

AUSTRALIAN SOUTH DEVONS NEWSLETTER NO 1 - 2019.

Welcome to the first newsletter of this year.

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas.

I always seem to comment on the weather, and this edition will be no different.

What a land of contrasts! As I write this, Townsville in North Qld is slowly emerging from under the floodwaters of an unprecedented amount of rain, central and north west Qld are facing massive stock losses from previously unseen amounts of rain, and yet Tasmania and some of Victoria is burning. Parts of South Australia and New South Wales are in severe drought, as in Southern Inland Queensland (where the headwaters of the Darling River are). Graziers in northwest Qld who have endured many years of drought and fought to keep core breeders alive, now have the heartbreak of seeing those cattle go down and subsequently die from too many days of being wet and cold. There are now fires burning in the northern part of NSW and light snow falling on the Alps in Tasmania – from one extreme to the other, we seem to cover all bases at present.

Parts of the USA are also experiencing severe weather conditions of a different kind to us – they are freezing!

Now on to the business of the newsletter – in this issue we have articles on South Devon meat being sold direct to butchers/the public/restaurants; Lardner Park figures; reports from Victorian/South Australian Beef Weeks; report from South Devons West, a reminder about the upcoming AGM and tour; and general news from around Australia.

First; I have a request. **Is there anybody out there with website experience who would be willing to do some maintenance and updating on the South Devon website at least for the next year please? I am in the process of moving, and with all that is going on, I simply do not have the time at present to do the website as well as the Facebook page and the newsletters.** Leonie has very kindly been keeping things ticking over and is currently working on a couple of problems that have cropped up again with the site, but she has other things to do, so we (I) need help from our membership please.

While I am asking for help from the membership. If you have any show results, photos from field days, or any items you think may be of interest to the members, please forward them to me for possible inclusion in the next newsletter. I cannot guarantee there will be space because I need to keep the newsletter to 10 pages and I try to include decent size photos, but I do need news items from

members to help fill the pages please. Written content needs to be in word format and photos as jpeg. If you send me the written content as a word doc, I can simply cut and paste -otherwise I must retype the whole article. Similarly, with photos - I can easily insert a jpeg image into the newsletter. Please email them to; gh.lindsay@bigpond.com . If you send a written report, I run the spelling and grammar check on them but unless there is blatant advertising, my policy is to not alter the article. We now have the provision for paid written advertising, so the newsletter itself is a platform for sharing with the members **news and information** about our breed right across Australia.

We also need to start thinking about the next issue of The Review, because if we are going to keep it to a 3-year schedule, by the end of this year we need to have it ready to go to the printers. As the World Conference is not until November 2020, do we hold the magazine back a little, so it is fresh for the Conference? Maybe it needs to be discussed at the AGM?

AGM:

It was decided at the meeting on 5th February that the proposed venue and timetable for the upcoming AGM will be adopted. The AGM will be held at Bomaderry (NSW) on Thursday 9th May. There is a proposed tour itinerary worked around this, which has been distributed to members. There is still time to notify David of your intention to attend, and costings will be forwarded as soon as they have been finalised. The group on the South Coast are very hardworking and it would be great to see a good roll up of SD breeders/members support them by attending.

As is required under the constitution, two members of Council have stood down, but are eligible to be renominated and re-elected. This year Ross Cauley and David Corker have stood down. Nomination forms for vacant positions on the SD council will be forwarded to members very shortly. If there are more than three nominations received, postal elections will be held. I urge everyone to have a good think about where they envisage our breed in the immediate and long-term future, who they want to represent our breed, and nominate and vote accordingly. **To paraphrase John F Kennedy; 'ask not what your breed society can do for you, but rather ask what you can do for your breed society'.**

Should we have enough nominations to require an election, I would be happy for all nominees to supply one or at most two pages of information that could be combined into a special election issue, separate from the newsletter. It would contain basic personal details but focus on where the nominee sees the SD breed going and how they think they can help the Society. I will not be standing for Council so I could put a special election issue together for distribution by David McDonald.

