

THE HORMONAL MAIL

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the mid-year edition of our newsletter. Seasonal conditions have been kinder to producers over the last few months, especially in Australia, and I hope also in many other countries, than they have been over say the last 5-year period. Cattle prices have eased off in recent months after the heady days of 2 – 3 years ago, and it is hoped that we see a stabilising of prices now that allows producers in all parts of the industry to be able to make some longer-term plans for the future. In terms of planning the future of one's enterprise, some longer-term stability provides a foundation to do this. It is a characteristic of the free market that we have that highlights the peaks and troughs in the market and we will always have this as one of the major challenges in the cattle industry.

The beef industry continues to face challenges so the need to maintain

consumer awareness in particular is crucial and whilst the high prices of recent years has been a dampener to some consumers, beef consumption is predicted to rise over the next 2 – 3 years. This is a great positive, especially given the push by some sectors of the community to promote and use synthetic meat products. I recently read where over 1000 doctors are encouraging people to continue to eat “real” red meat as a staple of their diet because of the natural nutrients it supplies to the human body.

I also read of recent criticism from dieticians of our attraction to eating processed food. They are encouraging people to eat fresh food and to read the labels on their food to see just what is used in the processing operation. Many of the products named as additives on the food labels are unknown to the average consumer unless they make a point of researching what these ingredients are and their reason for being added. The dieticians I read about believe that if a processed product has more than 3 – 4 additives on the label, then it should be ignored.

WHAT'S (BEEN) HAPPENING

* We are looking forward to our next five-day course at the Clermont Show and Sale yard facilities commencing on Monday the 17th. July and finishing on Friday the 21st. July. We have decided to leave the cost of attending the course the same as it has been in the past at \$1200 per person, despite the cost of most associated needs we supply for the course increasing in cost. However, we have asked for a \$100 deposit by the 30th. June to book a place on the course and provide us with a little more capital to offset some of the many pre-course costs. Our aim in conducting such a course is to pass on the information we have accumulated over the years to as many people as possible who are interested in seeing more in their cattle than they may have previously, rather than making a fortune for ourselves.

*We have decided to go ahead with the course despite a number of people who previously indicated an interest who have not as yet confirmed. This means we may not have as large a group as we had hoped for to fully justify holding the course. However, we are hoping that we do get a few more people decide to attend in the next few days. We are currently putting together all the aids and learning material for the course and knowing the numbers attending will make this more efficient for us.

* Just to confirm that we have made changes to our business which we have reflected on our website to show 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" is still be available on the website.

*Unfortunately, we have not been able to find a suitable venue to date to hold a one day field day in North-Eastern NSW. However, we will be visiting NSW in late August or early September and plan to visit that area and find a suitable location. The main things we need at a venue are a suitable building in which to do the morning power point presentation and then some reasonably sound cattle yards with a functional crush and, of course, cattle, both cows and bulls. We will keep you informed of our plans for a day in that area as we get closer to the time.

*If you are interested in having a field day near you or would like to host one, please let myself or Albert Hancock (0417244057/0267334666) 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.

* We are also hoping to get to the Northern Territory for a few days around early to mid-September to visit current and future clients up there, if time permits.

*I would also like to report that Albert Hancock, who had a confrontation with his tractor about 6 months ago is now on the road to recovery and was able to attend the day we held at Boorowa without too much pain. He still has a way to go but is confident he will be fit to partner me in running the Clermont course.

*Coodardie still have some Brahman bulls available for private sale and further information is available on their website – www.coodardie.com.au.

* The Siefert Belmont Red sale will be held on property and On-Line on Auctions Plus on the 7th August at 12.00 noon – catalogues available at:- www.seifertbelmontreds.com

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.

Braford

When I looked into the history of the Braford breed, I found it to have an interesting beginning in that historical records have identified two initial Braford beginnings, one in Australia and one in the USA, both starting within a year or so of each other with the Australian trial starting first and dating back to 1946 with the USA one being a year later. The other interesting variation is that in America, Hereford bulls were used over Braham cows whereas in Australia, Hereford cows were mated to Brahman bulls. However, the general consensus is that the breed was developed to provide a consistent and efficient product for beef production in a tropical environment.

In Australia, the Braford breed originated at 'Edengarry' north of Rockhampton in Queensland in 1946 when the Rea Brothers introduced Brahman bulls into their Hereford breeders to help combat the effects of drought and ticks. In the USA, it was first done by Partin and Hudgins breeding with Alto Adams Ranch in Florida in 1947. In both cases, these trials took place in a tropical type environment to develop a breed that would stand these climatic conditions and withstand the added heat, hoof diseases, eye cancer, and ectoparasites, mainly ticks.

This resistance to ticks was what attracted the attention of South American breeders, who acquired animals from Australia. The first breeder to do so was from Uruguay around 1970. From then on, the breed has spread across Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil. Each

country has its own association of breeders, and each one keeps their own herd book of the breed where the animals are registered. Selective breeding has been conducted over the years, shaping genetic diversity with the breed remaining about 50% Hereford and 50% Braham though, if anything, the Hereford percentage may be slightly higher.

