

2020/21 JOURNAL | ISSUE NO. 32

AUSTRALIAN LOWLINE

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BRED FOR BEEF

*Above: Day old heifer calf, Lowland Park
Roseanne*

*Right: Newborn calf with mum
Photography by Tania Wilkinson,
Lowland Park, New Zealand*



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WINNER OF THE 2020 ALCA PHOTO COMPETITION

*Kaitake Lowline Stud,
Taranaki, New Zealand*



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*Opposite page, top: Australian Lowlines
in the mist. Photo courtesy of Audrey
Lauvie, France*



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Julie Knight

We have experienced a difficult year but one positive is that many city-dwellers are looking for a healthier lifestyle and moving to the country to be self-sufficient. What better way to feed the family than by growing your own beef and produce or buying from local producers. Both of these trends open opportunities for Australian Lowline breeders. Pleasingly, a few members have taken this opportunity to begin selling Certified Lowline Beef (or Lowline beef under their own brand). The more people who try our beef and love it, the more steers will be needed to meet the demand.

We would like to thank the long-term members who are retiring from farming for their support of the breed over many years and wish them an enjoyable time in their new stage of life.

The introduction of the popular new Lifestyle membership allows Lowline owners with small herd numbers to enjoy the benefits of being involved with like-minded cattle people breeding Australian Lowlines.

This year we welcomed our first members from France, Scotland and Ireland with continuing membership growth from England and the USA. Thank you to the ALCA members who are promoting their cattle and encouraging others to join the Australian Lowline family.

To date funding has been approved for the three year Dairy Beef Progeny Testing project in New Zealand run by Beef and Lamb NZ to collect much needed data for the breed, the 2021 Beef Australia event in Rockhampton, Queensland and the 2021 Royal Melbourne Show in Victoria, showcasing Australian Lowline cattle as the Feature Breed.

Executive Office, Katrina McKemey and Natalie Herd, the Lowline Registrar, are the people to contact with all your questions regarding the Association and procedures for the breed. They are very easy to deal with and happy to help with all your questions.

If you have any queries please contact the ALCA office: office@lowlinecattleassoc.com.au

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members for their continued support throughout this challenging time and hope that 2021 is better for all of us.

Julie Knight

ALCA PRESIDENT



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BEEF AND LAMB NEW ZEALAND DAIRY-BEEF PROGENY TEST SCHEME

Not since the commencement of the trials at the Trangie Agricultural Research Centre, NSW in 1974 has a genuine opportunity presented itself for the collection of scientifically based breed efficiency and performance data.

ALCA had recently agreed to sponsor an Australian Lowline bull for participation in the Dairy - Beef Progeny Test conducted by Beef and Lamb New Zealand Genetics. The program aims to compare the genetic suitability and traits of a number of bulls from a wide variety of beef breeds, to illustrate the successful use of beef bulls in a dairy - beef finishing system.

Seeing an opportunity, Ironclad, Lowland Park, Rancho Radiata and BBQ Ranch studs came together to lobby for the inclusion of an Australian Lowline bull in this year's Test program. The success of this inclusion is seen as ground-breaking in the future development of our breed.

The nominated bull is Ploughbright Fennessy, bred by Sally Yearbury, Ploughbright Stud, and owned by Christina and David Clee, Rancho Radiata Stud. The bull is now deceased so the current owners of semen, Matt and Tania Wilkinson, Lowland Park Stud, were happy to donate it for the purpose of the test. This bull has produced progeny with high growth rates which will be important when growth rates of progeny are compared between breed sires.

The Dairy-Beef Progeny Test commenced in 2015 with the mating of 800 Friesian and Kiwi cross cows and 220 heifers with Angus and Hereford bulls by artificial insemination (AI). The aim was to identify ideal bulls to use in the dairy-beef system. By 2017 the research dairy herd increased to 1600 which were joined by AI to another 26 nominated sires.. It is anticipated that in the 2020 Test, the herd size will be 1400 cows and 16 nominated sires of which the Australian Lowline breed will be one.

The test program will analyse data from each calf. Birth weight and calving ease; gestation length; weaning age; growth weights and finally carcase traits will be assessed. Birth weights, calving ease and gestation lengths are important in the dairy industry as they all assist with trouble free calving and more days in milk for the dairy cow. These are areas where the Australian Lowline bull should have positive results. Important carcase data will also be collected at the end of the program.

Whilst ALCA has high hopes of being favourably compared to the larger beef breeds through the three year program, it is the scientifically controlled data for our Australian Lowline breed that will be the invaluable asset for us all to consider in our breeding programs and markets of the future.

B+LNZ GENETICS DAIRY-BEEF PROGENY TEST SIRES



COHORT 6 (2020 MATING)

BREED	SIRE
Angus	Focus 193013
Angus	Focus Cracker 4025
Angus	Ngaputahi P219
Australian Lowline	Ploughbright Fennessy QLF046
Hereford	Beechwood Imposer 44
Hereford	Mahuta Ocean 8073
Murray Grey	Torrisdale Pegasus P66
Poll Hereford	Ardo Hustler 8014
Poll Hereford	Beechwood In Time 7
Poll Hereford	Foulden Hill King 180500
Poll Hereford	Shrimptons Hill 190126
Poll Hereford	Westholm Fargo U66
Red Devon	Tinopai BA Jed
Simmental	Kerrah Fortress F326
Speckle Park	Kidmans Cove
Speckle Park	Totara Hill Steak House N6
Stabilizer	Focus Stabilizer 5004 (red)
Stabilizer	Focus Stabilizer S183 (black)
Angus	Glanworth 17013*
Hereford	Ardo Ajax 5014*
Simmental	Kerrah Exchequer E502*
Simmental	Leafland E121*
Stabilizer	Focus Trinity 135263*

*Indicates that the bull is a link sire

For more information contact
info@blnzgenetics.com | 03 477 6632



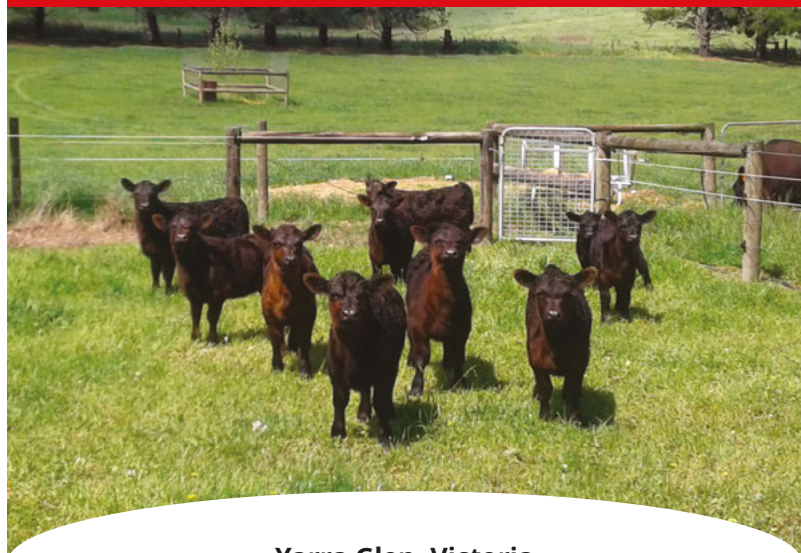


PLOUGHBRIGHT FENNESSY

ALCA's entrant in Beef & Lamb New Zealand Dairy-Beef progeny test.

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COW FAMILIES: THE BACKBONE OF YOUR HERD

With Julie Knight, Victoria

Whether for lifestyle, showing or primary production, the future of the Australian Lowline breed is in the hands of today's breeders. It is imperative that you strive to improve your herd through selective breeding. Establishing cow families that produce cattle of consistent quality that suit your environment and your market is the key to success.

The importance of selecting a good bull is often emphasised, however it is crucial that breeders do not overlook the value of the cow family. Purchasing a few cows is just the start, the next step is to breed progeny that are an improvement on the foundation herd, in order to establish a line that will allow you to consistently identify desirable and productive genetic traits.



All females within each cow family will trace back to the original female of that family. The aim is that after years of selection for these traits, cow families will produce lines that are highly predictable and profitable. Experienced breeders know the value and importance of having good cow families.

To gain some insight into the world of cow families, we asked Julie Knight, Wanamara Farm, a few questions. Julie has 25 years of breeding experience and industry wisdom behind her.

HOW AND WHY DID YOU ESTABLISH COW FAMILIES IN YOUR HERD?

“Cow families provide stability in your herd. If beef production is your aim, your breeding cows should produce the quality of calf that produces great beef, no matter what bull you use. Bull selection is important as well but that is another topic,” Julie says.

