# ROMAGOMOLAS SUMMER 2011 \*... no better bull"

66 What they did to the Brahmans was amazing – better boned and everything we were looking for 77 Henry Family, "Sugarbag Station", Mt Garnet QLD 66 longer and heavier with a quiet temperament 99 Riggs Family, "Lakefield Station", Mataranka NT average premium of \$109 per head for the steers by Romagnola bulls 77 Dan Lynch, "Tara Station", Cloncurry QLD All of a sudden The beauty of the Romagnola the buyers stand to breed is it's ability to put attention and the beef where it counts 77 competition heats up 7 Denyss Alers, Dunsborough WA Linda Law,

# www.romagnola.com.au

Echuca Saleyard operator. VIC



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# 55 DNA MARKERS FOR FEED EFFICIENCY

\* MARBLING \* TENDERNESS \*





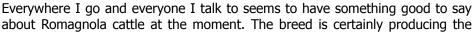
#### **President's Report**



2011 has been a dramatic year for the beef industry to say the least. From the floods of the summer, a record Australian dollar hindering export trade through the live export debacle it has certainly been trying

times in what was originally shaping up to be a pretty good year for the many producers. It seems ironic that after all the flooding rains and damage done, a lot of producers I speak to are looking for some moisture to kick start dry frosted pasture hammered by one of the coldest winters on record.

Hopefully the worst is behind us and we can rebuild our market share in Indonesian and repair some of the damage done by an ill-informed government decision which brought an entire industry to its knees. The most alarming thing is they still don't seem to realise what they have done. They don't appreciate the lost jobs, income or businesses let alone the animal welfare crisis they have potentially created through the stop they put on the supply chain. It will take years of hard work to rebuild the market to Indonesia and many producers will struggle as they simply won't have the resources to tie them over until they can next sell stock. While the Indonesian market is critical and many producers will stick with live export, many are already assessing their options and are looking at different breeds to provide more market options for them. The Romagnola is well placed to play a role in these areas. With the numbers and quality of bulls produced, many of these northern producers now have a serious alternative to running a pure Bos Indicus herd.





goods in a commercial sense and we have some good news stories about their success in different markets crossed with different breeds. The versatility of the breed is coming to the fore and it is proving to be the real deal with its ability to produce quality beef regardless of the environment. This is resulting in increased bull sales for our members but it is still obvious to me that the ones who put in the hard work are reaping the results. As a breed, we need to make sure we don't get pigeon holed as a breed that crosses well with Brahmans in the north. The results we are now seeing in some of the southern markets are nothing short of astonishing with Romagnola sired vealers making over \$1100 at 10 months of age in Victoria. We need to continue to market the eating quality and carcass characteristics of the breed as well as their adaptability.

Marketing wise, we still continue to punch above our weight. Our marketing budget is a mere fraction of what many of our competitor breeds spend each year yet we seem to hold our own in terms of bull sale numbers and average prices. I strongly believe that good cattle sell themselves, so we must continue to produce them and then get them out and about so people know about them.

Beef 2012 is the next major event on the Beef Industry calendar and the Romagnola breed will be there flying the flag as usual. We hope to have a good line up of led cattle shown as well as entries in the commercial and carcass sections.

As this is my first newsletter report as president I would like to thank our past president, James Pullen for the excellent job he did in steering the society on the right path through a few difficult years and to Tania Haynes and Anna Ahern for their support and continuing hard work as the society executive.

Regards

Matthew Ahern President

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#### **Feature Stud**

#### Roboco Romagnolas – Hughenden

"Romagnolas mean a lot to me...they are a real passion".

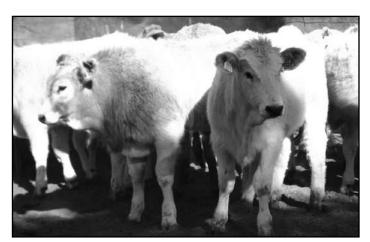
Bob Blacklock from "Roboco" Stud based at Hughenden readily admits that the breed has "done him well and he has a real love for them" however the breed has had to earn his respect over the 20 years he has had them. In the early 1990's he had a herd of polled Brahman cows and was looking for a breed to provide an injection of bone and weight. Bob turned to the Romagnola and purchased a bull from "Aldaree" Romagnola stud at Millmerran and some cows from John Onley at Nebo. Since then Bob has based his breeding program on Romagnola Beef Genetics, Wing Valley and Wyoming bulls and females sourced from Carramar, RBG, Robur and Wyoming studs.

Bob's biggest challenge has been managing his herd of 250 head on agistment country. 110 females are currently mated to 2 Romagnola bulls, Italia Bennett (a Xerox/Unesco bred bull) and Wing Valley Bellini (an Orlando/Orlone bred bull). These two mating groups are based at "Limbri Station" 40km south of Hughenden, an area well known for its open downs grazing country.

Not one to stay still, Bob also wears three other hats. Working alongside partner Tracey White, Bob has the contract with the local council as the Saleyards representative, is the Q Rail livestock contractor and acts as the Third Party Provider for the Dip Clearance Centre at Hughenden. Weaning at the Hughenden yards has had its benefits as his quality weaners have attracted many a favourable comment regarding their type and placid temperament. The "Roboco" cattle are bred to be a "hardy animal that will handle conditions with ease". They are weaned on weaner pellets, worked through the yards several times and are then "left to look after themselves". Weaner bulls are kept nearby with the heifers taken back to Bob and Tracey's place "Traboco" south of Hughenden.

