



AUSTRALIAN SOUTH DEVONS

NEWSLETTER

December 2021

Welcome to the latest newsletter.

How the year seems to have flown. Winter and Spring have been and gone and we're now about to sit down for Christmas.

I apologise profusely for the very long break between newsletters, but, as with everyone else, we seem to have had a very busy last few months and there simply has not been time to spare.

In this issue we are covering the excellent results for our resilient South Devon Breeders in the modified Ekka (Brisbane Royal) carcase competition.

I also have a very welcome report and some photos from Western Australia.

I 'listened in' to the World Meeting on August 18th (our internet connection kept dropping in and out). By the time of the November meeting, I was able to maintain visual as well as audio, and I look forward to the next one on February 16th. It is hoped to have a speaker from ABRI address this meeting. The November meeting had two speakers (one of whom was Lane Geiss) from IGS (International Genetic Solutions, which specialises in genetic evaluation and can evaluate cross bred cattle – which in Australia would seem to be a huge step forward..'

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EKKA 2021

SOUTH DEVONS EXCEL AT EKKA 2021 MODIFIED LED STEER COMPETITION. Thanks to Kath McUtchen for report and photos.

Queensland's Ekka 2021 promised so much, but as we are all aware, it was cancelled at the last minute. This last minute decision left some exhibitors stranded at the RNA Grounds with their Cattle for a few days. Kath McUtchen and the 6 Jambili & Kildare Bulls were just some of those who had an extended stay at this year's Ekka grounds. Due to this cancellation, the popular led steer competition was modified to become a Carcase Competition.

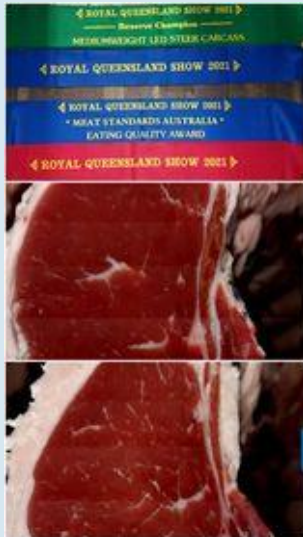
110 head were processed at Nolan's Meats at Gympie; 6 of those were South Devon and South Devon x Steers. The McUtchen Family (Jambili) entered 3 head – 2 x bred and 1 pure, Rick & Sue McDouall (Kildare) 1 pure bred, Girlie Goodie – 1 x bred & Goodie & Taylor Families 1 x bred.

This small representation of our breed had amazing results, collecting 2 of the 6 MSA eating quality awards, with the Kildare and Jambili Pure Bred Steers winning MSA Class 6 & 7, respectively. **The Jambili Steer had the top MSA Index Score in the competition of 60.55, and Kildare the 3rd Highest of 59.66**



The Goodie/ Taylor Entry and the Pure Bred Jambili Steers both claimed 2nd in their respective classes (class 4 & class 7).

Goodie/ Taylor dressed 230.4; p8 6; ribs 3; yield 63.33%; ema 65; **total points 78**
Jambili dressed 282.4kg; p8 11; ribs 13; yield 57.98%; ema 77; **total points 77**



(The Jambili Steer which won the Reserve Championship.)

The biggest success (and pineapple) for the South Devon breed was the Jambili class 5 steer (a South Devon cross.) He won his class with 86 points and tied overall with the class 6 winning steer who was also on 86 points. The class 6 steer was named Grand Champion Carcase due to yielding 1. 13% higher than the McUtchen Steer, meaning that the **McUtchen/Jambili Steer was named Reserve Champion Middle Weight Carcase.**

McUtchen dressed 257.8kg; p8 7; ribs 4; ema 85; yield 63.83%; **total points 86**



Photos above show the Kildare steer (black) and Jambili Redneck. Redneck placed 2nd and won the MSA award and the Kildare steer also won the MSA award.

These results are an amazing effort for a breed which numerically had one of the smallest representations in the competition. Not only do these breeders deserve recognition for the quality of their animals, as all were owner bred and exhibited, but the South Devon breed deserves recognition for the consistent meat quality that is such a strong fundamental characteristic that is passed along through the use of South Devon genetics.

