

# THE HORMONAL MAIL

THE OFFICIAL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF  
CLASSIC LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT SERVICES.

VOLUME 1. NUMBER 29.

JULY 2013



MANAGEMENT SERVICES

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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to this edition of our newsletter. I hope it finds you in good health and humour despite the many issues that are no doubt there to challenge our hopes and positivity in these ever changing times. As usual, we are seeing and hearing of the diversity in our climate throughout the world and while the season is being extremely good in some regions, it is also very trying in others such as northwest Qld. at present. I was speaking with Gearld Fry recently and he was saying they are very optimistic as they come into what is promising to be a very good grass season in Arkansas in the USA.

The basis for most of our system is from knowledge that has been passed on down through the generations in one form or another and adapted in varying degrees to be as effective as possible in today's world. It is also interesting to read and experience similar things happening in other areas. I have been reading more and more over recent months about the virtues of grass fed beef and how recently a grass fed steer was successful in a fairly prestigious meat quality competition. This, and many other such competitions over the last 3 – 4 decades, has been dominated by grain fed animals. Maybe we are starting to realise that the flavour and quality of the meat that our forefathers have consumed for centuries wasn't all that bad after all. Whilst there has been many research based inputs that have contributed to improved pastures and pasture management, the basis for the actual meat quality has always been there. It hasn't needed wholesale changes. What we need now is a standardised set of criteria to tell consumers who only want genuine grass fed meat that it is actually what the packaging and promotion say it is. I will expand on the topic of labelling a little more later in this newsletter.

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

\* We have just completed a slight re-organisation of our company that we believe will improve our position in regard to going ahead in the future. The main company will still be known as Classic Livestock Management Services (CLMS). The old CLMS, comprising our original shareholder/directors, will be now named CLMS Holdings and will hold a minimum of a 20% shareholding in the new CLMS. 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. It became clear to us on talking to people in the finance industry that to attract investors or venture capitalists that we needed to restructure our business somewhat. We believe that first part of our new plan is now complete. Within the next week we will have a completed investment memorandum to discuss with potential investors and now have a company structure that will accommodate such interested parties. Whether we will be able to achieve what we are aiming to do or not remains to be seen, but if our plans do come to fruition, they will have a huge impact on not only the beef industry's ability to identify quality animals, but other cloven hoofed animals as well. As I said in the last newsletter, it all takes time and while it is quite frustrating to endure, we need to make certain of every step to ensure success. We have already experienced a number of minor setbacks, but I guess it all helps to build one's patience and tolerance.

\*I have left most of this next paragraph in again this quarter because we are now a step closer in regard to furthering our future plans in the sense that we can offer our investment memorandum to anyone

who is interested. Obviously because of the sensitivity and critical nature of the information contained in the information memorandum to our whole future, we are asking all interested parties to sign our confidentiality agreement before receiving the information memorandum. As I have stated in previous newsletters, to add flexibility to the shareholding acquisition element of the investment, we will accept in kind contributions. In one sense, this will not be raising the cash that we need to develop the technology we believe is critical to our future development as a company, but we also want to be able to involve any grass roots beef producers interested in the venture and the future of the industry and we see this as a way to do so. 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.

\* 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 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.

#I have just recently become aware of 25 Red Poll cows 4 – 8 years old that are available for sale. The owner of these cows is retiring (slowing down a little anyway) and has been selecting cows that are high milk producers for many years. I have graded these cows and

they are probably the best line of beef or dual purpose cows for milk production potential that I have seen. The owner told me that he recently had a 10 month old weaner processed and it weighed 217 kg. hot dressed weight. I have seen a number of his 8 – 10 month old weaners processed and they always consistently dress over 180 kgs. In fact, some of the fat samples we used in last year's Omega trials were from these calves.

\* We had the pleasure of attending the annual Coodardie Brahman sale held on Friday the 17<sup>th</sup>. of May at the Mataranka Showground. Despite the low state of the industry in the Northern Territory at present, there was quite good interest in the sale and whilst there was not a total clearance of all the cattle on offer, given the current climate, it was a reasonable result. The overall quality, especially the heifers, was the best I have seen at the Coodardie sale and reflected the quality of the Coodardie herd. These cattle are bred to work and produce quality meat. The unfortunate thing is that these traits are not always what some producers are looking for. Just to support this, nearly 90% of last year's weaners graded 3.5 (tender) or better on our grading system. The most interesting thing at this sale was that there was a much stronger demand for grey Brahman bulls and heifers. This is contrary to previous sales. In fact, all but 2 of the 30 grey bulls offered sold for their reserve price or better and all the grey heifers sold. The average price for the bulls was very similar to last year, while the heifers were just slightly cheaper. The sale did not fully reflect the lower prices on offer generally in the Territory at present though. Again, many thanks to the O'Brien family for the their wonderful hospitality over the sale period and congratulations to them for the presentation of their stock and the very smooth way in which the sale itself was conducted.

