

FLINDERS BEEF FIRES

Earlier this year Greenham took out the Reserve Champion award at the national beef carcass competition held in Rockhampton.

The winning carcass came from a mob of cattle that had been bred on Flinders Island and finished at Tasmania Feedlot. They were milk tooth and slaughtered at 13 – 14 months, dressing out at an average 280kg with AusMeat marbling scores of 3s and a 2, surprisingly high for such young cattle.

He told us the island is now pushing 30,000 breeders and a big swing away from Merinos has put the focus firmly on beef and prime lamb.

"They're mainly Angus and Poll Hereford," he said. "Producers are buying better genetics and we can certainly see the difference in growth rates. A lot of producers are growing their steers and heifers to feedlot weights, and some are backgrounding stores to go into the Aleph program.

"Some of the heavier steers in the 420 to 520kg range are going to Rob McKenzie's feedlot on the mainland for the Jap Ox trade."

Darren says that Flinders Island is often seen as the poor cousin to King Island but he believes local cattle perform just as well.

"In fact, we often hear that our cattle do better on feed than those from King. Flinders Island cattle also seem to be better suited for the Aleph program.

"The improved genetics are coming mainly from Tasmania, although the carcass that got the gong was by a Te Mania bull," Darren added.

While Darren acts as an agent for Greenham he is also a producer in his own right and runs 500 Angus breeders on the south eastern side of the island. "I think being a farmer as well as an agent is helpful – you understand both sides of the story," Darren said.

Flinders Island farmers with cattle to sell can contact Darren on 0429 353 936.



It was a great result for the Tasmanian beef industry and especially for Flinders Island.

The King Island beef story is well known but we don't hear so much about cattle from Flinders Island but clearly, they have a lot going for them. Meatworks Messenger called Greenham's agent on Flinders, Darren Grace, to find out more.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT YOUR BEEF

"We love Cape Grim Tasmanian beef.

We have been using it since the opening of Rockpool Bar & Grill in Melbourne, our world class Steak House. We find it dry ages beautifully with the complex long clean beef flavour that you would expect from the best pasture fed cattle, and it has a wonderful tenderness. Being a completely natural product ... it fits our sourcing philosophy perfectly.

Nothing defines us more than our ability to put the best quality steaks on the table. Our relationship with Greenham makes that possible."

Neil Perry
Director, Rockpool Group

"Tenderest eye fillets I have ever tried.

We are using the tenderloin and scotch fillets – both are fantastic.

I've been cooking for 20 years and these are the tenderest eye fillets I have ever tried.

The rep called in and said you have to try these. I did and said they have to go straight on the menu. I asked the owner to try one because he has to approve everything, and he was just blown away.

The quality is great and it never fluctuates. It's really consistent."

Philip Edwards,
Moo Moo The Wine Bar + Grill,
Gold Coast

"Marbling makes it foolproof.

It's just beautiful grass fed beef. It's well marbled but not to the extent that it's unsaleable. In fact, the marbling makes it foolproof. Even if somebody takes it home and overcooks it, it will still be tender and moist.

...people entertaining at home can put it on the barbecue and still produce a restaurant quality steak. The marbling really safeguards it.

Cape Grim cube rolls and strip loins are amongst the best I have ever come across."

David Pugh
Executive Chef,
Restaurant Two and Three Bistro



Tasmanian

MEATWORKS MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2009

GREENHAM



NETWORK OF 300

The adjacent article illustrates the publicity that our brands are generating as we continue our efforts to promote the unique benefits of Tasmanian beef.

Our Cape Grim brand is designed mainly for restaurants but also finds favour with some butchers. Tasmania Natural on the other hand is positioned as a brand for butchers but also does particularly well with Tasmanian restaurants.

At last count we had 167 restaurants across five states with Cape Grim beef on their menus. Just over half are in New South Wales but Queensland is also very strong with 28 restaurants listed on our website. Of the 33 butchers stocking Cape Grim nationally, 23 are also in the Sunshine State.

Other Queensland butchers are strong supporters of Tasmania Natural with 42 listed out of a total of 74 across the country.

Just on 300 Australian restaurants and butcher shops are now selling the advantages offered by Tasmanian beef and the list keeps growing week by week.

OVERSEAS MARKETS HOLDING

We all know that Australia has come through the global financial crisis in much better shape than many other countries. The contrast is really underlined in our dealings with Japan and Korea which represent substantial markets for our Tasmanian product.

Consumers in both countries have taken a hit and changed their shopping patterns. They are looking for cheaper cuts and substitute products.

Fortunately, our past investment in promoting Tasmanian branded beef into these markets is paying off. Sales are far from fantastic but volumes are holding reasonably well. We are in much better shape than would have been the case just selling generic product. It costs money to promote brands but the rewards are there, especially in the tough times.

Once consumers have come to trust a brand they are less likely to substitute it for a cheaper product with the risk of inferior quality.

CHANCE AT TEN GRAND

Applications are open for our \$10,000 Beef and Dairy Scholarship. You will find all the details on page three. Please encourage family members and employees to enter. I know it requires a bit of effort but there is a very real chance of success.

