

THE HORMONAL MAIL

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EDITORIAL

I hope all is well in your world at the moment whether you are facing the full force of winter or the warmth of summer. From all reports the cattle market is on the improve in a number of countries world-wide so I hope this is giving producers an opportunity to either catch up on some much needed equipment and technology or to develop some new innovations in their business. I guess with many of us, it is a case of just keeping up enough to make enough to survive. This is never more evident than now in the drought areas of Queensland in Australia. Please continue to support our fellow producers who are facing, in many cases, the biggest challenge of their lives just to keep their properties. In most cases, most or all their stock have gone now so when it does rain, they will be faced with many years of rebuilding with their herds. This applies to our producers all over the world who might be facing the results of nature's vagaries.

I know there weren't as many visitors from Western Qld. at this year's three yearly Beef Week event in Rockhampton because of the dire circumstances facing them. Despite that more than 90,000 people attended this 5 day event with over 1,000 registered overseas visitors. We met people from Argentina, New Zealand, Mexico, USA, Canada, South Africa, China and Germany on our stand to name but a few of the countries represented at this year's event.

We were very pleased with the interest shown in our system and were very busy on our stand, particularly after the first couple of days. There were certainly plenty of activities and events within the event to entertain and educate people. Several people have since contacted us and said they wanted to visit our sight and many others, but just ran out of time.

*** It is with great sadness and shock that I learnt of the passing of one of our Directors, Michael Norton-Smith on Saturday the 13th. June. On behalf of our company, I would like to offer our sincere condolences to his family on losing such a loved and valued member. Mike probably wasn't known to many of you outside our immediate company shareholders. However, he made a very valuable and important contribution in a more behind the scenes role in providing advice, support and direction in terms of the financial and business management side of the company. His contribution to the development of the company was second to none. He was always willing to provide leadership in his areas of expertise and nothing was too much trouble for him. His contributions will be irreplaceable and his friendship and support sadly missed. Peace and Blessings, Mike.

WHAT'S (BEEN) HAPPENING

* We are planning to hold a 5 day evaluator training course later in the year following many queries and urging to do so by clients and others interested in our system. At this stage we are planning to hold it from October 19 – 23 incl. (tentative date) at the Nanango Showgrounds about 2.5 hours North West of Brisbane. We are looking for expressions of interest from those who would be interested in attending. We need a minimum of 10 and ideally about 15 people to attend to make it viable for us to run. At the moment, we are planning to keep the cost to participants at a maximum of 1500 dollars and this will include all the course materials (including

an updated version of our book, “A Vision Tender”), morning and afternoon tea and lunch. We will have information on travel and accommodation for participants in the near future, but these are not included in the cost. The plan is to have a full five days training including some night presentations with plenty of cattle available for evaluation practice. We are currently investigating whether there are any rural training programs that will assist with the cost for participants. The facilities at the Nanango Showgrounds include plenty of yards of various sizes, 2 crushes and pavilions for indoor presentations and meals. We are asking anyone who is interested to contact us by July 31st. so we can make a decision on whether to go ahead and in what form. A first draft program is attached at the end of the newsletter. Further details will be sent to those who are interested as they become available.

* As I mentioned above, we were very satisfied with the outcome we achieved at Beef Week. We estimated that we had around 400 visitors stop in on our site. We distributed more than 80 brochures, sold nearly 20 copies of our book, “The Vision Tender” and had over 40 people sign on to be on our mailing list. The satisfying thing from the feedback was that many of our visitors made a special effort to visit and find out more about the system and the positive feedback was very encouraging. We demonstrated the ultrasound machine on two occasions without publicity and had over 20 people attend the demonstrations.

*We have had a few problems to sort out not so much with the ultrasound machine itself as with the associated software. This is new software that has been developed specifically to meet the needs of our evaluation system and so it has taken a while for us to fine tune the software. At present we feel it is close to operating as we expect it to and only needs some more practice on our part now.

* The field day we held on the 11th. April near Yeppoon was attended by 14 producers and this proved to be a good number in terms of working around the crush to linear measure and practice the main traits we are looking for with the system. Several of those attending travelled long distances and we appreciate their effort and interest. I would also like to thank the O'Hare family for hosting the day and for their hospitality. It also gave those attending a first-hand glimpse of the damage caused by the cyclone that hit the area in March.

* 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.