\* I am planning at least one trip to Northern NSW in the couple of months as well as getting back to catch up with producers in Central Qld. I will be going to Aramac in late July so would be happy to catch up then or if that doesn't suit then I am happy to make other arrangements.

\*In August, the world renowned holistic farming and pasture management expert, Allan Savoury will be visiting Australia. He will be conducting a special workshop on Tuesday, August the 13<sup>th</sup>. at Mataranka. Northern Territory, hosted by the Coodardie Brahman Stud. If you are interested in attending, please visit [www.coodardie.com.au](http://www.coodardie.com.au) or phone 0889754460 and speak with Moira Lanzarin or Clair O'Brien. Allan will be conducting other workshops in NSW and Qld. prior to this date.

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### **LABELLED OFF**

One of the most confusing aspects of shopping for food these days must certainly be the amount of information on product labels. Not only the amount of information, but the variations in standards. I'm afraid that as a simple type of person, I can't understand how so many "grey areas" can exist. To me, if something is made in Australia then it is grown, processed, packaged and sold here. Yet we have a range of standards that can easily give the impression of being grown and made locally, even when they are either imported and packaged here, or contain some imported products or are grown here but processed overseas. Then there is the number of foreign owned processors operating here and despite their advertising to the contrary, can't help but be taking some revenue out of the country. Why would they have invested here in the first place otherwise.

That raises the question as to why local companies can't survive here and grow without having to sell out to overseas companies. It's a similar scenario as to why there is a growing amount of investment in farms here by overseas investors. Now, I'm not against overseas investment. It brings the latest technology and knowledge to the country in a whole range of areas. I think the question is: why can't local companies and primary producers be more competitive in regard to keeping local ownership of our commodities? The obvious reason is that Australia is playing on the level global trading playing field and unfortunately, we are only playing with ourselves. Other developed countries show much more support for their local businesses and producers. I think this need to be seen as squeaky clean in regard to global trade and finance has meant that we are frightened of upsetting our so called trading partners by being more transparent with our product labelling at consumer level. These labelling issues not only apply to processed food. There are a range of issues with local labelling in other areas.

As I mentioned earlier, the grass fed labelling can also be questioned as I've seen meat that has been advertised as being grass fed and finished on grain. There are consumers who won't read the fine print and believe that the product they are purchasing is all grass fed.

Another area of huge contention currently being debated is around the labelling of organic products. Again, there is a range or number of levels of organic production. Some of these allow some form of synthetic and processed additives such as weedicides or insecticides that are not natural. We really need to remove the confusion from food labelling by reducing the number of categories and making it a black and white, clear non-confusing area.

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## **BREED OF THE QUARTER**

### **NEL(L)ORE.**

The Nellore is of the species *Bos indicus* (Zebu), and has few similarities to breeds of the *Bos taurus* (European) species. Their most distinctive characteristic is the presence of a prominent "hump" behind their neck.

The Nellore breed can be traced back over 2000 years when they were brought to India by the Aryan people. They were originally known as Ongole but had their name changed to that of Nellore after a district in the now State of Andra on the Bengal Sea. Their history traces a breed that has survived in regions that have extremes of climate from the cold winters of the Punjab to the arid lands of Belushistan and the hard country along the Bengal Sea. This provided them with genes that are capable of quick adaption to climatic variations and has been the reason the Nellore breed has survived today in a variety of climates in various countries. There has never existed in India a breed called Nellore. The name "Nellore" has never been used in India. It was in Brazil where some breeders started to use the name Nellore as a synonym to Ongole, the Indian breed that contributed most to the creation of the Nellore.

Whilst the Nellore is now found in many countries, they have been most widely accepted in Brazil where well over 50% of the national herd are Nellore. They were first introduced into Brazil in 1868, when two animals were sold there off a ship travelling from India to England. From there, other animals were imported until a herd book was established in 1938.

The name "Brahman" was adopted in 1924 for the new *Bos Indicus* breed developed by American cattlemen who required an alternative to European type cattle for the difficult environment conditions

along the Texas gulf coast, similar to the sub-tropical and tropical regions in Australia.

