



Predictable, Functional Genetics....

Fertile, Gentle, Growthy & Adapted....

CBV Update

As we get to the end of another wet season we start to assess how much grass we have grown and whether it will or won't be sufficient to carry our stock numbers through the dry. This is where an early and controlled mating comes into play. In our CBV herds we do a pregnancy test as we muster to pull bulls out on 21st of February. We now have only two mobs to manage. All pregnant cows are in one mob and cows carrying undetectable pregnancies are in a second mob. By implementing this simple yet effective management strategy we can utilize the benefits of paddock rotation. This does a few things for us.

1. Lets most of our paddocks get some rest while there is still some growing season left.
2. Minimises the labour costs associated with managing multiple mobs.
3. Gives us an early indication of how many breeders we will have to carry for the next calving season, and how many calves will be born early. The cows that calve in the first cycles are the super cows.
4. With all the undetectable cows in one mob it only takes one day to recheck those cows and we are ready to market the non-pregnant cows if there is a sudden spike in price.
5. Gives us the option of only working the early calving cows in the early part of the calving season. (Less mustering and fewer cows to put through the yards).

We are not using cell grazing but trying to adopt the principles of rest and utilization and have seen some nice results in our pasture since applying this. As the cows calve we put them into a slower rotation as we found it was not very easy moving cows and baby calves. When they move they always go to a paddock beside the paddock they are in.

CBV herd has achieved a pleasing result of 68% detectable pregnancies the day the bulls came out at "Belah Valley" and "Tondara", so this will easily give us our goal of 75% of calves born by October 15th. We think this is where the efficient gains in our dry cattle (Carl and Judi Bain's article in CBV Newsletter 4) come from. By selecting cows that produce in the tough time of year, it is evident that the ability to produce on low quality nutrition is passed on through genetics to our dry cattle, hence the reason we are seeing very good results in weight gain.

"This will easily give us our goal of 75% of calves born by October 15th."

The season at "Tapnor" Moura this year has been a bit slow starting, with some early rain then nothing much since November. This is where we run our sale bulls with Carl and Judi Bain, so we are taking the opportunity to find the real doers— the cattle that still show some gain and testicle development without green grass. At the same time we are hoping it rains before winter!

Our Bull Sale date has been set for the Open Nucleus contributors 13th July and Open Sale Day 14th July. We will have a get together on the night of the 13th and every one is welcome to this dinner. This has been moved back to after the school holidays after welcomed feedback received last year. We look forward to these sale days mostly due to the fact that it's a gathering of creative, innovative and productive "can-do" people. CBV clients and friends are an inspiring group to be around and I hope you can all make it and bring a friend.

Alf Collins Jr

Inside this issue:

CBV Update	1
Soil Health	2 & 3
CBV Bull Sale Day 2006	4
CBV Nucleus Herd	4
Final Thought	6



Soil Health: The core issue for the profitable operation of our assets

I usually write on cattle subjects, and can assure you that we are making ground breaking progress at CBV with our methods of tight commercial management and vigorous analysis.

However, all good agriculture businesses are based on responsible soil management and enhancement. I recently spent 4 days at a major Landcare corroboree, the State Annual Conference. At the conclusion I still had not heard one other person propose or develop the theme of better soils. I heard parroting of the tired political themes and drama queens hunting more funding – no outcomes. At that point I can assure you that the subject was well aired. I considered there was a real need for lifting the level of awareness of enhanced soil management and said so; after all, it was titled a land-care conference. Change of land use requires change of land management. As we utilize land, and extract production I'm certain we need to develop additional techniques to compensate for our out-take.

Nature has endowed us with excellent resources; to just milk those resources dry is a recipe for disaster in even a short period of 50 years.

I do not subscribe to the philosophy that all natural resources should be frozen into immobility. That level of dopey stupidity is criminal in its effect on private property. We have a responsibility nationally to develop and harvest from our land; as we have a responsibility to maintain and enhance that land.

Certainly we have resources to develop land, and to harvest a wide range of foods. We also have some malignantly dumb bureaucracies acting on poorly advised/based legislation from even more malignant or poorly advised politicians, that collectively remove incentive and opportunity from the owners and managers of property.

In contrast, observe the chronic neglect of public lands. The degradation is significant, and produces zilch, just like those charged with control of those public lands.

The old BBC radio program "Beyond Our Ken" featured Arthur J. Fallowfield succinctly with his comment "We country folk believe the answer lies in the soil".

