

Hybrid vigour boosts profit

ONE way Australian beef producers can remain competitive in a global market is to take advantage of hybrid vigour.

Hybrid vigour gives production advantages in fertility, growth and yield without compromising carcass quality on shorter feeding regimes.

Tarcutta-based Circle 8 proprietor Jeremy Cooper said there was no logical reason for purebred cows in the theatre of commercial beef production, and is adamant there is room for hybrid seedstock.

"As most producers don't need 50 per cent European cattle in a grass based production system," Mr Cooper said.

"But in a bid to maximise productivity in the current environment they are going to need something with a little more 'horse power' than a straight angus."

He said the crossbred cow would evolve in their production end point focus.

"She must have the ability to in one generation move from short fed-and or grass-fed domestic products to a long fed product," he said.

The cow has to be viewed as a beef production factory and producers have to develop ways in there individual production systems that the commercial cow will carry out this task in the most efficient fashion, he said.

"These hybrid cattle are part of



CIRCLE 8's Jeremy Cooper, right, with wife Carmen and son Thomas, 6 months, says his clients should be able to sell beef based on quality and yield, not based on colour and live weight. Circle 8 will hold its sale on March 13.

a production system that, if embraced in whole, will lead to big gains in productivity and profit without a major swing in management culture and without huge capital investment," he said.

"It's not cost efficient to feed cattle for 300 days and no one in Australia is being paid a premium for marbling except Wagyu," he said.

"And nobody will unless there is a domestic, grading system,(MSA) which will reward for yeild and quality."

Benefits of early weaning have two major effects, by harvesting calves off there mothers at four to five months and feeding to slaughter we can move marbling score six standard deviations.

All the research done at Illinois

quick facts

What is hybrid vigour?

- ▶ Hybrid vigour (HV) refers to the measure of performance superiority of crossbreds or hybrids over the average performance of the purebred parents.
- ▶ It is classified as either, individual, expressed by the hybrid calf, or maternal expressed by the hybrid cow.
- ▶ Animals from unrelated breeds that are crossed – for example, European British breeds exhibit higher levels of HV than crosses of similar breeds (eg British-British).
- ▶ Generates larger improvements in lower heritable traits.

that's a huge cost saving, he said.

"With hybrid seedstock we can make cows up to 25 per cent more productive, with early weaning we can increase stocking rates by 25 per cent and then if we had a system to sell carcass's based on the MSA principals, which is the best grading system in the world we could possibly move profit another 25 per cent," he said.

"Now that's worth fighting for. And that's how you manage drought.

"My clients should not have to sell cattle based on the colour of the hide and live weight." and if they do, hybrid seestock that have an angus lookalike advantage will do this better that purebreds with flow on effects on cow fertility."

Mr Cooper's selection process, using simmental sires through ET with his pure angus donors is based on moderate birth weight and optimum growth rate, carcass superiority and fertility, combined with an internal structural assessment.

The Circle 8 March 17 sale will comprise 45 bulls (including 20 angus hybrid bulls, aged 12 to 18 months) and 50 females.

The angus hybrid sale bulls scanned an average eye muscle area of 80 centimetres and raw IMF figure of 4.0 at nine months.

The same bulls had an average of 38 kilograms at birth only two kilos more than the 2007 angus breed average of 36 kilograms.

State University by Dr Dan Faulkner paints this picture very clearly.

The second benefit is that the female portion which is retained as breeders will be increasingly feed efficient as cows, due to a greater developed rumen and in a feed challenged production system that just makes sense, Mr Cooper said.

Cows and calves convert at fourteen kilos of input to one kilo of output. A calf will convert at 3 to 1,

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