



VIOLET HILLS CHAROLAIS

SUMMER 2018-2019 NEWSLETTER

I think it is fair to say that the least said about seasonal conditions over the last year or so the better. It has been a very emotionally and financially trying time for farming over a wide area of New South Wales and parts of Victoria that I am aware of. Normally very safe rainfall areas like East Gippsland and the Tablelands of NSW have been badly impacted by the run of below average seasons. Thank goodness the cattle market was relatively strong.

At Violet Hills we have tried to maintain our numbers. The high cost of fodder may cause us to re-assess this position if the summer and autumn fail us again. Our season at this moment is ok after some reasonable rain in November.

CANCELLATION of the SOUTHERN SALE



After careful consideration it is with regret that we have decided to cancel our Southern Sale which would normally be held at the Yea saleyards in February.

On the positive side, all of our clients will now have access to the full annual draft of bulls at the one sale, on Thursday, 2nd May, 2019. With internet and phone bidding, as well as generous transport assistance, our valuable clients should not be inconvenienced too much.

Report of Yea Sale 2018

The top priced bull at the 2018 sale held at Yea was Violet Hills McKinley 9 (P) (VHV M226E) who is a low birth weight, easy calving bull with excellent carcase characteristics. He was sired by Violet Hills Jolly Joker (P) and has a Domestic Index of +\$52. He was purchased by Paringa Livestock



Report of 8th On Farm Sale May 2018

A total of 38 bulls were presented for sale with 30 selling for an average of \$5116.00 and a top price of \$9500.00. The top priced bull was Violet Hills Marcello (P) who was purchased by the Inder family. Marcello was by Violet Hills Jolly Joker (P) and scanned 8mm for rump fat, 6mm for rib fat, 143 sq. cm. and 4.5% for marbling. His breedplan figures put him in the top 10% for Domestic and Export Indexes, top 5% for EMA and top 10% for growth.

The second top priced bull, selling for \$9000.00, was Violet Hills Magnificent (P) who scanned 10mm for rump fat, 8 mm for rib fat, 145sq.cm.for EMA and 4.9% for marbling. He was also by Violet Hills Jolly Joker and was purchased by the Mackaway Pastoral Co. The Mackaway Pastoral Co. purchased a total of 5 bulls for an average of \$6800.00



9th On Farm Sale 2nd May 2019

50 BULLS

20mths old

Mostly Polled

Agents are Elders. Contact Brian Kennedy (Elders Stud Stock) 0427844047, Andrew Bickford (Elders Bathurst) 0427943781

NOTES on CALVING EASE

We often get asked about a sire's suitability to put over heifers so I thought that it may be an opportune time to visit this topic again. Getting a live, healthy calf on the ground is one of the most important aspects in cattle breeding. Everything else is irrelevant if this does not happen.

- 1) Birth weight has a major influence on dystocia (calving difficulty) and this is influenced genetically by the bull and the dam. Too often the dam's genetic influence is overlooked. Gestation length has a significant effect on birth weight. The shorter the gestation time the less time for the calf to grow whilst in the cow. We aim to weigh as many bull calves as possible to get an accurate indication of the sires influence. If we get an unusually large calf it is often due to the cow having a history of larger calves in her pedigree. These cows are usually culled.
- 2) Seasonal conditions play a significant role in determining the birth weight of the calf. We have noticed a difference in average birth weights, of up to 4kgs heavier, in a good season compared to a poor season. Similarly, the quality of the pasture can have a big effect. Pastures of higher protein and digestibility in southern Australia will result in higher birth weights than would be experienced by the same cows being run on coastal Queensland country, due to the lower quality forage.
- 3) The maternal influence on dystocia is often overlooked. I have mentioned gestation length as having a significant impact on birth weight. The breed of the cow can have a significant impact on calf size. Identical embryos when placed in Fresian and Jersey cows resulted in much larger calves born from the Fresian cows compared to calves born from the Jersey cows. Hereford cows were notoriously bad calvers with some breeders resorting to using low birth weight Angus bulls, or even Jerseys, over heifers.