Peter Greenham

TASMANIAN BEEF – TELLING THE STORY

We all know that Tasmania is a superb environment for beef production. The island is blessed with clean air and water, abundant pastures, and skilled farmers who really know how to produce great cattle.

The challenge for us is to get the message out to the rest of Australia, and to our foreign markets. The good news is that our promotion of Tasmanian brands is working.

The Cape Grim story, in particular, is capturing the

imagination of journalists and leading to extensive publicity. They readily understand the core values of the brand – beef that comes from cattle breathing the world's most pure air and grazing on natural pastures, and without any assistance from hormone growth promotants.

In recent times Cape Grim has received extensive coverage in The Weekend Australian and RM Williams' Outback magazine.

CHRISTMAS – NEW YEAR ARRANGEMENTS

Processing will cease at our Smithton plant on Wednesday, December 23 and resume on Monday, January 4.

For all livestock enquiries during this period contact your usual Greenham buyer.

Elliot Mainwaring – Circular Head
6456 1300 / 0419 131 458

Nick Strickland – Central / N-W
6433 3230 / 0417 335 843

Ian Millen – Central East
6344 8915 / 0408 133 685

Daniel Sinclair – North-East
0428 384 484

Ron Crack – King Island
0400 895 133

Michael Ardle – South
0428 134 122

Wayne Oliver – Statewide
6362 3682 / 0419 358 441

Graeme Pretty – Livestock Controller
0418 505 347

WE WISH ALL OF OUR CUSTOMERS A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR



WINTER FINISHING – AND THE STORY FROM ONE OF OUR ALEPH PRODUCERS

This last winter, despite the higher rainfall and less than ideal conditions for fattening, one north east farmer managed to send us a couple of semi loads of prime cattle every month.

How could he get his cattle into top condition when many others were struggling? Meatworks Messenger paid a visit to Muirhead Enterprises at Winnaleah find out.

Bruce Muirhead's family has been on the property since 1900. It now stands at 720ha following the acquisition of two additional parcels in recent years. The property covers both flats and hilly, undulating country, and on a clear day you can see Bass Strait from the high ground.

Beef and the cropping are the dominant activities. The main crops are potatoes, poppies and parsley which is grown for the production of essential oil and distilled locally. Cereals are grown as a break crop.

1000 HEAD

Manager of the business and the man responsible for the beef side is Leon Quilliam. He's been with the Muirheads for 22 years and has occupied the manager's role for some 15 years. It's clear during our discussion that he knows his way around the cattle game.

The property runs 250 Angus breeders and buys in another 1000 head annually for

ALEPH NOT DIFFICULT

He says that meeting the Aleph requirements is quite easy. "It isn't difficult if you keep good records. You need to be Cattle Care QA accredited – we were the fourth property in Tasmania to achieve it – and that's also largely about record keeping. We don't even use a computer – everything is hand written and it works!"

The fatteners are all bought privately over the scales with many coming from Rushy Lagoon Resources and also quite a few off Flinders Island. Leon believes in doing everything on a weight basis, both buying and selling.

He makes all the selections himself and works on a minimum weight, but with no maximum. Type is very important and he especially looks for good muscling. He prefers Angus or Angus Hereford crosses and tends to shy away from European breeds like Simmentals.

"They don't seem to do as well for us as the British breeds. Over the years we have worked out where to get the cattle that do best on our place."

WEIGHING IMPORTANT

Buying and selling is not the only time when Leon believes in the importance of weighing cattle. The scales get a frequent work out right through the fattening cycle with all cattle weighed regularly.

"We run them together according to weight. We'll have one mob of cattle weighing between 390 and 420kg, another from 420 to 450, and so on. We keep weighing and moving them up all the time, but the main thing is that all the cattle in the mob are at a similar stage of development."

Weaners are typically bought in at nine months and sold off anywhere between 18 months and up to 24 or 25 months depending on performance. All fatteners are registered in the

Aleph program and the cut-off age is 27 months.

Leon pays careful attention as the cattle reach turnoff. Previously, he used an agent to market the fatteners but for the last 12 months has been doing it himself. He makes all the fat and weight assessments, and all cattle go to Greenham. "Doing it myself has saved us a lot of money."



LEON QUILLIAM, MANAGER OF MUIRHEAD ENTERPRISES AT WINNALEAH, HAS INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY ON THE 720 HA PROPERTY BY 20% TO 30% IN THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS. THE GAIN CAME FROM INTRODUCING WHAT LEON DESCRIBES AS MANAGED GRAZING FOLLOWING A SERIES OF TRIALS THAT PRODUCED ASTOUNDING RESULTS.

Fourteen days before delivery he puts them on Transcalm to quieten them down. "Very few miss out on MSA due to dark cutting or fat colour. We don't always have a lot of control over teeth or weight requirements for MSA but we can minimise pre-slaughter stress," Leon says.

Careful management is more than evident but there is still the question of consistently fattening cattle in the depths of winter. Sure enough there is a solid reason why the Muirhead Enterprises cattle perform so well and Leon delights in telling the story.