Every single outcome in agriculture is inextricably dependent on soil, its properties, and our knowledge of it. I believe with reasonable inputs by spelling, and renovation, and adding vigorous legumes and companion grasses, we can achieve all our stated aims for production, profit and environmental care.

Soil health is dependent on carbon, air and water backed by a full suite of useful bacterium, fungi and insects, and a complimentary suite of minerals. Soil health is also dependent on a healthy vegetative cover. As we are learning, native plants do not withstand endless grazing pressure; they need to be augmented with innovative grazing management and new species of grasses and legumes that will yield commercial returns, yet still enhance soil health with various root systems. Residual ground cover protects micro-flora and buffers against heat, wind, rain & animal impact.

Carbon accumulation in the soil is mandatory. With the addition of air and water along with the subsequent development of micro-life in the soils, soil health is assured. Economic land renovation will get us there and improved plant species and cattle will help us pay for the investment.

This level of thinking is not new or original. All my life there have been efforts to develop better soils, that have not been widely accepted. P.A. Yeoman, Wallace, Alex Podlinsky etc. have been advocating these practices since the 1940's, and Peter Andrews very publicly on ABC Television's Australian Story last year.

From the mid-fifties I was enthused by the examples locally of my uncle, Harry Collins, and my Father's open and encouraging mind. My own involvement in land renovation directly started in 1968. The important thing is to remember to change your cattle grazing management when you change the plant species and soil environment. Rest in the grazing cycle seems important, especially in the wet season, and plant-seeding phase. I do not think there is any downside. At current cattle prices, it makes a lot of sense to invest some of our gains back into our land bank. It is not taxable, and yields extra value every season both directly and environmentally.

The legume to grass ratio seems to balance out, with surges of each at different times. Once the adapted legumes have stored increasing levels of Nitrogen, the grasses gain momentum, and seem to dominate the legumes for a while.

Improved grasses and legumes are complimentary to many native grasses and legumes. On our country we have used mostly stylo's, of all sizes and varieties, as well as siratro, centro and vetch. Complimentary grasses have been the natives, plus buffel, sabi, pertusa, bothriochloa, dicanthium, and Rhodes. Sure, we have tried lots of other species, and have often failed, but we will continue trialing with an open and enquiring mind. The equilibrium of Nature is awesome. Simply observe and apply.

Chisel plough renovation is both expensive and laborious, but seems to get us over the hump quickly to turn soils around. The ensuing soil properties and production is spectacular. In wetter or drier country the mix and tools will be different, but the aims and principles the same. At "Belah Valley" our first major renovations were in 1983, with the help of Fridee Bolton. The paddock named 'No Man's Land' is now a very illustrative useful pasture. When Alf Jr erected a netting fence to keep wallabies out, that sped the process up also. QDPI's John Wilden and David Chapman were very encouraging and John Rains from Southedge Seeds gave me endless practical advice. Practical advice is hard to come by. All of our advisors have developed their own land assets, hands on... It is interesting what unfettered ownership and responsibility engenders.

During the last 4 years, Carl & Judi Bain at "Tapnor" have been monitoring Kg of live weight gained per year per Ha per 100mm of rain (Kg/Ha/100mm). Similarly over 3000 head of weaners and yearlings have been measured for Kg gain per Kg of opening stock (inventory). This is doubly interesting as they have used roughly equal numbers of CBV stock and purchased Brahman's of similar age and weight. These cattle run as a single group in a paddock rotation system all year. The difference of gain is 62% annually for the 4 year period.

"The equilibrium of Nature is awesome. Simply observe and apply."

Soil Health: The core issue for the profitable operation of our assets ...cont'd...

Measuring cattle for efficiency of reproduction and speed of growth and rebreed is giving us a huge genetic gain. *This is only for discussion at this time. I reckon we need another 2 or 3 years data to consolidate the analysis.* Anyone can do this with strong management and sound genetics – and 25 years of dedication. We will continue to manage and measure genetics.

If these gains are possible in cattle populations, then be certain of enormous gains to be made in soil management.

I am including two articles from "New Scientist" that I requested from David Rees at Biloela. He, just like John Purcell (Property Rights Australia), Dr Bill Burrows, & Dixie Nott, are not tolerant of misinformation and subsequent poor legislation and thuggish administration.

"Red Faces All Round"

Editorial in New Scientist, 14th January 2006, p.3 - www.newscientist.com

One of the most enjoyable things about science is seeing a preconceived idea turned on its head, especially if the new finding has important consequences. This week saw just such a result in an area we thought we knew all about: the gases released by plants.

