



## **SOUTH DEVON CATTLE SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA**

### **Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter of the Australian South Devon Cattle Society of Australia Inc.**

There has been a distinct change in the season here in SA's Mid North. Cool, mornings and warmer afternoons and heavy morning dews. My favourite season.

Not much news has been forwarded to me so it won't take long to read this. Also, I am having difficulty in transferring photo's so it will look rather bland! Please be patient, like many my age I need a Grandchild!



**Firstly, Welcome to Elizabeth** as our new Executive Officer. I have asked her to give a profile and add to the end of this Newsletter.

**Farewell to David** after a great job over many years. David has been a great support to us and we wish him and Julie all the best as they spend their retirement years with new interests. Ric and Sue McDouall met with David and Julie during their holiday on the Coast and presented David with a Clock from us all, perhaps when he looks at the time he will remember all the friendships that he made while part of our Society. I am sure that we all have memories of David, his calm and welcoming manner and friendship has been appreciated and I am sure that we will develop the same relationship with Elizabeth over the years to come

**Up, Up and Away.** Attached is the New Zealand World Conference and associated Tour details. I would like to think that you all have it by now, however for those who don't here it is. Starting at Christchurch attending the New Zealand Agricultural Show 2023 and finishing in Auckland, a varied programme has been prepared. Having been on the 2002 tour it is good to see new Studs to be visited and areas to be toured. While there are some repeats as to be expected, a comprehensive itinerary has been planned over 17 days.

Pricing for the New Zealand Tour in November 23 is in 4 stages, Full tour, Pre-conference, Conference and post Conference. Limited numbers apply. It would be great to see a good representation from Australia meeting with our world-wide friends and fellow breeders.

**World News.** The December meeting of the World Association was well attended, every member country present. On March 1<sup>st</sup>, another meeting was held and technology was a challenge for me, I could see but not hear any of the Conversation, neither could I give an Australian report. The meeting speaker 's subject was carbon soils farming and his slides looked to be of great interest. Next meeting will be in May at 12 noon London time, this seems to be the best time for all countries except New Zealand who need to have a nap prior to joining the meeting. It is always great to see familiar faces and to catch up with what's happening in their countries. If you are not receiving the information, contact me and I will make sure that you have the details.

**Our own AGM** will be held this year by hook up on 23<sup>rd</sup> May; you will receive details from Elizabeth nearer the time. I know it is always difficult to be part of a phone/zoom meeting but please make an effort to join in. Don't forget that your Delegates are here to hear from you with any concerns and would welcome your input. Put the first week of May 2023 in your Diary now as the AGM for that year will be held during Beef Australia. It would also be a good idea, if you haven't yet, to book your accommodation. This is a wonderful week of learning about all things BEEF – free seminars, as well as on site displays, breakfasts, dinners, and the inevitable sore feet at the end of the day.

**Personal notes.** Congratulations to Callum McUtchen who was presented with an Australia Day award 2023. You are a great little Ambassador for South Devons Callum, and an asset to your Community Callum, keep it up.

In South Australia, we record the recent death of Nan Michelmore who with her husband, Colin, ran a small herd of South Devons in the Adelaide hills. Nan toured the UK on the 1992 World Tour and was so inspired by the many B & B's that she came home and opened her own very successful business on the farm. She was a gifted Floral Artist and won many prizes at the Adelaide Show and nationally.

In November Glan and I made a quick trip to Tasmania on a rellie run but found time to visit some present and past members. Will Randall's property was a joy to behold - lush green pastures and rolling hills in the Evandale area with, a beautiful herd of South Devons and

amazing butter block calves of English Longhorn influence. He graciously arranged for his manager to give us a quick look at his unfolding dream and we came away excited about his programme. Members of a longer time (rather than saying older members) will remember Sam Beattie. We first met Sam in the UK in 1992 as an Akubra wearing Aussie with a strong Irish accent. Sam celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday in January and he has not lost that melodious accent. He lives in Bridport on the north coast with his wife Norma and daughter Louise. While at Sam's, Ian McGregor visited and it was sad to find out that Julie had passed away 2 years ago. Ian has relocated to Scottsdale and is a frequent visitor to Sam and Norma; always prepared he had his photos in a rolling form on his iPad and it was a trip down memory lane as we toured Canada again. The Bruce family of Western Plains, Stanley, were also on our visiting list and we were fortunate to be entertained by Marie along with John and Angela. While only having a limited number of South Devons on the property, John remains passionate about his carcasses and that afternoon was hosting a delegation from Cape Grim Beef on a farm walk. As expected, we were welcomed with the normal South Devon hospitality and it was great to rekindle these friendships

I understand that the Northern Show circuit is under way so good luck to all exhibitors for flying the flag. Schools are already making their steers here in SA ready for the Adelaide Royal in September.

