THE HORMONAL MAIL

THE OFFICIAL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF CLASSIC LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT SERVICES.

NUMBER 65

July 2022

CLASSIC LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT SERVICES

ACN 092435571

P.O. BOX 1181,
MARYBOROUGH, QLD. 4650.
PHONE: 0741297029/0411201879.
Email:gewyatt@bigpond.com
Website:www.classiclivestock.com.au

EDITORIAL

Welcome to our July quarterly newsletter and I hope it is finding you all in good spirits despite the many challenges that we are facing on a global basis at present. There are certainly plenty of things happening around the world at present that are posing some very different situations to those that many of us grew up with. I guess one of the things that has added to the current situation is the way in which the world has "shrunk" in terms of communication and the time it takes to move around the world at present. News that once took days to reach local outlets is now doing so in a few seconds of them happening and what took weeks to get from one side of the world to the other in terms of travel time for goods, now arrives in a few hours so the follow up effect is much quicker and usually therefore more difficult to manage or more impactful. When one part of the world or country sneezes, the rest of the world catches a cold. The war in Ukraine is a good example where global oil and gas supplies as well as some foodstuffs such as wheat are being very heavily impacted on and affecting most of the world in one way or another. Add the impact of the now ongoing covid virus to this and if we are so inclined, it is very easy to become negative and depressed.

I am fairly certain that despite these and other local events such as the floods we have experienced here recently in Australia and that other countries have experienced with their own disasters, there are some silver linings if we take a more positive approach. I guess one of the main positives for us in Australia at present are the record cattle prices that producers are obtaining. To compliment this, we are now seeing some very promising seasonal conditions in the areas that have had so much rain both in cropping regions as well as many of our cattle producing regions. As country people and managers of the land, we have had these experiences that mother nature has

bestowed upon us before and by using our own resilience and experiences will survive.

WHAT'S (BEEN) HAPPENING

* The cattle evaluation course we held from the 2nd. of May through to and including the 6th. of May was the most successful in terms of numbers attending we have held to date. We had 20 participants on the course with a great cross section in terms of age, experience and breeding backgrounds. It was extremely gratifying for both Albert Hancock, my co-presenter, and myself to be able to share our information with such a diverse and extremely enthusiastic and committed group of people. As with previous courses, our role was made much easier by the way those participating worked together and shared information as a group and were willing to learn and be involved in all aspects of the course. It was certainly very encouraging for us and definitely made all the preparation etc. well worthwhile. It has encouraged us to look at further courses in the future. Whether they take exactly the same format or not, we will need to consider. Unfortunately, neither Albert or myself are getting any younger and we want to be able to maintain an acceptable standard of presenting the system that ensures those participating get good value from their participation. We also recognise and appreciate the commitment that those attending make to give up 5 days plus travel time to attend the course and we thank them for doing this.
I would like to thank the Clermont Show Society and the Saleyards for their co-operation and support with providing the first-rate facilities for holding the course. I would like to thank Rosemary Robertson and Brett Kinnon for their support over the week. Rosie arranged for 50 cattle of various breeds and types to be available at the saleyards for us to evaluate as well as their transport and feed. Brett made his property yards and cattle available for us to use on the final day of the course so that those participating could culminate their week's learning in a practical environment where they able to practice in selecting both heifers and bulls that they would buy for their clients in a sale situation. Last and certainly not the least, I must thank Albert's and my wife for doing all the catering for the week.

*On a somewhat sadder note, the shareholders in Classic Livestock Management Services recently made a decision to wind the company up at the end of June. However, whilst it will no longer be a registered company, the name will be retained as a business name with a website similar to the current one and with registered evaluators carrying on with that side of the business on a contract basis. These evaluators will still be available to conduct courses and field days etc. This decision was made because of the aging of our group overall and the cost of maintaining a company structure. We have, like many other businesses, been restricted in what we could do, especially over the last 3 years because of covid. However, several of us have been encouraged by the increased interest in the system in recent months and have decided to keep the system alive, albeit in a different format.
There will be further information on our website in coming weeks in regard as to how we will operate, but for our current clients we do not see any change in our evaluation process. The website will contain contact details for all our registered evaluators as well as access to purchase our book "The Vision Tender". We are putting together the requirements for anyone interested in becoming a registered evaluator and at this stage it will require attendance at one of our past or future long courses and supervised evaluation of a number of cattle (500 – 1000 depending on previous experience) with one of our registered evaluators. At present we have 3 registered evaluators, Albert Hancock, Doug Paton and myself and

our contact details are on our website. We will operate as private consultants mainly and work together when needed to run courses, field days etc. We would like to thank all of those who have supported and been interested in the system in the past and hope that you will continue to support our new structure.
*We will be available for evaluations in NSW in late June and then again in early September in the Young/Yass area with the possibility of a field day or even a 2 or 3 day course during that visit.