*It has also been great to catch up with several producers in New South Wales and Central Qld over the last few months. It is very exciting and stimulating to see some of the innovations that producers are planning to increase the choices they have in marketing their products. I believe this is a reflection of the stagnation of the broader industry and marketing chain to cater for innovation and lateral thinking in the industry, especially in regard to the smaller producers. I am seeing a growing trend towards producers taking more control of their destiny in regard to getting a fairer and more equitable return for what they produce. These producers are well ahead of the broader industry in regard to talking to consumers and producing a product that a growing number of consumers are now demanding. The recent move to brand grass fed beef on a national basis is something that could have happened many years ago if the industry had been more in touch with consumer demands. Now it is more of a catch up situation to regain a share of the wider meat market that beef has lost over the past

couple of decades. There is also a growing move to organic production and again this is driven by consumers and those few usually smaller, innovative producers who are not prepared to be dictated to by the "mob" or sheep mentality.

* During the next three months I will be heading into Central Qld. to do some evaluations for breeders in that general area as well as visiting Northern New South Wales, attending the Women in Agriculture Conference in Alice Springs in August and South Australia to meet a new client there.

* The results from the samples of meat we sent to the Victorian Department of Primary Industries for testing using the Warner Bratzler shear force test have now been posted on our website under the link to "new research" and then as trial no. 4 on the new research page. As I explained earlier, these samples came from cattle that were graded prior to processing for bone shape and then taste tested and scored using our system. The main focus was 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. Unfortunately, because we didn't have any choice as to what animals we took the samples from, we found that when we evaluated them there was not a lot of difference between them when we graded them for tenderness.

*We remain keen to get some marketing of graded cattle going and are happy to advertise for any of our clients here in the newsletter.

#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 also have breeders interested in purchasing well-muscled Red Poll bulls.

SCROTUM SHAPE ON BULLS.

I have been prompted to continue to write about the reproductive organs of bulls after the number of people who came to our stand at Beef Week and commented on the shape of scrotums and twisted testicles on many of the bulls on display at this event.

The general consensus among judges and breeders seems to be that a slight or even greater twist in the testicles is of no great concern, nor is a large “V” between the testicles, or teats on the front of the scrotum. Maybe we have been missing something and have been heading down the wrong track with our thoughts on the relationship between the scrotum characteristics of bulls and the impact that it has on his daughter’s udders. If so, we can only apologise to our clients.

However, I don’t believe we are on the wrong track despite what seems to be a general acceptance amongst many judges and breeders that it is not worth considering in the selection process. I am certainly not going to change my views on this at present and won’t until someone can prove our beliefs to be totally wrong by showing me a large number of cows with perfect or near perfect udders by a bull with twisted testicles.

If we are going to discard the idea that the characteristics of a bull’s scrotum are not going to influence his daughter’s udders then we should be questioning whether or what, if any, influence a bull has on any of his female off spring’s traits. If this was true then we would expect that if we crossed a red breed of cow with a black breed of bull then all the females from that joining would be predominately red and all the males would be black. I think we all know this doesn’t happen and as simplistic as this example may be, it certainly shows that the bull does influence his daughter’s

confirmation characteristics. To what extent will certainly vary and I believe this is directly related to the dominance or otherwise of specific genes in the hereditary genepool.

There are many breeders who aim to correct udder and teat deformities in their cow herd by culling any cows that show any of these defects. Certainly, over time, and a lot of it at that, these defects will slowly improve, especially if bulls from cows within the herd that have good udders are used. It will take longer if bulls with an unknown genetic background are bought in for use in the herd unless they are specifically selected from a dam line that has the desired udder and teat characteristics. I would suggest that when buying a bull, you see the mother and grandmother at least and more of the line if possible such as great grand-mother and sisters. You will then get an indication of the bull’s potential to produce daughter’s that meet your specifications for functional udders and teats.

Ideally, the scrotum should be an even, oval shape with a 36 cm minimum circumference and 5-6 inch length testicles with an even bottom portion that does not cut up between the testicles and an epididymis’ that can be seen clearly from a few metres away. The epididymis are the sperm storage tanks for the bull prior to serving a cow so if they are not present or small then his serving capacity will be severely diminished. A bull with these characteristics can accomplish excellent breeding performances on grass. As the circumference decreases down from 36 cm the fertility will be reduced significantly. (Apologies for the mixed measurements – 2.5 cm =1 inch). Whilst the length of the testicle is more important than the circumference, there is a length and circumference ratio that will produce the highest pregnancy rate.

