

## VIOLET HILLS SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2017-2018

The season dominated our management decisions once again. We were fortunate to get some good rain in March. Since then, the winter/spring was bone dry resulting in a deficit of over 10 inches (250 mm) for the year up to the beginning of October. I believe we have been luckier than many others as we did have some sort of an early autumn. The extremely dry conditions during last year's joining has also had an adverse impact on our calving % this year due to a number of first calf heifers (2 yr old) not going back in calf, and our yearling heifers being smaller than usual at joining. We have not deviated from our regular 2 month joining period, which maintains a very fertile herd. As a result, more empty females have been sold.

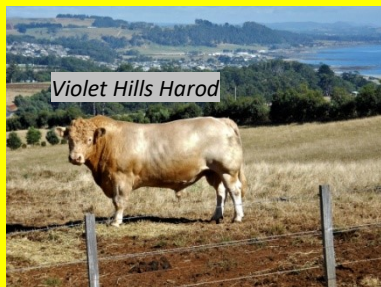


November saw some welcome rain. This has extended into early December resulting in some very welcome pasture growth. Our cows have said "thank you very much" and are now a pleasure to see.

The widespread dry in NSW and Qld put downward pressure on the cattle market. While we may not see the prices of a year ago the improvement in the season will firm the market up.

### TASMANIAN TRIP

Early in March, Kaye and I visited the North of Tasmania and had the pleasure to catch up with some of our friends and clients. It is truly a beautiful part of the country. It was great to see Charolais doing such a wonderful job, especially for the Cape Grimm Grass Fed Beef brand.



Violet Hills Harod



Joanne

with her yearling  
cattle



We visited Joanne and Nick Strickland at Burnie. They had purchased Violet Hills Harod in 2014. Harod has developed into a magnificent bull. The Stricklands are delighted with his progeny, which fit nicely into the Cape Grimm Grass Fed Beef brand. Being a honey coloured bull they are finding that they get some red and black calves out of cross bred cows.

We had a lovely few days with Audrey and Robert Scott at Stanley. Using a combination of Red Angus and Charolais, they are producing an ideal product for the Cape Grimm brand. Audrey has had a lot of success in beef competitions and we now understand why.



Violet Hills Kentucky



I should mention Milton and Gaylene de Jong's "Beach Shack". Suffice to say their hospitality was first class. I was hanging out for some lobster and was not disappointed!! We finished our visit by going to Denis and Trixie Dobson's little bit of heaven at Port Sorell. A thoroughly enjoyable trip with wonderful hospitality everywhere we went. It is heart warming to see the value of using appropriate Charolais in the beef industry.



### VIOLET HILLS SOUTHERN SALE

We will once again be holding our Southern sale at Yea on **Wednesday the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2018**. We have selected an excellent line of polled bulls, which will include new sires such as Violet Hills Jolly Joker (P) and Violet Hills Jay (P). Both of these bulls have a little more "stretch" in them while maintaining doing ability and finishing ability at a young age. On figures, Jolly Joker is one of the top bulls in the breed.



### VIOLET HILLS ON FARM SALE

The Violet Hills home sale will be held on **Thursday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2018**. We hope to present 45 bulls of the usual high standard.

### POLL or SCUR

The demand for polled animals continues to grow and this is being encouraged from an animal welfare perspective as well as a management point of view. Dehorning can be another unpleasant job.

Many cattle producers are still confused about the genetics of horns or lack of them. I still hear people talking of the depth of polling in a pedigree when in fact the only thing that matters is the horned status of the sire and dam. The rest of the pedigree is irrelevant regarding the ability to produce polled progeny. So we now see reference to homozygous polls (the animal has inherited a poll gene from both sire and dam), and heterozygous polls (have inherited the poll gene from one parent and the horn gene from the other parent). The poll gene is dominant over the horn gene so heterozygous polls appear to be polled whilst carrying the horned gene. There is a genetic test that will give a good indication of the animal being homozygous for the poll gene. A nonsense term that is sometimes used is "double polled". This refers to both parents being polled. The animal itself may be carrying the horned gene and have the ability to pass this on to its progeny.



This brings me to scurs. These are growths on the skin where the horns would normally be. They do not have the bony attachment to the skull that horns have. Scurs have a different genetic basis to horns. They can still be annoying and difficult to detect in a young animal. They can indicate that the animal is carrying the recessive horn gene.

At Violet Hills, all of our sires are polled although some are still carrying the recessive horned gene. Also 90% of the cows are polled.

**HEALTH STATUS** Violet Hills has a jbas status of 7 and will be vaccinating all bulls for Vibriosis as well as Pestivirus, Leptosporosis and Clostridium diseases (7:1). As well as this they have had a vaccination for pink eye (Piliguard) as a calf as well as regular drenches for Liver Fluke and Worms.

**All of us at Violet Hills would like to wish you a prosperous New Year and every success in beef breeding.**