

# **MID NORTH COAST MURRAY GREY BREED PROMOTION GROUP SPRING NEWSLETTER**

*The groups AGM was held on the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2018*

*The New committee is:*

*President: Peter Watson, Vice President: Peter McIntyre*

*Treasurer: Ray Norquay, Secretary/Publicity Officer: Kyle Thomas*

*Thanks to Peter McIntyre for many years of hard work and dedication as our President.*

*Welcome Peter Watson as the New President.*

*The main topic for discussion at the AGM was how do the members want to proceed with the group. The number of aging and active farmers with Murray Grey Beef cattle have diminished to 1 stud breeder, 1 commercial breeder and a few commercial composite breeders. A motion was put forward and the Members voted to continue as an Official rather than a social group.*

*The group has an active interest in Murray Greys but, needs to attract New and younger Members if it is going to continue.*

## **CHRISTMAS LUNCH**



*Will be held at the Taree West Bowling Club*

*116 Edinburgh Drive*

*Taree West*

*On Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018*

*At 12-12.30 pm*

*Meals will be off the Menu.*

*A table in the dining room has been booked.*

*If possible please RSVP Kyle on 0427381859 or email [kinkiwib@bigpond.com](mailto:kinkiwib@bigpond.com)*

*by the 3<sup>rd</sup> December so that we have appropriate seating.*



# Female Herd Dispersal

2nd March 2019

## ★ BIG ANNOUNCEMENT ★

It is with a heavy heart that we announce the dispersal of stud operations at Glenliam Farm following 25 years of breeding.

### WHOLE FEMALE HERD DISPERSAL

2nd March 2019 at Glenliam!

Unless whole herd offer is made before end of October 2018.

The sale will consist of:

- \* 33 Spring Calving Cows ( 3 in 1 units )
- \* 18 Autumn Calving Cows (PTIC)
- \* 12 'M' Joined heifers (PTIC)
- \* 14 'N' Heifers
- \* 10 'P' Heifers
- \* 10 PTIC ET Embryo's or ET calves at foot
- \* Semen, embryos & stud sires may also be available

J-Bas 8 - Eligible to ALL STATES!

Do not miss this final opportunity to secure our very best genetics!

Don't forget to mark your calendar!

Complete Female Herd Dispersal

1PM - 2nd March 2019

We would like to welcome [Colin Say & Co P/L](#) on board as the sole agent for our sale! The sale will also be interfaced with [AuctionsPlus!](#) Here is a sneak peak of our PTIC 'M' Females on offer...

Agent comments upon inspection: 'You can't breed them any better can you? This is truly an outstanding offering of females, a once in a lifetime opportunity to secure some of the best genetics the breed has to offer!'

Be sure to add a Glenliam female to your Christmas Wish List!

**CHECK OUT THE GLENLIAM FARM FACEBOOK PAGE FOR THE SNEAK PEAK OF FEMALES ON OFFER**

## A co-operative approach to compliance

22 August 2018

### On Farm Snapshot

Name/s: Lachlan and Kate James, and sons Stirling, 10, and Fraser, 8.  
Location: Gunnedah, NSW  
Area: 1,700ha  
Enterprise: Wallawong Premium Beef – Angus and Murray Grey seedstock  
Livestock: 220 seedstock breeders plus commercial herd (usually around 80 breeders but currently reduced to 25–30 because of ongoing drought)  
Pastures: Native and some tropical pastures and dual-purpose crops  
Soils: Sand to heavy black soils  
Rainfall: 580mm, but only 65mm received to August this year

### Lessons learned

- Genetics, nutrition and management are the building blocks of compliance.
- Aim for high-yielding cattle with high eating quality.
- Industry relevance underpins producers' profitability and productivity.

### A co-operative approach to compliance

Lachlan and Kate James partnered with a commercial client, Heath Birchall, to present a category-winning pen of steers in this year's National Beef Carcase Competition at Beef Australia.

They credit carcase-oriented genetics and a rising plane of nutrition with achieving market compliance, including high Meat Standards Australia (MSA) Index scores for eating quality potential.

Lachlan said producing consistent cattle, which are relevant to industry, from conception to consumption, underpins producer profitability and productivity.



Their long-time client, Heath Birchall, bred the winning pen in the unrestricted feed, heavy trade class, with three Murray Grey steers sired by a Wallawong bull.

Heath runs 110 breeders on an 800ha cropping and beef enterprise near Tamworth.

He selected the sire (of the winning pen) for calving ease and an eye muscle area in the top 5% of the breed to aid Heath's goal of producing high-yielding cattle for the domestic supermarket trade.

Heath followed his usual practice of weaning on to early-sown oats in May. In July, the three steers were brought to the James' home property 'Marriot Park' for preparation in their on-farm feedlot.

"We partner with commercial clients to enter cattle in carcase competitions as a way to benchmark the industry relevance of our genetics and to show where cattle sit within target markets," Lachlan said.

While they are regulars in NSW carcase competitions, including the Sydney Royal, Wingham Beef Week and the Upper Hunter Beef Bonanza events, this was the first time Lachlan and Kate have been able to enter the national carcase competition following the addition of the heavy (260–340kg), unrestricted feed category.