News from all around Australia;

Queensland has a completely new executive for their promotion group. At the November AGM, held in Toowoomba, James McUtchen (Jambili) was elected



President and Jenny Cross was elected Secretary/Treasurer. It's good to see new blood and willing people to take on these roles – we must keep renewing and refreshing or we face the real prospect of becoming irrelevant to the cattle industry. Since **we** all know the value of South Devon cattle, it is incumbent upon us to get out there and convince others that our breed definitely has valuable traits to offer to the cattle industry. At the rate that the Jambili cross bred steers are

walking out of the cattle yards to show homes at present, I would say that they have definitely been recognized by other competitors as having proved the value of adding South Devon breeding for carcase quality. Jim and Jenny, along with daughter Bec, run a 3-way cross breeding operation near Kumbia. **The photo above left shows one of Jim and Jenny Cross's SD x steers on feed.** There was an article on their cattle in the 2017 Review, and they also hosted the Qld farm walk last September (Oct newsletter).

All Qld members are still feeling the effects of very dry weather as none of the much talked about rainfall has fallen in the Southern inland. While there was a mini break in the middle of December, it is now mid-February and there has been no wet season to speak of.

The only exceptions to battling dry weather are Graham and Heather who have moved their cattle 1000 km north to Calen (halfway between Mackay and Proserpine in the Whitsunday area), where the cattle are having a crash course in lots of wet weather (26" in 10 days). This move has been a huge learning curve for cattle and people alike, because not only is there a completely different climate, but also the cattle must acquire a completely different set of gut flora to process the different type of grasses, and we have returned to ticky country, so everything had to be vaccinated (blooded) for tick fever. The move hasn't been without its dramas and we have already lost one good heifer to suspected snake bite (we are in taipan country), but we will persevere. It's 14 hours in a truck so it's a bit of a stress on everyone concerned. We have already made one management change – there will be no more calving in the summer months. Baby calves that are born during one of the tropical wet periods, like has just occurred, have too great a chance of succumbing to



pneumonia because the poor little things just don't ever get dry and then they get cold. However, we have every confidence that our SD cattle will acclimatise and thrive and hopefully we can get some more SD blood spread about up here, which incidentally is the major cattle

breeding area (highest concentration of cattle) in Australia. Photo shows calves by Athlone Mitch out of Brahman cross cows – only two weeks after living through a metre of rainfall in a two-week period. These are the sort of calves that we hope commercial breeders up here will appreciate so we can get some South Devon bulls out in to commercial herds. They still have the Brahman short coat but with added South Devon width and softness.

NSW:

The NSW South Devon Promotion Group has been reformed out of the old NSW State Branch. I'm not sure what the weather situation is on the South Coast, but I know both Kildare and Chevalley are very dry, with water being a significant problem.

Kildare is being very proactive in the marketing of their South Devon meat. Kath McUtchen prepared the following report after a visit there.

“‘Meat on Maitland’ is a small family owned butcher shop located in the town of Bingara, NSW. McUtchen Family of Jambili Stud, (Jandowae Qld) had the pleasure to meet with Damien and his staff during a recent visit to Kildare Stud, Upper Horton, NSW.

Rick McDouall made a chance phone call to Damien after he found he had a small number of steers ready for processing.

Damien jumped at the chance and now stocks mostly Kildare South Devon



Beef. Damien kindly took the time to show the McUtchen Family around the shop, discussing the different cuts of meat and showing them some of the quarters hanging in the cold room. Meat on Maitland prides themselves in

supporting local producers stocking products from across northern NSW.

I believe Rick is working on yet another opening for his meat, after a chance encounter during a stay at Yaamba. From what I hear, Rick and Sue were dining at a local restaurant and after speaking with someone there, logistics are being worked on to see if more good South Devon meat can be supplied on a regular basis.



