



Predictable, Functional Genetics....

Fertile, Gentle, Growthy & Adapted....

## CBV Update

Firstly, I'd like to congratulate my sister Vashti and her husband Glenn McFadzen, on the arrival of their second son, Lachlan Jarvis, born in February. Vashti and Glenn are an important part of the CBV Team and we enjoy working with them.

Another wet season has now passed and it's time to look at our feed and make some paramount decisions. "Belah Valley" and "Kelso" have had an excellent season, growing a good body of feed. The cattle look great and our pregnancy test results are through the roof. This year the CBV herd achieved 92% pregnant. This is the highest pregnancy test ever at CBV.

The high pregnancy test result was achieved this year with very little supplement. It's marvellous what some rain will do. More importantly, it reinforces that if you select for genetics that work in the tough times, they will more than take care of themselves in the good times.

All breeders have been sorted into pregnant and empty lines. The empties will be slaughtered very shortly so as not to waste feed on non-productive animals. Our focus is to turn grass into pregnancies and kilograms at low costs.

It was a tougher year at "Tondara" with no rain until January, then they received 375mm all at once with no follow up rain since. Joshua and Sarah achieved 84% pregnant in the Marlboro stud herd in tough conditions. This is adapted genetics at work.

In the CBV herds we have been striving to breed cattle that will conceive in the first three months of mating, that is October, November and December. This means while lactating, and before rain in most years. The calves conceived in October are consistently 80-100kg heavier than calves conceived in February by the end of the wet season. Put a dollar value on that! That is real economic gain. Only highly adapted animals can operate in this time of year. CBV is totally committed to finding these animals and reporting to our clients in a transparent manner.

Carl and Judi Bain have done an excellent job with our Sale Bulls again this year at "Tapnor", Moura. We will have our sale days on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of July at "Tapnor". I hope a lot of you can join us. Sale days are not just about selecting bulls, but an opportunity to share ideas with some of the leading cattlemen in Australia. July 4<sup>th</sup>, will be Nucleus contributors selection day. In the evening of 4<sup>th</sup> July everyone is welcome to join us for a BBQ at 6pm and enjoy some good company. Our open selling day follows on the 5<sup>th</sup> July. If you are interested, please give us a call at CBV by June 15<sup>th</sup> so we can arrange a bulk booking for accommodation at the Banana Motel. If you are unable to make "Tapnor", we will have a number of sale bulls at "Belah Valley" and "Tondara". We encourage you to buy as early as you can and get the bulls home on their working territory.

Look forward to catching up.

**Alf Jr.**

**"This is adapted genetics at work..."**

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## CBV Bull Sale Day 2005

### 4<sup>th</sup> July

9:30am Smoko & 10am Start  
Nucleus Contributors Sale Day  
6pm BBQ at "Tapnor"  
All welcome

### 5<sup>th</sup> July

8am Start  
Open Sales Day



Above L) to R): Chris Lees, Mike Lyons, Bill Neubecker, Tom Copley & Rex Neubecker at "Tapnor" last year.

Ask about our attractive  
discounts for volume  
purchases...

**WHERE:** "Tapnor", Moura, Qld.

**WHEN:** 4—5<sup>th</sup> July 2005

**RSVP:** By 15<sup>th</sup> June to indicate numbers for  
catering and accommodation requirements.

**TELEPHONE:** (07) 4935 6222

## "There are no cover ups or hidden surprises to be found"

My name is Russell Lethbridge and I am operating a breeding enterprise at "Werrington", three hours north of Hughenden, North Queensland. "Werrington" is 2500 feet above sea level, comprising of all natural pasture in largely undeveloped open forest. The environmental issues we deal with at "Werrington" make operating an efficient breeder enterprise challenging at the best of times. Some of the extremes we have to deal with are 40 degree plus days in summer to minus 10 degree grass temperature in the winter with extremely low pasture protein and digestibility levels. The grower end of our operation is carried out at "Rainmore Station" which is midway between Alpha and Tambo in Central Queensland. "Rainmore" is comprised of developed buffel country and natural broad leaf forest grasses.