Please, there can be no newsletter without member contributions, I will attempt to sort out my technology problem with transferring photo's etc. before the Winter edition, which will be the next newsletter.

In the meantime, keep up to date with News on the South Devon Facebook pages

**Reminder of the Webinar on May 9th** *(refer to email March 29<sup>th</sup>)*

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The following article was sent by David Corker and is re printed for your interest.

**“BIRTH WEIGHT & CALVING EASE.”**

University studies in Wyoming and data from Montana and Colorado lend credence to the following conclusions.

1. Birth weight self-influences calving ease by 65%
2. The female has 60 – 70% influence on the birthweight of her calf'
3. The bull has 30-40% influence on the birth weight of his progeny
4. Pelvic measurement and angle as well as the shape of the calf have 35 -40% influence on calving ease
5. Length of Gestation greatly affects birthweights. A foetus can gain one pound per day in the last days of gestation

6. Weather and Temperature in the last 30 days affect the length of gestation
7. Size and maturity of the cow influence calving ease.

Most commercial producers do not take birth weight. Guessing is as inaccurate as driving without a speedometer- what's thought to be 55 miles per hour may in fact be 65 or 70 lb what's thought to be 70 -80 lbs may actually be 80 – 90 lbs.

Remember everything is relevant, increased growth, frame and performance will increase BW. A longer bodied calf will weigh more. If a calf is expected to have genetics for growth it will display this prior to birth as well as after. As a rule of thumb, it takes a calf weighing 85 lbs at birth to finish at 1200 -1250 lbs, A cow should easily give birth to a calf weighing 8% of her own body weight. Thus, a 1200 lb cow should give birth to a 96lb calf with ease.

Continued selection for light birth weights will ultimately reduce the mature sizes and performance of your cattle.”

Your thoughts on this article for our next Newsletter is welcomed.

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*And finally,*

### **Introducing Elizabeth Wilson, Secretary to the SDCSA**

Elizabeth grew up in the Midlands of England in a non-farming family, but was always horse mad and spent much of her early years at pony club and gymkhanas. After leaving school, Elizabeth undertook a Farm Secretarial Course and then became Farm Secretary on a large rural estate in Somerset, the owner of which at that time had the largest dairy herd in the west of England. In addition, there was also large beef breeding interests which certainly helped Elizabeth develop an interest in all cattle breeds – and she also became aware of the South Devon breed at that time.

Move forward several years and Elizabeth has completed a degree in physiotherapy in the UK and moved to Australia to take up a position at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. Most of her working professional career was spent in the health industry. However, her interest in horses and animals generally never waned and she also completed a Masters in Animal Science through the University of Queensland in the early 2000's so that she could practice as an animal physiotherapist. During her time in Australia, she has been very exposed to the cattle industry through her partner, who has been very prominent in cattle artificial breeding, and has met many people within the industry. In addition, on a voluntary basis, Elizabeth has undertaken voluntary administrative/secretarial roles in a number of organisations which has ensured her skills in this area are maintained.



Five years ago, Elizabeth and her partner moved up to the North East of Victoria to commence beef farming and they now have a herd of Shorthorn cattle – I am also told that South Devons will now have to be the next cow purchases!! Elizabeth states that she did have some time to spare as she had supposedly ‘retired’ and when this position was advertised it immediately sparked an interest for her. So here we are and Elizabeth looks forward to being with the South Devon Cattle Society of Australia for many years to come and to meeting and getting to know all the members in due course.



That’s all the news for now folks, please send any thing that you think of interest to our members to [lgumhill@bigpond.com](mailto:lgumhill@bigpond.com) and in the meantime, I will try to brush up on technology.

**Daphne Lines**

*May 2023*