“Things were very different in 1995 when we started our Australian Lowline journey. Breed improvement hadn’t begun, availability was limited and prices were high. We were on a waiting list with Peter and Jeanette Stebbins for a heifer, finally purchasing Ardrossan Chrystal, who was a deep bodied female with honest attributes, and a daughter of Foundation cow, Trangie M247 (Ardrossan Pearl). After that, purchasing a couple of embryos, doing embryo flush programs and using AI (artificial insemination) created the base animals which I have improved upon to establish my Wanamara cow families.”

THERE IS A LOT OF OBSERVATION AND RECORD KEEPING REQUIRED WHEN ASSESSING TRAITS. WHAT TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS ARE MOST IMPORTANT WHEN ESTABLISHING A COW FAMILY?

“The ideal breeding cow needs to be as close to the ‘full package’ as possible so she produces calves equal to, but preferably, better than herself. Structural soundness is important for the longevity of a breeding cow, also temperament, milking ability, depth of body, good muscling, fertility and good feet and legs. By improving my cattle through selective breeding over the years, many desired traits have been achieved. I need to read ear tags because the members of each of my cow families look so similar.

I have been exhibiting Australian Lowlines since 1996 and we have been extremely successful with bulls and females from different cow families. I am proud to say that my herd is consistent in quality, type and what they produce. Achieving this has taken a lot of hard work over a long time.”

Photographs courtesy of Julie Knight

Opposite: Ardrossan Chrystal at 10 years with her new with calf

Below: Wanamara Licorice Allsorts in 2017. She is a great granddaughter of Ardrossan Chrystal & great great granddaughter of Ardrossan Pearl



HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHICH TRAITS TO TOLERATE, TO IMPROVE UPON OR TO CULL?

Julie considers that structure and soundness, and a deep body for beef production are non-negotiable. A cow’s inability to rear a good calf, a questionable temperament or bad feet earn an animal instant disqualification.

Julie elaborates, “I will not sell cattle that don’t have a good temperament. Many people purchasing Australian Lowlines are new to cattle so my animals need to be easily handled. It is not good for my stud nor the breed to be otherwise. Wanamara is a working farm, my cattle are not pets. A good temperament doesn’t mean being able to pat an animal - instead visitors can confidently walk in and around all my cattle in the paddock.”

Aside from the role temperament plays in everyday stock management, it is proven that a docile temperament equates to tender beef.

“Cows must produce and raise a good calf to be kept in my herd. My cows are always in working condition and have to raise their calves, without supplementary feeding (other than hay and minerals). If a cow raises a poor calf yet still has good body condition, she will be culled. No use having fat cows that don’t feed their calves.

If a cow produces a questionable calf to a new sire, after previously producing good calves, I will give her another chance as it might be that the genetic combination didn't 'click'. Even breeding a champion show cow with a champion bull doesn't automatically mean a fantastic result - you won't know if those genetics work together until the progeny is on the ground."

Milk production is the key to the efficiency of the cow-calf unit so the ability to convert grass into milk and milk into meat on the weaner is paramount. Australian Lowlines excel at feed efficiency - an important trait not to compromise on.

"I don't worry about extra teats (within reason). Most Australian Lowlines will have extra teats, generally two at the back of the udder, but they won't affect her ability to feed her calf. For cosmetic reasons, most show judges will prefer to see a cow with four teats. However, the correct attachment and suspension of her udder are important for a long productive life of calf rearing.

A cattle breeder once told me 'Cattle have to travel for water and feed so if they can't walk they will die'. This is an important trait that I always consider when selecting my cattle. Genetic inheritance for feet is a trait with low heritability so will take many generations to improve. Cows with bad feet should be culled. Joining cows to a bull with good feet should increase the chance of having progeny with good feet."

CAN BREEDING FOR TRAITS LEAD TO REPERCUSSIONS DOWN THE TRACK?

Julie believes that if you concentrate on one trait over a long period you may end up minimising other desired traits. For example, by continuously using solid, thick bodied bulls, females may end up looking heavy in the shoulders with very little femininity (looking bullish). On the other hand, if you continuously use taller, long bodied bulls, you may end up with fine boned females that have lost muscle and depth.

Julie emphasises, "The trick of breeding a good animal is to look at your female, work out what traits need improving and select a bull that will hopefully improve those traits in their progeny. I introduce a new bull into my herd every three or four years to diversify the genetics. I also have semen from a selection of bulls to use. If there is a trait I would like to improve, I know which bulls I can use to achieve those results."

WHEN IS A BREEDING COW AT HER BEST AND WHY?

It takes time for that good looking heifer to mature into a great cow and prove her value in the herd. A few factors contribute to a cow producing good beefy calves - the number of calves

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birthed and her age being two of them.

Julie explains "From the third calf onwards, cows should be at their best for feeding and rearing a calf - they have matured with functional udders. After 10 years of age, the rearing of a calf tends to start taking its toll on a cow. If the weather conditions aren't favourable and the feed isn't plentiful for an older cow, the body condition and milking ability may begin to wane. This may result in her having trouble regaining body condition for the next calf and may eventually lead to infertility and culling. Last year I made a very difficult decision to cull a lot of my older cows due to drought and the prospect of them struggling through another hard winter.

Now my herd age is younger and should be more productive for the next few years. If your farming conditions are more gentle on your herd it is feasible your cows will go on being productive for several years past the age of 10. It is important to cull non-productive cows and those who don't meet expectations because we can't afford to spend money on animals that will not pay their own way."

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO PEOPLE WANTING TO BREED AUSTRALIAN LOWLINES?

- Begin with a solid foundation of well-bred registered females from a reputable Australian Lowline breeder
- Remember if you want quality be prepared to pay for it
- Educate yourself about cattle/nutrition/pastures - there are many courses available
- Ask questions of people who have cattle knowledge and experience, especially local farmers who know your area
- Listen to and implement the advice



Wayne Jenkins

ARDROSSAN PEARL

Photo credit Wayne Jenkins

*Foundation cow, Ardrossan Pearl
(Trangie M247)*

- Trust your own eye. Some cattle 'won't look right' while others will catch your eye again and again - learn to know what you like looking at and why
- Don't be sentimental - be prepared to cull unless you are not serious about making money from your cattle
- Don't sell your culls to another breeder as it is not good for your name nor the breed

Establishing cow families that produce consistent quality is the key to success of not only your own herd but to that of the breed as a whole.

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AUSTRALIAN LOWLINE — A CUT ABOVE THE REST

Not all animals are stud quality and by utilising the Certified Lowline Beef (CLB) program your steers become a great source of income for your farm.

Developed by the Australian Lowline Cattle Association, the CLB program allows ALCA members to promote their beef using the CLB trademark. This unique program enables the beef to be traced, by utilising the DNA and Parent verification test results that are already a prerequisite of animal registration with ALCA. Therefore the minimum requirement of having one registered Australian Lowline parent to produce the beef must be met.

Beef produced under the CLB agreement can be DNA tested to prove its origins. This traceability allows for a guarantee of quality and providence for the consumer while also providing a product management tool (to help identify the best beef producing genetics) for the producer. Carcase data collected through the CLB program is invaluable.

At slaughter, there is a general loss of 50 – 55% of the live weight in the head, hide and offal. In this respect, Australian Lowlines are the same as any other beef breed. Based on past and present data, after assessment of the remaining carcase weight and the saleable meat available, **the Australian Lowline breed produces 70 – 75% meat yield.** This exceeds industry standards of 55 - 65% meat yield.

Meat quality and consistency is the other vital factor when producing beef. Time and again through both Carcase and Taste Competitions, and customer feedback, the Australian Lowline breed has proven it produces excellent quality beef.

Beef can be sold directly to your local butcher shop, through a paddock-to-plate operation, high-end restaurants or at the local farmer's market. ALCA members have access to the e-book, *Developing a Beef Market*, for further information.

If you haven't eaten Lowline beef, you need to try it. As a beef producer, knowing your product allows you to effectively market your beef and promote its attributes – the fantastic eating qualities and unique traceability of Australian Lowline beef.

