

THE HORMONAL MAIL

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MANAGEMENT SERVICES

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EDITORIAL

Since the last newsletter, things have changed significantly in regard to the climate in our neck of the woods, at least. Again we have experienced the vagaries of nature at its best and its worst. I hope that you have not been too significantly affected by floods and bushfires over the last three months. If you have, we hope you are able to survive and get over this setback. I am aware that some of you have quite an amount of flood damage though. In the south Eastern quarter of Queensland we went from being very dry a few days before the end of January to being inundated with 20 inches plus of rain within 3 – 4 days and over the last 2 months have probably had another 12 – 15 inches. It certainly highlighted the old saying of ‘it never rains, but it pours’. We recently drove from Queensland to Melbourne and then over to Tasmania and there was a stark contrast in vegetative growth. Wherever you may be, I hope that the season takes a turn for the better for you. What the weather has done has slowed our evaluating down somewhat given that we have had to postpone work because of flooded roads and now because some of our clients are busy repairing fences and other infrastructure. Hopefully we will be back on track in the near future as will most of you.

On a note of sadness, I would like to offer our sincerest condolences to Gearld Fry and his family on the passing of Margie in February. Margie fought a most courageous battle over the last five years and I am certain has been the source of great inspiration to all of those close to her. Her faith, her beliefs and her commitment to her family never wavered throughout her life and particularly during these latter years when she could have been excused for doubting. I know her loss will be huge for Gearld, but I am equally certain that her life will continue to inspire him to follow his life passion with cattle.

WHAT'S (BEEN) HAPPENING

* We are continuing to work down the path of incorporating a new company that will be made up of the current company holding a minimum 20% shareholding plus any new investors that we can attract. This is going hand in hand with developing electronic technology to assist us in delivering the repeatability we are aiming for in our the grading system. As with so many things, it all takes time and while it is quite frustrating we need to make certain of every step to ensure success. What we are aiming for is something that we believe will benefit a large part of the beef industry.

*We are also developing an investment proposal as a parallel with the introduction of the new company and the new technology development. Once this is complete, we will be actively looking for potential partners who have a long term commitment to the industry. As I stated in the last newsletter, to add flexibility to the shareholding acquisition element of the investment, we will accept in kind contributions. We realise the difficulty in today's economic climate in coming up with ready cash for such investments so will be setting out a range of related activities that potential shareholders could undertake that will have a monetary value that can be credited towards their contribution of share acquisition. We hope this will make the offer more attractive to grass roots beef producers.

* As I stated in the last newsletter, 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 still have a client with 21 Red Poll x Droughtmaster heifers for sale for \$600.00 each. They are all graded as 3.5 and 3, are now around 18 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.

Now that breeders are becoming more aware of the importance of the role that butterfat plays in the growth and development of calves, we are also getting calls from clients asking us to look for lines of cattle that are carrying the required genes for high butterfat yield.

* We have recently returned from a successful trip to New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania where we met several potential new clients and saw some interesting innovations in terms of breeding and marketing. We also had successful meetings with the people we are working with to develop the ultra sound system and I believe they can provide the technology and software we are looking for.

*I will be going to the Northern Territory on April 10th. for a couple of weeks to assist with the grading of this season's Coodardie bulls and select those for their annual sale. We will be returning again for the annual sale which will be held on Friday the 17th. of May at the Mataranka Showground. I am sure anyone who would like to travel over for the sale will be most welcome and subjected to the traditional Coodardie hospitality. I also plan at least one trip to Northern NSW in the next 3 months as well as getting back to catch up with producers in Central Qld. I would be happy to call on our way to or back from the N.T. in May.

*I have attached some info re the Coodardie sale at the end of the newsletter. If anyone else would like to put similar information in the newsletter, please let me know so we can accommodate it.

RESEARCH DIRECTION

Since we have been looking at how we can develop some of the new technology we are looking at introducing into our system, we have also been considering options as to how we might be able research and fund this. One of the related areas that we would like to consider more is how we can evaluate and justify the changes we are proposing. As far as this is concerned, we would like to find a research institute or organisation that would partner us in achieving this aim. What we are aiming for is two-fold. Firstly, to prove that the technology we are considering will do what we need it to do and secondly, to add extra objectivity to the system.

The ideal we are aiming at is to have a system that will measure objectively all the traits that are measurable in terms of skeletal structure, eye muscle size etc. along with historical data, especially in the case of stud animals, and combine them with the other traits that we have identified as important in determining the factors that indicate a high performance animal such as skin texture, hair patterns etc. that can really only be identified using human touch and sight. Of course, as technology advances, it is not out of the question that more of the traits that can only be identified by human assessment could well be more objectively identified.

Whilst EBV's (estimated breed values) have been the tool used to measure the genetic potential of animals for many years now, it is still only a guide to base selections on. In many respects it could still be argued that there is a lot of subjectivity involved. It is a method of measuring an animal's projected performance based on how that animal measures up to the rest of the animals in its particular breed or breeding group. It also only measures a limited number of traits and only traits that are measurable. This doesn't mean that the overall concept of EBV's is necessarily fully objective. What is not taking into account, apart from traits that are not mathematically measurable, is the history of the group or the breed in terms of the

impact of the many bloodlines that are contained in the genetic make-up of that group. The difficulty is in measuring consistency and repeatability, especially for indicators for butterfat, milk production and hormonal activity which is directly related to other important factors such as fertility.

