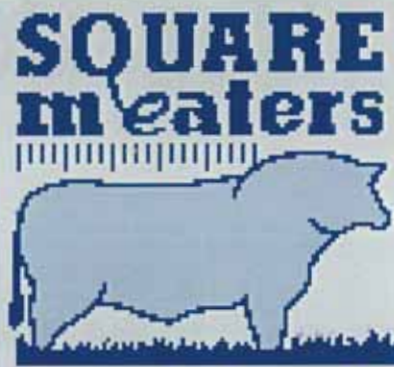
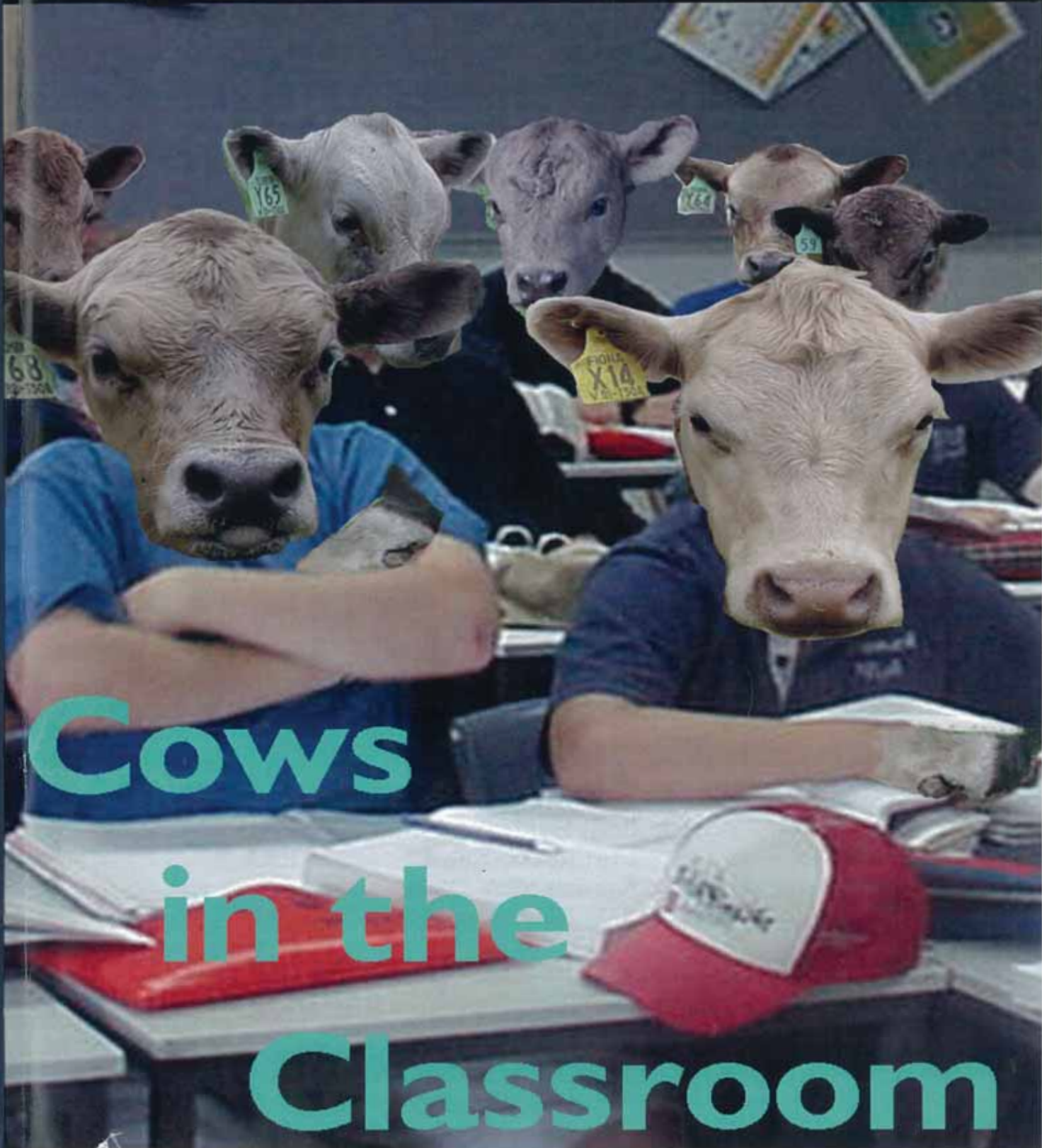


Outside the Square

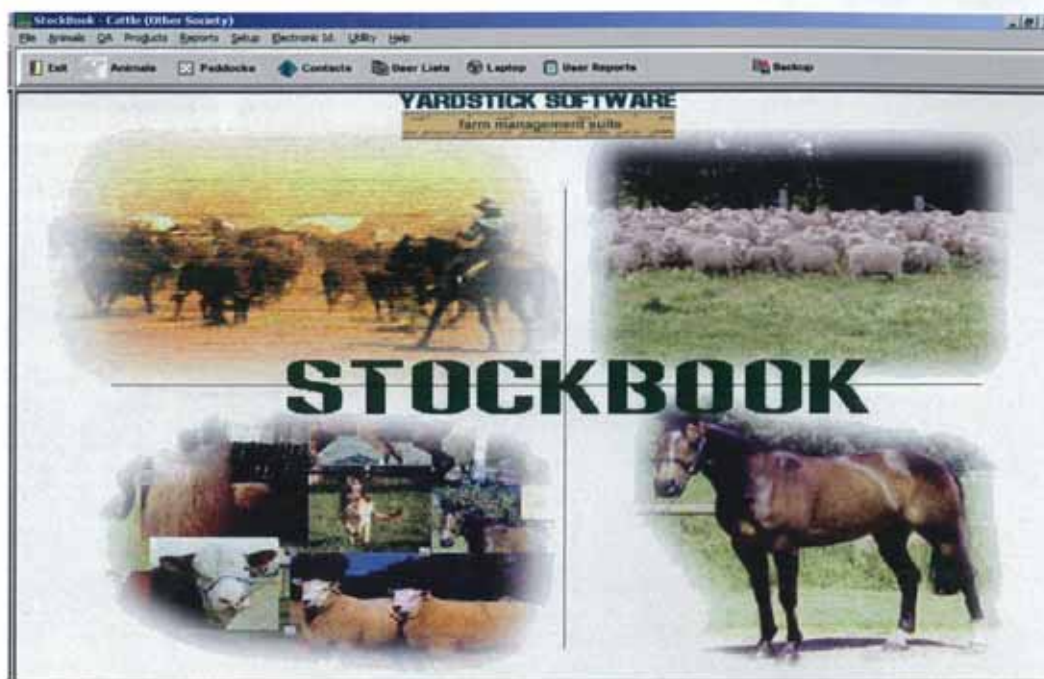


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Introduction

About the Magazine

Outside the Square is the first full-featured magazine that the Square Meaters Cattle Association has undertaken. The internal newsletters have always been intended for members of the Association and in many cases would be meaningless to outsiders.

Whilst this magazine has been produced by the Square Meaters Cattle Association it is intended to be read by anyone who has an interest in cattle farming. The articles contain information on a variety of rural-related subjects from fencing to stock identification to rural life. If you have a farm or are thinking of getting one, we hope that this magazine will whet your appetite (no pun intended) for Square Meaters as one of the most practical breeds of cattle.

It has taken the significant event of Canberra Feature Breed to get the project moving. But once the commitment had been made to produce the magazine, the response from members and commercial advertisers was overwhelming. As a first time editor I have learnt that deadlines mean nothing to anyone other than the person who sets them.

I would like to thank all the members for their submission of articles and apologise to those whose submissions we couldn't fit in—we will hold them over for the 2005 magazine!

Tom Pankhurst

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As at February 2004 the Board of Directors consisted of:

Tony Cairns (Chairman)	
Peter Brown	Deborah Howe
Glen Jackson	Tom Pankhurst
Brad Perry	Graeme Singleton
Secretary	Cheryl Mott
Magazine Editor	Tom Pankhurst

Front Cover

Our feature article deals with the increasing number of schools that are including agricultural aspects in their curriculum. We thank Denmark (WA) High School for this photograph.

You can find Square Meaters on the Web at:

www.squaremeaters.com.au

links are provided to many breeders, our sponsors and other useful sites

Chairman's Foreword

by Tony Cairns

The publication of this inaugural Square Meaters Annual coincides with the breed's showcasing as the Feature Breed at the RNCAS 2004, and marks a significant milestone in the breed's ultimate objective to establish Square Meaters as the pre-eminent domestic market beef carcass breed in Australia. It is therefore perhaps an appropriate time to reflect upon the progress that these wonderful cattle have made to this point towards achieving that objective.