Vegetation, it seems, releases methane – not just when it rots, but under normal conditions. And it's no small amount either – between 10 and 30 per cent of all the methane pumped into the atmosphere. One reason why we may have missed this "minor detail" is that we know of no physiological reason why plants should make methane (see page 13).

The finding clears up a number of observations that previously defied explanation, such as why methane emissions from rice plants increases with the area of foliage, and why rainforests give off large methane plumes. It also creates problems. Growing trees soak up the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide, so under the Kyoto protocol countries can plant forests as an alternative to reducing CO₂ emissions. Now we find that trees emit methane, which is a more potent greenhouse gas than CO₂. Time to rethink the Kyoto rules, then.

What is more, emissions of methane from plants double with every 10 °C rise in temperature. That means we have found yet another source of positive feedback to reinforce global warming. In which case, perhaps "enjoyable" is not quite right in the context of this particular preconception. (end)●

"The Lungs of the Planet are Belching Methane"

By Zeeya Merali in New Scientist, 14th January 2006, p.13 - www.newscientist.com

It's not just farting cows and belching sheep that spew out methane. Living plants have been disgorging millions of tonnes of the potent greenhouse gas into the atmosphere every year – without anybody noticing.

The concentration of methane in the atmosphere has almost tripled since pre-industrial times. Environmental scientists thought they had identified all natural sources where bacteria convert organic plant matter to methane, such as swamps, wetlands and rice paddies. These bacteria only thrive in wet, oxygen-poor environments; they cannot survive in the air.

So Frank Keppler, an environmental engineer at the Max Planck Institute for Nuclear Physics in Heidelberg, Germany, was surprised when he saw signs of methane being emitted by plants he was examining in normal air. "If we were following the textbook, we would have ignored it as a mistake," he says.

But Keppler and his colleagues decided to investigate further. They measured the amount of methane given off by plant debris – bits of grass and leaves from local and tropical plants – in methane-free chambers. To rule out the possibility that bacteria were at work, they bombarded the plants with gamma radiation to sterilise them.

The team saw similar levels of methane produced by both sterilised and un-sterilised leaves. "We realised that we were looking at a previously unrecognised process," Keppler says. They still don't know exactly what is happening, but believe that pectin, a substance contained in plant cell walls, plays a part in the methane-making mechanism (Nature, vol 439, p187).

When the group repeated the tests with living plants they were stunned by the amount of methane created. They estimate that, globally, living plants produce between 63 and 236 million tonnes of methane per year, with plant debris adding another 1 to 7 million tonnes. This would make plants responsible for roughly 10 to 30 per cent of global methane production.

"This effect is completely missing from climate change and biogeochemical models," says Peter Cox of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology at Winfrith in Dorset, UK. He suggests that a new source of methane could help solve some climate mysteries. One such puzzle was posed last year when satellite observations revealed that tropical rainforests are emitting more methane than expected (New Scientist, 26 March 2005, p20). Thomas Wagner from the University of Heidelberg in Germany, who led last year's study, thinks Keppler may have found the culprit. "This new source is in good agreement with our results," he says.

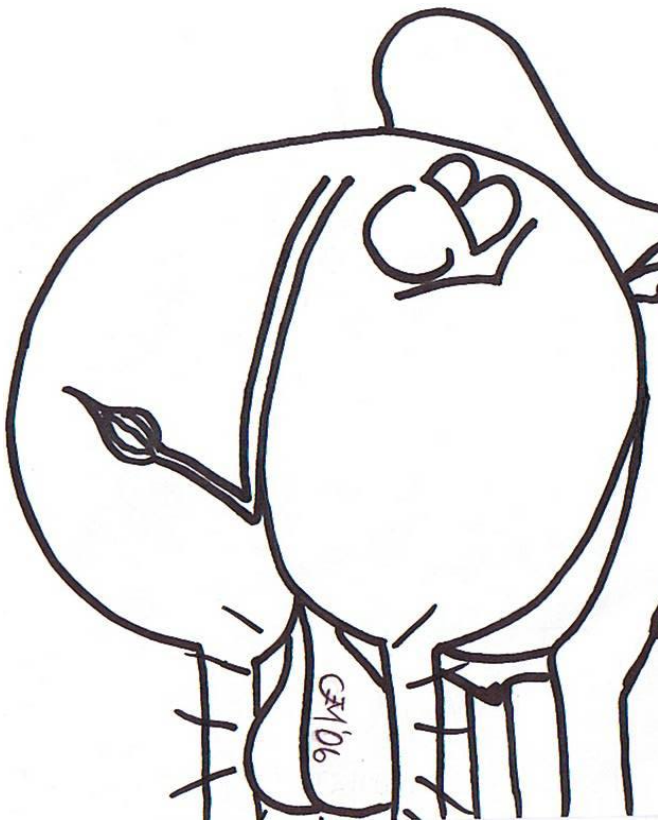
The finding should also encourage new strategies for cutting man-made methane emissions, says Chris Jardine of the University of Oxford's UK methane project. (end)●

History has illustrated so many times that with ownership comes responsibility. History also proves the reverse in all cases; no ownership, no responsibility... No responsibility equals no nation. Responsibility is the true price of freedom.