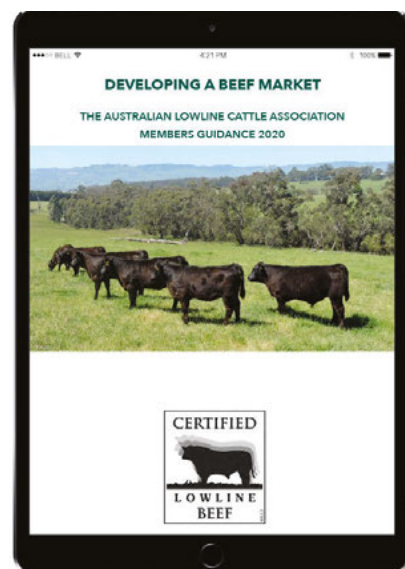
Further information about the Certified Lowline Beef Program including how to become a CLB Producer is on the ALCA website: www.lowlinecattleassoc.com.au



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CLB PRODUCERS GUIDE

E-booklet published by ALCA to assist our CLB producers in developing their beef market.

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Paddock to Table

*Beef from an Australian Lowline cow,
dry aged for 28 days.*

Frank Scmazzone, farmer and owner of the family butcher shop, Paddock To Table, in Laverton, Melbourne, Victoria, says, "these shorter cattle have many benefits. I move my cattle around the farm by cell grazing so they need to be easy to work with and calm cattle means good eating."

"As a butcher, their meat to bone ratio is fantastic, resulting in a high percentage of saleable meat for my shop. Lowlines are early maturing animals which means beef with flavour and fantastic deep colour."

THE GLENLONNY STORY - FROM BEAST TO BEEF

With Sue Foureur, South Australia

Sue Foureur has been involved with Australian Lowlines since 1998. Today her Australian Lowline herd runs on 15 acres (6ha) proving that intentionally small can be successful. Sue says "Managing my farm business on my own has been challenging but very rewarding. Using 'low stress' cattle handling methods, coupled with the excellent temperament of this breed, I have been able to manage my herd safely."

"Together with Peter and Denise Moloney, I commenced selling Certified Lowline beef in 2014 at Mount Gambier markets. It was a successful venture but ended in 2018 as the Moloneys had other commitments. Always up for a challenge, I took on the markets alone. Adding Lowline beef pies, sausage rolls and pasties all baked in my kitchen at home allowed me to diversify and more importantly utilized the WHOLE animal. My beef is guaranteed grass fed and this is what my customers prefer."

HOW I GO FROM BEAST TO BAKE

1. Ideally the animal is aged 18 to 24 months. In the past I've slaughtered older or fatter cows which have still produced excellent meat, full of flavour - Australian Lowlines are great for this.
2. I organise a suitable time with my butcher for slaughter and to have the animal freighted to the abattoir. The carcase is normally sent to my butcher the following week.
3. I developed a standard cutout sheet for the butcher. This lists what I require and how I want those cuts packaged. e.g. Scotch fillets - cut thick or thin - packed as two or four steaks, cryovaced, whole eye fillets or cut into steaks etc. Each sheet varies depending upon requests of my customers.
4. Once processed I refrigerate the meat on farm, notifying my customer that their order is ready to pick up. While a lot of customers collect from the Farmers Market, most Glencoe locals pick up from the farm gate.

5. Thursday and Friday are my days for baking pies, sausage rolls and pasties (for sale hot or cold) on Market Day. The Market is held on Saturdays, from 9am - noon.

It doesn't sound too much when I write it down, but it can be a lot of work - packing up the car with all the necessary items, travelling to the markets and then setting it all up. After cooking and selling products for 3 hours we then pack up, drive home, unpack again and clean up at home. By 3pm I am ready for a "nanna nap" and wishing I didn't have to go to check and feed my animals - but I do love being out in the paddock with them. And so, the cycle begins again for the next week. CLB really is the best, my regular customers assure me of this all the time, and they keep coming back again and again!

AT THE LOCAL MARKETS

Photo courtesy of Sue Foureur

Sue chatting with customers of the Glenlonny Beef stall at the local market.



WHEN A HOBBY BECOMES A PASSION

With Denis and Claire Hickey, Queensland

Denis and Claire Hickey embarked on their Australian Lowline journey at a time when the breed was relatively unknown. In 1991 they purchased 20 acres at Curramore, QLD, in preparation for retirement. They knew they'd need to think about how to manage their property and decide what would be of interest to them upon retirement.

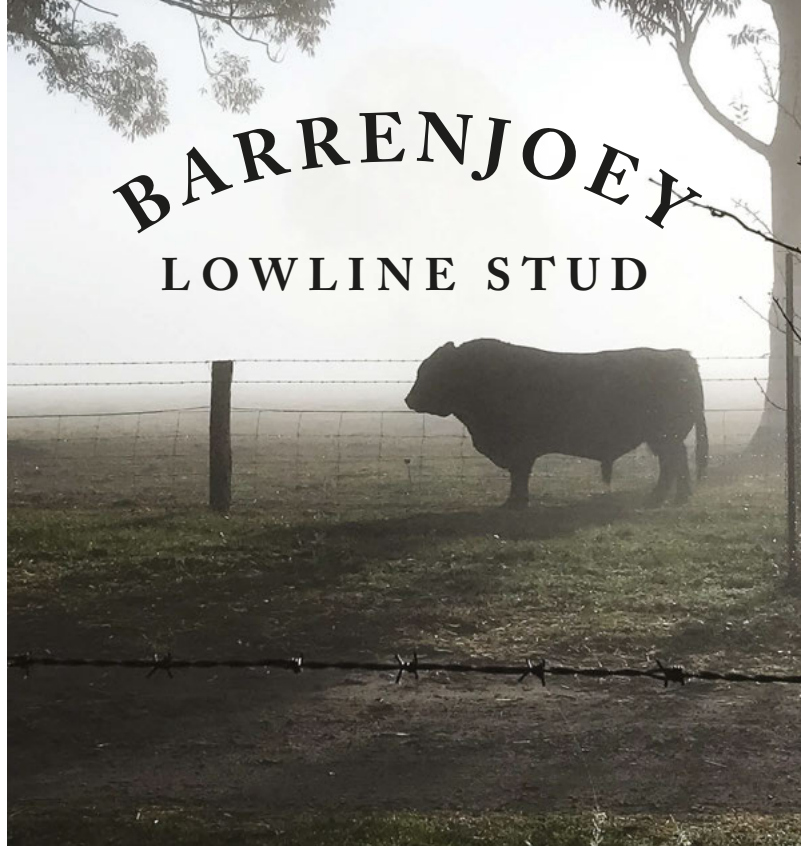
"At the time, several exotic species such as Emu, Ostrich, Deer and Alpacas were gaining the attention of hobby farmers," Denis explained. "I thought as newbies to farming, it would be smarter to stick to animals that vets and locals knew about, were easily managed with standard infrastructure, and had a less exotic price tag! Having watched a Don Burke TV show featuring Australian Lowlines, we visited the Sydney Royal Easter Show. We saw them again at a Field Day at Don Burke's farm in the Southern Highlands."

"In those days," Denis continued, "Lowline prices were also in the exotic range, but I put a business plan together showing we could break even. Even if we weren't going to make a lot of money, that was acceptable as we retired with substantial Superannuation." Claire added, "We had no cattle experience whatsoever, making the size and nature of the Lowline very appealing."

In 1995, Denis and Claire purchased two heifers, (Marigold and Bluebell) for \$11k each and subsequently a bull, Vandal, from Bloodwood Lowline Stud, near Gympie QLD. The cattle were agisted until 1997 when they were ready to move to the Curramore farm. With helpful neighbours to get them through the rough spots, Donovans Knob stud was on its way.

Within a few years, Denis grew his herd number to 40. Coorah Downs and Possum Bend Studs were in the area, so they banded together and embarked on ET (embryo transfer) and AI (artificial insemination) work. Denis used ten Hereford heifers as embryo recipients, achieving 9 out of 10 calves. Denis remarked, "This high level of success was because I heeded the advice given - pay attention to the nutrition of the cows." The other studs had very different results - a 50% and 33% success rate. Denis

BARRENJOEY LOWLINE STUD



TALLONG, NSW

Bill and Lee Brydon

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Phone: 0421 280 458

explains, "I know neither of them took much notice of the vet's advice regarding nutrition. For me, the results reinforced the importance of that advice."

Donovans Knob Stud had a successful show career from the outset, taking out Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion in the first Gympie show they entered. They successfully exhibited at the local shows and the Ekka taking home many a broad ribbon.

Whilst the focus for Denis was primarily stud, the Hereford cross progeny provided a small beef sideline. Claire remarked that "the black baldies easily sold at the saleyards" and fondly remembers "Freckles" the Hereford cow.

Denis was very keen to promote the breed. The Queensland Promotion group believed that they should focus on and foster the interest of youth in the breed, so they were proactive in promoting to the schools, even holding a Field Day at Kilkivan. About six schools attended. The day's activities revolved around cattle care and handling with a point system for each task providing a winner. The prize was an embryo, donated by Vitulus stud. The winning school was Dakabin High, which is still actively involved and highly successful today.

