

GLENAVON ANGUS

2023 Christmas Newsletter

FERTILITY AND JOINING TIPS

Joining wraps up mid-November here, the dry start to spring actually was ideal for preparing females for AI programs. We join our female herd for 6-7 weeks to ensure a high fertility hurdle, tight calving, and to drive efficiency. Whilst Stud cattle are AI'd, commercial cattle are joined in larger mobs with multiple sires. Joining in large mobs has become a very efficient tool for us, yet it does require some key management procedures (learnt from experience). In particular: check bulls at least weekly, identify those dominant bulls early in joining, and remove dominant bulls from the team after the first cycle/3 weeks. For example; if you are joining 150 females with 3-4 bulls (2+ years old), which on paper is 2%+, one or two of the 4 will be dominant and serve the vast majority of these in the first 3 weeks. They will be the ones who have lost significant condition, and once removed, expect a full recovery within a few weeks. If left in they will likely break down from overuse. After 3 weeks, you will have >50% of the 150 pregnant so leaving 2 bulls is more than enough to serve the 70odd cows that are left cycling. We find that by following this rule, bull attrition and breakdowns are very low. This is even more important for yearlings given their clear mismatch between libido and physical capacity.



Dam K1, a Docklands daughter with her Clunie Range Plantation heifer calf, U57.



Dam P93, a Musgrave Big Sky daughter with her RR Endeavor heifer calf, U62.



GENETICS TAILORED FOR THE COMMERCIAL BEEF PRODUCER

Our current “T” Yearling Bulls are growing out well on grass despite the tougher season. Of the 150, we are using around 30 in our own joining, which will be offered as 2 year olds in our next sale. Yearlings we selected for use include standout sons of Paratrooper, Enhance, Intensity and Clunie Range Plantation in particular. Those not being used are being run in one large contemporary group to identify those outperforming (and underperforming) in the same environment. With joining now completed and the yearling bulls back in their contemporary group, our focus now turns to preparing them for our sale. The calves sired by these bulls will be available for inspection around our open day.

2023 BULL SALE

We cannot thank our loyal client base enough for their support of our Sale, selling 112 bulls to average a little over \$11,000 and a full clearance of heifers to average \$1,427. The offering reflected our relentless focus of balancing phenotype with the handful of traits that matter most, in driving profitability in any commercial herd. Proof of this is illustrated by the Glenavon commercial herd sitting well inside the top 1% of our benchmarking group driven by our (low) cost of production and price received (FY21-22 data). 2024 will see some wonderful new outcross genetics coming through, with around 130 Bulls and 150 Heifers on offer. **Our 2024 Sale will be on Monday August 5th.**



Top Price bull sold to the Lindeman Family for \$38,000



RR Endeavor 9005, used in our 2022 AI program. Early data indicating a good outcross for the key traits we used him for.



Sterling Pacific 904, used in our 2023 AI program for his balanced traits that will drive our profitability.

KEY SIRE LINES TO DRIVE PROFITABILITY

June/July allowed for a trip to the US, our first since 2018 (due to Covid). We went deep into many of the leading American Angus herds, and found fantastic outcross genetics to use in coming years. We have conviction post trip that these genetics strike the ideal balance between phenotype and performance that complement our focus on the handful of traits that drive commercial profitability. Conversely, we found in herds that were generally chasing data, evidence of significant structural issues creeping in, in particular poor foot structure. Some key sire lines that caught our eye, often in multiple herds and environments are Sterling Pacific (pictured above), Casino Bomber's sons in particular T/D Doc Ryan, widely used US sire Tehama Patriach and 316 son RR Endeavour (pictured above). I have a much longer list of standouts that we would be comfortable using and recommending – call anytime.



STRATEGIC STOCKING AND PASTURE MANAGEMENT

A largely expected lower rainfall commenced for us in late 2022. We have received less than 50% of our monthly average for 11 of the past 12 months (March 2023 being the exception). We adjusted our stocking rate heavily in Autumn to allow us to match our available grass ahead of winter. This enabled us to make it to October before supplementary feeding, and we have since adjusted our stocking rate from 15 dse/ha in early Oct to 12 dse/ha in early November by sending 20% of our DSE (cattle) on agistment to Southern NSW. Sheep are being fed DDG pellets, Cattle cotton seed, and cereal hay. We have containment fed some sheep and cattle in paddocks earmarked for renovation in order to lock up and protect newer pastures, so they are rain-ready. Pasture budgeting, a key focus for us post the 2018/19 drought, has allowed us to manage the available grass and animals we have on at various periods throughout the year. We use a variety of tools, including visual assessment, Agriwebb/CIBO labs, our own historical data, and lessons from our local pasture group. The mild and dry start to spring has been wonderful for livestock, with a record lambing % and very favourable conditions for our Cattle AI programs. Whilst we are confident of a return to a more normal rainfall pattern from November, we have key dates to further adjust our DSE near term (without selling animals at this stage) should our season remain below average.



Stud cows and calves on agistment, Mangoplah NSW.



A new pasture paddock ahead of heifers arriving on agistment, Mangoplah NSW.

CARBON PROJECT

Our 25 year project was baselined in late 2022, which confirmed that we have significant variation in our Soil Carbon levels across our Guyra properties. Our goal is to grow our levels sustainably over the next 25 years with a mix of better grazing management, matching our stocking rate to our carrying capacity, renovating underperforming paddocks with new multispecies pastures and planting shelter belts just to name a few. This is a really confusing space, so feel free to reach out if you are considering whether a project may make sense for you. We have learnt a lot.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE & GRAZING MANAGEMENT

The past 2 years has seen significant work on water infrastructure on our farms. This allows a network of high-pressure water to essentially all paddocks, which has facilitated our move to running larger mobs and in a rotation system. In addition, this has allowed us to split paddocks with a single hotwire to achieve higher grazing density and longer rest periods for our pastures. Dan and Cody are to be commended for their management of splitting up paddocks and embracing this change.



TAILORING OPERATIONS BASED ON BENCHMARKING INSIGHTS

Several years of benchmarking data on each of our enterprises (Seedstock Cattle, Commercial Cattle & Prime Lambs) has allowed us to make some key enterprise decisions. The drivers of each business are quite unique in our environment. Seedstock cattle is largely driven by the % of Bull calves born that make it to sale (not the price they sell for). Our Commercial cattle profitability is driven by (low) cost of production (\$1.49/kg beef liveweight in FY21-22, average of the group \$2.30) and price received. Our prime lamb enterprise, whilst performing well above average (30th percentile), is stuck with a relatively high cost of production of around \$5.45/kg carcass weight (FY21-22 data) and well behind the top 10-20% of producers. For this reason, we began scaling down our prime lamb enterprise this year, whilst growing our Seedstock and Commercial cattle numbers. This enterprise mix shift will continue in coming years. Historically each enterprise has been of similar size, circa 10,000-15,000 DSE each.



Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Be sure to check out our Facebook and Instagram for regular updates throughout the year.

Richard and Prue Post

