

Profit is in the genes

Data key for Seifert Belmont Reds pair

BY MATT SHERRINGTON

WITH a clear vision and through sheer hard work,

Jeanne Seifert and Ian Stark of Seifert Belmont Reds in Queensland have demonstrated the benefits that the Australian-made breed can provide for producers domestically and abroad.

Jeanne said beef producers who are interested in profitable, hardy cattle developed for Northern Australian conditions, that breed more calves and produce better beef at a lower cost for higher profits, are investing in Belmont Reds.

Jeanne and Ian are the largest breeders of Belmont Reds in Australia and sell up to 150 bulls per year to a portfolio of private and corporate cattle producers across Qld, northern NSW and the NT, including Consolidated Pastoral Company (CPC).

The bulk of their breeders are run on 3,500ha of ticky forest country near Crows Nest with their three Jandowae properties totalling 3,300ha used for backgrounding

To add scale, Jeanne and Ian recently bought the 5,575ha Flag Springs, north of Chinchilla, which included 700 Santa Gertrudis cows and calves.

"We've put our Belmont Red bulls over these cows. Our goal is to produce more than 200 sale bulls per year



HIGH DEMAND: Jeanne Seifert and Ian Stark are the largest breeders of Belmont Reds in Australia and sell up to 150 bulls per year to cattle producers across Qld, northern NSW and the NT, including Consolidated Pastoral Company.

and breed customised bulls to meet individual clients' specific requirements," Jeanne said.

She said many people don't realise how important the investment of buying a bull is, given its long-term effect on the profitability of their business.

"When you buy a bull in 2019, his first calves will be born in 2020, his first daughters will calve in 2022, and his last calves will be born in 2025 or later. So, in 2035, the 10-year old females in your herd could still be out of this year's bull purchase and the majority of your middle-aged cows will be his granddaughters.

"There are no short-term decisions as his genetics will be in your herd until the late 2030's and early 2040's."

Jeanne said it's for this reason that their breeding standards are so stringent.

"We focus particularly on the economically profitable

traits of fertility, carcase quality and yield, genuine tropical adaptation and impeccable temperament."

To objectively identify these profitable traits, they are committed to Breedplan and plan genetic combinations based on their breeding objectives. Last year they used Breedplan's MateSel tool with some heifer groups to generate optimal joinings.

"We're very hands-on. We personally collect and submit data to Breedplan on every animal. We don't just pick the 'good ones'.

"We stake our reputation on high integrity, trustworthy data. Because Breedplan isn't the 'be all and end all', we also assess soundness and structure.

"However, using Breedplan data is far better than simply guessing what lies beneath the feed and fat of show or sale preparation."

She said breeding based on heritable genetic merit

ensures the bulls their clients buy produce consistent and profitable lines of calves which express the traits important to them

Bull calves are semen tested for morphology and motility as yearlings aged 12 to 14 months. These early puberty, high libido bulls are used in single sire groups over 50 to 80 females.

"This very short intergenerational interval means these bulls have produced their first weaner calves by the time they are two and a half. Importantly these sires produce highly profitable early puberty progeny and daughters with lower lactation anoestrus."

Their mature cow herd is joined for 12 weeks and yearling heifers (average age 14 months) are joined for six weeks. They also use genomic DNA technologies.

"All bulls are DNA sire verified and tested for the poll/horn gene. In total 98

per cent of our bulls are now polled with a third being Homozygous Polls (PP).

While they produce stud cattle, Jeanne said, the herd is run under strictly commercial conditions.

"We're one of a rare few who never treat for tick or fly which guarantees the most naturally resistant, truly tropically adapted genes persist in our herd.

"It's survival of the fittest. Only those that continue to breed a calf every year, despite the ticks, flies and heat, and with no external inputs or special care, remain."

The pair get involved in many research projects and the data they've received from these collaborations has seen the breed emerge with impressive results.

"CashCow was a project researching fertility and included approximately 78,000 breeders from 75 commercial enterprises across northern Australia.

Our results showed that our return-to-calf rates on first calf wet heifers were 45 per cent above the average.

"Currently we're involved in MLA's Northern Beef Genomics Project, MLA's Phosphorus Challenge, an MLA Pasture Producer Demonstration Site and an Animal Genetics and Breeding Unit (AGBU) Horn/Poll study."

In her dual role as president of Belmont Australia, Jeanne is always striving to extol the benefits of the breed both domestically and abroad.

Seifert Belmont Reds genetics are exported to New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea and Paraguay. She said they are also kick-starting a purebred satellite herd of Seifert Belmont Reds in Paraguay.

"Ian and I are forming a partnership with a collective of producers in Paraguay and we've already exported several hundred semen straws with embryos being exported later this year."

The growing stature of the breed was further underlined during the 2018 Belmont Australia sale where a new breed sale record was reached when Seifert Belmonts' SEI170155 was purchased for \$20,000.

On the back of last year's successful sale, Jeanne and Ian are preparing 75 bulls and seven PTIC heifers for their 2019 Seifert Belmont Red on-property sale on July 22, at Wonga, Jandowae. The draft will include 72 polled bulls, of which 34 are Homozygous Polls (PP).

The Helmsman auction sale will again be held at Wonga and will be run by Elders from 11am to 12.30pm and will also run online via AuctionsPlus. Sale lots can be inspected via appointment on July 20-21.

SEIFERT BELMONT REDS

Selling 75 Bulls and 7 PTIC Heifers

72 Polls incl 34 Homozygous Polls (PP)

On property 22 July 'Wonga' Jandowae & Auctions Plus

* FREE cartage North to Charters Towers, West to Roma, South to Casino.

* Fully BREEDPLAN recorded, DNA Poll/Horn tested, DNA Sire Verified, Semen Morphology and Motility. * JBAS 7



Ian Stark & Jeanne Seifert • Inspections by appointment Sat 20 & Sun 21 July

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