*Just to repeat, we are still very keen to hold more one day field days over the next few months now that border restrictions etc. have been lifted. If you would like one in your area, please let myself or Albert Hancock (0267334666) know and we will get it under way. We would like to be as flexible as possible in our future planning and would welcome and appreciate any input that you can provide for us in this regard.

*Coodardie Brahman bulls and cows are now available for private sale and an online catalogue is available on their website – www.coodardie.com.au.

*We now have linear measuring callipers available for sale (as well as the measurements if you would like to make your own – no cost) for $100.00 plus freight so if you are interested, please let me know.

*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 or on our website.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
*We are also happy to promote sales for any breeders, stud or otherwise, who would like to put them in our newsletter, so please let me know the details.
****

Breed of the Quarter – Red Sindhi

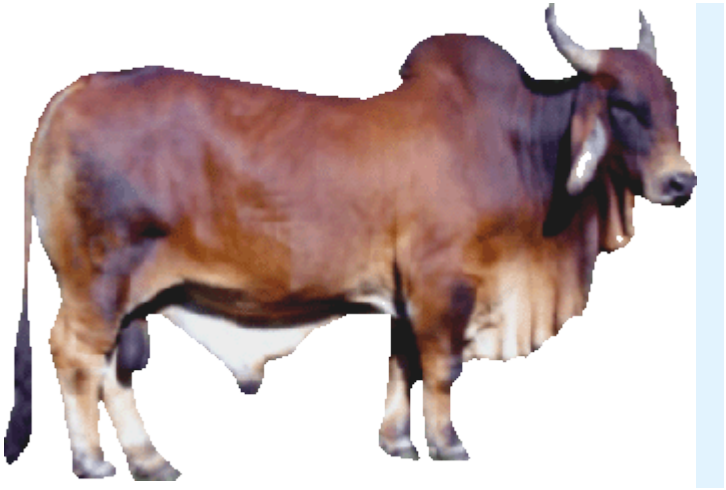
Red Sindhi is a reputed heat tolerant milch cattle breed originating from the Sindh province of Pakistan. The breed is also known as Malir (Baluchistan), Red Karachi and Sindhi and probably evolved from the Las Bela cattle of Bela, Baluchistan. They are from a mountainous region called Mahal Kohistan and spread over parts of Karachi, Thattha and Dadu districts in Sindh and includes the irrigated areas of Hyderabad and the arid plains of Lasbella district in Baluchistan.

The **Red Sindhi** range in colour from a deep reddish brown to a yellowish red, but are most commonly a deep red and darker than the Sahiwal. They are distinguished from the other dairy breed of Sindh, the Tharparkar or White Sindhi, both by colour and form, the Red Sindhi is smaller, rounder, with a more typical dairy form, and with short, curved horns, while the Tharparkar are taller with a shape more typical of Zebu draft breeds and with longer, lyre shaped horns. The bulls are usually of a darker colour than the cows.

Red Sindhi cattle are the most popular of all Zebu dairy breeds. They generally average over 1700 kg of milk after suckling their calves, though have been known to yield over 3400 kg per lactation under optimum conditions. They have also been used to improve beef and dual-purpose cattle in many tropical countries because of their ability to produce good beef calves in such crosses and their high milk production helps give a fast-growing calf which is ready for market at one year. It is somewhat smaller than the very similar Sahiwal and produces a little less milk per animal as a result. This has caused them to lose favour with some dairies.

They have been used for crossbreeding with temperate (European) origin dairy breeds such as Holstein-Friesian, Brown Swiss and Danish Red in many countries to combine their tropical

adaptations (heat tolerance, tick resistance, disease resistance, fertility at higher temperatures, etc.) with the higher milk production found in temperate regions. It has also been crossed with Jerseys in many places, including India, the United States, Australia and Sri Lanka.