Denis then either donated or loaned further animals to other



high schools in the region such as Lockyer, Kenilworth, Nambour Christian College, and Maryborough, naming just a few. Some schools participated in shows, for others the Australian Lowlines were an integral part of their agricultural programs. Lockyer High School, known as Loc-Hi, still has a very successful stud and show team. Not one to miss an opportunity, Denis even gave semen away to local dairy farmers to prove just what an Australian Lowline bull could do. They were rather impressed with what they saw!

During 23 years of active breeding, Denis has made some errors but also gained knowledge. Denis advises when you first buy your property and especially if you're new to farming to:

- Go through all four seasons before you buy any stock
- Make friends with local farmers, use local knowledge
- Spend the money to do your soil tests, seed and improve your pastures
- Learn the stocking rate for the country you have - start small, in fact, only stock to half your recommended carrying capacity
- Be aware of the country from which you buy in stock. When Denis bought some Australian Lowlines from Wanna Willa stud in Singleton, NSW, he lost two animals, even though he "had them blooded for ticks shortly after arrival".
- Learn what's on your land - plants, weeds, types of grass and how they need to be managed. Denis shared how he lost five animals in one season. An expensive and heartbreaking lesson in feed and pasture management.

DENIS WITH DONOVANS KNOB WINMALEE

Photo by Sarah Price



"I can't emphasise enough the importance of understanding your land, the area in which you farm and the carrying capacity. Nutrition is critical to success. To have good nutrition, your animals require good, balanced pastures" then with a laugh adds "and if you're a hobby farmer, don't expect to make money!"

Being proactive in breed promotion and within the Association, including being on Council, has been a rewarding and fulfilling experience for Denis and Claire.

At 80 years of age, Denis is ready for the next stage of his life. Despite recently resigning from the Association and no longer breeding, his passion for and love of the Australian Lowline breed is still obvious. Having only recently sold the six youngest of his herd, his three remaining Lowlines - his one remaining cow family - are the top priority.

At 20 years of age Donovans Knob Winmalee (who is one of their first ET calves) certainly isn't showing her age. Her daughter, Bindi, aged 14 and granddaughter Heidi, aged 7, keep her company. These three cows are a glowing testament to the longevity and fertility of the Australian Lowline female, the importance of cow families in herds and the dedication of one man on a mission to spread the name, Australian Lowline, far and wide.

BLOODWOOD MARIGOLD AT 7 MONTHS OLD IN 1996

Photo courtesy of Denis &
Claire Hickey

THE K&P SHOW

With Philip Worthington, New Zealand

With COVID-19 cancelling many of the A&P* shows in New Zealand in 2020, one Australian Lowline stud staged its own show at home to give the young handlers in its team the chance to show off their skills.

It was grey, wet and muddy on the last Sunday in June at Woolstone Park, Fernside, in New Zealand's South Island but the competition was hot. Kay and Philip Worthington, who work with young students from the Rangiora and Kaiapoi High Schools, recruited friends, neighbours, and cattle colleagues to help stage the show.

A ring was set up in a paddock. Outside judges were engaged for both handlers and stock judging competitions. The grandstands came by trailer from one local A&P association, and another A&P loaned a microphone and speakers for the day. "Woolstone Show" ribbons were organised – now a collector's item!

Parents and neighbours arrived to be the crowd to keep the young exhibitors on their toes. They also learned something as stockman and judge Peter Heddell gave a run-down on what to look for in a good beef animal. Paraders judge Marie Fitzpatrick gave each competitor some handling tips. The day was laced with a bit of fun with a gumboot tossing competition to find the biggest tosser in Fernside and a Cow Pat Bingo contest, which proved a long wait as Woolstone Park Tequila was in no hurry to do her business on one of the numbered squares in her pen.

The afternoon ended with a barbecue and prize giving for competitors and families. Philip said it was great to see the support of everyone involved to stage the show to keep the momentum going for young exhibitors in the post-COVID environment. The young handlers also appeared in photographs accompanying a full page article that appeared under the heading "Welcome to the K and P Show" in a local newspaper, the "North Canterbury News."

*Editors note - Over the decades, the title of the various Agricultural and Pastoral Shows has been shortened to become (region/town) A&P Show. To reflect this, Kay and Phil thought a little word play on that tradition would be fun and the K&P Show was born!

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The judge for the Young Paraders classes, Marie Fitzpatrick (back to camera), puts one class through their paces. The next class, seated to her right, await their turn while family and neighbours look on.



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Check out the RASV website for Beef Cattle Competition updates at the Royal Melbourne Show:

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LOWLINES ARE COOL FOR SCHOOL

With Malanda State High School, Queensland

Malanda is a small rural town in the Atherton Tableland Region of Far North Queensland. Malanda has a growing population with its economy based on tourism and agriculture. The local school, Malanda State High is an active school member of the Australian Lowline Cattle Association having joined in 2013.

David Kilpatrick has been the agriculture teacher at the school since 2011. He has the job of providing the students with an introduction to the world of agriculture and the many pathways onto trade related or degree courses available in agricultural sciences and technology. The availability of agriculture, as a subject in the school curriculum, is now even more important following the closure of Agricultural Colleges in the State of Queensland.

Australian Lowline cattle were introduced onto the school farm in 2013. At present they have 10 cows, 3 heifers and a bull. The cattle are used as “real life learning resources” across all year levels within the school. This includes feeding/nutrition, breeding/genetics, livestock management, general handling and animal husbandry skills.

Whilst the school also has a number of Droughtmaster and Lowline crossbreeds, the Australian Lowlines are described by David as “close as to bombproof”. Their docile nature, size and easy management make them the perfect breed to introduce students to, particularly those without previous agricultural experience.

Other opportunities for those committed students at Malanda High, is participation in the School's Show team. Each year a team of between 20-25 students are involved in the preparation of the animals used in the shows which encompasses grooming, breaking and general show preparation. The School takes as many Australian Lowlines as are available to the Malanda, Tully and Atherton Shows where they compete in the All Breeds competitions against some formidable breeds

such as Charbray, Droughtmasters, Murray Greys and Shorthorns. They also compete in the Lightweight Steer competitions. All students are expected to participate in the junior judges and handlers competitions as well.

All the Show Team members from years 8 – 12 participate at the Malanda Show. The school's year 11 and 12's go to the two day Atherton Show, then only the year 12's travel to the Tully Show. Travelling and staying with the cattle over this period provides wonderful fun and comradeship with the students. Hopefully, it will be a successful year for the School in 2021.



MALANDA STATE HIGH SHOW TEAM IN THE RING

Photo courtesy of Malanda State High

Tarrawarra Lowlines Tarrawarra Lowlines Tarrawarra Lowlines Tarrawarra Lowlines
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FEEDING BEEF HEIFERS FOR GROWTH

By Dr Elizabeth Bramley
BSc(Hons), BVMS, PhD (Ruminant Nutrition)

INTRODUCTION

The main aim of every beef producer in Australia should be to maximise profit, producing a quality product for the consumer using good animal welfare techniques. Feeding cows for optimal performance and to minimise disease risk begins at the calf and heifer stage. Heifers should be fed to maximise frame size and udder development (not fat) consistent with the breed, two qualities which make them valuable assets to the cow herd. Post weaning, aim for steady growth (0.7kg/day) to approximately 60-65% of mature cow weight before mating. This results in better body structure, a larger pelvis and less risk of calving problems (dystocia). It also avoids over fatness which in addition to increased dystocia risk can also reduce fertility. Growing heifers require more energy and protein than adult, non-lactating cows and if pasture quality is poor, they should be supplementary fed with feeds higher in energy or protein as required. Pregnant heifers however, in their last trimester should be carefully managed because over feeding at this time will result in increased foetal size.

Although most beef rations are simplistic compared with dairy rations, these aims can still be achieved by careful pasture management and supplementary feeding when necessary. It is important however to have a basic understanding of rumen function of the cow and how to keep it healthy.