Another important factor to remember is that deformities in the testicle shape will also have a negative effect on sperm quality and quantity. These deformities can include grapefruit, banana or cylinder shape, testicle turned partly around in scrotal sack, epididymis missing, misshapen or in the wrong place at the bottom of the testicle, testicles crossed over each other, uneven sized testicles, and deep wrinkles in scrotal sack. Another factor to look for is the strip of skin that is often visible at the top rear of the scrotum. If this is not situated between the two testicles at the top of the scrotum, then the testicles will become twisted. I also believe that if this skin is too prominent and especially if it is not centred, it will have a long term impact on the suspensory ligament in a defective bull's daughters. All of these faults will affect the shape, size and conformity of a cow's udder and teats. As we've discussed previously, a major indicator of poor teats, i.e bottle or bulbous teats, is the positioning of a bull's teats on the front of his scrotum. They must always be in front of the scrotum.

Another important consideration is the hair on the scrotum. Bulls should have thick, coarse hair on their head, neck and shoulders that then gradually becomes finer until it reaches the scrotum area where it needs to be a bare minimum and soft, silky and have a velvety feel with it. This carries through to a bull's daughters. Long course hair on the udder is a good indicator of "see through" milk i.e. low in butterfat. So with hair on bulls, look for course, curly hair (especially Bos Taurus) on the head and neck going through to the shoulders of a bull until you get to the rear end where it gradually becomes soft and silky on the scrotum.

Saggy udders in cows are a good indicator that a sire somewhere in the genetic lineage had a malformation in his scrotum. The most likely sign for this is that it has a vertical crease between the testicles

on the back side of the scrotum. There will be an inverted "V" shape at the bottom of the scrotum between the testicles. This trait is transferred to the daughter as an issue with the strength of the restraining ligaments in her udder. Most of these faults that I have described that can occur with the scrotum will become more evident as the cow has more lactations.

For those of you who are interested in further study of this topic, I would refer you to James Drayson's book "Herd Bull Fertility", which is available through Gearld Fry's website, bovineengineering.com or Amazon books on line and documents his thirty years of bull research following bulls from birth to death of over a thousand bulls.

BREED OF THE QUARTER SHORTHORN

The Shorthorn breed of cattle originated in the North East of England in the late 18th century from Teeswater and Durham cattle. Teeswater cattle were a breed developed in the Tees Valley from the original native shorter horned cattle that were crossed with other breeds such as the White Wild breed and cattle imported from Holland in the late 1700's. There is also a probability that some red polled Red Galloway bloodlines were also used around this time in the development of the modern Shorthorn. A Shorthorn bull called Comet was sold for 1000 guineas in 1804 and this was a world record all breeds price at the time. The first registered sale of the improved Shorthorn cattle was held in 1810 and there were several females sired by Comet sold at that sale.

The first Shorthorn cattle were imported into Australia in 1800, followed by another shipment in 1825. Along with the Hereford and Aberdeen Angus breeds, it was one of the three most popular *Bos Taurus* beef breeds in Australia until well into the late 1900's when the influx of European breeds meant a reduction in the percentage of Shorthorns making up the national beef herd. The Australian Agricultural Company imported Shorthorns into Northern Australia in 1825 and there are still descendants of those cattle in herds in Northern Australia today.

The breed was developed as dual purpose, suitable for both dairy and beef production. However, there were always certain blood lines within the breed which emphasise one quality or the other. During the second half of the 20th century, two separate breeds had developed from this variation of the two lines, the Beef Shorthorn, and the Dairy Shorthorn. All Shorthorn cattle are coloured red, white or roan, although roan cattle are preferred by some, and completely white animals are not common.

Although colour ranges from red to roan to white, roan and red are the predominant colours. Beef Shorthorns are smaller in frame than other Shorthorn strains and reach maturity earlier. They are docile and are efficient foragers, best suited for the production of vealers and prime weaners. The carcass is usually prime at a young age because fat is laid down early.

They tend to have the same kind of muscling that you will find in other British breeds such as the Angus, Red Angus, or Hereford cattle. Beef Shorthorns are, however, a beef breed, which still makes them quite blocky and beefy-looking. Bulls are usually quite deep, long, and muscular, with a lot of muscling on the hind quarters and shoulders. Well-conditioned cows can be the same way, but are not as massive as bulls.

