



Spring Newsletter 2015

As predicted in our last newsletter there has been a dramatic improvement in the cattle market. Unfortunately, the seasonal conditions are still patchy especially in Victoria. Storm rains in early November have kept our season going with the prospect of a reasonable spring. In our high country we don't get a body of feed until mid November while to the west of us their spring is finished.

Over the last year we have gone from a very ordinary summer to a poor autumn, leading into a bad winter. Even with an unusual amount of hand feeding our cattle had lost a lot of condition by spring time. Being very good doers, they are now picking up very quickly.

Value Based Payment

An exciting development has been announced by Teys-Cargill. As reported by Beef Central "Tey's Australia" plan to move towards a Value Based Payment system to reward producers for producing better yielding carcasses. While value based payments have been spoken about for some time, the big change is that latest-generation analytic technologies like Dual-Energy X-ray, do not rely on yield indicators like eye muscle area and fatness to establish a yield "prediction", but instead provide actual composition of each scanned carcass, accurately broken down into red meat, fat and bone.

MLA's Dr Alex Ball says it is not uncommon to see an \$80 variance in value between two carcasses of identical weight and fatness, based solely on the amount of saleable meat each body contains."

Also in Beef Central, Leann Dax, in her report of the NVLX Wodonga, 3rd Nov, stated "buyers paid up to 20 cents per kg more for European calves and their crosses"

New Sires

Violet Hills Jolly Joker (P) (VHV J187E)



Jolly Joker is an extremely well structured and well balanced bull with excellent feet and legs. He is long and deep with above average muscling and fattening ability. He is smooth polled and we are hoping DNA tests indicate that he is a homozygous poll. Calving ease and fertility should be well above average and his temperament is outstanding.

His Domestic Index puts him in the top 1% of the breed for the 2013 born. His mother, Violet Hills Briana (P) (VHVB52E) has the top Domestic Index, in the breed, for the 2006 born.

JWX Silver Bullet 524W (P)

Violet Hills Jolly Joker (P)

Violet Hills Briana (P)(VHVB52E)



Violet Hills Hilston (P) (VHV H191E)

Hilston's first progeny will be in our sales next year (2016). They are so impressive we have kept one to use in our breeding programme. Hilston is a very well balanced bull. As with all of our bulls he combines calving ease, good early growth and a maturity pattern that allows his progeny to finish easily on grass at a young age.

Hilston has a Domestic Index that is in the top 1% of the Charolais born in 2012.

Pinay

Violet Hills Hilston(P)

Violet Hills Bronwen(P) (VHVB28E)

Australian National Field Day Steer and Carcase Trial

Violet Hills entered two teams, by two individual bulls, of purebred steers in the 2014/15 trial. Both teams were out of heifers and were not suitable to be kept as bulls. In other words, they were the bottom of the crop!

After 100 days on grass they were inducted into Gundmain feedlot for a further 100 days. They were then slaughtered at the Teys-Cargill abattoir at Wagga and the carcasses assessed.

One of our teams was over fat and was judged 6th, so this debunks some opinions that pure bred Charolais can't put on good selvages of fat. The other team, by a different bull, had the correct finishing and muscling and was awarded first place for carcase quality and first place for saleable meat yield.

When the overall performance of the team was taken into account they were awarded overall first place and the John Sharpe Perpetual Trophy. This is the second time that Violet Hills has won the trophy in the last five years, with purebred Charolais steers.



Champion pen of steers and mud

The most rewarding aspect of the trials is the feedback that we get on the steers that we can relate to the sires in our breeding programme. We cannot stress enough the need to use Charolais that are appropriate for Australian markets and the environment you are going to use them in. The use of appropriate Charolais is the easiest way to make money in the cattle industry. If you have the right type, they can be used as pure bred or in cross breeding with terrific results.

Clients Visits

Max and Julie Ireland

Last spring we had the pleasure of visiting Max and Julie Ireland, Prairie Fields, Walcha. It was very interesting looking at their cattle breeding and fattening enterprise, which involves what I would call criss cross breeding, using Charolais and Shorthorns. The cows with the higher percentage of Shorthorn blood are joined to Charolais and the cows with the higher percentage of Charolais blood are joined to Shorthorns. The progeny are grown out and fattened to EU weights and usually sold direct to works where they are MSA graded (with high compliance).



Charolais-Shorthorn infused cows and calves



Young Violet Hills Charolais bull on the job.

With over 800 breeding cows the Prairie Fields operation is a very interesting and professionally run business.

After a day looking around we spent a delightful evening with Max and Julie and Max's sister and brother-in-law, Leone and Owen Mackaway, who run a similar cattle breeding operation in the Walcha region.

With MSA grading and fattening the cattle on high quality pastures, industry leaders like the Ireland's and Mackaway's are showing that the introduction of appropriate Charolais genetics makes their enterprise much more profitable. The introduction of Value Based Payment will really show the value of using appropriate Charolais genetics.

I neglected to take a photo of Julie's magnificent garden. A good reason to visit again!! Visiting clients and seeing their operations is one of the pleasures of the stud business. All we need is a little more time!!



Chris Iffland and Denise Shaw

Sean and Daryl had the pleasure of visiting "Oakdale", the property of Chris Iffland and Denise Shaw and discussing their cattle operation. Oakdale is near Cumnock in Central NSW.

Chris stressed that their aim is to maximise profits. They do not have any affiliation with any particular breed and require the calves that are produced to be uniform, thick and easy doing so they are marketable at any age. The challenge is to achieve this from mixed breed cows that are purchased from the saleyard on the basis of price and the ability to rear a calf.

