

# THE HORMONAL MAIL

THE OFFICIAL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF  
CLASSIC LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT SERVICES.

NUMBER 66

OCTOBER 2022



ABN 34 163 234 731

P.O. BOX 1181,  
MARYBOROUGH, QLD. 4650.  
PHONE: 0741297029/0411201879.

Email: [gewyatt@bigpond.com](mailto:gewyatt@bigpond.com)

Website: [www.classiclivestock.com.au](http://www.classiclivestock.com.au)

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to our October quarterly newsletter.

I hope that wherever you are farming in the world today that you are managing the challenges that the world is putting in front of you. It seems that regardless of where we are living in the world outside the most remote parts of it like the Antarctic or Arctic regions or the most isolated desert or mountainous regions, we are being bombarded with the ever-changing events in what is now such a small world that has been shrunken by the developing of communication technology. We are hearing of these changes as they happen regardless of where we live and have to assess how they are going to affect us. We are pretty much now forced into having to consider these factors on top of the day to day management of our enterprises that we have always had to do to survive. There seems to be an ever-increasing number of these factors that either are already, or will inevitably impact on our lives. Apart from the growing threat to world peace that is being challenged more and more, we are being continually fed information by the mass media about a range of topics such as climate change, the energy “crisis”, sustainability, COVID threats and so on. These topics are blasted all over our preferred media outlets by organisations that are often more interested in their own popularity ratings than what is “real” news or what provides a balanced or even truthful and objective discussion on the topics that are the “flavour of the month” for them rather than the average hard-working member of the general population. This seems to be a world-wide phenomenon.

It is little wonder that many people are either confused by the discussion on the above popular topics or just believe whatever the loudest voices tell them. A cynic would probably draw the conclusion that much of this information is part of the “system”, “government” or power brokers attempt at increasing their control

over us, the general population, and reduce our freedom, especially freedom of thought and creativity.

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

\* This is our first newsletter since we made the decision to de-register Classic Livestock Management Services as a company and operate it purely under a business name. We are in the process of making the necessary adjustments on our website to indicate this change. One of the main differences will be that it will have a list of registered evaluators and their details so that you can contact them if you wish to have your cattle evaluated using the Classic system. We will continue to provide the same evaluating service and run field days and courses whenever the demand justifies it without the imposts and costs associated with a company structure. Our book "The Vision Tender" will also still be available on the website.

My hope is that those of you who are using the system, whether by getting one of us to do the evaluating or whether you have done a field day or course and have learnt how to evaluate there will keep doing so and continue to benefit from it. It is very gratifying and I know that Albert feels the same way, to be able to visit herds we have been working with over the years and see the positive changes brought about by using the system. Herds that were getting less than 50% calving percentages or were having major calving problems are now experiencing major and significant improvements and can see what it has done to greatly increase their income. We have had herds go from less than 25% tenderness (i.e. 3.5 or better on our grading system) to 80% in a few years. Other breeders are now only keeping score 3 or better heifers as replacements compared to not getting enough 3.5 or better as replacements when we started working with them. Some are now also breeding most of their own bulls because they have been able to breed high scoring bulls from their own

cows. Our main wish is that other breeders also consider using our system or, at least, the traits that they need most in their herd.

\* We are continuing to put together 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 intend to add more as they become qualified. We will operate as private consultants mainly and work together when needed to run courses, field days etc.

\*We are hoping to hold some field days in NSW either later this year or early next year. We are currently sourcing suitable sites for these field days in a number of areas. Ideally, we would like to run several field days concurrently as this would reduce our travel time.

\*We will be in Central Qld in the week commencing the 10<sup>th</sup> of October doing some evaluating there.

\*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.

\*Coodardie still have some Brahman bulls and cows available for private sale and further information is available on their website – [www.coodardie.com.au](http://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.**

**MAINE-ANJOU**

The Maine-Anjou is a French breed of domestic cattle, raised mainly in the Loire Valley region in north-western France. The cattle in the Loire region were large, well-muscled animals with light red coats spotted with white. These cattle were known as the Mancelle breed. In addition to their size and muscling, the Mancelle had a reputation for their easy fattening.

In 1839 a local landholder in the historic province of Maine created the breed by cross-breeding the local Mancelle dairy cattle with Durham cattle, the breed that would later become the Shorthorn breed, that he imported from Britain, and was at first called the Durham-Mancelle.

By 1850, Durham-Mancelle animals were winning championships at the French agricultural fairs. In 1908 the Society of Durham-Mancelle Breeders was formed at Chateau- Gontier in the Mayenne district. In 1909 the name was changed to the Society of Maine-Anjou cattle breeders, taking the name from the Maine and Anjou river valleys.