Previously we focused on a supplementation program which is essential to breeding stock in this environment. We were spending a lot of money, time and effort on the supplementation program and receiving minimal productivity results from so called adapted cattle which we now understand had very little adaptability in them. Our desire to find a source of genetics that were environmentally adapted led us to "Belah Valley" in 1996. Upon being introduced to the team at "Belah Valley" we found a complete package of what we were looking for in genetics that suited us. The integrity of the operation at "Belah Valley" I found to be of the highest level in that what you see is what you get. There are no cover ups or hidden surprises to be found.

Since introducing the "Belah Valley" genetics into the "Werrington" herd we have witnessed an improvement in temperament in an already quiet herd. Temperament being of the up most importance here at "Werrington" given that it is a family run operation with small children working the live stock. I am yet to see another seed stock producer with the same integrity when it comes to delivering extremely gentle cattle.

The big bonus for us has been an improvement in the consistency of fertility throughout the "Werrington" herd with only receiving supplementation. The herd is pregnancy tested back to a 120 day joining period which is consistently producing a conception rate of between 72% and 82% through good times and bad. Despite the selection pressure on fertility which automatically results in a moderate framed animal the turn off weight of the "Werrington" cull cows has increased slightly over the last five years which must point to the do ability of the animal.

The direction at "Belah Valley" to produce early maturing cattle by selecting for reduction in age at puberty has given us a better result in the pregnancy rates in our maiden heifers. The early maturity of our steers gives us an animal that is a marketable item at any time up to our target turn off weight of 420kg.

Alf has continually challenged us to hold every beast accountable for producing a profitable result. I read an article recently which stated that you should be buying bulls from someone who is running cattle like you should be.



Above — Clayton Lethbridge with CBV bulls at the end of joining at "Werrington"

...Russell Lethbridge, Hughenden.

# A Closer Look At CBV Bull Data Sheets...

The principle of CBV genetics management is to report all data from our whole herd, to our clients and potential clients. Our aim is to have the most important data in nett commercial terms, readily available, in easy to read format.

In most regions of the commercial beef-raising world the important profit index ranks as follows for every \$10 margin:

- \$7 earned by good reproduction
- \$2 earned by live weight growth
- \$1 earned by other traits (carcase, colour, temperament etc)

At CBV we are in our third decade of intense selection in the traits of **fertile, gentle and growthy** cattle **adapted** to our Northern Australian costs and conditions. Four traits are plenty to select for.

1. In reality fertility and adaptation may end up meaning the same thing: absolute value.
2. Good temperament is essential for low costs in labour and facilities, and minimising market losses.
3. Growth usually equals consumption, so there is literally no free feed there, in normal Northern Australian conditions. The most elusive factor is adequate groceries for our herds. You can equate this in several ways, eg. stocking rates per square mile, stock days per hectare per 100mm of rain, or acres to the beast. All of these have an equivalent **dollar cost**, whether on your own country or on agistment. Quantity and distribution of rainfall has a big impact on our costs each year also.

SO LET'S FOCUS ON THE REAL STUFF.

**Fertility and adaptation...** we can use the simple fertility measures of pregnant or empty, and weaned a calf or lost a calf or pregnancy. This criteria of pregnant must fall in a set period, or we would be hiding behind excuses forever. Similarly, a weaner in the yard, or no weaner is pretty final judgement too. For every year of ownership any less than a calf weaned plus a pregnancy is simply not an option.

It seems to me that the less adapted cattle, such as Sanga and bos Taurus crosses including first cross Taurus/Indicus have simply failed to arrive at our destination for a variety of reasons, many that we have canvassed with leading scientists and researchers.