As well as a saleable calf, the salvage value of the cow compared to the purchase price of the cow is an important consideration of the operation. In other words the business cannot afford passengers such as poor doing cattle or calves that have to be sold as stores because of their inability to finish at a young age.

Before buying a Violet Hills bull, Chris and Denise had used a Charolais bull from another breeder. Chris estimates that this bull increased the returns per calf by \$100 but the problem was that only 25% could be turned off as vealers because of the wrong maturity pattern.



This left them with the options of selling them as stores or keeping them and growing them out to a much bigger weight in an effort to try and fatten them. The calves were also a bit "slab sided".

Chris said the calves from the Violet Hills bull have improved his profit per calf by a further \$100 per head. Their consistency, thickness and do-ability have allowed them to be saleable at a young age straight off mum allowing more cows to be run and increasing the overall profitability of the operation.



The calves by Violet Hills Handsome (Chris calls him Daryl..... a

challenge I can't live up to!!!!) are 4 months younger than the British breed calves in the same mob and are the same size as well as being much thicker and much softer. "Daryl" has demonstrated his doing ability by maintaining his condition through a very tough winter. His calves are showing the same trait. Denise also pointed out the very good temperament of the bull and his progeny.



It is very rewarding to get the feedback that our breeding aims are being achieved. Those aims are: producing thick, easy doing, early maturing Charolais with good early growth and an ability to finish at an early age off grass.

The Charolais Difference

Our clients' experiences, which is backed up by independent research, is that Charolais cross calves can have a 50kg weight advantage over British breed calves at weaning. This weight advantage, if valued at \$3.00 per kg, gives an extra \$150.00 per head at weaning (say 400kg). This difference will only increase as the animal grows and we still haven't taken into account the extra premium for carcase yield and the fact that the heifer portion does not get penalised the same as their British Breed sisters.

A conservative estimation of an extra \$200.00 per head (when carcase yield is taken into account) for the Charolais calves will give the breeder an EXTRA \$8000.00 for the 40 calves you would expect to market each year from one bull. And this would be for an average operation.

It is a "no brainer" when it comes to making money in the cattle industry.

On a 350kg calf of that "high profile black breed" you would need a premium of at least 57 cents a kg LW to be roughly equal the 400kg Charolais cross calf. As the saying goes "There are none so blind as those who will not see".

A glance at the direction of our breeding programme

Feedback from our clients is extremely important and has a big bearing on the direction of our breeding.

There are so many important traits that need to be considered in a breeding programme.

Below are some comments on the characteristics we continually aim for:-

Structural soundness. This is a real problem with a lot of the AI sires. We are continually trying to improve foot structure and cull rather than trim hooves.

Fertility. Important for bulls and cows. Getting back in calf, especially after the first calf, is so important. We calve the heifers down as 2yr olds after a 2 month joining. All females are expected to get back in calf in a 2 month joining period.

Temperament. Never had a request for a wild bull so cull heavily at weaning and later if need be.

Early maturity. So important for fertility and the ability to finish at a young age. This is a very misused term.

Calving ease of mother and daughter Is a balance. Selecting too hard for low birth weight can lead to calving problems in the next generation heifers as well as possibly reducing the growth rate of the progeny.

Excellent carcase characteristics. High yielding carcasses with the correct fat cover at a young age. This will become increasingly important with value based payment. I think this is more important than growth rate.

Constitution or doing ability. To be able to do well on our variable grass pastures. A lot of the overseas sires fail in this area.

Good early growth. Getting to saleable size as quickly as possible and still be able to finish. Importance of maturity pattern cannot be overstated. Early growth is much more important than mature size.

Moderate mature size of cows. The salvage value of Charolais cows is very good. However, we need to keep in mind that the larger the cow the higher the feed requirements. Also, most works penalise carcasses much over 400kg CW. This indicates an ideal mature weight of 650-800 kg.LW.

Naturally polled. While striving for this we cannot lose sight of all the other important traits.

Ability to rear a calf. Good mothering, good teats and adequate milk.

I am sure there a number of other important things I have not mentioned. I have not attempted to prioritise the above list. That is up to the individual depending on their requirements.

★ *Violet Hills Southern Sale, Yea* ★

Wednesday 24th February 2016

At Yea saleyards 1pm

30 bulls 18 months old

Contact: Rodwells Andrew Allan, Alexandra (0428410341); Adam Mountjoy, Yea (0428926610); Tyson Bush, Shepperton (0419756746); Anthony Delaney, Pakenham (0429136055) as the contacts.



Violet Hills Kogan(P) VHVK180E

Two young bulls (14 months) by Violet Hills Hilston that will be in the Yea sale. At 400 days Kogan weighed 610kg and Kidman weighed 588kg off grass.



Violet Hills Kidman(P) VHVK153E

★ *Violet Hills on property sale* ★

Thursday 5th May 2016

45 bulls 20 months

30 CharolaisXRed Angus heifers PTIC 20 months

Contact: Elders Andrew Bickford, Elders Bathurst (0427943781); Brian Kennedy, Elders Stud Stock (0427844047); Josh Crosby, Elders Stud Stock (0428634658) as contacts



Violet Hills Gaelic Warrior(P)

Gaelic Warrior is producing calves with terrific thickness and an ability to finish on grass at a young age. He has a Domestic Index in the top 10% for the 2011 drop of Charolais and is a homozygous poll. His figures indicate above average growth and ability to fatten as well as having an ideal conformation.

Violet Hills Ellis(P) VHVE86E

Gaelic Warrior(P) VHVVG16E

Violet Hills Briana(P) VHVVB52E

★ *The Jenkins family at Violet Hills wish you all the best for the festive season and a happy and prosperous 2016* ★

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