Braford bulls are not terminal sires. Braford breeders have been careful to control the increased growth rate in their cattle while avoiding associated large increases in mature size that can reduce the ability of Braford bulls and females to function in everyday conditions. By avoiding the "bigger is better" syndrome that has plagued the purebred cattle business for years, Braford breeders have also avoided associated problems of difficult calving and market steers that are too big to fit industry needs when finished.



CHARACTERISTICS

1. Braford's have a small hump, low set pizzle, loose dewlap, somewhat droopy ears, loose skin and a short coat that is red and white. A variation in the degree of red colour occurs and is acceptable, the markings are similar to that of a Hereford and Poll Hereford, with less white.
2. They are usually very fertile, early maturing and reach puberty at a younger age than most breeds.
3. They possess strong maternal instincts and are usually good milkers.
4. Heat tolerant and relatively insect resistant.
5. Can be either horned or polled.

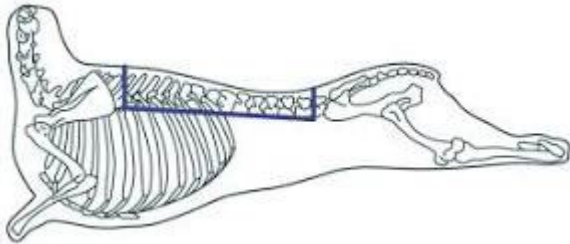
6. They have hooded eyes and good pigmentation around the eyes, providing protection and resistance to eye cancer, pinkeye and blight.
7. Mature Braford bulls have range in weight from 900 – 1000kg, while mature cows average 550–750 kg.



EYE MUSCLE

The eye muscle refers to the meat that is located between the front shoulder under the ribs and back to the start of the hook bone as in the illustration below including the rib area and the loin. This area contains the traditionally highest quality meat in the carcass including cuts such as eye fillet, sirloin, striploin, T-bone and porterhouse. It contains the most valuable parts of the carcass and its size is increased when all the other traits of the animal are in balance. Linear measuring is one of the most valuable tools to assess that balance, especially in the live animal.

- Marbling of the eye muscle is important, but more for a visual attraction than a production feature. Heavy marbling, that is, fat interspersed evenly within the muscle assists with giving the meat a perception of tenderness and thus means it is usually a more pleasing eating sensation. The fat spread evenly within the muscle fibre will assist in making sometimes slightly coarser meat fibre more edible.



- A long, slightly raised chine along with a low angular hip and a large shank muscle will give a large eye muscle. The area of the spine known as the chine starts immediately behind the centre of the shoulders and finishes just after the last rib. Length of the animal, along with the size of the heart girth will affect the total weight of eye muscle in each carcass.
- A shorter, thick-set animal may have a larger surface area of eye muscle when the eye muscle is cut, but usually the longer animal will have more actual slices of cut at the same thickness. The eye muscle will be longer in a longer bodied animal and usually have an overall gain.
- A good heart girth is essential and indicates a large rib eye area. It should be equal to the length of the top line in

animals over 12 months of age. The closer to equal this measurement is the more adaptable, efficient and vigorous the animal is. For every inch (2.5cm.) that the heart girth is longer than the top line, the animal will produce in the region of an extra 37pounds or 16 kg. meat. A larger heart girth increases feed capacity and efficiency and makes more space for red meat production with a larger loin and increased reproductive ability. A smaller heart girth increases the maintenance requirements of the animal and makes them more susceptible to stress.

- High hips in relation with the shoulders indicate a weak loin and thus a smaller rib eye area. The loin is the area between the last rib and the front of the hooks. It is not that easy to assess the loin area in an animal, but look for width in proportion to length and overall rib spring. The shape and set of the loin area, as well as being an indicator of eye muscle size, is also related to the rear quarter and butt. When the loin area is not well set and straight or slightly rounded, then the hips and pins will not be balanced. There will also be a loss of meat yield in the loin area that will carry through to the hindquarter cuts.
- A well-placed chine will lead to a direct increase in saleable meat yield, high milk production from dams and provide a deep body capacity that gives the animal the ability to increase feed intake and feed conversion efficiency. A chine that is too high will also indicate a weak loin.
- A large stifle muscle is also a good indicator of muscling throughout the body as well as being a good indicator of a

high meat to bone and fat yield in an animal. The stifle muscle is the muscle immediately below the stifle joint and in front of the animal's upper hind leg in the flank area.

- Eye Muscle Area is a recognised method of measuring the eye muscle and can be done quite accurately with an ultrasound machine. It is the measurement of the eye muscle area at the 12/13th rib site, usually in a carcass around 400 kg.

Eye muscle area must only be used as an indication of muscling, and not an indicator of saleable meat yield.

The figures below provide an indication of the variations in size and fat distribution with figure 2 showing even internal fat distribution throughout the muscle as compared with figure 1, which whilst large, has no internal fat. Figure 3 is smaller and is an indicator of a lack of rib spring.