RUMEN FUNCTION

The rumen should be thought of as the power house of the cow. In an adult cow it is effectively a 150 – 200L fermentation vat containing billions of bacteria, protozoa and fungi. These microorganisms digest carbohydrates from a cow's diet producing volatile fatty acids which are absorbed across the rumen wall and used for energy, growth (muscle) and milk production. Microorganisms also require dietary rumen degradable protein to grow. In turn, the microbes leave the rumen and are digested in the abomasum to provide protein and amino acids to the cow. A cow also requires physically effective fibre to maintain a stable rumen. Fibre in the diet

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increases chewing and saliva production, buffering the rumen and maintaining a stable rumen pH. Physically effective fibre is at least 4cm in length. Lastly, cows require an assortment of vitamins and minerals to help balance the ration and minimise metabolic diseases particularly during pregnancy and lactation. Some vitamins such as vitamin A are important in fertility. Beta carotene, a provitamin A carotenoid is present in green forage in large amounts. This is lost as the forage matures and during the hay making process. Vitamin A supplementation may be important during times of drought.

ASSESSING A CATTLE RATION

There are three important points of assessment of a beef ration; the quantity of food (dry matter) being provided, whether the ration is balanced correctly and whether any supplements are delivered appropriately. Most beef cattle, particularly on small holdings are predominantly pasture fed for most of the year. Good quality pasture will meet most if not all of maintenance requirements and is the cheapest form of energy and protein to the animal. However, pasture varies greatly between seasons and poor quality pasture will not contain enough energy and protein to support heifer growth or lactating cows. During these times, these classes of stock in particular may require supplementation.

IS THE QUANTITY OF DRY MATTER PROVIDED ADEQUATE?

One of the most common nutritional problems with cattle on small holdings is shortage of feed. Pasture needs to be at least 2 – 3cm in height for cattle to successfully graze. Dry stock including growing heifers will eat approximately 1% of their body weight per day, to maintain weight compared with a cow in early lactation eating 2.0 – 2.5%.

There are a number of factors that can limit pasture intake in cattle. Firstly, if the height of the pasture offered is too low, cattle are unable to bite off enough pasture to consume enough. Secondly, if the energy content of the pasture is poor (<8MJ/kg DM) it is very slowly digested. If pasture protein (CP%) is less than 7 – 8%, poor rumen function limits intake. Low dietary sulphur and phosphorus and high forage moisture in late autumn/ winter can limit pasture intake. Finally, late maturity pasture or hay often is low in energy and protein content and high in lignin/ neutral detergent fibre (low digestibility).

IS THE RATION BALANCED CORRECTLY?

It is important that not only is the amount of food offered

appropriate to the class and weight of animal, the quality of food is also adequate. The ration must meet the requirements for energy, protein, fibre (roughage), minerals and trace elements. Minerals and trace elements are usually supplied through pasture in grazing systems and only need to be supplemented when there is a specific deficiency.

Fibre concentration in a ration affects rumen function both physically and biochemically. Inadequate dietary fibre results in rumen instability, and predisposes the cow/ herd to acidosis. Fibre should be 4cm in length to be physically effective. Neutral detergent fibre is a measure of the digestibility of cell contents for ruminants and is negatively correlated with DMI. The more fibrous the grass, the less the cow is able to consume. The NDF% of most pastures unless they are highly improved lush pasture would meet minimum requirements.

Energy and protein malnutrition in growing heifers, late pregnant or lactating cows (especially first calf heifers) is common in many districts during the feed deficit period (often during winter or a long dry spell). Affected animals will lose condition and may calve small calves prematurely. Heifers will not meet target growth rates. One of the measures of energy is metabolisable energy (ME). It is often helpful to understand the energy and protein requirements for various classes of

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stock and compare the feed values of some of the common pastures and supplements used. Table 1 summarises beef cattle requirements for dietary energy and protein.

TABLE 1. BEEF CATTLE REQUIREMENTS FOR METABOLISABLE ENERGY (ME) (MJ ME/KG DM) AND CRUDE PROTEIN (CP) %.

	ME (MJ ME/kg DM)	CP%
Maintenance (adult)	8	7–8
Late pregnant	8.5	8–9
Lactation	8.5–10	9–11
Growth	10–12	12–15

These requirements can be compared with feed values of some common feedstuffs fed to cattle (Table 2). Consultants or veterinarians can use this information to help formulate a supplementary feed plan to match feed available with requirements.

TABLE 2. FEED VALUES OF COMMON FEEDSTUFFS AND PASTURE (DM = DRY MATTER)

	DM%	ME (MJ ME/kg DM)	CP%
Green pasture (new lush - flowering)	14 - 25	12.6 - 10	12 - 25
Dry pasture	90	5 (3.5-9.5)	4.5 (4-8)
Pasture hay	90	8.5 (6.5-10)	10.5 (7-15)
Oaten hay	90	8 (6-9)	5.5 (4-8)
Wheat/ barley grain	90	12	11
Oat grain	90	11	9
Lupin grain	90	13	20-35

A NOTE ON SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING

If a supplement is required because pasture quality and/ or quality is insufficient, it should be chosen based on what is deficient in the diet. For example, cows fed poor quality pasture low in crude protein may require supplementation with good quality lucerne or pasture hay and a protein source like lupins or Manildra® pellets. Any concentrates should be introduced SLOWLY to reduce risk of acidosis and death. All supplements should be fed carefully to ensure that all animals have access to the supplement. Concentrate supplementation to cows on pasture by itself is not ideal. Fibre levels in the pasture may not keep the rumen stable. Forage supplements in addition to grain are often necessary to increase fibre concentration of the diet. Feeding by-products such as bread that are high in fermentable carbohydrate also carry a high risk of acidosis and should be fed with caution. At all times, the main principle of supplementation is to maximise pasture usage (the cheapest feed) and minimise the use of expensive supplements.

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GREAT BEEF, QUIET NATURE - IT'S THE BREED FOR ME!

With Danielle Irvin, New South Wales

From early childhood I have wanted to be involved in farming. Having lived on a sheep and cropping property in the Riverina until 8 years of age and having my grandfather involved with cattle my farming roots were deeply sown. Despite moving away from the land for many years, I jumped at a temporary farm hand position with Yanco Agricultural High School. I love the role so much and it has confirmed that farming was in my blood.

My father took an interest in a 100 acre irrigated farm in Yanco for grazing steers. Having a desire to produce a quality beef product, I started researching small beef breeds and discovered Australian Lowline cattle. After speaking to a couple of breeders who loved the beef that their animals produced I sourced a pack of Australian Lowline beef. It was a hit with everyone who tried it!

The size of my father's new farm provided the opportunity to start my own herd. Seeing an advertisement for the sale of six unregistered Australian Lowline cows with calves at foot and a bull, I travelled to the drought - stricken Port Macquarie area, and purchased them. The cattle were pleased to come back to irrigated pastures where they were fattened up. Through access to NLIS records, I was able to trace the history of the cattle and their pedigree, enabling some to be DNA tested and deemed registered. I immediately noticed how easy these cattle were to handle. I was very taken with the quiet and gentle nature of the Australian Lowline breed together with its good meat qualities, so deciding this was the breed for me, Blair Athol Lowline Stud began. I dedicated the name of my stud to my great grandfather who started the Blair Athol Clydesdale Stud.

The departure of Dad's steers meant the opportunity to increase my herd of Australian Lowlines so I bought 7 registered cows.

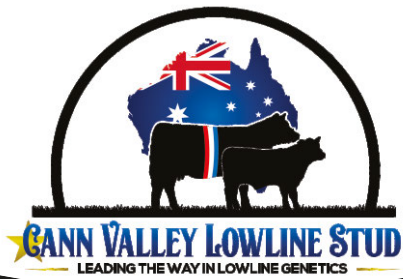
My plan now is to develop a registered Australian Lowline herd of about 30 head.

I have been lucky in my Lowline journey to have had such good help and guidance from a number of ALCA members in particular, Bob Smith from Windsor Park Lowlines at Uranquinty. I feel I am now doing what I was destined to do.



Top: Danielle's growing herd of Australian Lowlines at Blair Athol Stud

Bottom: Proof of the quiet and gentle nature that attracted Danielle to the breed.



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* 4th in Interbreed of 18 breeds
- never been achieved before *

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* Grand Champion Bull *

Tarrawarra Fantasia
* Supreme Exhibit *

Whittlesea Australian Lowline Feature Show 2019

Cann Valley Nut Cracker
* Supreme Champion *
* Supreme Champion
Beef Bull (All Breeds) *

Cann Valley Nefertiti Girl
* Grand Champion Female *

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breeds-never been achieved
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A LITTLE BULL IS STILL GOING A LONG WAY

With Christine Hine, Queensland

When Gympie breeder Chris Hine of McIntosh Creek Lowlines embarked on her export journey she certainly had no idea of the hurdles awaiting her. Being familiar with the AI process, through using it to improve and diversify the genetics in her own herd, and farming on 40 acres, Chris knew the value of having twenty seven bulls in the tank instead of in the paddock.