The breed was conceived by Mr Rick Pisaturo, AM, JP, who over many years had established a reputation second to none in the beef industry, after having made outstanding contributions to a number of breeds including Charolais, Shorthorn, Poll Hereford and Mandalong Specials cattle. Based purely on Murray Grey genetics, Square Meaters were selected for the most desirable traits of early maturing, medium-framed polled cattle, with well-defined muscle pattern and superior fleshing, combined with excellent fertility, easy calving, low birth weight, optimal milk production, and very importantly in these difficult times, higher feed conversion or "doing" ability.

At the same time they have retained the meat qualities which have dominated steer and carcass competitions and taste tests over the past few decades, including optimal fat cover and marbling, which has resulted in the demand for Square Meaters carcasses by the local market and butchers increasing rapidly. Those discerning breeders who have entered the breed have enjoyed their cattle which are recognised for their beautiful and characteristic colours varying from silver to silver/grey to dark grey which enhances the vista of any property, large or small. They are quiet, docile, naturally polled cattle and even easier to handle because of their medium size.

This genuinely Australian breed, despite its short history, has already made its mark by virtue of consistent successes in interbreed competitions at both regional and major shows in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. It has also enjoyed success in numerous steer competitions both on the hoof and the hook. Square Meaters steers have returned the highest average auction price at the last three Royal Agricultural Shows in Sydney,

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and in 2003 gained fourth place on the hook and sixth overall in the prestigious Stan Hill trophy.

Our breed continues to make its mark in the very competitive beef industry, as evidenced by our increasing membership and show ring successes, and most importantly the enthusiasm of butchers in sourcing the breed. They are also achieving popularity amongst cattlemen from other breeds as sires for heifers on their first calving because of the low birth weight, early maturing and higher yielding calves. For those reasons the breed offers the same benefits to dairymen looking to maintain their heifers in forward condition to maximise ultimate milking potential.

Interest in the breed is also being shown from overseas, with enquiries from New Zealand and more recently from North America where breeders, including some Murray Grey owners, have become disappointed and disenchanted with the trend towards the "modern Murray Grey", with the attendant problems, which that trend has brought to a breed which previously enjoyed and prided themselves as being *easy calving*. We welcome this interest from our friends in North America, and look forward to assisting and working with them in establishing, developing and promoting the Square Meaters breed in the USA and Canada.

Finally, it only remains for me to invite any and all interested parties who may be contemplating joining this exciting breed, or returning to breeding traditional medium-framed grey cattle with the improved characteristics of the Square Meaters breed, to approach or make enquiries with the Square Meaters Cattle Association of Australia Ltd or local breeders, both of whom will be only too happy to assist you in any way possible.

No ifs—just butts! Be there, get square!

Tony Cairns is the current Chairman of the Square Meaters Cattle Association of Australia Ltd. An Orthopaedic Surgeon by profession, Tony and his wife Ellen own Rainbow Estate Stud at Braidwood, NSW.

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The Road to Canberra

When you first pick up this magazine, judging of the Square Meaters Cattle at the 2004 Royal National Capital Agricultural Society Show will be under way.

Square Meaters were selected from all other types of cattle to be the 2004 Feature Breed. The judging of the Supreme Champion Square Meater and subsequent Inter-Breed Champion represents the culmination of eighteen long months of preparation—by far the biggest undertaking that the Square Meaters Cattle Association has embarked upon. To put it into some perspective, the youngest animal that is being judged in Canberra was being conceived as the first discussions about the possibility that we could be Feature Breed were taking place. Even as this article is being written, those same calves are just being born.

The benefit to the Association of being the Feature Breed is the potential for extensive exposure of our breed to the cattle industry in general and to the wider public. With very few exceptions every Square Meater breeder was at some time just plain old Mr or Mrs Jo Public, who saw an animal and had a dream. Being Feature Breed presents us with an open doorway that can lead us to wherever we wish to take the breed.

The prominence that is given to Feature Breed gives us the opportunity to exploit exposure to all forms of media for reporting and previewing our breed, opportunities that are not available to other breeds.

The generous support of our many sponsors is also a result of our Feature Breed status. Sponsors have provided the trophies and much of the prize monies. Most importantly, our sponsors, through their advertisements, have funded the production of this magazine. If we had not been Feature Breed, few, if any, of these organisations would have provided anywhere near the same level of support. I urge

all members of the Association, and readers of this magazine, to support our sponsors.

Whether you are an Association member who is showing at Canberra, or you have cattle of some other breed, or if you are just an interested member of the public, we hope that what you have seen in Canberra in 2004 provides you with an insight into this wonderful Australian Breed of Cattle.

An event like Feature Breed requires an enormous amount of preparation. To justify the honour of Feature Breed, maximum participation of members in showing their cattle, and in the associated events, is required.

At the start of the organisational phase, two questions were immediately evident: What is required to attract members to show their cattle in Canberra? How could

the Association afford the cost of staging such an event? To further complicate matters the original board of directors that foresaw this event would not be the same board that would complete the project.

What motivates people to participate in Shows? Is it the prize money? Is it the exposure to potential customers? Is it pride in your animal winning, beating all other animals in its class? Is it to know honestly how your animals compare to their peers? The answer is, of course, all of these things. After speaking to other members, I found that pride of winning as the most important, followed by monetary reward.

Whilst there are many positives to showing, there are also the negatives. There is the time taken to train and prepare the animals. What about the cost in transportation and show paraphernalia needed? Somewhere a balance must exist between the negatives and positives of showing. Our mission as the Association's Executive was to tip that balance in favour of showing.

What motivates people to participate in Shows?



I remember being told some years ago that we all have the same amount of time — it's just some of us are able to make better use of it. With this in mind, in April of 2003 we sent out the first information to advise members to start preparing. It would not have been too late at that stage to have started training 5–8 month animals for the 15–18 month class. Some of today's 9-12 month class animals could have commenced training in April 2003 at two months of age. The earlier you start to train an animal the easier it is. The best source of information is someone who has shown before.

A word of warning for those showing for the first time – 'Showing is Addictive'. Before the show is the anticipation and self-doubts: Are the animals ready? Do I have everything that I need? Am I ready? Immediately after the show it's: 'No way—never again—not ever.' Then a couple of days later, it becomes: 'It really wasn't all that bad; perhaps if we ...; next time I'll ...'. But that is enough about the actual show ring. As I said, the animals are now in the ring or back in their stalls showing off their ribbons while you are relaxing with friends

over a bottle of red. As they say, 'It will be all right on the day', and no doubt it was.

The Organising Committee for this event includes Tony Cairns (our Chairman), Julie Thompson, Su McCluskey, Cheryl Mott and other helpers (from both inside and outside of the Association). A conservative estimate of the amount of time involved in the organisation of this event is 3200 volunteered hours.

Some years back, when I was at a show, a member who was not showing stated, "I have an animal that could have beaten the winner here." I said to him that if what he said was true then he should put his money where his mouth was. He did—and he won. Just remember that the best animal can't win a ribbon while it is still in the paddock.

Congratulations to the winners and well done to the rest of the exhibitors, for there are never any losers. If you did not win, ask why. Ask the Judge, other members or even the winner. Take this knowledge with you and use it to win next time.

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Good Fencing is Good Sense

by Joe Forrester

As a seller of cattle, I know that one of the most often asked questions by potential novice buyers is: "Do they require any special fencing?". My answer is always the same: "Square Meaters require no different fencing to any other breed of cattle—they all need good fencing!"

The young animals of all breeds of livestock are very inquisitive, especially lambs and calves. They will put their heads through a fence to see if the grass really is greener on the other side. If their heads will fit they might push a little harder to see if the rest of their body will fit. Once that animal has learnt that it can go through a fence it is much harder to re-educate them to respect fences. If you have an animal that cannot be taught to respect fences, you will have far less aggravation and expense if you sell that animal. The problem is if you cannot stop that animal with a fence; it will lead others to do the same. The cost of repairing fences and other costs related to animals not being where they are meant to be is likely to be more than the value of the offender.

There are two main types of fencing: Conventional Wire fence and Electric Fence. A conventional fence is strong and reliable. The electric fence provides a greater deterrent but is subject to the reliability of the power source and electrical circuitry. A hybrid type involving conventional and electric design is common for cattle situations.

Conventional Fences

The conventional fence these days is constructed using a fabricated wire mesh. While the cost of materials for this style of fence is higher, the cost of erection is lower. There are many brands and configurations of fabricated fence. One of the most common is Waratah Stocklock© 7/90/30 (see Fig. 1). The numbers 7 - 90 - 30 refer to the make up of the fence; the 7 means that there are seven horizontal 'line' wires, the 90 means that the height of the fabrication is 90cm tall and the 30 means that the fence has

vertical 'picket' wires at 30cm spacing. The 7/90/30 fence is a very good secure fence and is usually used as boundary fencing for cattle. The internal fences can be a little less secure if needed. The 7/90/45 fence has a little wider gap in the verticals.