.....

It was changed again in 2004, to Rouge des Prés, but outside France the older name, Maine-Anjou, continues to be used.

Breeders of the cattle were mostly small farmers whose goal was to maximize income from their small area of land. For this reason, the Maine-Anjou evolved as a dual-purpose breed, with the cows used for milk production and the bull calves fed for market. It is still common on many farms to find Maine-Anjou being milked. In many herds, half the cows are milked and the other half raise two calves

The Maine-Anjou may display the genetic myostatin deficiency which produces "double muscling", but has not been selectively bred for this attribute. The Maine-Anjou is being bred in at least eight countries in the world, with an estimated total population of about 60,000, of which approximately two thirds are in France. Of these, some 90% are in the Loire region, and most of the remainder are in the neighbouring Basse-Normandie and Poitou-Charentes regions. About one third of the rest of the world's population is in the United States, where registrations began in 1969. Maine-Anjou semen was first imported into Australia in 1972, and has been followed by imports of purebred cattle and fertilised ova from New Zealand in recent years.

The Maine-Anjou is one of the larger breeds developed in France, with mature bulls weighing from 2200 (1000kg.) to 3100 (1400kg.) pounds on the average. Mature cows will range from 1500 (700kg.) to 1900 (850kg.) pounds. The colouring is a very dark red with white markings on the head, belly, rear legs and tail. White on other parts of the body is also common.



The first Maine-Anjou imported into North America came to Canada in 1969. These cattle were then introduced to the United States through artificial insemination.

## Breed characteristics



- Used for both meat and milk, they are best developed as beef producers.
- Their colouring is dark red and white, with the head always predominantly red and the eyes always surrounded by red colouring.
- They have medium-sized horns which curve forward like those of Shorthorns.
- The breed is noted for its rapid growth and weight gain.
- Later maturing.

- Produces a high proportion of well-marbled muscle with a minimum of fat cover.
- Has a large rib-eye area.
- Has proven ability in crossbreeding with British breeds, producing very acceptable crossbred calves.
- Feed efficient beef.
- Calving ease.
- Good mothering and milking
- Docile

## BODY CAPACITY

The production potential of an animal is directly related to its body capacity. The amount of body capacity is determined by the amount of heart and lung room and this, in turn, provides an indication of an animal's ability to convert feed and withstand stressful environments. As with many of the traits that we focus on, body capacity is related to several other traits. These include shoulder width/rib spring, heart girth, chine position, neck length, front leg set, angularity and basic form. The introduction of linear measuring into our system has enabled us to more accurately assess the body capacity of animals. Measurements such as shoulder width and neck to  $\frac{2}{3}$  body length assist in doing this, but the most significant measurements are the comparison of heart girth with full top-line. Ideally, the heart girth needs to be at least the same as the overall animal length from pins to top knot. This not only gives an indication of the amount of extra meat an animal can produce, but also of the room created by a good rib spring for the animals to be able to take in greater quantities of the necessities of life i.e. air and food.

If you want to get a reasonable idea of an animal's body capacity in the paddock, there are at least three areas you can observe to assist you to do so. These include:-

1. There should be an even flow from the shoulders onto the ribs. A dip immediately behind the shoulders indicates a

- reduction in rib spring and intake area for food and air.
2. The front of the underbelly should not cut up just behind the front legs.
  3. Draw an imaginary line from the knees to the hocks and see how much space there is between that line and the bottom of the animal's flank/underbelly. The less space, the more capacity.

### **CHARACTERISTICS.**

The barrel of the animal should be long, deep and wide with the depth and spring of rib increasing towards the rear and into a deep flank. This applies particularly to the spread of the last two ribs.

A good spring of ribs is important for a female to ensure that she has the capacity to consume adequate feed and support the growth and development of the foetus and then being able to provide maximum feed for her calf after birth.

The chest is deep with a wide floor and well sprung fore ribs blending into the shoulders.

A good heart girth is essential and indicates good growth rate potential. It should be equal to the length of the top line in animals over 12 months of age. The closer to equal these measurements are, the more adaptable, efficient and vigorous the animal is. Insufficient heart girth will allow the front feet to toe out.

A larger heart girth increases feed capacity and efficiency and makes more space for red meat production with a larger loin area and increased reproductive ability. A smaller heart girth increases the maintenance requirements of the animal and makes them more susceptible to stress.