Since the inception of the Australian Lowline, there has been world wide demand for genetics. In this rapidly changing world, live cattle exports are not an option so once again breeders are turning to artificial insemination (AI) and embryo transfer (ET). International breeders do not have the genetic diversity available that Australian studs like McIntosh Creek do.

Perhaps naively, Chris was driven by her passion and a steely determination to see red and black Australian Lowlines in every country. 'With so many countries, including our own, breeding larger framed cattle I could see that there was a desperate need for an alternative. The breed traits of the Australian Lowline are so appealing and I could see the potential for the breed to be established in new countries. It has been extremely difficult to deal with all the different requirements - no two countries seem to have the same set of rules. I'm not sure that I've made any money but I do know I've made many friends and am achieving my goals! When I started out I fell in love with the breed and was determined to put my energy into continuing the work others before me have done - improving the breed and spreading the name Australian Lowline far and wide. It's true the red genetics are a particular passion, but really I love them all! "

Chris has sourced the best Australian Lowlines available and offers breeders diversity of genetics through semen and embryos. Since 2016, Chris has exported both red and black genetics to the UK, Switzerland, Scotland, France, Wales, Ireland, Germany, New Zealand and USA and fielded enquiries

from many more. With breeders in Canada, Laos, Belgium, Norway, South Africa, the Czech Republic and Zambia on the waiting list for embryos and semen in 2021, the name of this amazing breed continues to reach far flung places.

In the early days of the breed, ET and AI were common practice here in Australia. Using this technology allowed breeders to quickly increase herd size and commence work on breed improvement. Whilst it doesn't appeal to everyone, it remains an option available to Australian breeders - with access to some of the newest and oldest genetics. It is a quick method of gaining genetic diversity without needing the acreage to run several bulls.

The future of this breed is in the hands of today's breeders, so we must all continue to use whatever methods are available to preserve the purity of the genetics and expand the commercial viability of the Australian Lowline Breed.



Photo courtesy of Christine Hine, McIntosh Creek Lowlines

AUSTRALIAN LOWLINES RULE THE RANCH

With Renae Stentz, Spangles, USA

TRG Ranch is located north west from the small town of Spangles in Washington State, USA. The ranch name incorporates the use of the first letters of my husband, Tom's name, myself Renae, and our son, Garrett. We tease our son that if he does not participate enough in the ranch the "G" could stand for our grandson, Gunner, who loves being in the middle of the herd whenever possible.

After purchasing some better land we wanted to get back into beef cattle, potentially for seed stock and something that would maximise the amount of ground we had. After a lot of research, we decided the Australian Lowline breed had the temperament, size and quality that answered our requirements. We found a family that was retiring and dispersing their Australian Lowline herd so we moved quickly.

My husband thought we were nuts, not only buying registered cattle but having to drive 14 hours one way to collect them. Steve and Wendy from Sunset Ranch, a wonderful family, were great with all our questions and planning. Our herd started with 2 bull calves, 2 cows and 2 heifers.

On the morning of our return with the cattle, we encountered some nasty fires which meant the journey took 12 hours rather than 8, to get to our planned stop, our friend's farm in Eugene, Oregon, where we stayed an extra day to rest the cattle before heading home.

At TRG Ranch, we started bonding with the cattle by pulling up a chair in the corral with a bucket of treats and quickly discovered our cattle provided a wonderful stress release. We are now leasing additional pasture close to home allowing us to increase our herd to two dozen at any given time.

We still chuckle a bit about their size, but more about the length of the legs on a commercial cow and the loss of money those producers have as a result. Our customers have specifically liked the size and feed efficiency compared to other



Photo courtesy of Tom & Renae Stentz

Our grandson Gunner with Guinness

breeds. We can safely say we have sold more meat than we have eaten.

We love the breed and continue to build our program, thoroughly enjoying all the networking, both in the US and Australia, with the many wonderful breeders. Getting to know so many in such a short space of time I would consider a pretty good achievement.

A QUEST FOR GENETIC DIVERSITY

With Matt Wilkinson, New Zealand

Lowline beef production on a commercial scale has not been attempted in New Zealand, until now. For Matt and Tania Wilkinson, Lowland Park, following the traditional farming route is no longer the plan and producing Australian Lowlines primarily for beef was a challenge they readily accepted. The New Zealand beef market requires a steer of 180kg carcass weight which is Prime, P2 or finished with a fat covering of 3 to 10mm. With this knowledge Matt and Tania Wilkinson set about sourcing suitable breeding stock which wasn't easy.

Matt explained, "New Zealand has a very limited genetic base to its Australian Lowline herd when compared to Australia. The focus for most breeders in New Zealand has traditionally been to breed easy calving sires to service dairy industry heifers or stock for the lifestyle block as



LOTTIE

Photo courtesy of Tania Wilkinson

Rancho Radiata Lottie, a 5 year old cow, pictured at Lowland Park Lowlines, NZ



BREEDING BETTER BEEF

Photo courtesy of Tania Wilkinson

Australian Lowline steers, at Lowland Park Lowlines, NZ

pets or home kill. The existing breeders generally used either their own or locally available Australian Lowline bulls meaning the gene pool remained limited and perhaps not suitable to our specific goals - breeding animals producing early finishing beef."

Matt has observed that, in New Zealand, Lowline females grow significantly slower than their male siblings. "I believe this resulted from the small genetic pool available in New Zealand due to the fact that there has been limited new genetics introduced since the early imports from Australia. There are a few studs though that have infused new genetics through AI (artificial insemination) - Ploughbright Fennessy is one such example and this is partly what led me to investigating the possibilities further."

Having been a dairy farmer for many years, Matt explained, "AI has revolutionised genetic gain in both dairy and beef herds around the globe. Fortunately for us, some Australian breeders have been selecting their cattle on growth, structural correctness and conformation, with a few of them having collected semen for export around the world."

What is this genetic gain and 'improvement' talked about? Random matings of cattle produce random results. The offspring will display wide and varied traits and their genetic expression will be unpredictable.

Matt explains, "One thing we are working towards in our herd is consistency. An animal that grows predictably to a given

weight in a certain time frame. For me, as a beef producer, to be able to meet our market in a sensible time frame the females need to grow at a rate similar to that of the steers. Being able to calve at 24 months old suits our farming system. To achieve this, the heifers need to be 240kgs at 14 - 15 months of age, to reach a calving weight of 360kg at 24 months old which is 80% of the mature cow weight (450kgs). I cannot stress enough the importance of not mating heifers when they are too small - this applies universally across all cattle breeds. We are not trying to get Lowlines to a heavier mature weight than they already are, we would like to get them there quicker, which is more efficient with the pasture we have available.

Using selectively chosen imported semen from Australia is allowing us to achieve the goals we would not have otherwise been able to if we'd only used our own bulls."

It's not all work for Matt though, with the imported semen, "At Lowland Park we are also introducing red genetics into our herd. This is not a commercial project, but rather one for fun!"

Continuing to increase the size of the Lowland Park herd and produce great animals that in turn produce great beef has become a passion for this one time dairy farmer and his ever patient wife.

THE LOWLINE INFLUENCE

Photo courtesy of Tania Wilkinson

The Lowline influence clearly evident in the 2 Lowline x Jersey steers on the left & middle of this photo. The steer on the right is 100% Australian Lowline. All 19 months old, taken at Lowland Park Lowlines, NZ





ABOVE

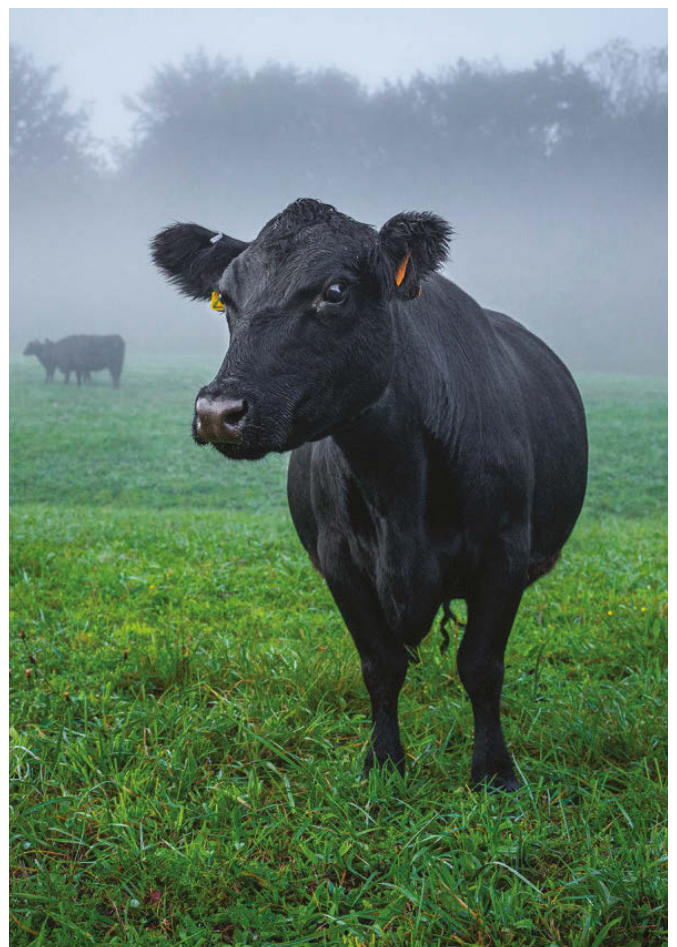
Photo by Tania Wilkinson

Matt Wilkinson, Lowland Park, New Zealand, with Rancho Radiata Playboy at 2yrs.