Bob was born in Charters Towers however he spent most of his childhood at Julia Creek. Hughenden has been home off and on for the last 20 years with his current Saleyards contract starting in 2004. Bob aims to make the Romagnola stud his main interest in the future. He is already selling up to 15 Romagnola bulls locally each year however he maintains that quality is most important to him, not numbers.

Bob acknowledges that "if you want something you have to work for it". Things have not always gone his way but there is no denying that his herd of Romagnola cattle is one he should be immensely proud of.

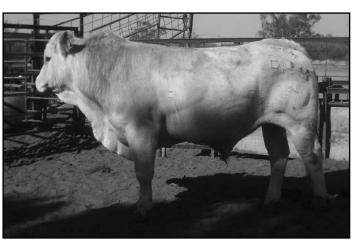


Roboco Weaners



Roboco Weaners

Bob and Tracey welcome visitors to Hughenden. Bob may be contacted on mobile: 0428411788.



Roboco Sire, Italia Bennett



Bob, Tracey and Ruby-Jae

#### **Commercial Focus**



#### Butcher Shoppe, Esk

ESK butcher Darren Ebert has no trouble accessing quality grainfed beef from growers in the Brisbane Valley but does have one request.

He'd like to see more Romagnola genetics used by producers and says Romagnola cattle are ideal for the butchering trade.

"When there are Romagnola's available that fit our criteria we certainly like to buy them," he said.

"They have great eye muscle and the colour of their meat always seems to be excellent."

"We've also noticed that there is not too much fat on the Romagnola's which means less waste in the bin."

"Their suburb muscling also means they yield a lot better than some other breeds of cattle."

Mr Ebert and his wife Rebecca purchased The Butcher Shoppe in Esk twelve months ago after owning and running a butcher shop at Aspley in Brisbane for six years.

The couple are well known for supporting local shows and sales, often paying top dollar for the grand champion steers.

Mr Ebert caused a stir at the Brisbane Exhibition in 2009 when he paid more than \$19,000 or \$72.10/kg for the grand champion led steer.

"That was a pretty successful advertising campaign for us and we developed a bit of a following in our shop with customers who liked to try meat from the award winning steers," he said.

"We still enjoy supporting the local shows and recently bought the Grand Champion steer at the Esk Show and the Grand Champion steer at the Toogoolawah Show."

The Ebert's now have four staff working in the Esk shop and say the business has been very busy since they purchased it 12 months ago.

Mr Ebert said he aims to focus on providing top quality, basic products.

"We don't do as much value adding as we did in our Brisbane shop because we have noticed the customers here prefer the basic cuts to do their own cooking at home," he said.

"We've been overwhelmed by how busy it's been since we took over – I think the local community has really appreciated our efforts in the shop and are supporting us accordingly."

Mr Ebert sources local cattle for the shop and prefers to buy grainfed steers.

"We look for steers that have had around 100 days on grain and we source them from local growers and from Nolan's Meats," he said.

"From a business perspective we just find the grainfed beef to be better eating quality."

Story: Penelope Arthur, Qld Country Life



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# Romagnola: proof in pudding

"HE old saying that the 'proof of the pudding is in the eating' is ringing true for the Romagnola breed. Feedback from producers across Australia is proving testament to the breed's versatility and ability to produce a quality article in any environment.

Beef producers using Romagnola bulls in their crossbreeding operations from Victoria to the too end of the Northern Territory are singing the praises of the Italian breed, and are excited by the options they provide in the market place.

Marketing options have always been important to Julia Creek cattlemen John and Ross Walker, who have been using Romagnola bulls over high-content Brahman females for more than 20 years at Rutchillo Station.

John Walker describes the crossbred progeny as "good, flat-backed cattle with all the best attributes of the Brahma

"We are targeting the premium MSA grassfed yearling market with our steers and surplus females but the Romagnolacross provides the option to go south into feedlots if the season doesn't go to plan", he said.

The Walkers recently consigned a line of No.9 largely Romagnola cross steers to JBS Australia in Townsville with impressive results. The total consignment of 396 steers averaged 320kg dressed weight with 90pc compliance with the top grassfed ox or yearling steer specifications.

Of this consignment 264 of the Romagnola cross steers were also graded



agnola cross cattle are providing premium market specifications

under the MSA criteria, with 54pc of these grading MSA and 97pc grading Jap ox or yearling steer. These results where achieved after a 750km road trip from their home at Rutchillo, 70km south of Julia Creek, to the Townsville meatworks.

Mr Walker has stopped using hormone growth promotants to assist with MSA compliance and believes, "that although the good season has made a difference, the Romagnola cross provides the weight for age required to reach premium market specifications which helps our bottom line\*

Northern Territory producers Gary and Michelle Riggs produce cattle for liv export on the 600so/km Lakefield Station

Mrs Riggs said they had been using Romagnola/Brahman cross bulls for about four years over their pure Brahman cows and described the progeny as "slightly longer and heavier framed with a quiet

"The steers are turned off for the live export trade in March/April each year with the heifer portion retained and mated to Brahman bulls. These are proving to be reliable breeders", she said. In Victoria, the breed is also gaining in

popularity in the production of vealers sold off their mothers.

