

Three-way success



It's all in the bull at Holbrook

WHEN buying bulls for his Holbrook-based three-way crossbreeding operation, Russell Parker, "Ingleburn", buys for a specific reason and not just for the sake of buying a certain number of bulls to fulfil requirements. Mr Parker (pictured) buys Shorthorn, Angus, Black Simmental and Angus Hybrid bulls to complement each breed's benefits when producing a productive calf. He said with a shift in genetics he tried to buy bulls with breed average or below birthweight, plus strong maternal traits, as this increased the rate of gain in cow performance. "The Angus breed has terrific accuracy, so we look at birthweight as it is

well documented, but needs to be above 80 per cent to make good judgments," he said. "I am very mindful of fat cover on all bulls, as they must be positive or I don't want them. "Growth traits are not a major concern for me and they don't have to be above breed average for 400- and 600-day weight as I need to be aware of my mature cow weights and not just the steers I produce," he said. "If I keep my mature cow weight moderate and get the bulls' maternal traits firing, then the steers will look after themselves." He said targeting the top

end of the feedlots and chasing growth only made replacement females extreme and less productive. "Our selection policy is based around structure and temperament so we can work and draft cows and calves in the paddock and work cattle easily," he said. All calves were sire identified and individually numbered so their calves could be monitored for performance, which was a must when using three different breeds. The bulls needed to be able to complement each other and produce even and marketable steers.

Rotating breeds the key to maximum profits

By BRETT TINDAL

A THREE breed rotation has become a necessity for Holbrook farmer, Russell Parker, and his wife, Lea, "Ingleburn", to provide the performance he demands from his cattle.

The performance is driven by cost, but Mr Parker aims to strive for more dollars per hectare rather than more dollars per head.

The Parkers run 450 spring calving cows on their two properties of 770ha at Holbrook and Woomargama, and use Angus, Shorthorn and Black Simmentals in a three-way breeding operation to produce 12- to 14-month-old steers at 400 kilograms for the feedlots.

Mr Parker runs his young cattle on his Holbrook farm, the breeding cattle at Woomargama and his replacement females are on constant agistment to allow him to run the 400-plus females he believes he needs to be viable.

"I need the replacements to be on agistment to free up room to breed and produce cash flow cattle to run the operation at optimum returns," he said.

Mr Parker said his father, Henry, started crossbreeding before it became popular, buying in Hereford cows from the mountains and crossing them with a traditional Simmental and then an Angus sire back over them as a terminal option.

"We soon came to the realisation we were killing too many good females through selling all the progeny and buying in replacement Hereford cows all the time," he said.

"So we shifted the operation to

produce a more maternal female that we could breed from, not just get good weight on and sell," he said.

Mr Parker said his focus had changed from breeding growthy, high performance steers and heifers to better maternal cattle that allow him to retain females and produce steers that when pushed will hit all markets.

"If you want to target the top end feedlot B3 markets you will need to use high growth bulls, but you will not be able to retain the females as they will be too extreme," he said.

In the Parker's system any animals joined to Angus will see the females joined back to a Black Simmental and their progeny joined to a Shorthorn, then back to an Angus to keep the cycle flowing.

He said they chose Angus for their market acceptance, carcass quality, depth of genetics and breeding predictability through estimated breeding values.

"We had a change from a terminal sire Angus bull to bulls that could produce more maternal progeny to keep them as phenotypical as possible for a better producing group of females," he said.

"This is quite possibly why we bought a few Angus hybrids to change up the cycle and produce females that were like peas in a pod and perform the same across the board," he said.

The Black Simmentals were a fantastic maternal breed, he said, because they offered great milk and yield with optimum growth, while the Shorthorns offered marketability, acceptance and great carcass traits to complement the two other breeds.

Mr Parker said depending on the season he sold steers to Cargill's

Jindalee feedlot, Jindalee, at 400kg at 12 to 14 months and if they didn't hit the weight due to short seasons they went to local backgrounders.