They are excellent foragers with excellent convertibility, great maternal traits, and ruggedness. Shorthorns are naturally horned animals, though there is a lot of emphasis on modern Shorthorns to be polled and not horned. This breed is also a little less wide in the forehead.

The Shorthorn Society of Great Britain and Ireland was founded in 1874. The American Shorthorn Herd Book was the first to be published in the United States for any breed and was started in 1846, with the formation of the American Shorthorn Association following 26 years later in 1872. The Australian Shorthorn Herd Book was established by the Beef Shorthorn Society in 1974.

The breed has a wide genetic base, resulting in the development of the following distinct, though closely related strains:

Beef Shorthorn

Poll Shorthorn

Durham

Dairy Shorthorn

Australian Shorthorn

The current Shorthorn Society of Australia encompasses the Poll Shorthorn, Australian Shorthorn and the Durham.

Many other beef cattle breeds have used Shorthorn genetics in the development of new breeds such as the Belmont Red.

The adage that the Australian beef industry was founded on Shorthorn cattle is demonstrably true except with one exception, they were what we know today as Beef Shorthorns.

The first Beef Shorthorns came to Australia in 1825.

So it follows that not only was the beef industry in Australia underpinned by Beef Shorthorns in the mid 18th century, it was Beef Shorthorn Beef that was consumed by a large part of the population. They thrived in the early days in Australia on unimproved pastures.

The dominance of the Beef Shorthorns continued until many producers began to take notice of the hype that began with the introduction of feedlots and the European draught breeds in the middle of the last century. On balance, the performance of many of the introduced breeds struggles to match the productivity of Beef Shorthorns or the breed's meat quality. They have high fertility and good mothering ability, and generally have a docile temperament. They finish readily on good quality pastures and are noted for their good marbling characteristics when finished on grain. Today's Shorthorn cattle are noted for their excellent maternal abilities, temperament, growth and carcass quality, as well as net feed efficiency. The balanced, multi-trait performance of Shorthorns allows them to influence profitability by improving the traits of economic importance.

BETTER BUTTERFAT COWS

More butterfat in your cow's milk equals more money in your bank account. I know this is a topic I've discussed previously so please bear with me because I still think that outside those breeders who we have been working with or those who have been following Gearld Fry's writings etc. there are very few who are truly serious when it comes to considering milk production in beef cattle as being overly important. More specifically though, I would like to focus on butterfat again.

I tend to think that one of the reasons for breeders not paying that much attention to butterfat production is because it doesn't figure highly in EBV calculations in its own right. Whilst EBV's have provided a choice of measurement for animal replacement assessment, it was developed by people mainly with a limited

practical experience in raising consistent grass fed cattle. These measurements were developed with the feed lot industry in mind and so we now have a national herd that is geared towards producing later maturing, higher maintenance animals.

Producing cows that are high in butterfat from grass grazing will turn this trend around. As beef producers, it is important to realise that first and foremost, we need to produce good quality milk. Growing nutritious grass is not all that is required in getting a good return per hectare for your grass. Selecting cows and bulls with the right body type and genetics to turn grass into butterfat is though. Cows that don't produce enough butterfat produce calves that have long bones and tall frames that require high maintenance. Think of the body shape of dairy calves you have seen that are weaned from their mother a few days after birth and fed on supplementary milk replacement products and compare them with the shape of beef calves reared on a mother with plenty of butterfat and even given the confirmation differences between dairy and beef breeds, you will see the difference. In fact, if you have followed the prominent dairy breeds like Freisan and Holstein in particular over the last 40 years you may have noticed how they have gradually become more prominent in areas like the hook (hip), pins and chine. A classic indicator of this is usually easily seen when cattle have a dip behind their shoulders and onto the ribs. They will measure short in the heart girth compared to their length and are therefore not producing as meat as they should be. I believe that one of the main reasons for this is that these cows and many generations before them have been reared on a diet highly deficient in butter oil. So this then follows on into beef herds where cows with low quality milk tend to produce calves that are later maturing and don't have the deep, wide chests and rumps necessary to produce meat at an early age.

Certainly there are climatic conditions that can influence the length of the growing season and weaning time. However, we should not develop early weaning as a regular habit that becomes the standard rather than the exception in good seasons. I have stated before; feed the cow to feed the calf.