"The opportunity to present grain-assisted steers reflects the production systems of many producers who do some supplementary feeding to finish cattle for the domestic supermarket trade," Lachlan said.

## MSA compliance

Lachlan said preparation was important to maintain a rising plane of nutrition and reduce pre-slaughter stress to optimise eating quality.

The cattle were fed a barley-based ration (including barley straw, urea, bentonite and a beef mix supplement) for 120 days before being processed and graded in November at 16 months.

Pre-slaughter strategies include adding electrolytes to water 24 hours before transport to maintain muscle glycogen and minimise the chance of dark-cutting. Lachlan transported the steers himself to Bindaree Beef at Inverell.

Lachlan believes it is important to get the genetics right before adding the building blocks of feeding and management to create a superior product.

He aims to produce cattle that achieve an MSA Index of at least 60, which was demonstrated by the winning steers, which received MSA Index scores of 64.04, 62.27 and 61.54.

"However, a superior product doesn't just mean a good eating experience for the consumer, it also has to be profitable for the producer," Lachlan said.

"Increasing MSA eating quality will increase consumers' love of beef and bring them back, which benefits the industry but, as breeders, we also need to be mindful of producing a product which also has increased carcase yield."

### More information

Email [Lachlan James](mailto:Lachlan James)

Visit [www.wallawong.com.au](http://www.wallawong.com.au)

## Improving MSA compliance from the pasture up

• Rectangular Snip

15 June 2018

Peak times for non-compliance to Meat Standards Australia (MSA) requirements can vary from state-to-state, so some timely tips have been compiled to help producers overcome seasonal variation.

MSA's [2017 Australian Beef Eating Quality Insights](#) revealed average non-compliance for producers throughout 2015-17 and offered information on peak non-compliance.

The insights show:

- Non-compliance for **NSW** throughout 2015-17 was the highest through winter in 2015 and peaking again around autumn in 2016, as a result of high pH.
- **Tasmania's** non-compliance was highest early winter and late autumn, with high pH the main contributor to non-compliance to MSA minimum requirements.
- Non-compliance for **Queensland** cattle throughout 2015-17 was the highest in August 2015, peaking again around spring in 2016, as a result of high pH.
- The two peak periods of non-compliance for **Victorian** cattle were spring and late summer into early autumn. Throughout 2015-17, average non-compliance peaked in October 2015, and February 2017, primarily as a result of high pH.
- **South Australia's** non-compliance peaked in August 2015 and in both January/February 2016 and 2017.
- In **Western Australia** non-compliance was highest in November and December 2015.

## Focus on nutrition

MSA Program Manager, Sarah Strachan, said there are some key nutrition areas that producers can target to address pH and improve MSA compliance.

"An animal's energy requirements will vary according to conditions - cattle might use more energy to stay warm on a cold, wet day," Sarah said.

"While one chilly day shouldn't have a major effect on its own, a week or two of consistently dreary weather could drain your animals' energy stores, cause them to lose condition, and/or lead to higher incidence of dark cutting, which is defined as carcasses with an ultimate pH of more than 5.7."

Carcase pH levels are driven by muscle glycogen, which is built up through good nutrition and then depleted by stress.

"To address issues of non-compliance to pH, producers need to maximise the amount of glycogen at the point of slaughter by optimising nutrition and minimising stress," Sarah said.

"If your cattle aren't receiving enough feed or adequate nutrition to grow, they're likely not storing much glycogen. Low pasture growth during February and March can also lead to lower pasture quality, which means that total feed on offer, and therefore intake, would also be low.

"Endophytes in plants produce mycotoxins which can be fatal to cattle in high concentrations. When the plant is under stress from lack of moisture, endophyte concentrations are higher, particularly if there has been a false break."

## Rectangular Snip Magnesium matters

Research suggests that a magnesium deficiency in cattle could also contribute to a higher incidence of dark cutting as affected cattle are more susceptible to stress. Dark cutting is defined as carcasses with an ultimate pH of more than 5.7.

"The acceptable range of magnesium levels will vary according to soil type, profile and pasture composition. The safest bet is to conduct soil and feed tests and discuss the results with your agronomist," Sarah said.

"Preliminary research has shown that pasture with a magnesium concentration greater than 0.24% can decrease the risk of dark cutting."

Research has also shown that magnesium absorption can be hindered by high potassium and nitrogen levels in pasture, which occurs when feed is growing green and lush.

"If you notice higher rates of dark cutting in your cattle despite abundant feed, look to include a more fibrous supplement in their diet, such as straw or hay, to slow digestion and improve magnesium absorption.

"Alternatively, if pasture is in short supply, supplementing cattle with other nutritious feed sources will help to optimise their performance.

"A high-energy pelleted ration of 2.5kg/head/day, for 14 days before slaughter, can increase muscle glycogen and reduce the risk of dark cutting. Grain-free options are available."

### Producers can boost low magnesium levels by:

- applying fertiliser to improve magnesium in soil and pasture
- supplementing stock with a magnesium-based lick, pellets or liquid - as it is bitter in taste, introduce it slowly
- ensuring daily supply as magnesium is not stored in the body.

### More information

[mla.com.au/msa](http://mla.com.au/msa)

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