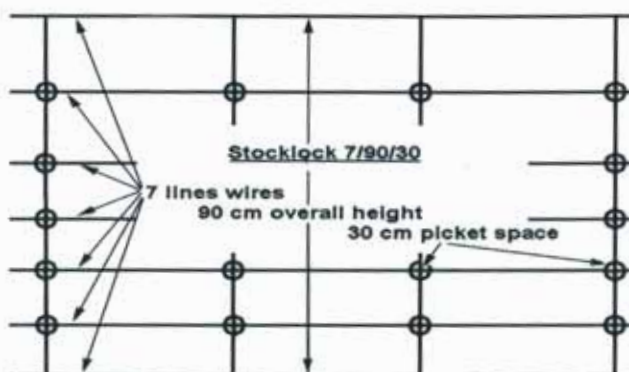


Figure 1. Understanding fence terminology.

A fence begins and ends with 'Strainer Posts'. The secret of a good stable fence is the strainers, and while the size of diameter is important, the depth of the post into the ground is the most important factor. I should advise you of two very important points at this stage:

- Dial before you Dig, and
- Check your Boundary.

If you think that there may be telephone or power lines anywhere near where the fence is going, check with the authorities. The cost of repairing phone lines could run into the thousands of dollars; the cost of cutting a power line could be your life.

A good design for cattle fencing has posts (galvanised Star Pickets are ideal) spaced at 10-metre intervals with a support post or 'dropper' at 5-metre spacing. The 7/90/30 wire is used to provide the barrier for animals trying to go through the fence and a 'barbed wire' is placed on the top of the fence to stop animals trying to reach over the fence. A handy hint is to



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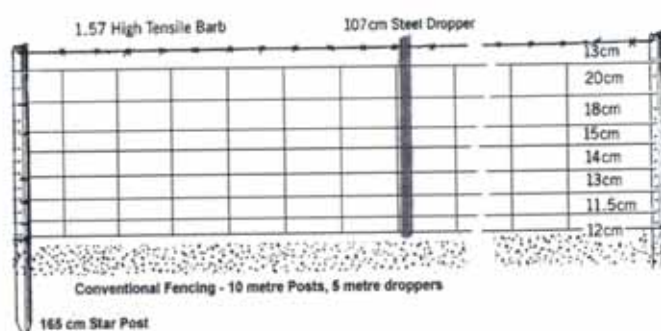


Figure 2. A useful fence design.

lay out the wire loosely and tie it off at the strainer posts at each end. Now cut the wire in the middle of the fence and re-join it with Gripple© joiners. You can now easily tension the fence using the Grippler tool.

Electric Fences

While the value of the Conventional Fence is in its strength, the value of the Electric Fence is in its simplicity. An electric fence deters animals from crossing the fence by sending high voltage pulses of electricity along the fence wires. I cautiously advise that the electric pulses are not dangerous but they do give a nasty 'kick' that has a lasting effect on the memory of cattle, sheep, farm dogs, people, etc. The tension on the wires of electric fences is much less than that of the conventional fence and therefore the strainer posts do not need to be as substantial. Between the strainers the fence consists of one to seven wires with five being a good arrangement for cattle. The odd numbered wires are what is known as the 'live' wires and are connected to the posts by insulators. The even numbered wires are 'earth' wires and connected directly to the post. The animal will receive a shock whenever it touches a live wire either through the ground or through the earth wire. With an electric fence you would usually space your star pickets at 20-metre intervals with two insulated droppers at 6.6-metre spacing between the pickets.

The essential other requirement is the Electric Fence Energiser that produces the pulses. These come in a range of models that may be mains, battery or solar powered. The power output of Electric Fence Energisers is measured in joules.

As a very rough rule of thumb, each joule of output will power 10km of Electric Fence with low vegetation. For example, the Gallagher Model B75 has a power output of .7 Joules therefore it will power 7km of fence. Gallagher and other Energiser manufacturers produce very informative Electric



Fig. 3. A digital voltmeter is an essential tool for electric fences.

Fence design booklets. Note: Where electric fences are accessible to the public, Warning Signs must be placed on the fence.

Hybrid Fences

The Hybrid fence offers the advantages of both the Conventional and Electric fences. The high deterrent features of the electric fence are backed up by the strength and reliability of the conventional fence. There are many ways that the hybrid fence can be constructed. Some of these include replacing the top barbed wire with an electric wire. Another way is to use an offset or outrigged wire that is held out about 30cm from the fence. This is very effective with cattle as it keeps them well away from the actual fence.

Conclusion

A good fence will serve you well and keep your stock where you want them. A bad fence will serve you right and cause no end of frustration. The larger fencing material manufacturers like Waratah and Gallagher have information pamphlets and how-to guides that make designing and building fences a breeze.



Cows in the Classroom

An increasing number of High Schools across Australia are including agricultural based subjects in their curriculum. Whilst it is perfectly reasonable that the local country high school may have subjects relevant to the agricultural interests of the district, there is also a trend for outer suburban schools to also include such subjects, even though they are not located in an agricultural area.

The changes in Australian lifestyle, or perhaps leisurestyle, may partly be behind this change. The traditional 'weekender' of a shack at the beach is giving way to 'a few acres in the hills'. As the new landowner stands on his piece of rural Australia, one thought comes to mind, *"I think we need a cow or a sheep or an alpaca."* And so a new breed of farmer evolves. Be they Hobby farmer or Lifestyle farmer they are still farmers and that brings with it a sense of involvement for the whole family and a need for knowledge.

There are, of course, other motivations for the educational institutions. Agricultural studies give students the ability to watch and interact with the development of animals like no other subject at school. Not surprisingly, the majority of the students at country schools involved with cattle are the 'townies' who otherwise would not gain the same experiences as their farming peers.

The following articles have been submitted from schools from diverse areas of the country.

Elderslie High School

Elderslie High School is situated in Camden, approximately 70 km from Sydney. Camden has for many years been an area of small farms with ventures ranging from dairy cattle, alpacas, beef cattle to turf farms, vineyards and orchards. Approximately 12 months ago it was decided that the agriculture department

was in need of some beef cattle to add to the animal teaching resources.

As the school is on a small acreage, a more compact breed of cattle seemed the most logical. Staff had previously heard through colleagues that 'Mandalong Stud' at St Marys, owned by Rick Pisaturo, ran Square Meater cattle. Rick was contacted and within a few weeks the school had purchased two cows in calf, and with calves at foot.

"I think we need a cow..."

Elderslie has approximately 10 students involved in the management, preparation and parading of animals at shows. Each year the school regularly attends local shows and the Sydney Royal. Students have been rewarded with broad ribbons at all venues.

These animals have created an enormous interest amongst the school's young beef cattle enthusiasts. To attest to that fact, the school recently purchased two more heifers from David and Julie Thompson of Thurloo Park Stud, Cootamundra.



As a medium cattle breed, Square Meaters have been ideal for the school farm and for the young students involved in the handling of them. Elderslie High School will be attending at the 2004 Canberra Royal Show.



Murrumburrah High School

The Murrumburrah High School, located at Harden in southern NSW, has a Farm Club where students have access to hands-on experience with all facets of rural life, particularly livestock.

David and Julie Thompson from "Thurloo Park" at Cootamundra were so impressed with the skills and focus of the Murrumburrah High students they met at local shows, that they donated a heavily pregnant stud female, Thurloo Park Valray, to the Farm Club.

Valray produced a heifer (Murrumburrah Xena) during the 2002 Canberra Royal and another (Murrumburrah Miss Young) in 2003. To say the Farm Club kids are hooked on Square Meaters is an understatement. They are also great ambassadors for the breed.

Julie Thompson said she has never regretted donating Thurloo Park Valray to the school. "They really are great kids, so enthusiastic, so well mannered and so helpful. At the 2003 Canberra Royal they impressed everyone with their eagerness to roll their sleeves up, pitch in and to learn more about the breed and cattle



handling. They have to raise money to fund their showing activities so their dedication and enthusiasm is fantastic to be see. We couldn't be happier to be associated with them."

At the Boorowa Show they won the Junior and Grand Champion Square Meaters female, and the Senior Champion female. They were also placed second and third in the steer competition with two animals from Thurloo Park—one donated and one purchased from the Thompson's.

Murrumburrah High School's modest Square Meaters herd is allowing the students to hone skills that will stand them in good stead for the future. Those skills are not restricted to handling animals, but include skills in organisation, discipline and even dealing with unruly customers!

Dakabin High School

Dakabin State High School is situated approximately 36 km north of Brisbane in the midst of 24 hectares of bushland near Alma Park Zoo. There are around 1360 students enrolled in the 25-year-old school.

Approximately 17 years ago the school farm was established on 15 hectares of old pineapple farm. The Agriculture Section started its first cattle stud in 1991 with two Sahiwal heifers. The school has continued to show and breed these cattle. Initially only four or five students became involved with the showing of cattle, which had to be transported in a 40-year-old Bedford truck belonging to one of the teachers. After 12 months of fundraising the Agriculture Section purchased its own stock truck in 1993. This meant more cattle could be shown. Student numbers started to increase and the school also ventured into steer showing.