The American Brahman was the source of virtually all importations of Zebu cattle into Australia before 1982. The breed was developed by crossing three strains of Indian Zebu cattle. These three strains were the Guzerat, Nellore and Gyr, which were imported from both India and Brazil, mainly between the years 1900 to 1946. The Nellore is the breed most likely to have given the grey/white colouring to the Brahman cattle we have today.

The Nelore are usually white in colour with black skin, muzzle and tail with fairly long legs although they have shorter ears than most Bos Indicus types. They were predominantly horned although polled animals were first identified about 50 years ago and so these have been used extensively since, especially with the advent of more intensive fattening systems.

They are heat and insect resistant, have long deep bodies with clear underlines. The cows have small udders and short teats whilst bulls have small sheaths. The cows calve very easily because of their large frame and wide pelvic opening giving a larger birth canal. They are very fertile breed that have a long and productive life highlighted by their mothering ability and milk production.

The Nellore has the following outstanding characteristics:

Hardiness. Heat and Insect resistance. Metabolic Efficiency.

Meat quality. Reproductive Efficiency Maternal Instinct and Disposition.

The meat potential of the Nellore (Ongole) has not been exploited in their homeland, since India is not a beef-eating country. However, their performance on this account has been exceptional in the American tropics. This is the main reason why the Ongoles are the predominant breed in Latin America and are continuing to spread.

The Nellore (Ongole) has the lowest birth weight, the highest percentage of calves born, the highest percentage of calves weaned, the highest percentage of unassisted calving and the second highest weaning weight in a range of South American trials over a long period of time.

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## **THE SCROTUM**

In the last newsletter, I made a few brief comments in regard to the cow's udder. The udder is what really defines the end result of a cow's productivity cycle and her calf is the showcase of her performance. Regardless of how good everything else is about the cow, if she has one or more un-productive quarters, uneven quarters, won't/can't let her milk down, has bulbous or bottle shaped teats etc. she cannot give her calf a proper start to its life – the most important few months of its life. Quite often many of the udder and teat defects don't show up in a cow until her second, third or later lactation and she has already produced 2 -3 sub-standard calves for you and you wonder why. The short cut to finding the answer is to take a look at the cows' father.

In this edition, I want to briefly mention a couple of pertinent points about the bull's scrotum and testes and particularly because these are important in determining what type of udder and teats his daughters will have. This is directly related to the cows ability to raise a top quality calf.

A cow's udder shape and elasticity will be determined by the position, shape, attachment, and size of her father's scrotum. The scrotum should be positioned well back between the hind legs with two evenly shaped testes that are at least 36 cms. (14.5 inches) circumference and 15 – 17.5 cms. (6 – 7 inches) long at twelve

months of age. The neck of the scrotum needs to be short with strong structural ligaments. A long scrotum neck leads to a pendulous scrotum that can be easily damaged when the bull runs or, at times, when he lies down. His daughters will stand a very good chance of having low hanging udders. Be aware of the piece of skin that is easily visible on many bulls that comes down from the body and onto the rear of the scrotum. This needs to be attached in the centre of the scrotum. If it is not, it will twist the bull's scrotum and testicles. This is also an indicator of the strength of the very important suspensory ligament in a cow. A cow needs a strong suspensory ligament to hold her udder up and maintain the four quarters in an even, well balanced position.

The scrotum also needs to be even on the bottom and not have a distinct "V" shape between the testicles and this division should not continue up the scrotum between the testes. It is acceptable on the front of the scrotum. This will indicate uneven quarters in a bull's daughters that can easily lead to calves not being able to suckle one or more quarters because they can't reach the teat.

There are a range of other indicators to look for in regard to a bull's testes and scrotum that are more to do with maturity and fertility as much as or more so than reflecting on the productivity of a cows udder and I hope to cover these more in the future.

Another other point that I would like to make here that is not directly related to the cow's udder though, is in regard to the epididymis, because it is so often ignored in bull selection. The presence and size of the epididymis is the most important physical indicator of the number of cows a bull has the potential to serve in each cycle. A bull with two prominent, walnut shaped epididymis, has the potential to serve at least 50 – 60 cows in their first cycle. Always check to ensure your bulls have two epididymis.

The final point I would like to mention here is in regard to the positioning of the bulls teats. They are not always easy to see and beware of flying hooves when you look. Ideally use a small reflecting mirror with a long handle. A bull's teats should be placed off the scrotum and in front of it. They should be well-shaped and identical to a good miniature cow teat. If one or both teats are on the scrotum, it is a strong indication that the daughters of that bull will end up with bulbous or bottle teats that, as the cow gets older, will ultimately become impossible for a new born calf to be able to get hold of to suckle.

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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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