

NATIONAL BEEF SHOW BENDIGO 14th – 18th MAY 2008

In the few years since its inception the National Beef Show at Bendigo has confirmed its place in the Show calendar. Now in its third year, with each of those years being drought affected in most of south eastern Australia, the Show attracted almost 700 head from 32 different breeds, as well as 70 head for the led and unled carcass competition. This filled the “big shed” (the Bendigo Exhibition Centre), one of the old cattle sheds and a large clear span marquee.

One of the reasons for the Show’s success is that it is organised by cattle people for cattle people. Even though the Show has expanded there are always people around with whom concerns can be raised and who seem genuinely concerned to help. Parking is easy and free and there is on site camping and caravan parking. A range of motel accommodation is available a few minutes drive from the Showgrounds. Public attendance is not large but those who do come are genuinely interested in cattle. It may not be the continuous speaking to the public that Seymour Expo is for example, but those who do ask questions have a real interest in the breed, with a higher probability of eventually becoming breeders themselves.

The organisers have been able to maintain high levels of sponsorship and so the prizes are generous; from \$40 for a class blue ribbon to a cattle crush valued at \$11,600 for the supreme exhibit.

The Square Meaters exhibits, although few in numbers attracted plenty of interest. This year there was a Square Meaters steer in the carcass competition. Mrs Fiona Battiste (Ernie Stephenson’s daughter) from NSW is to be congratulated for her entry in the “ export” category, although at 241 – 280kg HSCW this would more normally be regarded as a heavy domestic carcass. Although missing out on a place in the “on the hoof” section, the steer was well regarded by the judge and attracted good interest at the auction afterwards. The steer was placed 7th and best placed of the pure bred, out of a class of 15 on the hook.

In the stud cattle section the NSW members Brenton Catlin and David and Julie Thompson are to be congratulated in making the effort to bring cattle to the show. In all there were 6 head, unfortunately no bulls except for the calf at foot of Thurloo Park Zoe, which at about 8 months of age was giving a good indication of the shape of things to come. As entered there was competition in 3 classes. Unfortunately the Thompson’s junior heifer had not travelled well and to give her a chance to recover before the long journey home she was withdrawn so our junior heifer Windridge Chloe was unopposed junior champion.

In the first of the senior classes Brenton Catlin’s Eagle Park Beauty Queen, with calf at foot, was placed behind the slightly older heifer Thurloo Park Brook, entered by David and Julie Thompson. Although unsuccessful on the day Beauty Queen will, with a little more age on her, go on to do well.

The senior class was a re-match of last year, with the result the same. Thurloo Park Zoe was placed ahead of our Windridge Zoe (they are half sisters, sired by the same bull which we had owned and then sold to Thurloo Park). Thurloo Park Zoe went on to be senior champion, with our Zoe as reserve, and then on to grand champion and supreme exhibit. This rounds off another successful year for David and Julie and their beautiful cow, a truly magnificent example of the breed, which had already taken out championship ribbons at Canberra and Sydney. Although unsure whether they would be able to make it to the Show; the cattle had been brought down by Gary Boewens the Thompson’s regular fitter; David and Julie arrived just in time for the judging and were able to enjoy their success first hand.

Unfortunately the Square Meaters were out-gunned in the interbreed but certainly did not look out of place amongst the larger breeds. For the record the supreme exhibit sash was awarded to a black Limousin cow and calf.

We intend to be back next year and hope to see more of you there and a bigger line up of Square Meaters cattle at what is becoming regarded as the premier show of beef cattle in southern Australia.

Peter Brown