In 2001 the Agriculture Section started an animal fitting service with Simmentals, Simbrahs and Square Meaters being their first clients. At the Brisbane Royal Show in 2001 a Square Meater heifer, KRE8 Beef Ursula, owned by Ron Lowe, was shown, and also an association with Vesco Square Meaters owned by Jo Van Elten and Pam Scott developed.



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Beef... made to measure



In 2002 Vesco bred Square Meaters were shown at 13 local shows resulting in many Champion awards. These included Supreme Bull, Supreme Cow and Exhibitors group. At the Brisbane Royal Show the school won Champion Bull and Champion Cow. The school began entering carcass competitions by showing a steer, also bred by Vesco, winning Reserve Champion Carcass at Toowoomba Agricultural Show.

Last year the school entered Square Meaters into Beef 2003 winning Champion Cow/Heifer with Vesco Pride and Joy—Dakabin's foundation female. At Beef 2003 the Judge commented, "She is an outstanding female.", Joy delivered a heifer calf and went on to win Champion Cow at Brisbane Royal.

Dakabin has found Square Meaters to be compatible with the school's aims. They are a compact animal that finishes on very little feed. They have fantastic carcasses with excellent muscling and even fat cover as shown with placings throughout the 2002 competition year. Square Meaters have a great temperament, they are easy to train for showing, and novice students gain confidence rapidly when working with them. Not only do they handle the heat and humidity in Brisbane remarkably well, they suit Dakabin's small area and are easily transported to shows.

Dakabin currently has a group of 25 dedicated students who work before school, at lunch times and after school to feed, train and prepare the Show team of 15-20 head.

In Square Meaters the school has found a breed that is gaining respect around South-East Queensland and is most suited to their beef showing programme.

Bede Polding College

Bede Polding College is located in Windsor

on the north western outskirts of Sydney. The cattle interest group has been showing cattle for the last six years. The college has owned and shown Square Meaters cattle for the last two years with outstanding results in carcass, hook and hoof competitions at the Sydney Royal and the Dubbo National shows.

Needless to say the college is convinced of Square Meaters true meat value. Often judges seem reluctant, in steer hoof classes, to place Square Meaters up high; this is often due to the judge being unaware of the superior nature of Square Meaters carcasses. Bede Polding believe that at the end of the day that is what breeding beef cattle is all about.

The students are very involved right from breaking in, to designing and implementing feed rations, through to preparation and presentation in the show ring. Many students have gained considerable skills including

- eye for detail
- work ethic
- animal husbandry skills
- communication skills
- ability to work unsupervised
- using initiative

Bede Polding College is very grateful to those breeders, namely Rick Pisaturo from Mandalong, Tony Cairns from Rainbow

Estate and David & Julie Thompson of Thurloo Park, who have supported them in the past. The College is looking

forward to the 2004 show season and we hope to see you out there.

Chairman's Conclusion

As breeders gather to celebrate the first ten years of Square Meaters, and being Feature Breed at the 2004 Canberra Royal Show, it is worth pausing to reflect on the contribution high school students are making to increase the profile of the grey,

...few things are certain except that the big dry will end in rain and the future belongs to the coming generations.



compact quiet achievers we are all so proud to be involved with. With the generous support of breeders, these students are forming a bond with Square Meaters and learning life skills that will endure long after they have completed their studies.

In this land of drought and sweeping plains few things are certain except that the big dry will end in rain and the future belongs to the coming generations. While Square Meaters can't make the heavens open, these genetically selected cattle are proving an ideal animal to help prepare tomorrow's farmers and graziers for life on the land. These youngsters in turn are proving great ambassadors and advocates for a breed which, like them, continues to steadily realise its considerable potential.

Thanks to the support of a number of breeders, school students across Australia are becoming very familiar with, and very fond of, Square Meaters.

The dedication and achievements of the Bede Polding College, Elderslie, Murrumburrah and Dakabin High have already been well documented, with St Clair High School in Sydney and Bridgetown High School in WA starting breeding programs using stud Square Meaters animals.

The students and their teachers, as well as the Mandalong, Thurloo Park, Maryvale, Malolo and Vesco Studs which have so generously supported their cattle programs, are to be applauded. They are putting Square Meaters in the spotlight, and every time they venture to a show, they are also highlighting the docility and commercial characteristics of these compact quiet achievers.

Students are finding out it is indeed hip to go Square. Long may they continue to prove its hip to be square!

Come and see what makes a true champion at



The 2004 Royal Canberra Show

27th to 29th February, 2004

Feature Breed:
Square Meaters

Left, Murrumburrah Teddy Bear at 2003 Sydney Royal, 1st On Hoof & 2nd On Hook in Lightweight Section, Highest selling price—480 c/Kg, grossing \$1800.00
Photo courtesy Wayne Jenkins and Murrumburrah High School



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Stock Identification

(Please note that Stock Branding is controlled by State legislation. Your Department of Agriculture can provide you with more information).

Introduction

Currently all cattle over six months of age, or younger if not on their mothers, are required to be identified by an Ear Mark or Brand, or a Tattoo in the case of Stud Animals. Culled Stud Cattle need to be earmarked or branded if sold as trade cattle. The identification requirements of a breed society does not override the State Authorities regulations, but works as a subset.

Cattle being moved off any property are required to be identified by a 'tail tag'. In its literal interpretation a tail tag is an adhesive tag containing the Property Identification Code (PIC), that is attached to the tail of the animal. The Tail Tag is coloured white, pink or green to identify the animal's status¹. The PIC uniquely identifies the owner of the animal and the property that the animal departed from. If the owner has multiple properties, theoretically they require a separate PIC for each property. In practice the Registrar of Stockbrands allows multiple properties with one owner to use a single PIC but warns that in the event of a

quarantine being placed on one of the properties, all properties under that PIC would be also be quarantined. The PIC is an eight character sequence that includes a State, District and property identifier. For example, WEPT0900 is a (W) Western Australian tag, from the (PT) Plantaganet Shire; 0900 identifies Trepid Park Square Meaters. No other property has that PIC. If the PIC is printed on to the eartag of the animal, a tail tag is not required; however, the eartag must be pink to identify if HGP-free status is to be indicated. A waybill is required for any movement of animals on a public road.

Requirement of Government

Stock Branding and Tail Tagging have been a requirement by government agencies in the past to trace and verify the origin of animals. These agencies include Stock Police, Department of Health, Department of Agriculture and AQIS. While the Stock Brand identifies the place of birth of an animal they do not record the subsequent movement of the animal.

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Park**



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- Registered Bulls
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- Leasing
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THURLOO PARK

SQUARE MEATER STUD

COOTAMUNDRA NSW

SITUATED ON THE SOUTHWEST SLOPES OF N.S.W. NEAR COOTAMUNDRA THE THURLOO PARK SQUARE MEATERS STUD WAS FOUNDED IN 1996 WHEN DAVID & JULIE THOMPSON CHANGED FOCUS FROM A MERINO SHEEP FARMING ENTERPRISE TO ONE OF CATTLE BREEDING

With the introduction of some foundation stud stock they commenced their breeding program. With tons of enthusiasm we aim to produce a top quality herd that would be in demand for both the butcher, retail food service trades and the cattle breeder. We have always claimed that farming and grazing was 5% knowledge and 95% commonsense so began the love for the Square Meater breed.

We have been fortunate to have produced some top quality females and bulls that have had outstanding success in the show ring.

Square Meater cattle are noted for their quiet temperament, calving ease and milking ability making them ideal cattle for both the large commercial and small farming operations.

Square Meaters were developed with the ultimate aim to produce compact beef rather than a miniature beef animal that can produce quality beef under commercial conditions. We believe that the consumer will require smaller cuts of beef and Square Meaters are achieving this and more.

Thurloo Park have been able to sell the majority of steers by the time they reach twelve months old weighing approximately 400kgs live weight requiring only minimal supplementary feeding.

Steers from Thurloo Park have won 1st. & 2nd. placings at both Canberra Sydney Royal Shows in Hoof & Hook sections in the past two years and gained the top price of \$4.85.cents per Kg. at Sydney Royal Easter Show 2003.

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A Tail Tag records the last property the animal was on but not the preceding property(ies). Combined, these two methods provide a good record of the animal's movements, but not necessarily the full history of the animal.

For bio-security reassurance to both the Australian public and our export partners, the livestock industry requires a 'whole-of-life' traceability system. This will allow the government to identify where an animal has been in the event of a BSE, FMD, Brucellosis, Tuberculosis or other reportable disease outbreak.