What we are aiming at ultimately achieving is a system of identification that will record many more of these less measurable, but still very important traits.

I have not mentioned MSA as a grading system because, in reality, it is a meat quality control system and not something that can be used for the future selection of breeding or certainly not for short term purposes. If the system we are using now and developing further is adopted, then animals identified pre slaughter can either be used to breed from if superior or processed and a meat grading system can accurately be based on the live evaluation system.

We feel that the industry could be putting more emphasis in this type of research. Whilst many of the projects that the industry are researching and have done in recent years are important to the industry in a broad sense, there have also been examples of research funding being directed to projects that may only warrant that funding sometime in the future, but I believe that right now there are other areas such as a more practical industry trait identification system, grazing management and sustainability and soil management research that would serve the industry much more positively.

I have been looking on the websites of industry related bodies to see if I could find a list of the research projects that these bodies have undertaken in recent years as well as to look for possible organisations we could approach to partner us in some of our research. Most of them have very specific guidelines that are difficult for the average lay person to follow with many criteria to meet to qualify for support. Those organisations include:

The Red Meat Advisory Council
 Meat and Livestock Australia
 The Australian Meat Processor Corporation
 Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation
 Livecorp

The only site that has anything of substance in regard to recent projects completed is the MLA site. Others are either not on the site or as in the case of Livecorp only pre 2002.

The following are examples of recent funded research projects that the industry has used Government and producer dollars to fund:

Preliminary investigation of prickly pear
 Leucaena in southern inland Qld.

Systematic literature review between soil and clinical expression of
 Johne's disease

Potential industry impact; Management of non-Merino ewes

Factors associated with divergent post-weaning gain in Northern
 Australian beef cattle

Endophyte metabolites associated with severe cases of perennial
 ryegrass toxicoses

I'm sure that there was valuable information gained from these trials for a limited number of producers. What we would like to see is more work on the topics I mentioned above that would benefit a far greater part of the industry.

STILL MORE ABOUT CHANGE

I hope you will bear with me as I cover some more ground on this topic that I have written about on several previous occasions and in our book "The Vision Tender". I don't apologise though, for raising it again, especially in light of the previous section on research. Change is something that happens every micro-second somewhere

in the world. In fact, I don't believe it is out of the question to suggest that the way we change also changes repeatedly.

I'm not for one minute forgetting that we need to be aware of maintaining balance in what we are doing when we are making and implementing changes. Quite often, especially in industries such as agriculture, to not change is to lose ground and that doesn't necessarily mean changing to something that is completely new, but maybe reinventing something successful from the past and adapting it to today's world. Positive, balanced change is about selecting the difference that makes the difference in whatever you are doing. Then, it is about noticing the difference that the change makes.

How is it different to what I was doing?

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

Is the change noticeable enough to follow through with?

What can I add to that change to make it even more effective?

Many people don't make changes in their lives because of fear – fear of taking a risk, fear of making a mistake, fear of loss, fear of themselves.

Certainly, everyone is different and some people can accept and take risks more readily than others.

One of the most accepted ways to reduce the risk in any change is to develop a set of criteria (goals) that the change needs to produce for it to be acceptable. Use your senses to develop a workable change. By that I mean visualise what you see that will be different when you make the change, become aware of how you will feel about that change and see yourself actually in the situation working the change. Use your "self-talk" to work out all the pros and cons of the change and do any calculations that are needed and also write them down as part of your plan. Check as wide a range of scenarios as you can bring to mind that will be affected by the change, how they will be affected and does that still mean the change is sustainable and beneficial.

For most people, it is the initial taking of the first step in the process of change that is the most challenging. That is even after they have made a plan they believe is the best they can produce and will give them a great chance of success.

Quite often when we have made a change, we wonder why we hadn't done it sooner. Remember that we have had a lifetime of experience in making changes of different magnitudes over a long period of time and so each time we make a new change we have all our past experiences to call on and each new change means we have even more experience than we had for the last change we made.

Even if a change is not totally as we had planned, we still need to accept it as a learning experience that is going to be useful when we make future changes.

When you do make a change, especially a big one, review it. This will assist in "filing" it away in your memory file for future use.

There are also useful post change questions you can ask:

Do you know now that the change wasn't as frightening as you originally thought?

When you know that the change isn't as frightening as you thought and you know that now, what difference does that make?

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

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

Next time you have a decision to make, how will you make it differently? If you do?

These questions are all aimed at encouraging you to think a little differently, possibly more laterally, but certainly to ensure that as much of your cognitive ability as possible is fully utilised.

I hope these questions assist you in thinking about/looking at/approaching change a little differently in the future and especially in how you look ahead at changes to your livestock evaluation system!

BREED OF THE QUARTER

BELTED GALLOWAY.

