



Dakabin State High School show team members Tamara Holstein, Dhana Stokes and Zane Austin with some of their prized Lowline stud animals.

By PENELOPE ARTHUR

WHEN agricultural science teacher Fiona Lester talks about the Australian Lowlines under her care at Dakabin State High School, her passion for the breed quickly becomes apparent.

But Mrs Lester admits to not always being so fond of the breed that has now captured her heart.

"We started the stud in 2002 and at the time I didn't think much of Lowlines, but as time has gone on and I have seen how Lowlines allow the kids to work with them and get more confidence working with cattle, I have become very impressed with them as a breed," she said.

"They are docile and easy to handle but they aren't push-overs.

"The students still have to be on the ball when they are working with them.

"They are a really valuable learning tool."

Based on Brisbane's north side, Dakabin State High School is home to Dakabin Lowlines, a stud herd that now includes two bulls and six breeding females.

The school is situated on about 8ha and has the use of another 16ha of council-owned land nearby.

Mrs Lester said the idea to operate an Australian Lowline stud came after a group of students were invited to attend a Lowline

School Lowline team prove high achievers

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camp. "At the end of the camp the hosts donated an embryo and Margo Hayes from Vitulis Lowline Stud supplied a recipient cow and then kindly donated the calf, Dakabin Magic Pudding," she said.

"That was the first animal in our stud herd and since then we have worked with quite a few local Lowline breeders who have lent us bulls and helped us develop our herd."

About 25 students are currently involved in the school's show team, which had a busy 2013 season attending 12 shows across the south east.

"We start with the Kilcoy Show in April and we do approximately 12 shows through to the Ekka and every third year we go to Rockhampton for Beef Australia," Ms Lester said.

"The students are responsible for the training of all the show cattle."

Students learn how to train them to be led on a halter, wash and groom them, and prepare them for the shows.

"They are also involved in the day to day husbandry practices needed to manage and keep the cattle healthy," Ms Lester said.

"We had a fairly successful year this year.

"We won supreme small breeds cow and/or bull in show at Sunshine Coast, Kilcoy, Rocklea, Redcliffe, Pine Rivers as well as a few other local shows.

"It's great for the kids to have a win. They get a lot of joy and a sense of achievement when they do."