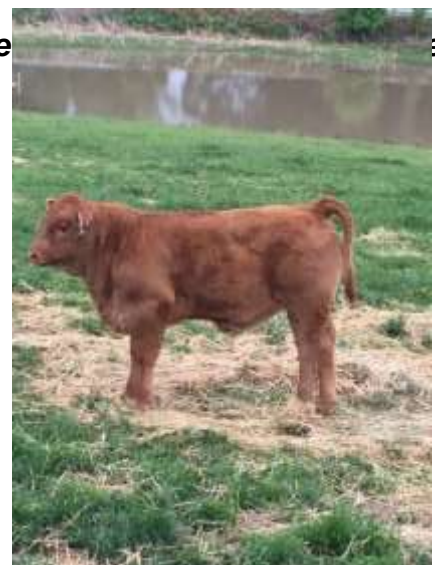
“**Braxton South Devons** continue to provide pure South Devon meat to a local gourmet butcher shop in Bowral, NSW. Customers continually ask when the next supply will be arriving in the shop. One customer, who supplies Angus cattle to Woolworths from his farms throughout NSW, actually places forward orders with the butcher for South Devon beef. A butcher friend of the butcher has also tried the beef and said that it was so soft that it was like cutting butter. Great feedback and it validates what South Devon breeders already know about taste and tenderness. Great also to see that both butchers and customers are recognising the good qualities that our product possesses.

Photo above shows a pack of Braxton South Devons meat at the shop.

Braxton continue their breeding programme with the use of select AI sires and Braxton bulls. One young bull that has taken the eye of the owners (Stephen and Lisa Harris) is ***Braxton Pride***. He has an extremely quiet temperament and correct structure. ***Photo shows Pride at 2 months.*** His genetics include The Bend, Lincoln and Ashlea and Elker bloodlines.”

Thanks to Stephen Harris for that report and photos.

Victoria:



Again, there are varying weather conditions throughout the State with some significant bushfires raging. Torr Down and Babrooten participated in the Victorian Beef Week days.

Sarah Bolte (Ebenezer Park) has entered steers in a very prestigious grass-fed carcass competition where the cattle are killed at Naracoorte (SA). Sarah has also participated in Beef week field days at Mt Gambier, and some local shows – she's one busy lady!! ***Photo shows young Ebenezer Park SD bulls on display at Mt Gambier.***

LARDNER PARK FIELD DAYS;

Gaylene Garratt would like some assistance please, from Victorian South Devon breeders/supporters for the SD display at the Lardner Park Field days from 11 – 14th April. She has posted details on both South Devon Facebook pages, so I won't repeat them here. If you can help showcase our breed, either by supplying animals (even for one day), or by spending time at the site, please talk to Gaylene. We need to keep our breed in front of the public, and these field days are an ideal way to do it, but it takes time and effort, so the more SD supporters who turn up, the lighter the workload on each one.

Lardner Park Steer Trial results – courtesy Leonie Daley.

"The 2018 Lardner Park Steer Trial competition.

The initial weights were taken on 1st August after a one week settling in period and the final weight on 3rd December. The herd was run in one mob on predominately rye grass-based pastures with supplements fed as deemed necessary depending on pasture growth. Cattle had to meet the following specifications for **standard domestic trade** when they were turned off. Hot Standard Carcass weight 210- 285 kgs. Fat range (P8) 8-14mm. 2 penalty points per kg were imposed if cattle fell outside specifications for carcass weight. This year to be in contention to win the "Highest weight gain pair" both animals in the pair had to fall in the carcass weight specifications. If one or both animals in the pair failed to meet the carcass weight specifications, the pair were not eligible for the award. No individual steer/carcass was disqualified from the "Domestic Weight Gain and Carcass" category or "Highest Carcass score as a pair" if the animals failed to meet specifications as this was already taken into account through the penalty system.

2018 average weight gain performance of all 64 steers of varying breeds and crossbreeds entered was 1.40 kg LW/day.

The highest individual weight gain of 1.73kg LW/day was from a South Devon x Charolais x Murray Grey steer bred and entered by Brett and Gaylene Garratt & family, with the other animal of the pair growing at 1.41kg LW/day resulting in a pair average of 1.57. Unfortunately, the steer growing at 1.73kg LW/day did not meet carcass specifications, with the resulting carcass being overweight – meaning the pair of steers were ineligible for "Highest Weight Gain Pair Award". The Steers penalty was 16 points leaving them with a grand total score (weight and carcass) of 207.6 points for weight gain and carcass.