Red Sindhi Characteristics

- Medium sized animals.
- Most commonly a deep red colour.
- The Red Sindhi cattle are raised mainly as a dairy cattle breed in Pakistan and India. But in other countries, it is also raised for meat.
- They are very hardy and strong animals.
- Tick and disease resistant and very heat tolerant.
- Fertile and easy calving (sloping rump).
- Well adapted to their local climates, especially tropical, and also do well in some other environments. This has led to them being fairly widely available throughout the world.
- Predominately a dairy breed though they are more meaty than other Zebu dairy breeds so are more adaptable to cross-breeding.
- Temperament is good.
- They are a horned breed with horns that are thick at the base and emerge laterally and curve upward.

As a medium sized breed, average live body weight of the mature bulls is around 530 kg. and average live body weight of the mature cows is around 325 kg.

The average height of a **Red Sindhi cow** is 116 cm with a body weight of 340 kg. Bulls average 134 cm in height and a body weight of 420 kg

A small number of Red Sindhi were brought to Australia in 1954 as a gift from the Pakistan government. However, recent estimates are that there are only about 10 cows in Australia at present and

probably no bulls. Red Sindhi bulls and Sahiwal bulls were originally used over Jersey cows in Australia to create the Australian Milking Zebu. The Queensland Agriculture College had some on their property during the late 1960's and early 10970's and they were, at that time, the only known Sindhi cattle in Australia.
****

Peas in a pod

One of the most frustrating things that I have experienced in the cattle evaluation business is the inconsistency between animals within a herd and then between traits in individual animals. I realise that I have written about this previously so please bear with me because I think the current approach of crossbreeding is not doing the industry any favours. Whenever we cross-breed we are at least doubling the potential size of an animal's gene pool and reducing the chances we have of producing consistency in our end product. Those of you who have been observing the cattle industry over many years are familiar with the changes that have occurred in terms of trait variation, again in both individual animals and in breeds. Now some of that has been for the better. However, the opposite has also occurred. The main aim of crossbreeding has usually been to increase hormonal activity and therefore growth rates and productivity. However, from a breeding perspective, these are terminal animals and should not be bred from unless there is a long term aim of possibly creating a new breed and if this is the case, then a very tight breeding schedule is needed to keep the positive traits repeating themselves in each generation. It also goes without saying that animals used in any breeding program need to have as many positive traits as possible. Poor traits will be magnified in the same way as good traits if they are present.
Crossbreeding though, has generally become uncontrolled. The number of pure-bred herds that one can see as they drive around our rural areas has decreased over the years. In fact, as I may have stated previously, the difference between extreme types within each breed is such that certainly with some of the popular breeds, if a cow from one end of the spectrum was mated with a bull from the other end, hybrid vigour could well be evident. However, only are very few of those offspring would be reliable, consistent breeders.

The above is a small sample of over 150 steers and heifers from the one herd that are all similar type and weight that we have been evaluating for a number of years. They aren't in prime condition as they were photographed at the end of winter, but this gives an idea

of the trait evenness and consistency to aim for. Cattle buyers, whether they be buying for processors or for breeding, also prefer a pen of cattle that are as alike in their traits and weights as possible. When breeding, each breeder will rightly have their own preference for breed and particularly if it is suited environmentally to individual properties. However, regardless of breed, balance and consistency in a breeding program that therefore carries through to the end product should be the aim.

Cows to keep

This newsletter has contained a little about change, but also more about re-enforcement and/or revision of some of the factors in regard to cattle breeding that we have learnt over the years from our predecessors and seen practiced or practiced ourselves that we have found work well in almost all situations. I know I have discussed these ideas previously. However, we believe they are extremely important so please bear with me as I repeat them.

One of the people we have worked with and shared a lot of common information with is the late Gearld Fry. In this part of the newsletter, I have combined some of his thoughts that are very similar to our own in terms of developing the benchmark for an ideal cow, and with some slight adjustments that will fit most situations and environments in terms of breeding efficient, productive animals. I know when I am evaluating, I have found cows that I have told the owner to never sell. These cows should have a calf every year, live to be 15 – 20 years of age and maintain her low maintenance requirements all her life. She should be amongst the first calvers in the herd each calving period and calve with no difficulty. She needs to maintain good health throughout her life, have a good temperament and ideally never causes trouble or expense of any kind and maintain her health on a grass, hay or silage diet. She should produce 55-65% (or more) of her body weight each year while maintaining her own body weight. She sheds her hair at the first lengthening of days in spring, a sign of early maturity and good hormonal activity, which results in a sleek, shiny, feminine hair coat. This also assists with her ability to control insects/parasites (internal or external). She produces heifers that can rebuild the herd. Her daughters perform the same or ideally, better, than her mother and grandmothers. Her gland system (endocrine) functions with perfection and results in maximum hormonal activity. Her gene pool is her strength and should be the desire of every beef or dairy producer.