There are currently some real minefields with legislation. We all need to think of how we can still do a good job with cattle country and pastures, without the dramas of tree police and other misguided outfits. I would like to stimulate the progress of this necessary discussion. We have every good reason to seek harmony with nature as we develop new uses for our land. This is not exclusive to farmers; it is the domain of every person who needs to eat, and to eat well.

Alf Collins Sr

CBV Sale Days



There is no pleasure
like meeting an old
friend, except, making a
new one.
(Rudyard Kipling)

Nucleus Contributors Sale Day

Thursday 13th July 2006
9:30am Smoko
10:00am Start

6:30pm—All welcome to
dinner at Banana Motel.

Open Sale Day

Friday 14th July 2006
8:00am Start

WHERE: "Tapnor", Moura, Qld.
WHEN: 13-14th July 2006
RSVP: 19th June to Alf or Louise
(07) 4935 6222 .

**Motel rooms have been tentatively
booked and need to be confirmed.**

*Please come to join us at "Tapnor" this year, to catch up with old friends
and meet more innovative people...*

What is the CBV open nucleus herd?

The Open Nucleus is where CBV buys females with their 3rd pregnancy and a perfect calving record from a group of our clients. We then run these cows under the same pressure as the CBV herds and measure the progeny. The Open Nucleus herd is only in its early days yet but we are seeing some excellent results from some of the cows. It will take a few more years to see how the progeny compare but will be very interesting. CBV reports back to the contributors each year as to how their cows are performing. These cows come from various parts of Queensland and very different types of country. We run a northern Nucleus herd at "Tondara" and a central herd at "Belah Valley". We plan to bring the progeny from both herds together at "Belah Valley". It is a team effort on the part of CBV and the people contributing to the program all with an open mind and an interest in the outcome. •



Alf Collins Jr

Thankyou & Farewell Joshua, Sarah and Hannah...

After four years Josh & Sarah are heading off to pursue a new adventure. They have done an excellent job and will be missed as we have enjoyed working hand in hand with them during this time. We look forward to keeping in contact with their growing family and wish them all the very best in their new venture. Thank you very much again, Josh & Sarah...



As a consequence, CBV currently has 2 positions available at "Tondara", Bowen, to commence by July.

- Overseer/Manager
- Stationhand

Please contact Alf Jr with expressions of interest.

The purpose of our CBV Newsletter is not to be illustrative or prescriptive. The real purpose is to foment and stimulate discussion and debate; to develop philosophy and action.

"The aim of argument, or of discussion should not be victory, but progress."

Joseph Joubert 1754—1824 France

Keep the communication loop wide and active - speak with your friends, share ideas and literature - and keep us at CBV in your loop.

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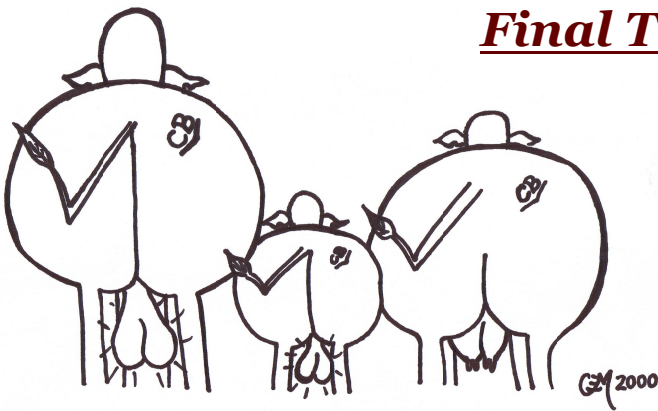
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CBV is committed to ensuring a quality product to its customers. Your feedback and thoughts are encouraged.

Final Thought...



*"To exist is to change,
to change is to mature,
to mature is to go on
creating oneself endlessly"
(Henri Bergson 1859—1941)*

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 or Post to P.O. Box 416, Sarina, Qld, 4737.

...Thankyou, Vashti...