Requirement of Stud Societies

Purchasers of Stud animals need to have an assurance that the animal that they are purchasing is the animal that is registered with the breed society. Agricultural Societies need to verify the animal that has been entered is the same as the animal exhibited. The same verification process is required by veterinarians when testing for Mannosidosis and for licensed semen collection. The accepted method is a unique tattoo in the ear of stud animals. While there is no method to stop the same tattoo being placed in the ear of more than one animal, it does provide an easy, low-cost, permanent, tamper-evident and virtually fail-safe method of positively identifying one animal from another.

Future Direction

The Meat and Livestock Authority (MLA), on behalf of the government, has begun implementing the National Livestock Identification Scheme (NLIS). NLIS comprises two main components: a comprehensive database that will record the location of all cattle in Australia; and a family of Electronic Identification Devices (EID's) that will be applied to every animal. The EID's are currently available in the form of a button that is applied to the ear, or a rumen bolus that is orally introduced to the animal. The EID's are radio frequency transponders that use technology licenced from Texas Instruments.

When interrogated by an electronic reader they transmit the animal's identity back to the reader.

The implementation commenced in Victoria and is now being taken up in other states. The intention is that from the implementation date (Jan-04 in WA) every animal that leaves the property of birth must be EID identified. In the future EID's may replace earmarks / brands / tattoos and tail tags.

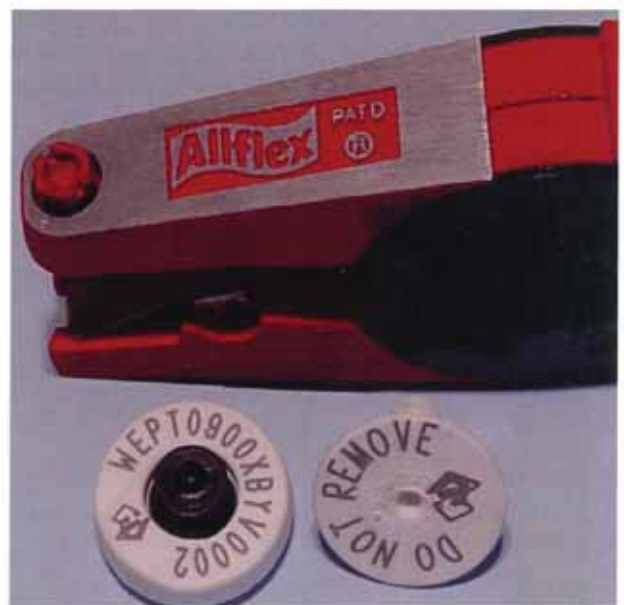


Figure 2. Allflex EID button and applicator

While EID eartags are considered tamper proof, cannot be re-used and have a high animal retention rate (losses of less than 1 in a 1000), they can be easily removed (although it is illegal to do so). The EID's are intended to be read by electronic readers that range in price from many hundreds to several thousands of dollars. EID ear tags are reasonably visually readable in a race or crush situation. The rumen bolus is obviously not visually readable but is supplied with a matching visual tag for the ear.

It is best at this stage to reflect on what the intention of the NLIS system is: Firstly it is a whole-of-life identity for the animal,



and secondly it is an electronically readable device that can be coupled to data capture devices to trace the animal's movement history, thus filling the gap that exists between earmarking and tail tagging.

The EID does not stop the theft of stock, nor does it provide a positive identity of a specific animal. Implementation of EID's into a herd does not make the management of that herd any easier, just simpler if combined with expensive reading equipment and software programs. Data on stock that are consigned to a saleyard will be automatically forwarded to the NLIS database by the Stock Agent or Saleyards. Stock that are privately sold will require the owner to notify the NLIS of the stock movement—this can be by written information and does not require an electronic reader.

At best for the stud breeder or small farm owner (less than 50 head) the EID system is an expensive ear tag to satisfy government regulations.

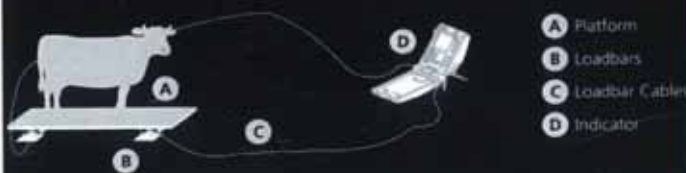
Conclusion

The immediate future is that irrespective of whether an animal has an EID or not it will still require an ear mark/brand/tattoo until all relevant bodies deem that they are no longer required. From the perspective of a buyer of stud stock, I would still insist on the animal having a tattoo that positively identifies that animal until another method (such as DNA testing) comes along to provide that assurance.

1. Tail Tag colours indicate the animal's treatment status: Green - eligible for EU market, Pink - Not HGP treated, White - undeclared status/may have been HGP treated.



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RUDDWEIGH
by GALLAGHER



Capitalising on Smaller Farms

In 1996 Su and Bob McCluskey of Hall, ACT were looking for a way to increase production from their Murray Grey enterprise when they saw an article on the newest Australian beef breed – Square Meaters cattle. A few weeks later the Cluskers Square Meaters stud was born.

“The decision for us to breed Square Meaters was easy,” says Bob. “We were looking for a way to expand and thought that buying more land was our only option, until we heard about Square Meaters.”

“We have been able to increase our cattle numbers to almost double what our carrying capacity was,” he said.

Based just outside the nation’s capital, the McCluskeys have found a keen demand for Square Meaters cattle. “Many people around here have smaller farms and Square Meaters are ideal,” says Su. “But because of their commercial viability, Square Meaters are just as suitable for the commercial farmer on larger holdings.”

Square Meaters are bred from Murray Grey cattle, a breed known for their docile temperament. Their quiet nature, suitability to the cool Canberra region and commercial viability made them a perfect choice for the McCluskeys. “These aren’t toy cattle or pets,” says Bob. “Square Meaters are a proven serious beef breed and that’s why we like them.” Although, as can be seen from the photos, the cattle are certainly quiet!

Since starting the Cluskers stud seven years ago the McCluskeys have focussed heavily on structural soundness and the female traits of milking ability and fertility.

“We firmly believe that a cow has one job to do, and that is rear a live calf year in and year out,” says Su. “There is no point in a female looking 100% if she is going to have problems calving or keeps all her nutrition to

herself rather than putting it into the calf.” To this end, the McCluskeys have instigated a strict stock management regime ensuring that cattle are continually classed for structural soundness as calves, fertility as young cattle and rearing ability once they have calved.

At the Cluskers Stud, the breeding and management program is based firmly on commercial factors and needs to fit in with the busy schedules of two working proprietors. “We have the basic principle in our decision making that the benefit has to outweigh the costs, and time is money for us,” says Su. “Our breeding program fits in with how we can manage our herd to have the cattle at their healthiest best all the time.”



Su McCluskey at Canberra Royal Show, 2001

Stocking rates and pasture rotation are managed to ensure minimal hand feeding occurs. “The cost of feed and the time it takes to hand feed make it an unviable prospect except when absolutely necessary,” says Bob. Cattle are calved down in late winter, and weaners are sold in autumn, when they meet the domestic market specifications—and that means that nothing needs to be hand fed over winter.

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Cattle are joined in spring for a six-week joining period using four to five bulls with around 20 cows each. At the end of the joining period, the cows are placed into one mob and then rotated around the property. This allows better management of the pastures and water and keeps the cattle in peak condition. "Throughout summer the cattle get used to being moved around; in fact, as soon as they hear the motorbike, they run to the gate so it takes no time at all to move them into the next paddock," said Bob.

"We now keep our stocking rates low – a lesson we learned from past overstocking experiences and a decision which proved to be a saving grace during the drought," says Su. "We have also divided our property into small paddocks separated by laneways which makes for much more efficient management."

The good doing ability of the Square Meaters was certainly proven during the drought with the cattle retaining reasonable condition throughout, and within a few weeks of the spring growth coming through looking in good condition again.

The McCluskeys have also found a demand for their bulls for lease. "Many people around here don't want to have a bull on their property all year," says Bob. "So we put one of our nice quiet bulls on a trailer, deliver him, then go back and pick him up six weeks later. People don't even need to have cattle yards as we just put a halter on the bull and walk him onto the trailer to bring him home."

The McCluskeys have shown their Square Meaters steers (prepared and presented by Gundagai High school) at the Melbourne Royal Show. "The school does a terrific job in preparing and showing the steers and it suits us fine," says Su. "We don't have the time to feed and prepare steers for showing but having a school prepare a steer for you is a really good option. It gives us exposure in a marketplace that we would not normally be in and is great for the students, too."

"You are welcome you to come out and see the Square Meaters in the paddock, and see for yourself what terrific cattle they are."

Tested on Humans

We are all too familiar with the statement that appears on cosmetics products 'Not tested on animals'. But how do you test products that are intended for use on animals?

When microbiologists from the Merck Research laboratories in the United States discovered that a fermentation of *Streptomyces avermitilis* had a powerful potency against internal parasites of mice and external parasites of rabbits, they could be excused for not realising how far their discovery could go in helping the animal kingdom.