A TONNE OF LIVEWEIGHT GAIN

"It started with our local discussion group. We got an MLA grant eight years ago to run some trial work on sustainable grazing systems. It was all pretty simple at the beginning.

"We ran some trials over a three-year period comparing short rotation cultivars and perennials. Six paddocks were set up and set stocked with the cattle weighed every 28 days. There were three paddocks of short rotation cultivars and three of perennial.

"In the early days questions were asked about what we had achieved but then a really interesting question popped up. 'What hasn't been achieved yet that might be possible?' The answer was a liveweight gain of 1000 kg per hectare over 12 months. We thought it was worth a crack and it really gave us a goal," Leon said.

It certainly was worth a crack because the trials achieved a best performance of 1200kg per hectare per year in the second and third years after starting at 700kg in year one. Interestingly, the short rotation

pastures were way out in front after 12 months but the positions were completely reversed at the end of three years.

Having been inspired by their achievements, the group wondered what was possible. They had galloped past 1000kg. Was it too unrealistic to look at 2000kg? Another grant was obtained and the trials continued, but with greater complexity.

ASTOUNDING RESULTS

Set stocking was compared with a 28 day rotation and intensive rotations of two or three days. After 12 months the intensively grazed paddocks were 200kg ahead. During the second year comparisons were made between nil nitrogen, two applications of 45 units, and multiple applications of 30 units during the growing season.

"The results were astounding," Leon enthused, "the multiple application paddocks achieved liveweight gains in the order of 1600 to 1800 kilograms per hectare per year."

Irrigation was added to the mix in the third year with the multiple application paddocks being watered as required. "We got so very, very close to 2000kg," Leon states proudly. "One paddock gave us 1981kg and the other 2016."

Muirhead Enterprises now operates what Leon describes as a managed grazing system based on the trial outcomes. The result is an increase in productivity of 20 to 30% and a ready supply of prime cattle during winter to keep our domestic and international customers happy.

OUR SCHOLARSHIP IS ON AGAIN

If you are in the 17-45 age bracket, are a family member or a sharefarmer or an employee of farmers who supply cattle to our Smithton meat processing plant, and are looking to undertake formal study leading to a career in the dairy or beef sectors, you have a very good chance of winning our \$10,000 Greenham Tasmania Scholarship.

"Because of the targeted conditions applying to this scholarship", says Peter Greenham, "there is quite a select group of applicants, and the chance of gaining the benefits is quite high. So if you feel you meet the criteria, don't hesitate to apply. You have nothing to lose!"

Applications have now opened for the 2010 award, which encourages motivated Tasmanians to build a future in the Australian dairy and beef industries. It has been going since 2003, helping the successful applicant to improve their skills and knowledge of these industries.

"The scholarship is aimed at encouraging Tasmanians to better prepare for a rewarding future on the land or in an associated industry" explained Peter. "We're an important part of the Tasmanian community, and ongoing education of this type is crucial to the future sustainability and development of the dairy and beef industries."

"It is very gratifying to us that our company is able to assist young people in forging careers in the beef and dairy industries. Without the support offered by the scholarship some of these people may not have been able to achieve what they have. Not only would that have been a loss for them personally, but also a loss for agriculture."

Tips for applicants, further information and application forms can be downloaded from www.greenham.com.au Past scholarship winners have gone on to increase their knowledge in agribusiness, soil and pasture management and agricultural sciences. 2009 winner, Robert Snare from Boat Harbour, is studying for his Bachelor of Agricultural Science degree at the University of Tasmania.

He says that modern Australian farming has changed, from an



enterprise based on experience and sharing of experiences among farmers in a local community, to an exact science where the measurement of inputs and outputs, the chemistry of soils and the biology of plants and animals need to be understood. "For me to continue to find a place in the agricultural industry I need to find out these things through the Bachelor of Agricultural Science course."

The 2010 Greenham Tasmania Scholarship entries will be judged on a range of criteria including:

- How the applicant will use the money to improve their skills and knowledge
- How important the scholarship is for them to be able to realise their ambitions
- Potential benefits to the beef/dairy industry or farm enterprise and
- Previous academic, industry and/or personal achievements.

The winner will be selected by an independent panel comprising representatives from the Tasmanian farm, community and education sectors. Applications close on Friday, January 29, 2010.

Greenham Tasmania Scholarship application forms and information sheets are available by phoning Jenny Andrews at Rivergum Marketing on (03) 5445 6103, faxing a request to (03) 5442 5301 or e-mailing to greenham@rivergummarketing.com.au



ALL THE 1000 ODD FATTENERS TURNED OFF EACH YEAR ARE REGISTERED IN THE ALEPH PROGRAM. LEON SAYS THE 10 CENTS/KG PREMIUM MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE TO THE BOTTOM LINE.

fattening. A third of the Angus calves are selected as breeder replacements with the remainder going into our Aleph program. The steers are put through a feedlot.

Leon is enthusiastic about the advantages of participating in Aleph. "The 10 cent premium really makes a difference across a big herd like ours."