

# Hybrid calves return \$63 more

By BRETT TINDAL

**I**F YOU could consistently breed calves that averaged 285 kilograms at eight months with the tops reaching 390kg at nine months, why would you be doing anything else?

That's the philosophy of Ken Bailey, who runs the 1012-hectare Oberon district operation, "Swatchfield" for Sydney-based owner, John Baxter.

Mr Bailey bought three Angus hybrid bulls from Circle 8 in 2008.

Steers bred from the bulls sold to local producers for \$600 on farm at eight months.

Mr Bailey said the calves came back at \$2.10/kg on farm and returned \$63 a head more on average than every Angus calf sold off the place.

"They were the best calves we have ever produced, weighing 30kg to

40kg heavier than any Angus-sired calves we have ever bred," he said

"The hybrids, compared to our straight Angus calves, were like chalk and cheese.

"They are better doers than Angus – before Christmas it was pretty ordinary here and they still put on good weight, while the Angus calves struggled."

Mr Bailey recently sold all the cows off "Swatchfield" after being offered a price he couldn't refuse.

They kept only 100 heifers and intend to build back up to about 200 breeders by Christmas 2011.

Of the 100 heifers, a large portion were heifers bred from the hybrid bulls and these will be joined back to Angus sires.

The pregnancy-tested-in-calf heifers they intend to buy in will later be joined to hybrid bulls with heifers once again retained and steers sold early.

Mr Bailey said he had been talking with the Coopers from Circle 8 at Marulan about joining the hybrid-sired heifers to a low birth weight Angus bull, until it was mentioned they had a series of low birth weight hybrid bulls in the pipeline set to be available in 2011.

Mr Bailey said "Swatchfield's" hybrid calves were purpose built as early turn-off cattle thanks to the



Agent, Todd Clements, Bowyer and Livermore, Bathurst, with manager of "Swatchfield" at Oberon, Ken Bailey, and some of the property's Angus/Simmental hybrid bulls.

extra punch they offered in weight.

"You look at these calves and you can tell they are good cattle due to more bone, depth and rump, but it is not until you weigh them that you realise how good they are," he said.

"The top calf sold out of this drop was a good calf, but you wouldn't have picked him as 390kg by looking at him – they just carry more weight than Angus cattle."

He said while it was the extra muscle, bone and growth they were

chasing, the temperament sealed the deal.

"When the buyers came to look at the calves they wanted weaned calves and mine were still on their mums – so I yard weaned them for four days and you could do anything with them," Mr Bailey said.

"Even the buyers commented on how quiet they were when delivered."

He said buyers could then take these "early turn-off" cattle through and turn them off several months

earlier than normal at 450kg to 500kg.

Mr Bailey said selling the hybrid-sired progeny as earlier turn-off cattle enabled him to free up more land for his lambing ewes, that lamb down twice a year in autumn and spring.

The property runs 3000 crossbred ewes, with an aim to run 4000 ewes and 200 breeders within 18 months.

"It's freeing up the pressure on pastures and crops and at the same time returning more dollars," he said.

**The calves came back at \$2.10/kg on farm and returned \$63 a head more on average than every Angus calf sold off the place.**

## Corryong reaping benefits from early growth

VICTORIAN beef producer, Glen Galbraith, "Khanbrong", Corryong, has made the best of early maturity and extra growth through the use of Angus hybrid bulls over his Angus females.

Mr Galbraith runs 270 breeders on his 133-hectare farm at Corryong and a second 660ha property at Khancoban.

His breeder herd is 70 per cent straight Angus, with a few black baldy cows and the rest young heifers bred from hybrid bulls.

He joins his breeders to Angus and hybrid bulls to calve in March/April and with the aim of selling

calves by about December/January.

Mr Galbraith said he had successfully achieved this for the past four years with the calves averaging 330 kilograms at 10 months and selling via an agent to his neighbour for a good return.

His neighbour, Ian Nankervis, buys in and breeds 1500 to 2000 steers a year and backgrounds them for feedlots or, if too heavy, direct to processors.

"Mr Nankervis has bought my steers for the past three years for the hybrid vigour they display and the extra weight gain and muscle," he said.

The Galbraiths have bought three

hybrid bulls of 50pc Angus and 50pc black Simmental content from Circle 8 to run with their herd and believe the hybrid calves have put at least an extra 20kg more weight on than the Angus-sired calves.

"I used to breed my own Angus bulls through an AI (artificial insemination) program, but instead of keeping the replacement heifers I was buying them in," Mr Galbraith said.

"The problem with that was you could only buy everybody else's culls or you couldn't get what you wanted when you wanted them.

"Now I breed my own from the

hybrid bulls and will join them back to a hybrid to stabilise the content of Simmental and maximise hybrid vigour."

Mr Galbraith said he was a big fan of the hybrid calves.

"You can see the extra meat in them compared to straight Angus calves and I believe they have a big future in the industry due to their extra weight off grass, their frame and structure."

Mr Galbraith said his hill country didn't allow him to take the calves past 10 months, but somebody with river flats or good feed could have multiple options – selling a

percentage as killable vealers or taking them through to feeder or finisher weights.

When questioned why he made the move to Angus hybrids Mr Galbraith said he was looking for more growth.

But, he said, the service and advice he received from the Cooper family at Circle 8 helped make up his mind.

"The Coopers are extremely professional and got bulls to me when I wanted them, not when it suited them to send them, and they seemed genuinely interested in improving my operation."

– BRETT TINDAL

# 60 BLACK Simmental Bulls

15th September 2010 @ 1pm TAMWORTH NSW

Jeremy Leslie Seaton Cooper - M: 0427 549 261 | Bill Cornell - M: 0428 293 498

John Setttee - M: 0408 297 368 | Mark Haywood - M: 0417 467 911