This year alone, South Devons have already won one of the major categories of the Southern Carcase Competition in South Australia, and the South Devon entries are performing very well in the current (Victorian) Lardner Park Grassfed Competition

(which has been won on numerous occasions by South Devon entries from several different breeders).

ADELAIDE

Unfortunately, I have not been provided with any results from Adelaide Show. I copied the following from the Davelle Facebook post.

Finally had a chance to look through the Royal Adelaide Show Carcass competition results.

Again, it was a hook competition for most. The Ag teachers did organise a virtual show for the school steer entries which was very well run. As posted previously our steer at Jamestown Community School was 2nd in his class, a great result for the students involved.

A Summary -

Davelle R53 (11mth sired by D Durango Nant) - Breeders Light Weight Class 249.6kg HSCW P8 8mm Rib 8mm EMA 77cm² Marble 380. 84.08 points 7th in class.

Davelle R38 (12mth sired by D Cool Beau) - Breeders Heavy Domestic Class 281kg HSCW P8 13mm Rib 5mm EMA 85cm² Marble 400 (highest in class). 84.75 points 5th in class

Davelle R39 (12mth sired by D Cool Beau) - Breeders Heavy Domestic Class 277.8kg HSCW P8 8mm Rib 3mm (needed to be at least 5mm - hide puller might have had an effect?) EMA 94cm² Marble 380 (2nd highest in class). 79.32 points 16th in class

Other Davelle Steers -

Jamestown Community School (12mth sired by Burtergill Henry) - Schools Heavy Domestic Class 273.4kg HSCW P8 8mm Rib 5mm EMA 80cm² Marble 340. 86.68 points 2nd in class and Highest Scoring South Devon steer

Faith Lutheran College (17mth sired by D Durango Nant) - Schools Export Class 377.8kg HSCW P8 12mm Rib 10mm EMA 97cm² Marble 480. 83.40 points 6th in class.

3 Davelle steers R38, R53 and Jamestown Community School were the 3 highest and were the South Devon entry for the TFI Teams scoring 255.51 points to finish 5th.

Adelaide cont'd)

The overall winner was a Limousin scoring 92.20 points. Limousins did dominate this year winning most awards, they have really changed the breed to be highly competitive in these competitions.

NEWS FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

(Thanks Simone for the report and to David Corker for the Callanish photos).

A field day was held at the Rees property on 6th October. As you can see there was a good roll up, and this report appeared in a WA newspaper shortly afterwards.

MATING on the spring flush and calving in winter has been a game changer for Collie cattle farmer David Rees.

“You can run more cows per hectare, your feed costs less and you are calving onto green feed,” he said.

“But the biggest gain is mating on the flush, which is when cows cycle better.”

About 70 producers and service providers gathered at Mr Rees’ property last week, as part of the Western Beef Association’s 2021 Spring Field Day.

The event focused on calving and weaning management in a bid to help farmers make “healthy, wealthy and wise decisions” for their systems.

Western Beef Association coordinator Jesiane Accioly said it was great to see many new faces at the event from across the southwest region.

Ms Accioly said the location was chosen because of Mr Rees’ decision to adopt a later winter calving practice several years ago, which enabled him to increase his carrying capacity and fertility by better matching pasture supply to the breeding herd’s peak requirement.

“The stress caused by season variability in recent years has sparked an interest from many beef farmers in changing their calving time,” she said.

“Most were unaware that a comprehensive research project was performed here in the southwest, comparing traditional calving time (March to April) to a later calving (June to July).

“The work found that calving later increased profitability, decreased the pressure on the breeding herd and enabled increased carrying capacity.

“The Rees family were members of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development’s (DPIRD) Time of Calving project farmer advisory group almost 20 years ago, that aimed to improve the year round supply to abattoirs.”

Mr Rees shared his experience with later calving, which allowed nature to run the system, and produced better results, as it better matched feed supply/demand.

Unlike other farmers, Mr Rees has chosen to calf in mid-July to August with a September finish.

This approach means he weans in (February) March and has the flexibility to sell weaners when there aren’t many on the market or carry some through if there is an early break.

“At weaning, the oldest of the mob are six to seven months old and usually about 250 kilograms.