John and Peter Favoloro, Echuca, use Romagnola bulls over Santa/Angus cross cows and recently sold 10-month-old

Crossbred proaeny are good, flat-backed cattle with all the best attributes of the Brahman.

John Walker, Rutchillo Station

calves through the Echuca saleyards to record an impressive average weight of 457kg for the steers to return \$1127/head, with the heifer portion averaging 425kg to return \$1054/head.

David and Bronwyn Moon, Nanneella. Victoria, recently sold eight-month-old calves off F1 dairy-cross mothers to average 352kg and return \$832/head.

"The Romagnola cross females go back in calf quicker than the others in the herd and I like their frame and growth rate," Mr Moon said. "The calves are always well received in the saleyards. Once you have worked with Romagnola cattle, it's pretty hard not to like them."

Echuca Saleyards operator Linda Law reported similar results for Romagnola cross calves sold there. "The sale ones along until the Romagnola cross calves

buyers stand to attention and the competition heats up", she said.

Western Australian Romagnola breeders Denyss and Harry Alers, Quinbook, report increased demand for Romagnola cattle in that state also. "Local primaries agents have had very positive feedback from the butchering company on Romagnola-sired calves," Mrs Alers said. They give a better boning yield than other calves and their curability is more efficient, saving them time and money. The butchering company is offering a 20c/kg on-the-hook bonus without penalties for this season's calves if they are Romagnola sired."

Newly elected Romagnola Breeders Society of Australia president Matt Ahem believes the Italian breed is set to make a big impact on the Australian industry, with breeders reporting increased demand for bulls on the back of positive feedback from producers who have used them in their operations.

"The background of the breed in Italy, where it was selected for eating quality, is proving very valuable in meeting a range of premium markets here in Australia," he said. "Romagnola cattle certainly seem to be on the rise, with interest from people impressed with their ability to survive and thrive.

"What sets them apart is their weight for age, eating quality and carcase characteristics which allow them to meet grading specifications and make money for produc

Courtesy of The Qld Country Life

# Easier calving with Romagnolas

By CARLA WIESE-SMITH

high-intensity grazing enter-prise on the North Coast introduced a Romagnola bull about five years ago to see how it worked.

Now, Bellingen's Brook Waugh with his father, Robert, and brother, only use Romagnolas over Trent - only use F their 400 cow herd.

"I liked the look and docility of them, and the first breeder we bought a bull from said they were

easy calving," Mr Waugh said. "The first calves were terrific - they just fell out.

Alongside the family-run saw mill, the Waugh's run about 400 Angus and Angus/Murray Grey cows across three properties in the Bellingen area, and currently have four Romagnola bulls, which are sourced from the Ahern family, "Bulala",

Roma, Queensland. They are also in the process of buying some Angus/Santa Gertrudis heifers which will be joined to Romagnolas.

We're very happy with the offspring, they're very quiet and grow pretty well," Mr Waugh said.

"We bought the first one to see how

it would go, and now

we just love them."

The easy calving ability, along with growth and temperaent, is what has the Waugh's sold on Romagnolas.

"All last year, I didn't pull a single calf - I can't speak highly enough of them," Mr Waugh said.

The calves aren't big, but they're not small either.

"I believe shape in a calf is very important and that's why the Romagnola calves just

slip out." He said it didn't

The first lot of first-cross Romagnola heifers which the Waugh's retained are just now rising two years old, and about to be joined.

They're probably older than what a lot of people would join heifers,



these heifers just look magnificent -they're big and grown out well."

The Waugh's run cows and calves on one property until weaning, and after weaning calves are sent to another property to grow out for 12 months

through Grafton.

aren't Because there Romagnolas in the area, they tend to generate a bit of interest through the saleyards," Mr Waugh said.

They are definitely selling better than what our cattle have done in the past.

The growth rate is much higher they're about 100 kilograms heavier at sale, and at weaning average about

"Calves tend to stay relatively small until about three months old and then they just take off - I haven't struck that before with other breeds."

Courtesy of The Land Newspaper

#### **Commercial Focus Cont.**



#### Romagnolas shine at Barmount Station Feedlot

Barmount Station Feedlot is a family owned feedlot located approximately 100km from Marlborough, halfway between Rockhampton and Mackay.

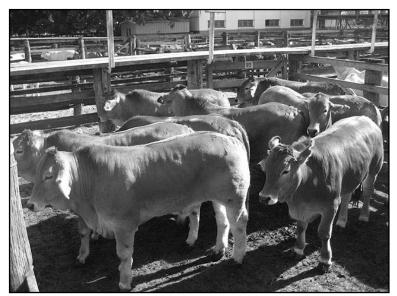
They operate a steam- flaking mill that provides peak feed conversion efficiency throughout the yard. Grain is heat treated before milling to ensure that the most cost effective feeding regime is followed.

They have a license to feed 9000 head, with cattle being drawn predominately from Central and Northern Queensland. They buy in approximately 50% of the cattle fed with those destined for the Jap Ox and domestic market able to be backgrounded to feedlot entry weight on pasture or they go direct into the feedlot for the EU market. The remaining 50% of the cattle are custom fed for various owners.

