

## SOUTHERN FOCUS

National Beef Show, Bendigo 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2010

The National Beef Show at Bendigo continues to be a success. Numbers of both stud and carcass competition entries were up slightly again this year. The Show continues to be a low stress, welcoming event with a strong social element and seems to have managed to avoid the excess of petty restrictions which make life difficult at some other large Shows. Maybe this has to do with the fact that all the work is done by volunteers. The quality of cattle on display continues to be excellent. The line up for the interbreed on the final day must be one of the best line-ups anywhere. For anyone thinking of giving showing a try, or wishing to move up from small local shows, National Beef is a good place to start.

Stud Cattle Section – a clean sweep to Argio Park.

There were 2 exhibitors again this year; Lyn and I and Roelf and Glennister de Koning from Argio Park who are to be congratulated for making the long trip from South Australia to support the breed. Although small in numbers the animals made a good show under the blue and silver banner and information was given to a number of people thinking of trying something different and who liked what they saw.

We had brought Express, a junior bull and Carla, a cow with calf at foot, along with a steer entered for the carcass competition. Roelf and Glennister, relatively new to Square Meaters and who have bought widely and wisely to establish their stud, had brought Gardenia, a junior heifer by Galashiels out of one of our cows, Upshot a junior bull of our bloodline in the class above our bull, and a Woolaringa Leanne with calf at foot in the senior female class.

The Argio Park junior heifer went forward unopposed. In the senior females the very stylish Leanne was placed over our Carla and went on to take Grand Champion Female. When the two bulls came up against each other the older bull, from Argio Park, was awarded the Champion's ribbons but he had to yield to Leanne for the title of Supreme Square Meaters exhibit. Well done Roelf and Glennister for making it a clean sweep for Argio Park!

Roelf and Glennister took Leanne and calf out in the inter-breed but didn't catch the judges' eye. As seems always to be the case in these large line-ups the judges seem to concentrate their attention on the larger, established breeds. For the record the Supreme Exhibit of the Show was awarded to a junior Angus bull, over a senior Angus bull.

### Carcass Competition

National Beef run both led and unled classes, attracting seventy odd entries in each. For anyone who would like to show case the breed but have neither the time nor the inclination to break cattle in and have good cattle at home, they might like to consider the unled carcass classes. Animals can be delivered early on the day of judging, usually the Wednesday. The cattle are weighed, scanned, judged, auctioned and on the truck that evening. The auction was well attended by local butchers; prices, apart

from the charity steer and the ribbon winners, reflect the market value of the quality of the cattle on offer.

Our previous attempts at carcass competitions were in the light/medium domestic category with animals around 12 months of age, The timing of National Beef was such that the only steer we had would be 15 months so we decided to have a shot at the heavy class. Unlike Melbourne, National Beef hold carcasses in the category entered and give penalty points for out of specification weight. Since we were in uncharted waters for us in the heavyweights and having been caught by the high dressing percentage of Square Meaters before, I was concerned that "Echo" was becoming too heavy and he was on maintenance rations for the last month. Even so he attracted favourable comment, some being surprised that a Square Meaters could make the weight in a reasonable time.

In competition his live-weight of 428kg confirmed him in the heavy domestic class and we were pleased that he made the cut, placing 5<sup>th</sup> behind a line of Limousin/Limousin crosses. When the carcass results were published a couple of "dark horses" revealed themselves and a Belgian Blue/Murray Grey cross won the class and went on to be awarded the Grand Champion Carcass ribbon. Echo had slipped a couple of places, finishing 8<sup>th</sup> out of 18, due to slightly less than ideal fat cover. My fault for holding him back, one day I'll get it right!

In the post when we got home was the Schedule for the Melbourne Royal Show. Entries close on the 9<sup>th</sup> July and entry forms can be obtained from RASV.

Peter Brown