of the outcomes. If you have any ideas about this, please feel free to call and so we can discuss it.

Why is it that when someone starts doing something differently, and I know many of you are in this boat, and you get good, sound, ongoing results yet your neighbours, who can see what is happening next door just continue to keep doing what they have always done. When we started controlled grazing with our beef cow/calf operation in Tasmania in the early 1980's, we did so because we saw how much extra production our dairying neighbours were getting when they made that change. Dairy's are good places to see changes in production because the results are measured in quantity and often quality of milk produced on a daily basis.

I guess one of the greatest frustrations from our business perspective is just being able to get more people to understand where we are

coming from and that sometimes it is okay to try something a little different. In my travels, I see many operations where a small change would make a huge difference to the future success of the business. I know that finance is scarce and returns for our products are not adequate at present and this adds pressure on decision making in regard to being able to do what you would like to do. One place to start is with the changes that you can make that are going to cost the least, but make a difference. In other words, prioritise your development plan based on the limiting factor. Another approach is to start putting in place a change in a micro situation within your larger operation so that you can see if the change will get the desired results and what the cost etc. will be. If you are looking at starting to develop an elite herd to breed your future breeding stock from, they might be the ones you use to trial a change with.

Broadly speaking, producers could be placed in three categories in regard to changing how they approach and do things within their business. I know that studies have been done on the rate of change and which group of people fit into which category in regard to speed of change etc. However, just broadly speaking, there are a small number of people, less than 10% who are leaders in regard to change, then there are a large group who follow in varying ways over a reasonable time frame and finally there are a large group of those who don't change at all.

Why don't they change?

Do they want to stay in their uncomfortable comfort zone?

I wonder if there is a touch of addict behaviour associated with their lives? I think in some cases this may be close to the truth. One definition of addiction is the continued repetition of a behavior despite adverse consequences, or a neurological impairment leading to such behaviors.

Addictions can include, but are not limited to, alcohol and drug abuse, exercise addiction, food addiction, computer addiction and gambling. If you can become addicted to seemingly positive behaviours such as exercise, which some people are, then it may be possible to categorise people who do the same thing year in and year out on a daily basis in at least a similar cohort.

Alternatively, it is pretty safe to say that these people have formed habits around their behaviour. A habit or want, and note that there is a difference between a want and a need, is a routine behavior that is repeated regularly and tends to occur unconsciously or it is a more or less fixed way of thinking, willing, or feeling acquired through previous repetition of a mental experience. Habitual behavior often goes unnoticed in persons exhibiting it, because a person does not need to engage in self-analysis when undertaking routine tasks.

I will mention this again shortly as I believe this self-analysis leads to a greater self-awareness that is a really important motivation for looking for ways to do things differently.

Habits are sometimes compulsory. This begs the question of how little is the difference between addictions and habits. Old habits are hard to break and new habits are hard to form because the behavioural patterns we repeat are imprinted in our neural pathways, but it is possible to form new habits through repetition.

At the very least I think it is safe to say that people who continue to do the same thing repetitively are in a pattern of behaviour that is controlling them rather than the other way around as is a more healthy way to be. Nearly 80% of what we do, we do to a pattern.

The key is to have the motivation to need to form new patterns of behaviour. The two main reasons for motivation are either to get away from something that is causing pain or to go toward something that is going to give us pleasure.

So how do they change assuming that they either want to change, or can be shown a way to do things differently that will give them a better outcome. If people don't want to change, it is pretty well futile to try and make them change. They will revert back to their previous behaviour sooner probably rather than later.

One of the more successful methods I have found in practice is to start a bit away from the actual process of change itself. As I mentioned above, it is about developing a better and different understanding of one's own awareness of what is happening in your life in your current environment. This can start with being aware that before you experience any emotional change, e.g. calmness to excitement, something will change physically for you. e.g. in this case it could be butterflies in the stomach. It is something that we usually aren't consciously aware of until we actually start to think about it. When we are able to recognise these physical changes at the really early stage, we can then have that split second to decide whether we want to keep playing the same video i.e. doing what we have always done or would we like to do something different, better if possible. It is useful to develop other "videos" or choices prior to the change so that when you notice the physical change, you have more than one video channel to play so you don't have to have the same old video or, in other words, the same outcome. Whenever you can change anything about the pictures in your head, the thoughts that are rattling around or the feelings that are associated with these thoughts and pictures yourself, it is a sign that you are getting control of whatever you are seeing, thinking or feeling. e.g. What happens when you change the picture in your head from colour to black and white or frame it or speed the thoughts up, spin them one way or the other etc.?

It is also about taking the time to ask yourself questions about where you are in your life now and if that is where you want to be. These questions need to be framed in a way that is different to how you have always asked them before. Often it only means changing a couple of words around and this stimulates the mind, especially the unconscious, to view this different question as a new one and so it will take time to come up with a different answer. It can be as easy as asking what will happen if I don't do a certain thing rather than what you have always asked e.g. what will happen if I do this thing. Take time to plan different ways of asking for an answer. Trust your unconscious to answer. There are some more examples as an appendix to this already long newsletter – apologies for that!!!

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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.

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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 NEW MANUAL. WE WELCOME PRODUCER INPUT AND INTEREST AND WANT TO INVOLVE YOU IN WHAT WE ARE DOING.**

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### **Setting up conditions for change.**

Explore change options within your business.

Prioritise and quantify – i.e. rank each one from one to ten. Then ask what needs to change to get to the next level. Small steps.

When you create the changes you want yourself, the process is more effective.

Explore the difference with the new change option that is different.

Will this change get only the desired outcome?

What will be lost by having this change?

What would happen if we did this change?

What would happen if we didn't?

What won't happen if we do?

What won't happen if we don't do it?

Why would you not want to make this change?

Are there any areas in your life where you would not want this outcome?

We can ask what prevents us from having our desired outcome right now?

What would happen if you had it right now?

What would happen if you didn't?

What causes your present state to remain?

When a change only works for say, a short time or few days, then respond similarly with the following:

“That is excellent and what did you notice in that short time that was different?”

So you can stop doing what you have always done for a time and when you do, what did you notice that was different? – Follow as above.

Remember that starting with a small change is okay – it gives you confidence that you can change and by using the above process.

When you get change what do you do with it?

What do you know now that you didn't know before?

If you did know unconsciously what you don't know consciously, what would you know? (how would your unconscious let you know? Maybe just ask?)

What do you notice now that is different from before?

So you know now that the problem (**or the fear of change**) is not as big as you thought?

When you know the problem **or the fear of change** isn't as big (threatening etc.) as you thought and you know that now, what difference does that make?

Now that you know it is not as big as you thought, how is that different for you?

And so when you know that, what difference does THAT make?

Is there a time/place in the future when having this difference would be useful?

And when you think about that now, how will that be different?

What do you have the opportunity to notice that is different ... now.... And in the future?

How will this being different change how you respond in the future?

Remember that whenever you make a change in anything there is usually some loss. That is, you will lose something and even when it was something you didn't really want, realising that and losing it will cause some form of loss and therefore grief so be prepared for that. The best way is to have something positive to replace it with worked out before you make the change.