“Sometimes I wean down to 200 kilograms depending on the season, but I wouldn’t go below five months onto hay - that is too savage.

“If hay is too expensive and (stores) straw are cheaper we will save some lupins and put on top straw.

“Other than that, I don’t use grain at all.”

Mr Rees added that he moved from autumn to winter calving, after reading into the animal's production cycle.

He said in a tough year, cattle move their cycle back.

"We have tried it many times and as soon as you get the stocking rate and they have had a tough season, they won't cycle until late.

"We find that mating them on the spring flush is awesome, especially this year - they are going mental.

"My advice is, if your cows aren't cycling this year, then sell them."

At the break of the season Mr Rees defer grazes, moving cattle into a smaller paddock and feeding them hay.

"We do that until roughly about the two-and-a-half (week) leaf stage and then we send them out to rotational graze, as one big mob.

"Every day we check the cows, we tag and birth weigh the calves, using a calf catcher, which has been very successful."

When mid-September hits, Mr Rees starts his artificial insemination (AI) program with a natural cycle for one cycle.

He said by doing so he makes a nucleus herd and by that mid-September to October mark he breaks down the mobs for mating.

"The big mob is cut down into smaller mobs for individual bulls.

"Sometimes with the yearlings we will put two together.

"In October, once we breakdown our mobs, we go through and mark our calves, select our bull calves out of that and on our first marking we ring what we don't want.

"We inoculate 5in1 for the first one, we earmark and we select potential bull calves on that."

With the second marking, Mr Rees returns with another dose of 5in1, before marking treated cattle with a National Livestock Identification System tag.

This helps him to identify which animal has had two doses of inoculation.

"We split up the bull calves into a mob and the leftover cows, that don't have bull calves, are all put back into one mob again," Mr Rees said.

"For me it is much easier to control one mob, as opposed to numerous mobs."

Mr Rees preg tests his cows in February and weans calves as soon as possible in March onto hay.

For the past few years, he has sold into the store market in April-May and even as late as June.

"June is a long time on hay, so it comes down to the price," he said.

"The first calving heifers we run as a separate mob at calving that is mainly because if they are going to have problems then that is when you will have it .

"It is a system that works for us."

Mr Rees runs a breeder to the hectare, year in and year out.

If he has an early start he will carry more followers depending on the break of season.

Empty cows are culled at preg-testing and at the time of weaning, if any cow fails to raise a calf or needs to be assisted, they will be sent out of the gate.

"I have found that preg testing is good and gets rid of a percentage of them," he said.

"If you take them through - and they don't wean a calf at weaning - your survival rate and fertility will lift."

While Mr Rees named many benefits of later calving he said there were also cons.

"Some years you do have problems with calf scours," he said.

"I believe there is inoculation in calf scours now, well at least I have only just discovered it and am going to try it this year."



Photo above shows the South Devon cattle at the Rees property.

Below is a photo of the line up of cars outside the shed, and then the field day in action. Again, many thanks for this information – this is what keeps the newsletter going.



PHOTOS FROM CALLANISH



Above; Ashlea Lancelot and daughter



Right and below; Two unidentified but excellent South Devon cows



South Devon X Steer takes Champion Led Steer Award at Sarina Show.



Athlone Remington, a $\frac{3}{4}$ SD $\frac{1}{4}$ Brahman steer swept all before him in the led steer classes at the 2021 Sarina Show. Bred, owned, and exhibited by Graham and Heather Lindsay of Athlone South Devons, he won the under 450 kg class and was subsequently awarded Champion Led Steer. The Judge (Stewart Borg – a Brahman breeder) was extremely

complimentary in his comments. It was a quite unexpected win as the Sarina area is Brahman heartland, and Remington was the only steer with predominantly Bos Taurus bloodlines.

NEXT ISSUE; - Aiming for end of February.

I will publish the photos from the 2021 Online Show. Hopefully also something from Lardner Park.

As always, I rely on you, the members, to supply me with information and photos of our South Devons out there showing the world what they can do.. I know there has been some excellent bull sales – please let me/us know so we can include these new South Devon owners in the information loop.

MERRY CHRISTMAS
everyone – stay safe and well.

Heather Lindsay

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