A key indicator of body capacity is the width of the muzzle and pins. A wide muzzle and pins relate to an animal with a large body capacity. Look closely for a wide duck billed muzzle for the

capacity for a large feed intake. The width of the muzzle should equal the width of the pins.

When the chine bone is too low, i.e. up to 2 cm. below the shoulders, the animal's body capacity decreases.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **CALF CARE**

I just thought I would share a few thoughts on some practices and facts we can focus on a bit more in terms of raising calves and I mean over and above just expecting the cow to do all the work. These are things that we can bear in mind during and, in fact, after gestation that can ease her burden and ensure that her calf has every chance to meet their potential as important parts of your future herd. I certainly appreciate that on range-land enterprises there are limitations as to how or what you can do to ensure a good healthy calf because you may only see the calf at marking and weaning time. I'm not going to dwell on what type or breed of cattle you prefer and how to select for the animals that best suit your environment and will usually give you the best return for your investment. The only thing that I will mention is that the cow must have the potential to produce adequate milk for her calf and that the milk she does produce is high in butterfat. One thing that is very pleasing that we are noticing as we evaluate herds is the importance that breeders are now placing on the milking quality of their cows, something that was largely neglected and/or taken for granted in beef herds for many years. Since we have adapted Geunon's methods of identifying high milk producing cows, we have been able to provide producers with a more quantitative way of selecting milk quality in their cows.

Once we have the herd that as close as possible meets our expectations, the most important thing to ensure a sound, healthy calf from your cows is feed, the nutrition that you are providing for them. This will vary significantly depending on your climate and environment as will the way you manage your herd. I will focus on things that are aimed at the ultimate in terms of breeding a beef cattle herd and you can adapt and use those that suit your situation or are practical to consider.

I would like to start just before the calf is born. The months just prior to calving are critical in terms of the cow having adequate nutrition so that the foetus develops to its full potential. It is also worth noting that the calf, when it starts grazing, will do best on the same type of pasture that its mother was eating prior to its birth.

I've emphasised the importance of adequate butterfat for a calf several times previously and I am not going to stop now. Butterfat is the key ingredient for skeletal development for the calf. Generally speaking, skeletal development continues in cattle until around 18 months of age, so ideally an animal should get butterfat in their diet until that age. However, we know that is not really practical or economically viable in today's world. What we can do though is ensure that the calf does have access to butterfat from his mother for as long is practically possible and ideally at least 9 months. In some more intensively farmed areas and in good seasons, this is certainly attainable. Again, feed availability and quality are the key and in tough times, feed the cow to feed the calf.

The classic example of what happens when calves don't get enough butterfat can be seen with dairy cattle. Nearly all dairy cattle only have access to a few days, at the most, of their mother's butterfat and then they are weaned onto a synthetic milk supplement and that is not the same as their mother's milk. That is the main reason that dairy cattle invariably have high chins, prominent rib structure, prominent hooks and pins. You rarely see that with beef cattle that

have had plenty of their mother's butterfat during the first few months of their lives. Certainly, dairy breeds are generally more angular than beef breeds, but that is not because of their lack of butterfat. It is their genetic type.

As a rule, a beef calf doesn't need a great deal of actual milk provided it has a good quantity of butterfat.

Calves that are suckling mothers that have plenty of butterfat will be the slickest and sappiest calves in your herd. Cows that are suckling calves usually require the best quality and most quantity of feed when the calves are around 3 months of age. As a rule, that is the time when the calf needs the most milk and just before they start grazing seriously. As they get older, the grass to milk ratio increases. The weaning process is also a very important milestone in a young animal's life and can be very stressful for them. You probably all have your own weaning technique or method that you have developed over many years. It does stand to reason that if you can keep the process as less stressful as possible the easier it is for both people and beasts. The more you can handle the young cattle immediately after weaning the better. Also, having good feed for them to wean onto helps. In my own experience, we made good use of electric fencing during the weaning process once we started using it on all our fences and both cows and calves knew what it was. As a rule, it only required two wires, sometimes three to keep the calves on one side of the fence and the cows on the other. They could still see each other and smell each whenever they wanted to.

The real beneficiaries of weaning calves at an early age other than in drought times are the grain companies. The calf cannot ruminate adequately until he/she is around 10 months of age depending on nutrition. The digestive system of a calf that has not reached full ruminating ability is easier to manipulate to tolerate a grain diet so early weaning is accepted by grain fatteners.

\*\*\*\*\*

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.**

Disclaimer: - Information contained in this newsletter is believed to be true and accurate at the time of publication. Classic Livestock Management Services is not liable to any person or organisation, whether in negligence or otherwise for anything published in, or omitted from this publication.