These cows should never be destroyed. They should not leave the farm. They cannot be replaced. She is the most precious part of your herd and the aim needs to be to replicate her until your herd is as she is. She is the one with no recessive genes. Prepotency is her strength. Grass and production are her only needs and desires. She is the standard in your pastures. When I evaluate, I always try to identify the cows/heifers in the herd I am grading that are closest to meeting the criteria for the females to die on your property. I identify them as elite animals on the grading spreadsheet and these are the cows to selectively mate to a bull that is ideally better than they are in all the main traits we select for. If not, then at least as good as the best cows in the elite group.

The aim is to improve herds from the top rather from the bottom up. Rather than just focusing on culling the non-producers, ensure that the top cows produce better than themselves and therefore increase the efficiency and productivity of your herd to a high standard much faster. The bottom of the herd will take care of itself in regard to the culling of non-performers.

Identifying the most productive cows starts with defining femininity and fertility and begins with the rump area of the cow. The rump width of the cow needs to be two and a half inches (5 cm.) plus

wider than the length of her rump. Looking from behind only the stomach is wider than the rump. Fertility is directly linked to the width and depth of the rump. Without the wide, deep rump, fertility is low and will suffer with slow calving through the life of the cow. A deep flank with an even transformation from the stomach to the udder and no cut up in front of the hind legs indicates high maternal traits. A narrow rump indicates a lack of femininity, reproductive capacity and repetitiveness and is an indication of low hormonal activity. A narrow rump is an indication of an absence of red meat and a higher maintenance cow

The ideal cow will be moderate in weight with lots of balance from front to back without being over length. She will have a heart girth that is the same or greater in length than her overall body length from the pins to the poll.

The size of the heart girth determines if the reproductive qualities of the cow are supported. With the heart girth circumference equal to the top line length or greater, the shoulders will be wide and deep enough and the cow will be a low maintenance cow with an adequate size loin muscle.

Her shoulders should be the same width as the length of the rump. She will have enough width between the front legs for a well-developed and wide, deep chest for easy maintenance.

The highly productive cow will have a neck that is half of the length of her body. If the neck is longer than half the body length, her body is too long and she will be a high maintenance cow. Femininity is not determined by a long slender neck on the cow. The long slender neck will get more milk (dairy look), but energy requirements go up. A long slender neck and limited heart girth will be associated together and lead to a high maintenance cow.

We have discussed some of the traits that a cow needs to be a low maintenance, well balanced and efficient producer over a long period of time and have mentioned how she needs to be a medium size. Of course, breed will have some influence on the ideal size for a cow with some breeds being genetically smaller (Dexter, Nadudana), while others (Limousine, Charolais, Fresian) are larger. However, for the majority of breeds, especially British breeds, university research, as well as practical experience, has indicated that the most efficient size for a cow to convert grass into meat and milk as being in the range of 550 to 600kg live weight. This size has been shown to be most efficient because the cow has one of the best endocrine (chemical factory) systems of any grazing animal. A mature cow of 800kg/live weight has the same size chemical factory as the 550kg cow. At a live weight, it is not as efficient because it cannot work any better than the smaller cow and requires more energy to carry out its normal daily activities such as walking, producing milk etc. In fact, on a conversion ratio it is poorer. It would probably be fair to say that in most of our herds today, the cows are considerably heavier than 550 to 600 kg. The most likely reason for us tending to think that big cows are more productive is as the result of the generalised perception that bigger is better as well as the strong trend over the last 40 -50 years to focus on weight gain as the major priority for breeding beef cattle. This has to a large extent been driven by the feedlot industry which has focused only on buying the type of animals that are big and therefore perceived as being fast growing and often is, if the feed regime can be maintained. What we don’t see or hear too much of is the cost factor involved in growing this type of animal. We need to see more work on comparing the gross margins of concentrated feeding with grass feeding.

This trend has led to herds of cows that have lost many of their true feminine characteristics, such as we have described above, not only from a physical perspective, but also from a reproductive view point.

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

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