Throughout the years they have fed a variety of Romagnola cross cattle and would currently feed 1500-2000 Romagnola cross cattle a year.

Co-owner Sean Conaghan said "the Romagnola cattle that we feed here handle the conditions well, with no problems with them coming onto feed and they have good weight gains."

The majority of the Romagnola cross cattle go to either the 100 day Jap market or the high quality EU beef market (HGP free). Again Mr Conaghan said "the Romagnola cross have no trouble hitting the market specs and finish well."



First cross Romagnola steers fed at Barmount

#### Words from the West

Dennys Alers, stud co-principle of Quinbrook Romagnolas is seeing a higher demand for Romagnola and Romagnola cross progeny in the local Western Australian baby beef market.

While agents are providing positive feedback regarding the yield and cutability of Romagnola sired calves, this is equating to more dollars in the pockets of those producers with a premium of 20c/kg paid through the butchering company.

After he recently purchased a new Romagnola sire, baby beef producer Robert Marshall said "the bull we've purchased is showing all the good traits of the Romagnola breed, with his extra muscling down his back and rump and good feet and step. His temperament and sappiness will transfer nicely into his calves that we will sell locally as 9-10 month olds off their mums."



Quinbrook sale bull



#### **Member Contribution**

The following is an excerpt from a letter by Timothy Trevor-Jones

In 2003 when we began to move back towards beef production on the family 115 hectare property on the outskirts of Lithgow in the Blue Mountains we discussed what bull to use. We had already decided on Angus cows and had purchased 17 cows and calves to kick off with. What about a Romagnola bull? Many years ago I had tinkered with Chianina cattle and in the process had some cows inseminated with Romagnola semen. I had been very impressed with the calves...born easy, grew well and had a very well muscled body.

OK, let's try and find a Romagnola bull. There was a Romagnola stud not far away from us on the Bathurst road but they must have been away because I couldn't get through to them. I left it up to Liz to investigate further and she found a bull for sale at Wingham on the Mid North Coast. He had been Champion bull at the Sydney Royal and was very reasonably priced. But Wingham, it would cost an arm and a leg to bring him home. Or would it?

Jimmy and Jane Colduck had bred "Tobemory Winston" and when we talked some more to them we decided that we could probably pick him up in our three horse float as he was very quiet.

So late September 2003 off we went to Wingham. After a beautiful drive and with a great deal of anticipation, we arrived at the Colducks and saw Winston for the first time. He was absolutely beautiful and very quiet. We stayed the night in Taree and headed out to Colduck's again in the morning, loaded Winston onto the float and headed home. We had taken out the horse dividers and lined the float with straw and he travelled fine. He was very relaxed although we could feel the float shift when he stood up or lay down but otherwise it was an event free trip. We even stopped in suburban Cherrybrook in Sydney so that the in-laws could have a look at him.

Winston went straight in with the cows but we didn't see him actually join a cow that first season which concerned me so much that we had the cows preg tested...I needed have worried, they were all in calf and from then on I wasn't worried about seeing him work...he just got on with it. Our first Winston calf hit the ground late June 2004 and was just as I had remembered those early Romagnola calves.

We put him over heifers as young as 12-13 months with no problems at all and they all shared his fantastic temperament. We were generally selling our calves at between 6 and 8 months old through the local saleyards although from 2007 we also sold some via Oberon Abattoir. We would take the cattle, usually yearlings that we had kept on because they were too small to sell with the others and the odd coloured calves, to the abattoir where they were processed and boned out and the happy purchaser would then pick up their meat a couple of weeks later. We have had plenty of return business.

The calves we have sold through the saleyards have done very well. Our most recent draft sold through CTLX Carcoar were 5-7months old...the steer portion made \$2.52.2 kilo, average weight 286 kilos and came back at \$722.97 while the heifers made \$2.42 kilo, weighed 252 kilos to come back at \$611.31.

Winston's calves were consistently close to the top of the sale and our property is marginal to say the least. Carriers who have taken the calves to the sale have been extremely complimentary on their presentation but we always put it down to genetics.

Unfortunately as Winston got older he began to wander once he had the cows in calf. So 2011 will see the last Winston drop. We thought that to get 7 years work out of a bull was a pretty good effort and to have so many quality calves a real bonus.

The down side of using a terminal sire is not retaining heifers from the good performing cows to breed on with so to that end we have bought a Shorthorn bull to go over the Angus cows and then hopefully in another two or three years we will be able to get another Romagnola bull to put over the Angus/Shorthorn cows.



Winston's offspring

ROMAGNOLA SPRING 2011



Winston

#### **Animal Health**



#### **Controlling Bloat**

There are a number of methods of controlling pasture bloat in beef and dairy cattle, reports Elanco veterinarian, Dr David Chudleigh.

Pasture bloat is a serious animal health problem in beef and dairy cattle, causing lost production and potential death. It is particularly prevalent among cattle grazing rapidly-growing legume pastures that are high in protein, water and starch content, and low in fibre. Bloat is a particular menace to cattle grazing improved and/or irrigated pastures.

