

## Queensland Corner

The QLD Square Meaters Breeders Group started the New Year in Queensland with a fantastic educational day held at Vesco Square Meaters in mid January where Travis Luscombe was once again present to help sort out the finer points of preparing for the show ring, this was an extension to the day that was held in September last year. Travis runs a fitting service here on the Darling Downs, and is always willing to share his knowledge gained from his personal experiences and many successes.

The day was attended by about 16 people who traveled from as far as Mackay in the North and from Ballina and Tweed Heads in the South. Both people wanting to get more into showing stud cattle, and also people running commercial herds represented the group.

Travis covered a large range of topics including all the stages of preparing to get to a show. Starting from the initial breaking, what to watch for to give an indication of what to anticipate from a beast. Through the introduction of the Nose Dog, right up to clipping, along with the shampoo and drying techniques, he also covered selection of both heifers and bulls. In the afternoon we moved onto the correct way to lead a beast, use of the show cane and how to juggle both leads and cane. Demonstrating how to get them moving with ease, how to keep control and then how to stand them calmly. Travis also covered how to fit the show halter correctly and how to change between halters at the show safely and efficiently, minimizing the chance of a beast getting loose. He also gave some good advise on what to do in the event that such an event occurs (hopefully not to us). Throughout the day Travis answered all our questions and gave us all a great insight into the joys of showing a well-presented animal.

Once again we have to Thank Jo van Elten and Pam Scott for their hospitality and opening their home to us.

All in all it was a very successful day with the sharing of knowledge and different ideas in good company, finishing the day with a quite drink on the verandah.

M. Cooper

## Clifton and Pittsworth shows

Wyralla and Chipililo studs teamed up for the Clifton and Pittsworth shows on the 15<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> Feb and the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Mar respectively. Chipililo Chance achieved success as Champion Female on both occasions with Wyralla Concinna and Chipililo Champ exchanging Reserve Champion status at the two shows. Both studs received the judges praise and delight at an impressive line-up of Square Meaters and for the breeds obvious uniformity and direction.

A number of enquiries were fielded from prospective breeders and interested schools. Comments such as 'They're a heavy breed' or 'Wow, I didn't realize they were that young' are typical comments from by-standers who are gradually being educated about the Squares in this part of the world.

## DNA test for earlier onset of puberty

Genetic research led by Dr Rachel Hawken at CSIRO Livestock Industries is identifying genes and gene markers that affect the age at which heifers mature – the earliest component of reproductive performance in Brahman cattle and a key to

more profitable northern cattle production.

Heifers that mature more rapidly can conceive and calve earlier without compromising their or their calf's survival, and without reducing subsequent reproductive performance.

The researchers are developing a DNA-based selection tool to tailor production towards breeding females with earlier onset of puberty. Initial work has already revealed a handful of genetic markers closely associated with age of puberty.

*Gene discovery for post partum re-conception and age of puberty in Australian beef cattle* (AKA Gene discovery project) is funded by The Cooperative Research Centre for Beef Genetic Technologies and the Queensland Government. Project collaborators are the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Animal Genetics and Breeding Unit and The University of Queensland.

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