The pelvic opening size of the cow is very important and can vary considerably. One possible side effect of continually selecting for low birth weight in your herd is to inadvertently select for a smaller pelvic opening resulting in increased calving difficulties.

These are some of the factors that need to be considered when determining minimizing dystocia. It could be argued that the cow and her environment had a more important role to play, when compared to the bull, in minimizing dystocia.

If you are concerned about birth weight then select your future sires from reputable breeders, who have taken the time and effort to record calving ease and birth weights.

The Domestic Index puts a big loading on birth weight and calving ease so can be a very good guide to calving ease, when selecting a sire.



International Charolais Congress – Sweden July 2018

We were fortunate to attend the Charolais Congress in Sweden. In total, there are about 1.5 million cattle in Sweden including 300,000 dairy cows and 200,000 beef



cows. In the early days all beef came from dairy cattle but since the 1950's beef breeds have played a more important role. The first Charolais semen was imported from Canada in 1959 as health protocols prevented Charolais importations from France. Live cattle were imported from Denmark during the 60's and finally from France in 1968. In the beginning of the 1990's more emphasis was placed on importing Canadian genetics with their easier calving and polled genetics. Today, Charolais are the dominant beef breed and 85% are polled.

Beef performance recording is an important tool and 75% of all purebred calves are weighed at birth, 200 days and one year of age. These recordings and information from the slaughter houses give the breeders highly reliable breeding values for birth weight, growth rate as well as carcase qualities.

In Sweden the cattle are fattened in undercover feed pens and slaughtered at about 400 kg cwt. Bulls are left entire. Farming is very heavily subsidised by the Government and the EU with over half the farms incomes coming from subsidies. Forestry is a major component of many of the farms incomes.



We saw some lovely looking cows but were generally disappointed with the calves which were very plain and leggy. I suspect that the cows were late maturing and more suited to manufacturing and hamburger meat rather than prime, young, grass fed beef.



USING YEARLING BULLS

The use of yearling bulls can get a mixed response. Some breeders can see a real value in using yearling bulls especially as it often means an extra year's use out of the bull, as well as determining the genetic value of the bull at a younger age. Other breeders find that early use knocks the young bull around too much and that it delays the bull from reaching mature size by a year or so.

Both arguments can have merit and depend a lot on how the young bull is looked after. It is a big ask to expect a young bull to work and continue growing. This is especially so if his nutrition is sub-optimal (as with winter pastures or drought) or he is losing his baby teeth.

At Violet Hills we use yearling bulls most years. This year we are using 6. We aim to have them in good condition and weighing 600kg at 15 months. They are joined to 20-30 cows for 2 months.

This enables us to assess future sires at a young age as well as speeding up the improvement of desirable traits. As well as all of the usual traits we are putting more emphasis on carcase yield and fattening ability at a young age. This is in line with our overall aim of producing bulls that are suitable for the young, grass fed, beef market.



Violet Hills Napoleon (P)

Yearling bulls (15 months old) just prior to being put out with our cows this spring.



Violet Hills Nero (P)

News from Stanley



It is always great to receive good news stories from our clients. We were delighted to receive this photo from Audrey Scott who is achieving excellent results by crossing Charolais over Red Angus cows at Stanley, Tasmania. The progeny are processed for the Tasmanian Cape Grim Grassfed Beef brand and are returning well over \$2000.00 per head for the milk tooth carcasses. Audrey continues to demonstrate what can be achieved by combining the appropriate genetics with excellent management. Pictured is a 5 month old calf, by a Violet Hills bull, out of a Red Angus cow. Audrey tells us that he has been a stand out calf from the day he was born.

All of us at Violet Hills would like to thank our clients for your support and wish everyone a safe, peaceful and joyous festive season.

The Jenkins family



Daryl and Kaye, 0263593221. Mob 0428639674

Email:- violethills@bigpond.com

Sean, 0263593292. Mob 0419416197

Web:- violethillscharolais.com.au