RIGHT

Photo courtesy of Audrey & Mathieu Lauvie

Australian Lowline cow in the mist at Perigord Lauvie Stud, France.



IRELAND - A NEW HOME FOR AUSTRALIAN LOWLINES

With Lucie Walsh, Kerry, Ireland

Lucie and John Walsh, are a Czech Irish couple who own a small farm in Kerry, Ireland. Their stud name in Irish is Boihéamach, meaning Bohemian which is also used to describe the Czech Republic.

In the winter of 2017/2018 after seeing a video, their interest in the Australian Lowline breed was sparked. A search for Irish breeders was unsuccessful so they set about finding out how to import the cattle. The following summer they tried unsuccessfully to obtain Lowlines from a UK based breeder. Then on August 18, Lucie discovered that one Australian Lowline bull, Wessex Angus, had been imported into Ireland. Two days later she travelled to see him and thought he was an absolutely beautiful animal.

Still determined to be able to breed Australian Lowlines, Lucie's searching led to Christine Hine, McIntosh Creek Lowlines, in Australia. It seemed her dreams would come true.

BOIHÉAMACH QUARTUS

Photo courtesy of Lucie & John Walsh

Boihéamach Quartus 11 months ET calf purchased by AI station



They purchased a few embryos which arrived in Ireland at the end of December.

Lucie said "in January the embryos were implanted into cross breed heifers with three pregnancies confirmed in March. On 19 October, the first full blood Australian Lowline calves hit Irish ground." They had two heifer calves and one bull calf. "We were very excited and pleased with how they thrived and grew".

"2019 was a very busy year with plenty of emails to the Irish Department of Agriculture. It had to create a new breed code for the Australian Lowline cattle and an artificial insemination ("AI") code for the semen" explained Lucie.

Lucie continued, "In July this year we contacted a couple of AI Collection Centres to see if there was interest in collecting semen from an Australian Lowline bull. One centre agreed to buy our embryo transfer bull and he has passed all tests so they will proceed to offer him as an AI Sire. We recently began a second round of ET, so we have our fingers and toes crossed that we will get more Australian Lowline calves by 2021. Ireland can sometimes be slow to adopt new things, so it may take a number of years before these little black pearls are accepted. There has already been a few inquiries for Australian Lowline heifers from small farms like ours. Having only 20 acres limits our grazing but we plan to expand our Australian Lowline herd as we just enjoy breeding them."

FROM PADDOCK TO PUB

With Rachael & Anthony Northwood, Victoria



YELLOW BOX RISE LOWLINES

Photo courtesy of Rachael & Anthony Northwood

New members Rachael and Anthony Northwood of Yellow Box Rise Lowlines purchased a beautiful 104 acre grazing property in the heart of the Yarra Valley (Victoria) earlier this year. The family moved from nearby Warrandyte to be closer to the historic township of Warburton where they were negotiating to purchase the Alpine Retreat Hotel. Soon after moving to the Yarra Valley, COVID restrictions and an accident resulting in Anthony fracturing his collarbone put a stop to his work as a registered builder. However, these two unforeseen events provided the opportunity to slow down allowing Anthony and Rachael to get their heads around what needed to be done to realise their dream of owning cattle.

That dream became a reality when they purchased seven registered Australian Lowline heifers, a bull and six steers from a local breeder. Since then the reality of the work required on the farm is just sinking in. Anthony and Rachael's children, Ollie who is ten, Archie eleven, Ben seventeen and Ella 20 years old all take a keen interest in the cattle and are actively involved in the care of their small herd. The Northwood's plan to increase the herd to around forty head over the next two to three years.

The Northwood's hope that in the future they will be able to put Lowline Beef on the menu and retail Certified Lowline Beef through their newly acquired pub. The pub's chef is keen to make use of the entire animal, a nose to tail philosophy in which the animal is respected, and novel and creative dishes are served. The Northwood's envisage the Alpine Retreat Hotel will establish a reputation as a foodie's destination, attracting national and international visitors to Warburton. The synergy between their new business venture and their passion for breeding Australian Lowline cattle is exciting but as Anthony says, "there is a lot to learn".

AUSTRALIAN LOWLINES — NO SHEARING REQUIRED!

With Sally & Malcolm Block, Western Australia

We emigrated from the United Kingdom to Australia in 1987, settling in Gidgegannup in the Perth Hills on 150 acres. Initially we ran a Suffolk sheep stud, bred thoroughbred horses for racing and had a few Jersey cows which I learnt to milk - not without a few upturned buckets in the process.

At the Gidgegannup Field Day about 10 years ago, we were introduced to Australian Lowline cattle. We were really taken with the breed and shortly afterwards we began our stud with a purchase of four in-calf cows. Finding them to be a really gentle and easy breed to maintain we purchased more - two cows in calf, 6 heifers and a bull from local studs. Our small stud, Cheverell Park, has now grown to about forty. We have had few dramas other than the bull, Kasanova, managing to get his head stuck in the hay feeder. The first we knew of it

was seeing a feeder waving around in the air. Although we were a bit wary, he seemed to know we had come to help and we freed him with the help of a very sharp file. The feeders are gone and we roll the bales down the paddock hill instead!

Recently we had another drop of beautiful calves with one cow delivering her third set of twins. She, like the other cows, has displayed wonderful maternal instincts with all twins surviving and well cared for. Our cattle are good at cleaning out the paddocks when the horses move on. Horses are such selective eaters. In recent years, 2 hectare rural residential subdivisions have been developed in the area and there is quite a demand for Lowlines as pets/grass eaters. Easier than sheep, no shearing, and so good tempered! It is a pleasure to share our property with them.



The Bottom Line

Woolstone Park

Lowlines

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- True to Breed
- Easy to Handle
- Early Finishing
- Winners in the Show Ring

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A LITTLE RAY OF AUSTRALIAN SUNSHINE IN THE UK

With Owen Tunney, Cheshire, UK

My wife Gillian and I are qualified as veterinary surgeons, and have been running a small herd of pedigree Aberdeen Angus cattle on a small holding since 2008. We get a lot of enjoyment from breeding and showing pedigree cattle. Our eldest daughter Sophie had been helping with washing and grooming show cattle almost as soon as she could walk. This was fine with the baby calves but they soon grow and it is risky for young kids to be working with the larger animals.

I became aware of the Australian Lowline breed when one of our embryo-transfer customers imported semen and embryos from Australia in 2015. It wasn't until late 2017 that I first saw them in the flesh at a local stud. The breeds small frame size combined with carcass conformation, eye appeal and placid temperament drew me to the Lowlines and they seemed a good prospect for introducing the children to cattle handling and showing.

SUNSHINE ARIEL

Photo courtesy of Sunshine Lowlines

Sophie, aged 6, with Sunshine Ariel at the 2019 show



There was a major reduction sale held in September 2018 presenting us with an opportunity to purchase Cammall Isolde with heifer calf at foot (now registered as Sunshine Ariel). Sophie was grooming and leading her spirited heifer calf within days. After a winter of washing and brushing we attended our first event with Sophie (age 6) and Sunshine Ariel placing Reserve Champion in the 'Any Other Breed' section at the Royal Cheshire County Show 2019. Sophie then went on to be placed second in the young handlers which created a lot of local interest.

Our Australian Lowline herd has now increased to three breeding females with our initial purchase having calved another heifer and Ariel having produced a heifer calf via AI to Australian bull, Fiddleleaf Red Ivan. We will be using semen imported from another Australian bull, Little Aberdeen Anderson next season as well as flushing our own cows to him. The purchase of embryos has so far only yielded bull calves and we will be sending two of these, Sunshine Rubble and Sunshine Enoch, for semen collection throughout winter. There is considerable interest in semen from Australian Lowlines being used for crossing on dairy cattle due to the calving ease and short gestation length, a fact which I have been preaching to many of the herds I work with.