Bloat is caused by the formation of persistent (or stable) foam in the rumen. This foam contains gas produced by the ruminal fermentation process, as well as components from bloat-inducing plants. The protein-rich foam overwhelms natural anti-foaming agents in the rumen and the resulting build-up of gas cannot be belched normally, causing distension of the rumen.

Under severe conditions, bloat can cause death from heart failure and asphyxiation due to the pressure of the distended rumen on the diaphragm, lungs and major blood vessels. While many cases are fatal, sub-clinical bloat can also have a less obvious effect in terms of lost production. Even with the best prevention and/or control measures in place, many beef producers still lose one or two animals to bloat each year.

There are many predisposing factors involved in the occurrence of bloat, including:

- **Genetic factors:** Some breeds and bloodlines are more susceptible to bloat than others.
- **Saliva:** Saliva acts as an important buffer in the fermentation of volatile fatty acids in the rumen. Acidity in the rumen is normally countered by saliva produced as the animal is grazing. Lush clover and lucerne pastures contain a high level of water but low fibre, resulting in reduced saliva production. The combined effects of reduced saliva flow and decreased rumen pH facilitate the formation of stable foam in the rumen. Saliva also contains mucins that have a destabilising effect on foams.
- **Pasture species/growth stage:** Actively-growing temperate legumes contain a high level of soluble proteins in their leaves, which contribute to the production of a highly viscous fluid that traps fermentation gases in a stable foam. High levels of minerals (e.g. calcium and magnesium) are also associated with the formation of bloat. These positively-charged cations increase the strength of stable foam. The presence of condensed tannins in pasture species can prevent bloat. Conversely, some species (e.g. clover) are low in tannins and are highly prone to bloat. Highly-fermentable feeds (e.g. lush spring pasture) will increase the amount of gas production in the rumen.
- Rumen microbe population: Changes in the ruminal microbial population can also contribute to the occurrence of bloat. For example, encapsulated bacteria produce extracellular polysaccharides that contribute to the formation of froth, while mucinolytic bacteria destroy the salivary mucin which is the animal's natural anti-foaming agent. Rumen bacteria also contribute to bloat by ingesting the natural anti-foaming agents (e.g. lipids) found in plants.

#### **Methods of controlling bloat**

Traditional methods of controlling bloat include pasture oils, flank oil, trough treatments, oral drenches and stock blocks. In general, drenching is the only method that ensures each animal receives the recommended dosage. Trough treatments are another accurate method of dosing cattle, provided the troughs are the only source of water. By comparison, the dosage rate among cattle exposed to pasture oils, flank licks or stock blocks is highly variable. Furthermore, these methods are relatively labour intensive, requiring daily or twice daily treatments.

The two key types of active ingredient commonly found in anti-bloat treatments are oils and detergents. Refined paraffin oils are an effective and commonly-used method of bloat treatment. Non-toxic and tasteless, the oil bursts the foam bubbles in the rumen. Anti-bloat oils can be applied as oral drenches, flank licks, feed treatments or pasture sprays. Drenches are generally administered after the symptoms are observed, while the latter three methods are applied as preventatives. Depending on the application method and application/dosage rate, bloat prevention using anti-bloat oils costs about 10–35 cents per animal per day, plus application costs.

Detergents are another popular method of bloat prevention. The active ingredient (alcohol ethoxylate teric, i.e. Teric†) has a preventive mode of action in separating the bloat foam from the natural anti-foaming agents in the rumen, thereby allowing the latter to function unimpeded. Detergents can be applied as oral drenches, trough additives or in conjunction with molasses.

A number of molasses-based stock blocks containing ethoxylate teric are also available. These blocks are particularly suitable for beef operations, where the daily treatment of large numbers of cattle is impractical. The main downside of bloat blocks is inconsistent intake. The cost of bloat prevention using detergents is about 15 cents per animal per day.

The third method of controlling bloat is feeding the ionophore, monensin, to potentially affected cattle. This can be fed as a component of a loose lick or a block, or arguably the

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most cost-effective method is through the use of Rumensin Capsule. This controlled-release bolus delivers a controlled amount of the proven rumen modifier, monensin, which is registered as an aid in reducing bloat in pasture fed cattle and for increased weight gain in beef cattle and increased milk production in

dairy cows.

Monensin alters the composition of the microbial population in the rumen thereby reducing methane gas production, rumen fluid viscosity and the build-up of foam in the rumen associated with bloat.

Once administered, it works 24 hours a day for an average of 100 days. Effective treatment also allows cattle to take advantage of seasonal conditions with minimal impact caused by bloat, making it ideal for use in improved and/or irrigation pastures.

Altering the rumen microbial population has the added benefit of improving the efficiency of rumen fermentation. In effect, more energy is made available to the animal from every mouthful of feed consumed. This extra energy can be used for increased growth and production.