The purebred steers entered by Chris & Leonie Daley (progeny of Winterwood cows and The Bend Harley) also performed too well in the weight gain with one steer of the pair also being over the weight range and receiving 14 penalty points leaving a grand total score of 207.2 points. The Bend steers this year were also deemed ineligible for the Highest Weight Gain Pair Award.

This year the winner of the “Combined Weight Gain and Carcase Award” was “Killandayle” Angus x Angus/Shorthorn from NSW with a total score of 222.3 points. The “Highest Weight Gain Pair Award” went to Dockers Plains Pastoral with Angus steers with the pairs average daily gain of 1.56kg/day.

For your interest the live weights of the steers at first weighing on 1/8 and the last on 3/12 were as follows:

Brejoyanne- 1/8/18 - 319 and 332kgs 3/12/18 - 494 and 546
average weight gain 1.57 kgs per day

The Bend – 1/8/18 - 321 and 345kgs 3/12/18 - 524 and 538
average weight gain 1.60 kgs per day.”

TORR DOWN NEWS

Despite the first six months of 2018 only delivering us 326 mms of rain, we still were fortunate to end up with 830 mms and as good a Spring as anyone could wish for.

January 27th, 2019 was our Beef Week Open Day. The cattle were looking in top condition but, unfortunately Visitor numbers were down dramatically. Not just for us but for all the studs that weekend of the Australia Day public holiday.

The few visitors we had were good friend’s , David and Carol Jackson, former South Devon breeders, who came to give a helping hand. However, two visitors from the previous Beef Field Day 2018. Andy and Claire Smith from Freshwater Creek near Geelong returned, especially to see the Akaushi Red Wagyu X South Devon calves. Having picked out three last year when the calves were only 2 months of age, they returned to purchase them, now at 10 months of age (*photos below*).

T.D. Helena



Fat 9/9, EMA 84, IMF 5.7 %

T.D. Mikado



Fat 8/8, EMA 92, IMF 5.1%

Andy & Claire intend to infuse the South Devon and Akaushi Red Wagyu into their Red Poll composite herd.

Not far behind these two were 2 South Devon's that had scans of Fat 9/9, EMA 78. IMF 5.4 % (Heifer) Fat 6.6 EMA, 103, IMF 4.1% (Bull) (Ed note; Kildare had similar findings when they scanned their purebred SD and Wagyu x)

Since the open day another composite breeder from Northern Vic who couldn't make it on the day has purchased one of the 15-month-old sons of Torr Down Magnifico. So, all in all it was a successful day for Torr Down South Devon's and the weather was perfect thankfully.

The beef bonanza is gathering speed and our neighbours Trish and Brad Gooch are doing a mighty job promoting South Devon beef, with a butcher wanting a carcass fortnightly and two other butchers clamouring to jump on the band wagon - GO SOUTH DEVON'S !!!!! “

South Australia;

Neil and Yvonne Hagger did a whistle stop trip to check out the Davelle Beef Week day as well as Mt Gambier. Thanks to Neil for the following report.



“Beef Week was held in SA from Friday 1st February. I was able to visit Davelle South Devons at Jamestown on the Friday and Ebenezer Park in Mount Gambier on Sunday 3rd.

DAVELLE;

David and Rochelle had their animals in magnificent condition. The photos they had to put in their catalogue did not do their cattle justice. They are to be commended for the display they had. ***Photo above left is Davelle M19 – a long and powerful son of Durango 26Z.***

Below right is a group of Davelle sale bulls.

I visited early in the day and David told me later they had a steady run of visitors all day. As they are not in a recognized cattle producing area, I think they are doing the right thing by offering their cattle on Auctions Plus. Of course, they are willing to talk sales at any time.