The most obvious and outstanding factor about this breed is their white "belt" that covers the mid-section of the animal and is set against their usually black coat. There are some animals with a dun coloured background as well although these are not eligible for registration in the Belted Galloway herd book. The Belted Galloway is basically the same in origin and characteristics as the Galloway breed. The breed is recognized to be a very ancient one, originating on the western side of southern most extremities of Scotland's Lowlands in the Province of Galloway. The Belted Galloways are naturally polled cattle with a long, coarse hair coat that helps shed the rain and a soft undercoat that provides insulation and waterproofing and allows them to adapt quickly to the cooler, temperate Australian climatic areas. They are well-suited to rough grazing land and can utilize coarser grasses that other breeds would not readily graze. They are able to maintain good condition on less than ideal pasture and produce a high quality beef product on grass alone.

It is believed that the belt originated from the importation of some Belted Dutch Lakenvelder cattle in the Seventeenth century. A polled herd book was started in 1852 in conjunction with the Aberdeen Angus. In 1878 the Galloway breeders acquired rights to their portion of the herd book and in 1921 the Dun and Belted Galloway Association was formed in Scotland. In 1951 the name of the organization was changed to the Belted Galloway Society. The Australian Belted Galloway Association (ABGA) was established in 1975.

Belted Galloway's are known for their quality marbled beef, although they have also been accepted as a dual purpose breed and milked. Their milk has been tested and shown, generally, to have a

high butterfat content. Bulls weigh from 1,700 pounds (770 kg) to 2,300 pounds (1045 kg) with the average being 1,800 pounds (820 kg). Cows weigh from 1,000 pounds (450 kg) to 1,500 pounds (675 kg) with the average being 1,250 pounds (565 kg). Calves generally weigh from 25 – 35 kgs. They are generally of a quiet temperament, but still maintain a strong maternal instinct and will protect a calf against perceived threats.

THE UDDER.

The udder and teats are the end of the cow's milk production chain and need to be highly functional to ensure that the results obtained by the rest of the cow's "production line" are passed on efficiently and effectively to the calf. A strong suspensory ligament will provide the starting point to ensure a long productive life for the cow. This allows the udder to stretch forward and then half way up the back of the tail to gain maximum capacity for milk storage. This can also be seen in the bull. If you view the back of the scrotum, there is sometimes a strip of skin that ideally should be directly between the two testicles. If it is not, then the testes will be twisted and this will also reflect in the cow's udder being un-proportionate or unbalanced.

The udder attachments should form a continuous curve from the belly to the back of the tail. This means there is no straining on the tissue from a pendulous action and movement, nor is there as much danger from being staked or stood on.

The udder should also be high enough for the calf to find easily when they first start to suckle. It should be symmetrical with an even balance of quarters, of moderate length, width and depth with a slight distinction of quarters. High producing cows will rear a heifer calf that has fat rolls in front of her udder and this signals a passing on of the cows production traits.

The udder should be symmetrical, strongly attached, well balanced and pendulous with a fine texture and soft, supple feel. Long coarse udder hair is a sign of see through milk. It should be of moderate depth relative to the hock and with adequate capacity and clearance. The average udder floor or bottom is about 2 inches or 5 cm. above the hocks. It should also be of a uniform distance from top to bottom with evenly balanced quarters.

While a degree of udder depth is necessary for capacity, an extremely deep udder is in danger of injury and mastitis. It can also be difficult for a calf to suckle.

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 and you won't hurt my feelings if you are honest.

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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3rd Annual

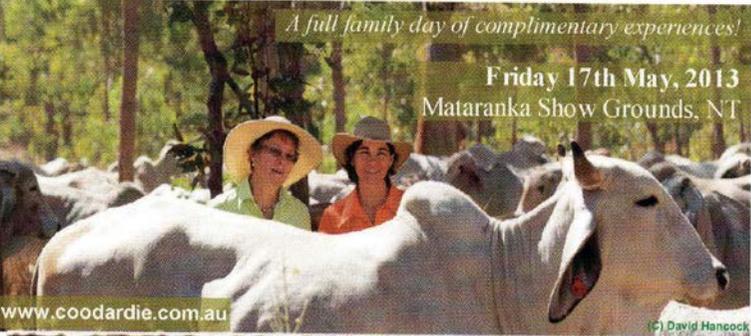


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Friday 17th of May will be a fun filled day for the whole family, with cattle workshop, children's activities and the auction in the afternoon.

www.coodardie.com.au

It is with pleasure that we invite you to our 3rd Annual Coodardie Brahms Sale to be held in Mataranka. Local Katherine stock agent, Scott Riggs of Territory Rural will be conducting the sale and we welcome him to our team.

For more information please contact us, Scott Riggs & his team or your preferred agent.

We look forward to seeing you.

The O'Brien Family

The bulls and females available for your competition are grass fed, quality bred. This means you pay for leading genetics - not expensive grain. Full fertility assessments will be included in the sale catalogue and available via our website mid April.

To: _____

All our cattle are constantly being assessed for the key profit drivers of fertility, functionality and meat qualities. They are genetically quiet for your safety and pleasure.

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