After five years of extensive research, IVOMEC® (ivermectin) was released in 1981 as a powerful anti-parasitic formulation for cattle. IVOMEC®, its derivatives and successor, EPRINEX®, are the most popular form of endectocide for use with cattle.

The effectiveness of ivermectin in controlling parasites without affecting the mammalian host attracted the attention of Merck scientists working in the human health field.

Some of the early research of ivermectin had taken place in horses to test against the larvae of a worm called *Onchocerca cervicalis*. A close relation of this worm is *Onchocerca volvulus*, which causes river blindness in humans.

After extensive laboratory testing, the first clinical trial of ivermectin usage in human beings began in 1981. The final formulation of ivermectin-MECTIZAN®-for the treatment of river blindness in humans, was approved in 1987.

The human trials had been complicated by the fact that the disease occurred mainly in remotest areas of Africa. Add to this the dilemma that the people who most needed the medication would be least able to pay for it.



One of Merck's core values was that 'Medicine is for people. It is not for profit...'

On that basis Merck announced that MECTIZAN® would be donated free for the treatment of river blindness to all those who needed it, for as long as it was needed. Twenty-three years later, this remarkable donation program still continues across 35 countries where river blindness is still endemic.

Another such crossover between animal and human technology, is that of warfarin. While it is a death sentence for rodents, it is a lifesaver for humans.

As far as animal health is concerned this remarkable story of drug discovery and development underscores the significance of the interdependent link between human and animal health.

Acknowledgements

This article has been written by Tom Pankhurst from material provided by Merial Australia Pty Limited. IVOMEC, EPRINEX and MECTIZAN are trademarks of Merial and/or Merck & Co Inc. Merck is referred to as Merck Sharp & Dohme or MSD internationally.

How to Drug Proof your Children

(or that's the idea anyway) by Christine Wade

In October 1999, we packed our three children up, and headed west for a three week camping holiday. We wanted to visit the zoo, explore the wine growing regions of NSW and Rutherglen, and visit Peter's ancestral family farm at Euroley NSW as well as introduce the children to some of their long lost relatives. Our travels took us out to Mudgee and Dubbo, down through Parkes and Forbes, along the Lachlan and Murray Rivers, into the Riverina and back out again through the high country of the Snowy Mountains on both sides of the border, before heading for home via the Southern Highlands.

It was a great trip, remarkable for the fact that the children who were then 3, 7 and 10 managed three weeks without TV, but an unsettling journey. Peter and I found ourselves assessing each region for it's potential to satisfy our deep need for a farm of our own. Forbes was nice with a great selection of red wine at the local IGA, Mudgee was gorgeous, Griffith vibrant and alive, Jindabyne had great potential for extra curricula activities. We got home and found ourselves reliving each step of the journey until we worked out that we needed to make our 'seachange'—**now**, not when the kids were older, and that it needed to be a "country change". We were living in the seaside village of Norah Head in an apartment above the general practice we owned and ran. Apart from anything Joseph had kicked one too many clocks off the wall with his football.

We had two choices, to make a complete break, sell the practice and move somewhere completely different, or to stay in the same practice and find land within a commutable distance. The decision was made for us, as the state of general practice meant that it was impossible to sell the business and so began our search for land and a farming venture

within a 40 minute drive of Norah Head.

Peter enrolled in courses at Tocal Agricultural College, and our nighttime reading consisted of manuals on planning and planting, irrigation and fertigation, fencing and pasture, weeds and fertilisers, alpacas, goats, cattle, (not ostriches), olives, macadamias, anything and everything we could lay our hands on to ensure that our venture was given the best possible chance to succeed.

During our research phase Glenfiddich Stud at Kulnura held an auction of stock. We went along on a fact finding mission, took one look and registered ourselves as bidders. Despite our best intentions of only going

along to assess the situation, we came home the proud owners of 2 Square Meater cows with calves at foot. You would have to say that with the benefit of hindsight, it was a very successful impulse buy, as from that first package we have raised a cow who went on to be Grand Champion cow at Maitland Show and Reserve Senior Champion cow at the Royal Easter show in 2003, sold 2 cows with calves at foot, and a steer. All were the original animals or their progeny from that first package.

*'we needed to make our
'seachange'—now,
not when the kids were older' ..*





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Even though our first purchase was unplanned, our attendance at the auction was planned. Getting involved after spending time researching the breed seems to be a characteristic of Square Meater breeders. People entering the market tend to be the discerning buyer who has been looking around for the animal that suits their particular circumstances. The other buyer is the breeder of other breeds that is having difficulties, and sees in the Square Meater a potential solution to their problems.

We were attracted to the Square Meaters initially because we had some absolute criteria that had to be met. The cattle had to be polled, no way did I want to be having to deal with horns. They had to be genuine easy calvers. One thing I did not want to be doing was pulling calves after some nasty experiences in my youth with a chain and a tow bar. Now into our third breeding season, it is with great relief that we can say our experience to date supports the claims of the Society that square meater cows have few birthing difficulties. What I have learnt is that it is the breeding characteristics of both the cows and the bulls that combine to produce the easy calving ability.

The next characteristic is one that I have learnt to appreciate with the passage of time, and that is the calm (and dare I say endearing) temperament of these cattle. Peter and I both

had experience in our growing years with cattle, and this is what we wanted to share with our children. As our move to the country was a lifestyle choice the last thing I wanted was to be in a situation where we were placing ourselves or the kids at risk. We have had some fun with some rodeo style tie ups when breaking the cattle in to lead, but so far we feel that we certainly made the right choice. Our cows are sensible, and the bull is a pushover.

This has been of particular importance when we have had visitors from "the city". We didn't realise how important it would be to have quiet cattle, until you have people who visit and are busting to "do something". Although we are careful to never put ourselves or anyone else in a position of danger, it is great to be able to let our friends have a go. The cattle have really proven themselves in this regard, and their sensible attitude has been appreciated by all our friends who have washed, groomed, walked and even milked our cows! The only drawback of their temperament is how attached we become to them which is an issue when it comes to eating or selling them.

Eating them is of course the next most important criteria. It was the eatability that drew us to cattle, and away from alpaca. At the end of the day, if your breeding programme falls over,

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if you don't enjoy the show circuit or if you have 100% males in a drop, you can always eat any animals that are surplus to your breeding programme. Initially I thought eating our own animals would be a hurdle, Peter held no such qualms. As much as I hate to admit it he was right. Once you have eaten your own home grown produce, your standards rise. We are now "meatist". It is difficult to enjoy poor quality meat anytime, but once you know what grass fed steers taste like, nothing else compares. Our friends and family all serve fish and chicken when we visit. One of the most common questions asked by potential Square Meater breeders is about the markets for the end product. The market is currently hugely under explored, and I think the major problem facing most breeders is actually producing enough to meet the demand. Everyone is always asking about heifers, and we have pre-sold every steer we have raised.

*Senior Bull Championship
remains however the Holy Grail..*

utilisation of our precious paddock space. After this experience, we have decided to re-analyse our focus, and get back to basics. What we are good at is cows and calves, good quality cows with proven fertility, easy calving and with good mothering abilities. We have a good strong base of matriarchs, who have taught the herd about laneways, gates and yards. They come when called. We want to be proud of the animals we sell, and we want to know that the people we sell them to will have animals they can work with safely.

The Senior Bull Championship remains however the Holy Grail, the golden event - guts and glory, just like the men's 100m at the Olympics. Who knows perhaps the next little bull calf born on Silver Gully Estate will give the prestigious southern breeders a run for their money in the years to come? I'm not giving up, just focussing!!



Figure 3. Milly Wade with Silver Gully Garnet.

It is in exploring the markets that we feel we have finally decided upon our marketing strategy, and our business plan focus. We did well at Maitland and Royal Canberra Show with our bull Silver Gully Xavier. He placed in his class at Royal Sydney, and was highest ranked in the weigh and scan sheet. We were unable to use him because he was related to most of our herd. One bull sitting unused in a paddock and awaiting a buyer isn't maximal

We are currently in the process of preparing our show team for next year. Tying up, leading, washing and grooming, this is how we hope to drug proof our kids. They have contributed financially to the herd, and now the proud owners of their own little heifer, Silver Gully Lucinda (so named because she was a female - lucky, the next male is Yorrich, as in "alas poor Yorrich"). The kids are an invaluable help, and certainly in a short amount of time have gained a wealth of knowledge and practical skills. Peter doesn't lift weights, he clips cattle to maintain his upper body strength. After one of our regular verbal spars, Peter asked me what it was that I wanted. He challenged me to really think about what it was that I wanted. It suddenly came to me, what I wanted was to be able to spend time with the animals, but my Type A personality doesn't allow me to do anything with an achievement goal set. Having Square Meaters allows me to have the farm and animals I always longed for, but there is a financial reward, you do actually sell something, and the show



circuit adds the sporting element. It is a competition, not a hobby. You can be as serious or as frivolous as you like, as long as you are having fun!