Mr Parker said the thing that inspired him was the goal to produce more dollars a hectare rather than more dollars a kilogram. "You can breed

Angus to gain a five cents a kilogram premium and yes it would be a lot easier to manage, but can you justify the five cents a kilogram premium, when you can potentially gain the extra 25 per cent production gained through hybrid vigour, which has been well documented - resulting in greater production per hectare," he said.

Mr Parker said as a farmer of either beef or cropping, the cost of production was spiraling and he needed to be able to produce more from what he had.

"My biggest challenge is balancing input dollars versus income rather than breeding cattle," he said.

■ Continued p72

CHARBRAY In Focus

Price advantage and adaptability for coastal Charbrays

A smoothly managed operation near Piora, west of Casino, runs an innovative Charbray breeding program, which handles the coastal conditions of the area, while attracting a premium price in the local market.

The New South Wales north coast property 'Woodlands' consists of 285 hectares of black soil flats that rise to forest country, and endures the humid, high rainfall conditions of coastal climates. To make best use of the land, co-owner and manager Jeremy Cruickshank introduced the Charbray breed to the property, and has since reaped the rewards.

Since the herd's conception five years ago, 200 breeders have been accumulated, including 50 foundation Brahman females sourced from Tarrus, Allawah and Danarla studs. Full French Charolais bulls from ANC and Advance studs are joined to these females, with the progeny targeted for commercial and seedstock markets. In the 'Woodlands' operation, the top 10 percent of male offspring are kept as bulls, after passing rigorous selection criteria, which includes aspects such as growth rate, temperament and skeletal structure. These bulls are then supplemented on a home mix ration, and are primarily sold privately to local commercial producers through the seedstock side of the operation, Maximus Charbray stud.

"The Charbray breed is certainly increasing in popularity in this area, as producers are seeing the results of using the bulls," Mr Cruickshank said. "Processors and butchers are realising the value of Charbray carcasses for the local trade and the premium is there for good Charbray cattle."

Two years ago Jeremy initiated a deal through local agents George and Fuhrmann, which enabled him to supply 20 carcasses a week to local butchers. The cattle are short fed on a premixed grain ration for 60 days, and sold from 10 to 14 months with a dressed weight aim of 160kg to 200kg, and 6mm to 10mm of fat.

"For the right article that meets their specifications, the butcher shops are paying a premium. We haven't had a carcass yet that hasn't met their requirements, so we've been enjoying a premium of 15cents to 20cents a kilogram."

Learn More.....www.charbray.org

Charbray/Charolais Classic Sale

August 28

commencing at 1pm - Casino Saleyards

ANNUAL NATIONAL SALE
23 September 2009
Gracemere Saleyards Rockhampton



"More Beef on four feet"

INCORPORATING BENELKAY, COBBORA AND MUNNABAH STUDS

SALE HIGHLIGHTS

Lot 16 Benelkay Kluger (P) \$17,500 to Rosevale Stud, Jandowae, Qld

Lot 17 Benelkay Kearns (P) \$17,000 to Derrawee Pastoral Co, Coolah

Lot 25 Munnabah 604 (P) \$15,000 to Kendara Stud, Biloela, Qld

Bulls have gone into herds as far afield as Springsure, central Qld, in the north, Bourke in the west, Orange in the south, and all points in between.

www.watasantabullsale.com.au

WATASANTA

INAUGURAL INVITATION BULL SALE

WAT-A-SALE!

AVERAGE: \$5,527 TOP: \$17,500

40% OF BULLS SOLD FOR \$4,000 AND UNDER

A sincere thank you to all bull purchasers and under bidders for supporting our inaugural sale.

~ Neil & Rosalie Watson, Andrew & Jules Orman, Harry & Jill Powell, Mark & Sally Dent

SALE HIGHLIGHTS

Lot 4 Watasanta Climate Changer (P) \$14,000 to Munnabah Stud, Coolah

Lot 5 Watasanta Catch Me (PS) \$14,000 to Tally-Ho Stud, Springsure, Qld



Top price bull Benelkay Kluger (P) sold for \$17,500 to Rosevale Stud