In the 1950's and 1960's we heard a great deal about the wonderful F1 cattle and bred thousands of them from pure British breed dams. Sure, compared to the British breed mothers in our environment, they were a huge improvement. Later on we bred plenty of European F1's, some spectacular progeny from Brahman dams, but again, compared to a Brahman cow and her highly adapted bos Indicus progeny, the F1 except for rare individuals, cannot compete. Various Sanga crosses were also trialled with similar results overall.

I have since observed that the environment on many research stations here and overseas is more benevolent and far removed from our Northern Australian conditions.

We provide very transparent data on all dams and grand dams of our CBV sale bulls.

	(1)	(6)	(5)	(7)	(7)	(2)	(3)	(4)							
Tag #	DOB	SIRE	DAM	C Val S'05	End. % '05	Loc. S'05	PT S'05	1st	No.	Int.	G'SIRE	G'DAM	1st	No.	Int.
02-1002	17/09/01	96-7143	96-6774	2.14	15	C2B	6	2.9	7	370	172/3	86-2247	2.8	12	366

  

	(10)	(8)	(9)	(12)	(11)	(11)	(11)	(13)					
PUB.	AGE	KG	KG	R	L	SC	EBV	EBV	EBV	EBV	Name		
	PUB.			27 <sup>th</sup>	May	'03	200	400	600	SS			
12/02	15	200	336	48	50	27.8	+17	+27	+36	+2.4	TOM DESIGN		

1. Dam year of birth as part of her identity number.
2. Age at first calf.
3. Number of calves born.
4. Subsequent calving interval in days.
5. Endurance percentage, the percentage of females born in that dam year which have survived in the CBV system to this current date.
6. Location by speed band, or "C Value", from C1 being the calving period of the first three weeks of calving, to C5, being the last three weeks of calving.
7. CBV matings commence in the dry season, October 1<sup>st</sup>, and end on February 21<sup>st</sup>, to conclude calving by December 10<sup>th</sup>, every year. We include a pregnancy test (PT months) of dam in the current year and her position in the herd at preg test date.

The "C Value" results from items 6 and 7 illustrate the level of adaptation and expression of fertility under our stock densities. "C Values" illustrate 'speed of rebreed' to highlight a genetic response to tight management.

Darwinian Principles of Genetics is a theme that is echoed all through nature as the survival of the fittest. I do not think there is a finer model for true commercial genetics. Adaptation is fitness for function. CBV strategy has been to impose management pressure to speed up the Darwinian Principles on a whole of herd basis. THIS IS POWERFUL STUFF.

Further data on sale bulls is published.

8. Age in months at puberty.
9. Kg live weight at puberty.
10. Month of puberty threshold.
11. Testicle diameters R) & L) and scrotal circumference (SC) at sale date.
12. Kg live weight at sale date.
13. Estimated Breeding Values for growth and scrotal size.

Production information for all sires is also provided.

Almost all of this data is related to speed of production driven by reproduction indicators. CBV bulls are priced accordingly.

To achieve real and lasting genetic gain, Darwinian Principles must apply. The genuine commercial beef industry can be very grateful to Charles Darwin and his observations of Nature at work in the survival of a species. Cattlemen and their families in the beef business stand a very good chance of prospering by using these core values. POWERFUL VALUES INDEED.

Please contact us direct for further discussion or data. Charts will follow in later newsletters.

...Alf Collins Sr

## **Final Thought...**

*"It's incredibly easy to get caught up in an activity trap, in the busy-ness of life, to work harder and harder at climbing the ladder of success only to discover it's leaning against the wrong wall."  
(Covey 1994)*



Opportunities abound—Sunrise at CBV

We would like to expand the contact list for our newsletter distribution. We would appreciate email or postal addresses of progressive and interested people.

Email: [vmcfadzen@bigpond.com](mailto:vmcfadzen@bigpond.com) or Post to P.O. Box 416, Sarina, Qld, 4737.

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