There are no extra maintenance requirements in terms of grass grown for producing butter-fat between a cow that produces plenty of butterfat and one that doesn't. Cows won't eat any extra grass and won't lose body condition because the key element is digestible grass. Digestible fibre in the form of grass is the key food product that the cows digest and depending on her genetic capabilities formulates the quality and amount of butter-fat she produces. There is very little energy involved in the production of that fat. Cows basically eat the same amount of grass whether they are lactating or dry. Heavier cows though will require much more feed than medium weight (550 – 650 kg.) cows to maintain their body condition and carry out their normal daily living requirements (walking etc.) without showing anymore for it in returns through their calves on a gross margin basis. The economics of your cattle operation is what determines whether you survive or not in your business and needs to give you an adequate return for growing your grass and the labour you use in managing your herd. The key to doing this is to manage your business so that the return per hectare gross margin of your enterprise is maximised. Therefore it is critical to support your best cows and breed more of them. Having your cows freeloading on your pastures for 5 - 6 months of the year because their calves have been weaned at 6 -7 months either because that is your practice or because she has simply failed to continue producing milk is really losing money for you. Would you invest money in your bank if they

told you they were only going to pay you interest for 6 -7 months of the year? I doubt it but it is much the same thing.

The ability of a cow to produce butterfat can also be reflected their bull calf's ability to produce high quality sperm and in testicle shape. Another factor to consider is that even if a bull's testicle circumference is adequate, he will produce a limited number of sperm cells if he has been weaned early at, say, 5-7 months. Bulls need to have access to their mother's milk fat for a full 9 – 10 month lactation on good quality grass to guarantee their potential for high sperm production. Please make yourself familiar with the indicators for butterfat production on your cows to maximise productivity.

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

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EVALUATOR	TRAINING	COURSE	PROGRAM - 2015			
TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
9:00 - 9:15	WELCOME	ICEBREAKERS	ICEBREAKERS	ICEBREAKERS	ICEBREAKERS	IF REQUIRED
9:15 - 9:45	INTRODUCTIONS	REVISION OF DAY 1	REVISION OF DAY 2	REVISION OF DAY 3	REVISION OF DAY 4	ON PROPERTY
9:45 - 10:00	CLMS COMPANY	INTRODUCING MEAT	INTRODUCTION	INTRODUCTION TO	THE ESCUTCHEON -	LIVE
	SITUATION	TRAIT SELECTION	TO BREED TRAIT	ULTRASOUND	MIRROR FOR	EVALUATION
10:30 - 10:30	OVERVIEW OF	PRACTICING MEAT TRAIT	SELECTION	MEASUREMENT	MILK QUALITY	TRAINING
	CLMS SYSTEM	SELECTION				FOR FUTURE
10:30 - 10:45	MORNING TEA	MORNING TEA	MORNING TEA	MORNING TEA	MORNING TEA	EVALUATORS
10:45 - 12:30	DESCRIPTION AND	PRACTICING	PRACTICING	PRACTICE ALL	VISIT FEEDLOT FOR	AND
	POWER POINT	MEAT TRAIT	BREED TRAIT	TRAITS	BROADER EVALn.	ACCREDITATION
	PRES.	SELECTION	SELECTION		EXPERIENCE	
12:30 - 1:15	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	
1:15 - 3:00	INTRODUCTION	PRACTICING	PRACTICING	INTRODUCTION TO	VISIT FEEDLOT FOR	
	4 TRAIT	MEAT TRAIT	BREED TRAIT	LINEAR	BROADER EVALn.	
	SELECTION	SELECTION	SELECTION	MEASURING	EXPERIENCE	
3:00 - 3:15	AFTERNOON TEA	AFTERNOON TEA	AFTERNOON TEA	AFTERNOON TEA	AFTERNOON TEA	
3:15 - 5:00	PRACTICING	INTRODUCING	PRACTICING	PRACTICING	FINAL ASSESSMENT	
	4 TRAIT	BREEDING TRAITS	BREED TRAIT	LINEAR	OF EVALUATION	
	SELECTION	POWER POINT PRES.	SELECTION	MEASURING	SKILLS	

6:30 - 8:30	DINNER PROGRAM					
	VALUING	PASTURE AND	GUEST SPEAKER	COMMUNICATING	BARBEQUE TASTE	
	YOUR	GRAZING		WITH	TEST OF CLMS	
	HERD	MANAGEMENT		CLIENTS	EVALUATED MEAT	