A series of 15 large-scale field trials involving almost 1,500 British breed and Bos indicus cattle found Rumensin Capsule significantly reduces the incidence and severity of bloat. In these trials, the product typically prevented four out of every five deaths from bloat. Furthermore, cattle treated with Rumensin Capsule gained an average of 8.5 kg more weight than untreated cattle over an average of 94 days.<sup>1</sup>

Other trials conducted in Australia and New Zealand have demonstrated that Rumensin Capsule significantly reduced the severity of bloat in dairy cows. In the four trials in which bloat was observed, just 1% of animals treated with Rumensin Capsule experienced moderate or severe bloat, even under high bloat conditions, compared to 24% of untreated cows.<sup>2</sup>

Likewise, treatment with Rumensin Capsule increased milk production by 1.1 L/day and protein production by 30 g/day, regardless of whether bloat conditions existed or not.2 In one Australian trial, cows treated with the Rumensin Capsule significantly increased milk production by 2.2 L/day, while protein and fat production increased 40 and 10 g/day, respectively.<sup>3</sup>

These benefits mean Rumensin is ideal for use in beef and dairy cattle grazing bloat-provocative pastures. For more information, contact your local cattle veterinarian or Elanco on 1800 226 324.

**References:** <sup>1</sup>BF1966 <sup>2</sup>BF130 <sup>3</sup>BF1041 \*Elanco®, Rumensin® and the diagonal colour bar are trademarks of Eli Lilly and Company. ®Rumensin is a trademark for Elanco's brand of monensin sodium †Registered trademark

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#### **High Density Grazing/Mob Grazing**

There are many terms for all types of grazing systems but we can divide them up into 4 or 5 main types:

**Set Stocked** – a paddock is stocked on a permanent basis with a certain number of cattle e.g. 60 breeders in Bore paddock. Numbers may alter slightly depending on season.

**Wet season spelling** – one paddock is selected every year to be spelled over the growing season to allow pastures to rest and go to seed. All other paddocks are grazed.

**Rotational grazing** – there are a number of paddocks and one mob of cattle are circulated around these paddocks. The time each paddock is grazed is determined on feed availability, size of paddock, number of paddocks available and the class and condition of the cattle.

**Cell, time control grazing, managed grazing** – this is a more intensive form of rotational grazing where stock can move a much as once a day but more commonly ever few days depending on feed availability. Paddocks are fenced into small areas generally by electric fence. A grazing chart gives accurate information on stock days/ha. Pastures are grazed to keep them in the vegetative stage for as long as possible.

**High Density grazing** – Sometimes called ultra high density grazing or mob grazing. In this system stock are put on pastures at very high densities. An example would be 750 x 450kg animals on 1 ha or 300 x 450kg animals on 1 acre for a 24 hour period. The stock are moved at least daily with some operators moving the stock up to 8 times a day. This is a very intensive grazing system. Cattle are confined by electric wire and in many cases water troughs are moved as stock move through the system. By using this system proponents are saying that stocking rates have been increased by up to 50%. This system aims to mimic the effects of large grazing animals in Africa and the Buffalo in the US. Originally these animals moved through an area eating everything in their path fertilising the pasture with their manure and urine. These rangeland pastures were then rested for considerable time periods before they were grazed again by the herds.

There are various aims that High density grazers have but generally it is for the stock to consume 60% of the pasture, trample 20% into the soil and leave 20% standing. The trampling of the pasture into the soil gives soil biology the organic matter it needs to increase carbon levels in the soil. One noted proponent of the system claims an increase of soil carbon from 1.5% to 8% over 8 years which is a dramatic increase. A key to this system is the increased rest that pasture has. In more fertile areas an area of pasture may only be grazed in total for 4 days/year. In drier environments each section of pasture may only be grazed once/year. People that have used this system have noted a vast improvement in the soil health and biology after using the system for three years. Research in Texas USA found that pasture composition could be beneficially changed over 4 years with a carefully managed High density grazing system.

So is it worth the effort? For those who have tried and persisted there are reports of favourable returns and worthwhile soil biology improvements. While these intensive systems claim to increase the kilograms of beef produced per ha individual anilmal performance can be lower. It is important to remember that the more of a plant an animal is forced to eat the lower the quality of their diet. Therefore steers that need a certain weight gain may not reach their required weight. Cows and calves may not produce as well. There needs to be a balance between pasture benefits and stock production. The issue of labour is also important with stock needing to be moved daily.

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#### Tick fever disease and the use of tick fever vaccine

Bull breeders and their clients will be well aware that bulls destined for the "ticky' regions of Queensland, Western Australia and Northern Territory should be vaccinated against tick fever. Buyers paying for 'preferred' genetics will be looking for some insurance that a purchased bull makes it past its first encounter with the local cattle ticks. Standard advice is:

- a single vaccination is usually sufficient. The tick fever vaccine is an attenuated (ie. made mild) live vaccine derived from parasites isolated from field cases. We know in the case of Babesia bovis (which causes most of our outbreaks of tick fever) and Anaplasma centrale that the animals are likely to remain infected for life the organisms continue to circulate in the bloodstream at a very low level, and therefore continually prime the immune system. So once infected or successfully vaccinated (unless treated), we think the animal should always be infected and therefore immune.
- vaccinate as weaners to reduce the risk of vaccine reactions. Although in most cases there is no clinical effect of the vaccine, it is not completely devoid of risk and sometimes results in a clinical reaction. Weaners rarely show any reaction to the vaccine. The risk of a reaction to the vaccine (just as with tick fever in the field) increases in animals vaccinated as yearlings or adults, and as the Bos indicus content of the cattle decreases. The usual reaction is a very mild form of tick fever disease which would not be noticed just by looking at the animal maybe a small temperature rise, some reduction in red cell count (that is, slight anaemia) and perhaps some reduction in weight gain. In rare instances however the reaction is more severe and the animals must be treated just as if they had contracted disease in the field. It is an unfortunate fact of life that if we take all the "sting" out of the vaccine (which we can do), it loses some of the ability to protect against the variety of tick fever parasites the animal may encounter in the field. Vaccine reactions occur between 7 21 days for Babesia and 30 60 days for Anaplasma. This means that monitoring for vaccine reactions, and the effect of vaccine reactions, can take place for 2 months from the time of vaccination. Weaners need little if any monitoring after vaccination.
- vaccinate well away from sale time and Bull Breeding Soundness examinations. Bulls are perhaps more susceptible
  to the risk of vaccine reactions; and although the incidence of sustained high fever and other vaccine reactions is very
  low, there may be an effect on appearance at sale (weight loss) and a temporary effect on subsequent fertility. Vaccine
  reactions might also affect results at pre-sale bull breeding soundness examinations.
- vaccinate at least 2 months before the bulls are introduced to the cattle tick areas so that immunity to all three parasites
  has developed prior to introduction; if that is not possible, allow 3 weeks for immunity to the Babesia spp at least to
  develop.

In most cases, a single successful vaccination allows introduction of bulls to tick areas without problems. However, this is not always so, and we occasionally investigate reports of bulls (and others) developing tick fever after introduction, despite having been vaccinated. Why does this occur, and what can we do about it?

There are two main issues:

#### 1. Anaplasma centrale does not provide complete protection.

A centrale is the organism incorporated into the trivalent tick fever vaccine to protect against field infection with Anaplasma marginale. It is not perfectly protective and in some cases, where there is heavy tick challenge and a virulent A marginale organism, then clinical disease results. Even where there is not evidence of clinical disease, it would not be uncommon to find changes to red blood cell counts and evidence of organisms in blood smears when the bulls first encounter the field strain of A marginale in cattle tick infested areas.

We are currently in the process of evaluating an isolate of A marginale (named Dawn strain - after the cow!), with the intention to register this organism with APVMA as the vaccine strain to replace A centrale. Initial work indicated that Dawn strain was not only a "milder" organism than the current vaccine strain (Anaplasma centrale) in terms of vaccine reactions, but also provided better protection against virulent field strains of A marginale. Further to this in field trials conducted in 2010, Dawn strain proved highly infective in an experimental vaccine. There is substantial work yet to be done to prove safety, efficacy, and lack of virulence and assess tick transmissibility, but we are working on those issues in 2011; hopefully this will lead to improved protection against anaplasmosis.

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#### 2. Does one vaccination dose provide adequate immunity?

We know that once the animal develops immunity that it is likely to be lifelong, particularly with Babesia bovis and Anaplasma spp. This occurs because the vaccine contains live organisms which establish a lifelong infection in the animal, simmering away at a level that is undetectable when we examine blood smears, but nevertheless present and providing some constant interaction with the immune system. This immunity may also be broadened by challenge from field strains of parasites encountered through tick bites. So, once vaccinated and successfully infected with the vaccine strains, there is no advantage in giving a second dose. This is quite a different scenario to many other cattle vaccines where a live persistent infection does not follow vaccination, and so two initial doses and regular boosters are needed to keep the immunity primed.

However, our experience and extensive trial work tells us that a small number of cattle will not become immune to one or other of the organisms in the tick fever vaccine, but we expect greater than 95% of animals to be immune to each of the organisms. So after one vaccination, a few animals will not have protection against all three organisms. A booster vaccination in valuable animals like bulls (and valuable cows, ET recipients etc) might be considered, particularly if they are born and raised in the cattle tick free area, to increase the chance that the animal develops immunity to all three organisms. Ideally, this should be given some months prior to a sale. For those animals which are raised in cattle tick area, the risk of not developing immunity to one or other organism is reduced because there is the chance of exposure to tick fever organisms in infected ticks, in addition to the immunity conferred by vaccination.

So, the recommendation is that a second vaccination is strongly considered for all susceptible animals (but especially bulls and other valuable animals) coming into the tick area from the cattle tick-free areas. This means that there is a second chance for the animal to develop immunity to any organism where infection (and immunity) failed to establish after the first dose of vaccine.

How should this be handled? There seems to be a number of options. Ideally the bulls would have the second dose well before going in to the ticky areas. So regimes might include an initial dose at weaning and a second dose prior to sale; or an initial dose with a second dose after sale for those animals destined for the tick areas; or it may even be that the vendor chooses to give only one vaccine dose, but passes on the advice that a second dose might be warranted. The actual way this is handled and the appropriate regime will probably vary for each property's circumstances.

What is the risk of a vaccine reaction when giving a booster? For bulls that have developed immunity to all three organisms from previous vaccination, the risk is virtually nil. The risk of a vaccine reaction is only present in the few animals where immunity has not developed to all three tick fever parasites; and only for those parasites to which immunity has not developed. The risk then is the same as if they were encountering that particular parasite in the vaccine for the first time. All other risk conditions apply – the age of the animal, the breed, and so forth. These non-immune animals however would also be very susceptible to a field infection of tick fever.