Our family extends a warm welcome to any new breeders, we are confident you will get as much enjoyment from your animals as we do, and extend an invitation for anyone interested to come and have a look at our enterprise. It is the camaraderie of the society that has been such a welcome surprise. We have been overwhelmed with the support we have received from the senior and experienced members of the society. From advice on breeding and feeding, to helping at the shows when things get a bit out of control, to being the supportive sympathetic listener on the phone when things go wrong. The kids might have learnt a lot but what we have learned has been phenomenal, and so much of it has been handed over so generously by other breeders. The regional group format has put into place formal ties that can be loosened to grow into friendships. It is this support that has developed my feeling that it is a sport, even though we are competing, the joy of the game lies in the sportsmanship, and the Square Meaters society shows great team spirit. Well done guys.



Figure 5. Christine, Hannah & Joseph Wade with Silver Gully Xavier at Sydney Royal 2003.

Christine, with husband Peter and children Hannah, Joseph and Milly own Silver Gully Estate at Mangrove Mountain, NSW

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Woolaringa will be showing at the Royal Canberra Show 2004.



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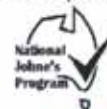
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Jaspers Restaurant is part of the Mount Seaview Retreat and offers high quality meals to guests and visitors. Mount Seaview offers the visitor spectacular countryside and is set on the banks of the crystal clear Hastings River, so the idea of serving quality beef is just what the doctor ordered.

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Keeping Track

Introduction

Managing livestock requires good record keeping skills. If you think that a BAS return is hard work, just imagine what is required to keep track of 100 breeding cows that include several generations of progeny and a couple of different bull bloodlines. Add to that conundrum the fact that for many people who have small herds of cattle, this is a hobby and not their principal business interest.

It is flippancy to say that documenting every event that occurs with your stock is the easy part of managing your herd—it is a tedious and onerous task to remember every single event that happens. The task becomes so much harder when a cow calves, because now you have to find out where she was 9 ½ months ago. Was she in the same mob as she is in now? If you retain some of your heifers for breeding, you need to know who her sire was and who she can be mated to.

In the past..

I started out with five cows and calves. I could record all the details I required on the back of a cigarette pack, but as the numbers started to build the need for better and more extensive information also increased. I started by using a desk diary that I would religiously record everything that occurred at the end of each day. While this worked reasonably well I found that I increasingly needed to have some of that information with me in the paddock or yards. I replaced the desk diary with a compendium that I could take with me.

To save the problem of having to continually go back through the diary to look up information, I devised two forms onto which I recorded information. The first is a Paddock Inventory that summarises what goes in and

out of each paddock. It records in sequence every stock movement and other activity in that paddock.

The second form was a Mob Stock Inventory (a mob is just a convenient grouping of animals

Cow Details		Square Master Cows		Stock Inventory									
Cow ID	Sex	D-OB	Size	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sire	DOB
Mona P1	C		Large		Tanya	N	21-Sep						
Fiona D1	C		Medly		Tanya	N	4-Nov						
Jade R2	C		Small		Tanya	N	4-Nov						
Faye B14	C		Small		Tanya	N	4-Nov						
Mona S28	C		Medly		Tanya	N	4-Nov						
Mona S14	C		Medly		Tanya	N	4-Nov						
Faye D14	C	28-Dec	Small	M22									
Faye T24	C	18-Dec	Small	B14	Ted								

Fig 1. The 'Stock Inventory' form

that have a common characteristic). The Stock Inventory sheet lists all the animals that are in that mob and has columns for all the usual activities, like joining, calving, etc, plus a number of spare columns for casual activities such as weighing. The back of the sheet tracks the status of calves for each mob member. A new sheet was started each year.

I also wanted to be able to see long term performance of cows and their progeny.

This system was working fine while the stock numbers were low, but now that I am up to 120 breeders, the

task of managing the cattle is getting harder and harder. I also wanted to be able to see long term performance of cows and their progeny. If there was one defining moment that made me realise that I needed a better system, it was when one of my top cows calved and I could not ascertain the calf's sire.

..then came Stockbook

Over the past year I have looked at several computer programs for stock management. None of them seemed to do all that I wanted or record all the information that I needed. I even wrote some small database applications that fulfilled some of my requirements.



Almost by accident I found a program called 'Stockbook' written by Practical Systems from Armidale. I was looking for information of NLIS devices and the tag manufacturer said that Stockbook had good software for tracking Electronic tags.

A demonstration version of Stockbook is available from the Internet, but after a 3 1/2 hour download and the installation ending in error, I called Practical Systems and they sent me a CD that installed and ran without any problems. Stockbook supports cattle, sheep, goats and alpacas and the licencing is scaled on the number of active (live) animals you are keeping. The first increment is up to 100 head of cattle.

Stockbook is very easy to use (the perfect 'man's program' because you do not have to read the manual to use it). Once you have installed and started it you can use the program by simply 'adding' animals. It is best to start with the oldest (acquired) animals first as it will make adding their progeny easier.

There are four important concepts that should be noted before going any further because it is vital they are best understood to be able to maximise the program's effectiveness.

The first deals with the animal's Identity. There are four identities for each animal:

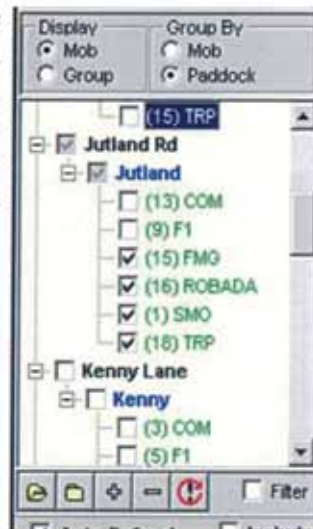
- primary Id is the name that you use for the animal in the paddock, eg Fiona,
- name is the full registered name, eg Trepid Park Fiona U1,
- society Id as it sounds, TRP-U01A, and
- NLIS Tag the electronic tag that is attached to the animal

By using the common name that you use to identify the animal as the primary Id, it makes the reports easier to use.

The second concept is paddock location. You will need to name all the paddocks of your farm plus include an 'extra' that you might

call 'Off-Farm' or 'Show' for when the animals have been off your farm for any reason.

Mob and Group are the third concept and they deal with logical collections of animals as opposed to the physical collection that paddock defines. There are no fixed rules as to how you should define animals into mobs and groups, but I use mobs to define animals who have a similar origin and I use Groups to define animals who



Paddocks and Mobs

are have a similar event happening to them. For example, I have mob for Square Meater Original (SMO) cows and a mob for Foundation cows (FMG), then I have a Group for AI'ed by Pride and another group for natural service.

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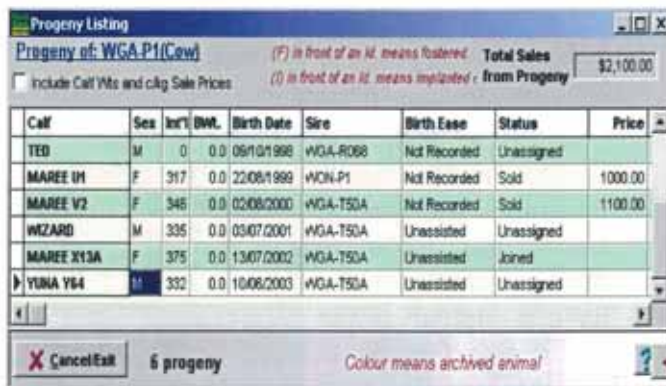
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Creating paddocks, mobs and groups does not have to be predefined; they can be created 'on-the-fly' as you are adding animals.

When adding an animal you are required to enter its identity, date of birth, paddock, mob and group. There are many other pieces of information that you can add if you wish plus



Calf	Sex	Inc'l	BWT	Birth Date	Sire	Birth Ease	Status	Price
TED	M	0	0.0	09/04/1998	WGA-R068	Not Recorded	Unassigned	
MAREE U1	F	317	0.0	22/08/1999	WON-P1	Not Recorded	Sold	1000.00
MAREE V2	F	346	0.0	02/08/2000	WGA-T50A	Not Recorded	Sold	1100.00
WIZARD	M	335	0.0	03/07/2001	WGA-T50A	Unassisted	Unassigned	
MAREE X13A	F	375	0.0	13/07/2002	WGA-T50A	Unassisted	Joined	
YUNA Y64	M	332	0.0	10/08/2003	WGA-T50A	Unassisted	Unassigned	

Figure 3 Stockbooks Progeny Listing shows all the cows progeny with calving intervals.

there are user definable fields. One of these I use to record the animals colour. You may have noted that there are two pieces of information about the animal that I have omitted to mention—the sire and dam. When you are entering information about animals that you have acquired you do not need to enter the Sire and Dam (because you do not own them). There is a menu item to build the pedigree tree for these animals if you require. If you are adding animals that have been born on your property, the drop down lists for Sire and Dam will include animals that you previously added. Also if you have created joining events (see later), the Sire will be automatically determined from the calf's Date of Birth.