At Sunshine Lowlines, we are only a small herd but are filled with enthusiasm for the Australian Lowlines and hope to keep showing and promoting the breed alongside our Angus herd for years to come.

IN THE PADDOCK

Photo courtesy of Kaitake Stud

*Australian Lowline cow and calf,
Kaitake Lowline stud*



AUSTRALIAN LOWLINES IN A NEW ZEALAND DAIRY HERD

With Fiona Henschman, Taranaki, New Zealand

Fiona and John Henschman are a husband and wife partnership running a 132 hectare dairy farm on steep hill country, up against the Kaitake Ranges (part of Egmont National Park). We run a herd of just over 200 Jersey and Jersey cross cows and all the replacements.

I have been interested in both beef and dairy cattle for many years and being an AB (Artificial Breeding) technician for 20 years, have tried a lot of different breeds over the dairy cattle. After all that time I have finally settled on the one true easy calving, easy to handle breed, the Australian Lowline. I bought some in-calf heifers and a couple of bulls from local breeders to start the Kaitake Lowline stud.

In June last year we bought another 21 hectares of flat but rocky ground with the idea of growing our hay and silage. Having the Puniho Runoff, as we call it, allows me to run my Australian Lowline herd, grow out the replacement Jersey heifers, run any dairy cows awaiting joining all without further competition with the milking herd. And of course, at present, we have one retired dairy cow "Curly", 19 years old and rearing

her 18th calf, a dairy Lowline cross bull - she is now enjoying the easy country after 17 years on hills.

This season in our Lowline herd we had three heifer calves and six bull calves born. Last season we learnt that calves can get very sick with scours while running out in pasture with their mums. So this year the Lowlines were also vaccinated with Scourguard before calving, same as the dairy cattle, which saved a lot of worry, with no sick calves this year.

We now have 5 breeding age and three yearling Australian Lowline bulls on the dairy farm, so with this year's crop I will have enough to consider selling some! The team of Lowline bulls did an amazing job tailing the dairy herd after we had finished artificial insemination with chosen dairy bulls. Most of those cows having Lowline cross calves, have calved 10 days early and easily.

I am very excited that there is an Australian Lowline entrant in the NZ Beef and Lamb Dairy - Beef Progeny Test, as the breed is not well known or taken seriously by most local dairy farmers. If they see official results and I keep prodding at them, I hope we will see Australian Lowline bulls used in the local dairy herds.



ON THE FARM

Photo courtesy of Matt & Jo McCready

Matt McCready in the paddock with his Australian Lowline herd.

EXPERIENCING THE LOWLINE ADVANTAGE

With Matt McCready, Victoria

I was first introduced to Australian Lowlines at Seymour Alternative Farming Expo in 2008 and after many years we have finally made the decision to buy some of these lovely animals. Being involved in the dairy industry since boyhood I was under the impression that we never had the time and space to own a separate herd. After many interesting discussions and some often colourful moments this has now changed. My wife, Jo, two kids Dougie and Tessa have jumped in and couldn't be happier.

We planned to use Australian Lowline bulls to 'mop up' after AI rounds on the dairy herd as well as over our heifers. The reality of making calving easier for heifers and being able to have a higher value end product made sense. This cattle breed are great converters of grass to muscle and seem to hold their weight really well. Beef production, selling quality bulls and showing are all planned in the future for Boxwood Park Lowlines.

I am also a teacher at Kyabram P-12 College and would like to involve the students with not only this breed but the intricacies of farming in a sustainable manner to help encourage future pathways. Having a breed of animal that is quiet enough for students to gain confidence and make a connection with is extremely important. I would really like students

to take ownership of the realities of what it takes to produce a good quality product. Whether this is from paddock to plate or from the calving paddock to the show ring. The skills, friendships and networks that people are able to form through caring for livestock always makes me smile.

AUSTRALIAN LOWLINES RETURN TO THEIR ROOTS

With Michael Walker, Scotland

New ALCA member, Michael Walker, has plenty of experience when it comes to beef and sheep production. The family farm is a 4,500 acre block in the southwest of Scotland in Dumfries and Galloway, which they have been farming for 98 years. Added to this is a neighbouring property and contract farming on a nearby 14,000 acre estate. The family presently runs 700 commercial beef cattle with 2,500 sheep to supplement the beef production.

Whilst working on a farm in Western Australia, Michael was first introduced to the Australian Lowline breed. On returning home in 2015, the family decided to look at reducing the frame size of their cattle to decrease the environmental impact on their land in their 1200mm annual rainfall district.

Michael and his family researched alternative beef producing animals that were sympathetic to the land, had good feeding efficiency and RFI (residual feed intake) and a reduced number of days to finish. Michael recalled that the Australian Lowlines were very efficient converters. In addition, their cow size was much smaller than the current 700kg herd average. They began their quest to source the breed.

Michael's family bought two Australian Lowline heifers from a UK breeder, one of which turned out to be in-calf and calved a heifer (Drumbuie Ruby) by the Australian sire, Ardrossan Orient in August 2020.

Due to the lack of commercial herds in the UK, access to stock has been difficult. As a result, Michael has relied upon obtaining imported embryos from Christine Hine, McIntosh Creek Lowlines, Queensland. The embryos were implanted into commercial heifers and to date, 10 out of the 16 implants were successful and there is great excitement for Spring 2021 when the new crop of Australian Lowlines are due to arrive.

Michael believes his industry is changing with climate change arguments and he foresees the Australian Lowline breed

as potentially being at the forefront of the agricultural debate because of their ability to run increased numbers yielding a greater volume of beef on the same acreage. His expectation for the breed in the future is they will compete favourably with the main commercial sires in the UK, in both efficiency and retail beef yields.

Although early in his Australian Lowline endeavours, we wish him well with his commercial undertakings and Drumbuie Lowline stud.



Photo courtesy of Michael Walker

The heaviest cow on Michael Walker's farm, a 1123kg Charolais with his two Australian Lowline heifers

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Special thanks to this years ALCA Journal Committee - Bill Brydon, Julie Knight & Sandra Price - for their efforts collating, editing and organising the 2020/21 Australian Lowline Journal.

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Published by The Australian Lowline Cattle Association
Editor / ALCA Journal Committee
Design & Layout / kelseypricedesign@gmail.com

Cover Image / Tania Wilkinson
Back Cover Image: Nanxi Wei on Unsplash

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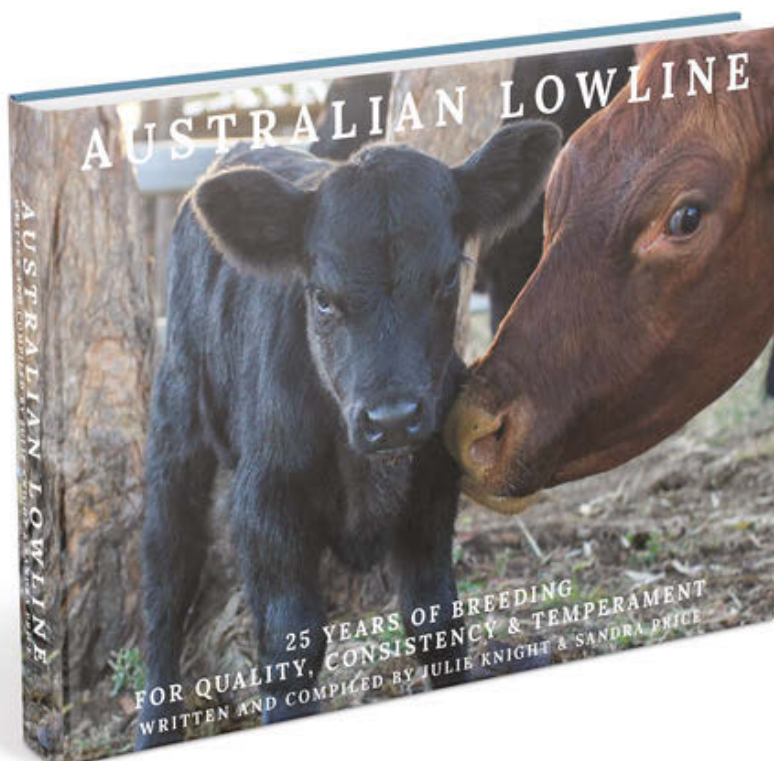
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