Ebenezer Park News;



Sarah Bolte from Greenwald in Victoria was actually part of Victoria Beef Week, but to give her South Devons a wider exposure to the public she joined with a multi stud display at Mt Gambier showgrounds on Sunday 2nd. With the limited space available in such circumstances, Sarah had

a mature bull on show (for sale), and a progressive group of yearling bulls which I will watch with interest next year. One bull in particular was a favourite and he is doing the local show circuit. It was a good effort by Sarah and her family to truck their animals to the Mount and I think they will probably continue to do so, at least until they have a larger herd. ***Photo shows more young Ebenezer Park bulls on display at Mt Gambier.***

It is a pity the two weeks overlap (Victoria and SA Beef Weeks) as I was not able to visit John Brian (Babrooten) who had his cattle on display on Friday 1st. We drove 1600 km in 3 days as it was."

Thanks to Daphne Lines who sent me the following after her trip to Europe late last year (for the 100th Anniversary of Armistice Day).

"My visit to Oxey Farm

Recently while visiting friends in Leicestershire I was able to spend a few hours with Richard and Diana Wright at Oxey Farm. It was hard to comprehend that they were, like so many of us in drought conditions. Streams were dry and ground was cracking despite being green. Feed was very short for late autumn conditions. Crops were just through but some about 6" high. In contrast I had a few photos taken at Kildare in



May, as well as our own area which they found in complete contrast to their visit in 2011. There were huge stacks of silage and hay having been stored ready for the winter months. They had started to shed

their cattle, a herd of about 260 breeders who will all calf in the barns. A shed full of steers was awaiting a new home a few days later(**photo above**). The shooting season was under way and pheasants and partridges were roaming the fields unaware that Thursday was shoot day. (I was there on a Wednesday). The usual South Devon hospitality was abundant, and they send their Best Wishes to their Australian friends."

Western Australia;

Thank to David Corker for the following report.

"South Devons West AGM



green rings. Four very nice replacement heifers had been tagged for



The tenth of November saw a gathering of eight South Devon stalwarts gather at Grace Glen for a farm drive and an AGM. Thirty cows with calves at foot were in a small paddock near the yards and three bulls were in pens adjacent to the yards. The cows and calves were starting to show the benefit of a good spring after a very poor autumn. Only one bull calf had been kept while all others had been engaged with keeping. The one bull calf was by the USA import bull Elker 642A and was showing great promise. The two young herd bulls had been purchased from Gavin Russell of the Callanish South Devon Stud at Donnybrook. The older of the two (**Callanish Nevarda left**) was an embryo bull from a flush out of Paltarra Devine using the USA bull MJB United. He is clean headed, well fleshed, smooth bull that had the job of covering nearly all of the cows after the senior bull was found lame.

The younger bull (**Callanish Nordic - on left**) was by Sulby

Titan and out of Davelle Debra Z26. He was also polled and showed great length and depth with a typical South Devon lay back attitude.

A short drive was taken to glance at the other breeds and checkout the oat crop and great water supply from a good winter.

Mary cooked up a treat for lunch and gave everyone the opportunity to gain a little weight.

The AGM resulted in the following:

Peter Piavanini: Chairman

Steve Italiano : Vice Chairman

Mauree Rees : Secretary / Treasurer

A decision was made to appoint a communications coordinator with social media skills to get information displayed where it is effective and to pass on information to the federal communications officer. A motion was also passed to present the Council with a request to bring the registration costs of embryo calves into line with other breeds. (ED note; this has already been to council). Another motion passed was to purchase and have embroidered forty caps primarily to be donated for use as prizes at the Youth Cattle Handler's Camp.

All up, a pleasant and productive day was enjoyed by everyone.

Bits and Pieces;

Next newsletter is due out by end of April – could I please have copy in by the middle of the month?

I would really like to see every member do a two-page (including photos) factual (not advertising) article on their breeding operation; with address, cattle numbers, aims and objectives, significant achievements etc. Then I can slot them in whenever and wherever I have room. I'm not sure whether I'll do an area by area or just randomly mix the locations up – probably the latter. Remember the newsletter is distributed at field days etc as well as to members. This is an easy way to get your name and address out to a wider audience and a couple of excellent photos may just pique somebody's interest. I don't know about everyone else, but I like to read about other people's cattle and what they are doing with them.

My email address is; gh.lindsay@bigpond.com

Photos and information for the Australian South Devons Facebook page would also be appreciated.

Hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Heather Lindsay – Newsletter editor.