Once you have entered all your animals in to Stockbook, you can start to realise the benefits of its features. The uncluttered, easy-to-read screen allows direct access to a wealth of information. You can view information on an individual animal, groups, mobs or paddocks

by clicking any of the many information tabs that list such information, such as progeny, pedigree, treatments, movements, etc.

Updating information is performed by creating an 'event' or 'treatment'. An event is any change in the status of the animal(s), while treatment is the administration of a veterinary procedure. Again these two processes can be carried out on individuals, groups, mobs or paddocks. For example, to create a joining event you select the animals to be joined, create the event for the appropriate bull, a bull-in date and a bull-out date. Later you may wish to create a pregnancy test events for those cows.

The true value of Stockbook is not so much in the information that you put into it, but in the information that you can get out. Some of the most useful reports that I have are the 'Progeny Report' where all the progeny of the selected animals are listed with the calving intervals and calf returns. An 'Animal Report' sorted by paddock resembles the Paddock Inventory list that I previously created manually. There are many other reports and features possible not listed because of limited space in this article.

The true value is not what you put into it, but what you get out of it.

Summary

Stockbook is not a cheap product, in either cost or performance. But on the same hand its cost is less than the difference between a Stud Heifer and a Commercial Heifer. In 2002 I had to sell two stud heifers as commercials because I could not positively determine who the Sires had been. With Stockbook I am confident that I will not make that mistake again.

Stockbook is such a good program that the Square Meaters Cattle Association is evaluating the program to manage its Herdbook. Not only will this allow the SMCA to provide a greater range of Sire and Progeny Reports, but will also allow electronic lodgement of registrations.



Have your cake and lease it too

by Tony Vander Loop

One of the problems that faces the person who wants to start a farming enterprise is the cost of purchasing the breeding stock. Having already grovelled with the bank to lend you the money to buy your ideal farm, you now have to find more money to buy the stock that will eventually give you the return for your investment. It does not matter whether your intended farming enterprise involves emus, ostriches, deer, alpacas or Square Meaters cattle—there is a considerable expense in purchasing stock.

While the use of lease arrangements is a relatively common practice for vehicles, plant and electrical or office equipment, it is not a very common practice for livestock, especially a lease that does not require any payments. Sounds too good to be true? Then read on.

The Malolo Square Meaters Lease works by the lessor (owner of the cattle) 'lending' the lessee (The person who wants the cattle) a number of cows that are PTIC¹. Because of the mathematics involved, the number of cows needs to be a multiple of four. At weaning time each year the lessor takes 25% of the progeny from the leased cows, ie. If there are four cows leased the lessor takes one calf. The remaining calves are the property of the lessee. If any of the cows die they have to be purchased by the lessee at the agreed price when the lease was commenced, but will be replaced by the lessor. The period of the lease can be for any amount of time and at the end of the lease the original cows are returned to the lessor (or they may be purchased by the lessee).

Here is a summary of sample leasing conditions:

- Leases are for four or multiples of four cows,
- The lessor is responsible for the subsequent mating of the cows after the first calving,
- The lessor chooses two calves for each four cows irrespective of multiple births or lost calves,
- The lessee is responsible for the feeding, welfare and veterinary requirements of the cows,
- The lessee is also responsible for the loss of any of the cows. It is strongly recommended that the cows be insured in the early years of the lease,
- The lessor has first right to purchase any of the progeny if they are for sale,
- The age of the cows is to be less than 10 - (length of lease) years old, and
- The period of the lease can be for any length of time.

So what does it all mean to either the owner of the cows or for the person who is leasing them? Let us make a few assumptions first. The value of \$1200.00 is used for a PTIC cow, \$800.00 for a breeding heifer, \$1500.00 for a bull and \$600.00 for a trade steer/heifer. It is recommended that leased cattle be insured against death. The cost of insurance has not been included.

For the lessor, they are using \$4800.00 of capital for which they can expect to get back between \$1600.00 and \$3000.00 (they are unlikely to choose a steer). There is also the reduction in stocking levels and a saving of animal health costs. There are no other costs involved but some allowance must be made for the depreciation in the value of the cows.

¹ Pregnancy Tested - In Calf



For the lessee, they are getting access to \$4800.00 of stock for no cost of capital or interest charge. They do have the management cost of the stock, but that is the same as if they had bought cows. The worst case scenario is that they could end up with three steers worth \$1800.00 but the more likely outcome is that they would get two steers and a heifer (it would not be a good economic situation to keep a calf as a bull in this situation). The gross return would therefore be \$1200.00 plus a breeding heifer. While you have had to give back one of the calves, its return value is only \$600.00 as a steer and you have saved \$480.00 in interest.

A leasing arrangement is not likely to suit everybody, but there are some situation where it makes good sense;

- a no cost agistment during a drought,
- obtaining good genetics without a huge expense,
- progressive build up of your own stud lines,
- the ability to supply schools with cattle at no cost.

Because of the issue of ownership, you should check with your breed society regarding transfer fees and the stud prefix that animals can be registered under.

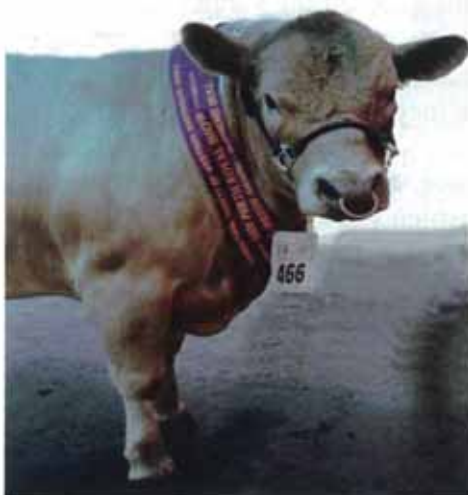
Tony Vander Loop is a member of the Square Meaters Cattle Association. The leasing plan was successfully developed by his brother, Paul Vander Loop, of Wisconsin, USA

Editors Note: People intending to enter into leasing arrangements, such as this, that do not involve payments, should consult their accountant regarding GST implications.

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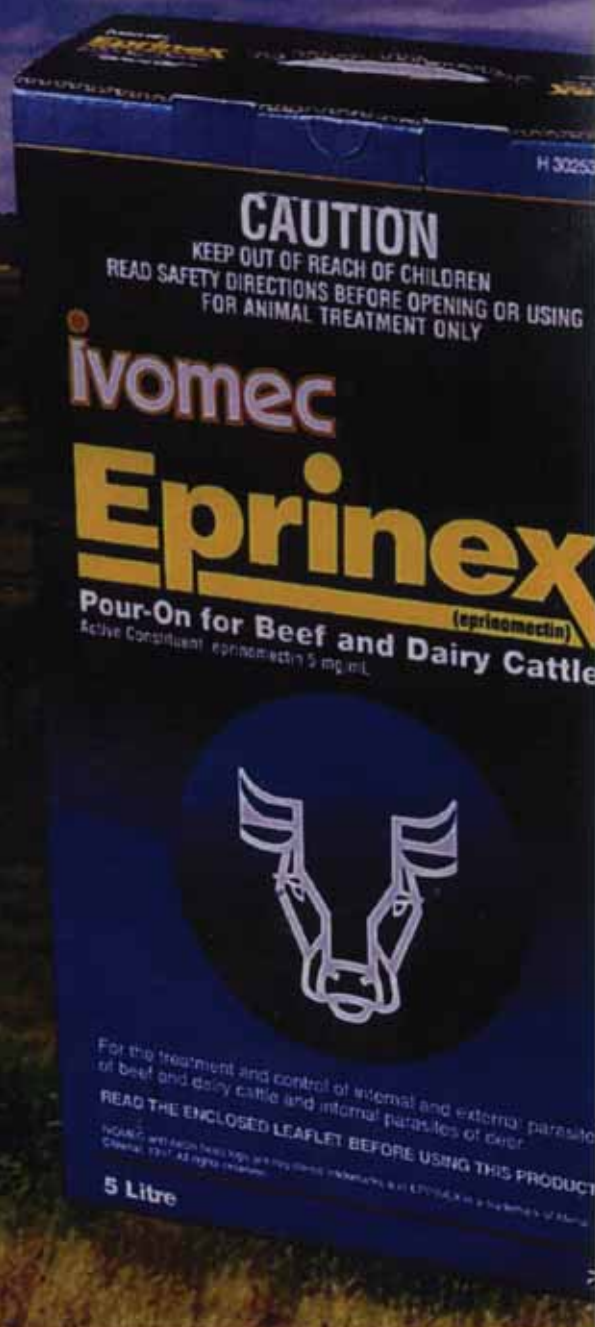
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