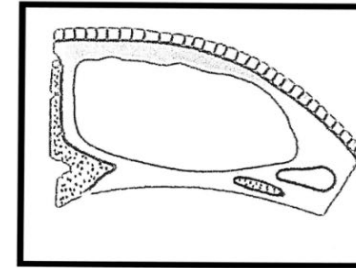


FIGURE 1

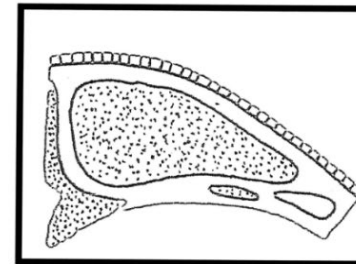


FIGURE 2

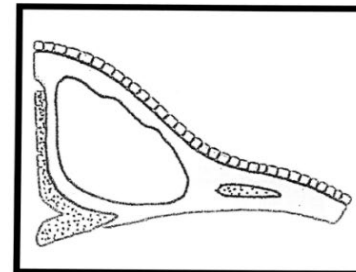


FIGURE 3

NATURE – SHOULD WE KEEP IGNORING IT

Again, I apologise if this segment is a little repetitive in content to some of the topics I have discussed previously. I realise it is not directly related specifically to cattle. However, I believe it is something that is becoming more and more an influence on the cattle breeding industry.

One of the things that is unfortunately becoming more obvious as time goes by is the pressure being placed on primary producers to conform with all the changes being introduced into the world to combat climate change. Having said that, I am also fairly certain that as people who live on the land and observe nature at work on a daily basis, you know that there have been changes in the climate constantly throughout history and to focus on a certain set few years or events as some scientists or experts tend to do and then draw wide ranging conclusions from that time or event neglects not only history, but also the power of Mother Nature. It would be more accurate to draw conclusions from actually living in nature than an air-conditioned office in the middle of a large city.

This constant barrage of publicity about how we are ruining the world by not being conservation aware does have at least one advantage in that it at least brings it to our attention and hopefully, makes us more individually aware that there are actions we can take in our own small part of the world to be more sustainably conscious and certainly as farmers generally are changing the practices that they can to be more environmentally friendly and they also know that in most cases it is going to pay off in the long term. However, we seem to be controlled by the extremists in this area.

I may have mentioned this previously and some of you may have seen this on the television news a few weeks ago. An interviewer was asking people in the street what they would do to be more climate aware and environmentally friendly and the answer from a mid 20 year old male brought home the extremism when he

answered that the answer was to ban farming. The fact that the interviewer failed to ask him to explain himself was nearly as extreme as the answer itself and unfortunately highlights the narrow perspective that some journalists have on the world. It also highlights the ignorance of some urban dwellers (and journalists) of the reality of living, but also puts the whole farming industry under the spotlight as a major contributor to the world's climate "crisis".

I have also heard several so-called world leaders and industry leaders making claims about how cattle contribute 6% of the methane in the atmosphere. Ireland is considering the slaughter of 200,000 cattle to reduce their contribution to methane emissions. Cattle are part of a natural carbon cycle of growing that includes plant growth along with light and sun and this is not explained clearly to the average person. David Mason-Jones in his book "Should Meat be on the Menu" gives an excellent explanation of livestock as part of a closed atmospheric carbon cycle where the carbon they give out equals the carbon they take in. We only here about the measuring of the output with cattle and not their intake. I also read some time ago of a comparison in England that gave the amount of methane emitted by cattle, cars and planes in 1955 as compared with 2020 or thereabouts. The output has increased significantly, but there are less cattle in England now than there was in 1955 so the increase can hardly be because of cattle.

I suppose the thing that is most likely to upset people, especially those that are doing as much as possible to reduce their impact on the climate is the hypocrisy of the so-called experts when they use planes and motor vehicles the way they do to get to all the high-powered conferences around the world that seem to be necessary to produce a plan to tell all of we mere mortals how to save energy etc. The other thing that there seems to be is a lack of understanding of nature and its ability to work on maintaining a balance in the life forces of the world. Today's experts have forgotten how to read

nature in the way that many of we older farmers and ex-farmers grew up with.

We don't see anything today about how to recognise the signs that Mother Nature gives us so we know what is happening in our world. Signs like the position of the new moon. When it is lying on its back it is holding water so we will have a dry month ahead as opposed to when it is standing upright and therefore pouring water out so the next month will be wet. We had a number of old deciduous English native trees such as Elms, English Oaks and Ashes on our farm in Tasmania that were planted by the early settlers. There was a rhyme that we had that went like this to let us know what the coming seasons were going to be like. If the Ash flowers before the Oak, we will get a soak, but if the Oak flowers before the Ash, we will only get a splash. Our forefathers also told us that for good crops we should plant root crops on the full moon and above the ground crops on the new moon. How many of these indicators do you know or have heard or had passed on to you from previous generations? Maybe we need to pay more attention to these messages rather than those generated from just a snap shot of the world at a specific time as seems too often to be the case today.

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.

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