Can we test to see if immunity has developed? The short answer is that tests are available, but it is not a service that is routinely offered, except for investigation of vaccine problems and R&D work. The testing is reasonably expensive (currently over \$24 per head to cover the B bovis and Anaplasma tests without the cost of sample collection), labour intensive for small numbers and there are some inaccuracies with the test (and indeed most diagnostic tests) which can make interpretation of results difficult for each individual bull. It is cheaper to give a second dose.

Further general information about tick fever can be found at our website or by contacting the Tick Fever Centre:

#### **Tick Fever Centre**

Biosecurity Queensland 280 Grindle Road Wacol Old 4076

Phone: 07 3898 9655 Fax: 07 3898 9685 Email: tfc@deedi.gld.gov.au

Business Information Centre 13 25 23

Visit www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au and search for 'tick fever'

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#### **Show and Field Day News**

#### Brisbane Ekka

The Romagnola competition at this year's Brisbane EKKA saw a quality line-up of cattle paraded in front of experienced cattle judge Don McConnell of Mt Brisbane Droughtmaster Stud, Esk.

Romagnola Beef Genetics (incorporating the Hamilton Park, Romulus Genetics and Remus stud prefixes) and the Wyoming Romagnola Stud exhibited a top line of Romagnola cattle in front of a large arena of spectators.

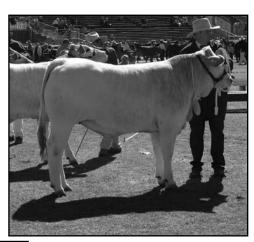
In the first class of females it was Italia Florence from the Romagnola Beef Genetics stable who took the judge's eye for her softness and clean structure, placing her in first place ahead of Wyoming Felicity who the judge noted for her length and femininity.

Claiming the 20-48 month class and then Champion Romagnola Female broad ribbon was the classy Ergum cow Remus Duchess, with the judge commending her mobility, femininity and outstanding bull calf at foot Remus Gigilo by AI sire Cesare. Italia Florence then claimed the Reserve Champion Romagnola Female.

In the bull section, it was the Pullen family's Wyoming Fireman who kicked off the bull classes winning first place in the 12-16 month category, followed by Wyoming Francisco winning first place in the 16-20.

In the 20-42 month section 22 month old Hamilton Park Eskimo Joe claimed first place ahead of Wyoming Emmett. Eskimo Joe went on to win Champion Romagnola Bull with the Judge making mention of his softness and potential to breed progeny which would meet any market. Wyoming Fireman was sashed Reserve Champion ahead of Wyoming Emmett due to his walking ability, muscle and growth.

Remus Duchess and bull calf Gigilo went on to be placed in the Top 10 in the Interbreed competition later that afternoon.



Italia Florence



HP Eskimo Joe



Remus Duchess



Wyoming Fireman

#### **Show and Field Day News Cont.**



#### RM Williams Australian Bush Learning Centre - Eidsvold

Earlier in the year the Romagnola Breeders Society Ltd was approached to participate in a display within the Gallery sector at the RM Williams Australian Bush Learning Centre in Eidsvold. The display was open to all breeds in which the North Burnett region has showcased and developed over the years.

The display ran from June until early August, incorporating the MLA Meat Profit Day, and was open to the visiting public at the Centre.



Bush Learning Centre display

## Romagnola Bulls in Demand at Northern and Western Queensland Field Days

Charters Towers Ag-Grow, Richmond Annual Field Days, Barcaldine Westech Field Days and Westpac Cloncurry Expo, once again proved to be a hype of activity and successful events for the sale and promotion of Romagnola bulls for the studs that attended.

For the Pullen family of the Wyoming Romagnola Stud, the sale of 4 bulls at Charters Towers, 13 bulls at Richmond and 14 bulls at Cloncurry was well worth their time in attending the events.

"Many of our buyers at these field days are repeat buyers with some of our bulls even being sold unseen to people in the area who are unable to make these events, though take the advantage of the opportunity to purchase quality bulls from our stud while we are in their location." Ron Said.

"We did find that with the event organisers moving the Charter Towers Field Days from September to May this year there was a decline in exhibitors and this was also reflected in the number of people that attended the field days. However, the attendance and response at the Richmond and Cloncurry events was great."

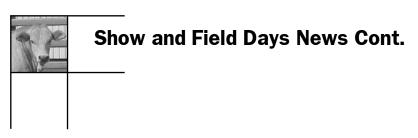
### Top Award in Pasture Fed Carcase competition

At the 2011 Mackay Show the Pullen Family of Wyoming Romagnola Stud entered two pens of pasture fed heifers in the trade cattle & carcase competition. The Pullen family won the MacGibbon Family-Lilianvale Award with a Pen of 2 Pasture Fed Heifers Suitable for Local Trade. These heifers were Romagnola/Brahman cross.

The details of the winning pair of heifers were:

Criteria	Heifer 1	Heifer 2
Carcase Weights	252 kgs	247 kgs
Fat Cover	10 mls	9 mls
Eye Muscle Area	104 sq. cm	100 cq. cm
Dentition	2 Teeth	2 Teeth





#### Northern New South Wales Report

Matthew and Bob Black of Sunny Dale Romagnolas from Lismore, have been busy out on the show and field day circuit in northern New South Wales again this year.

The first showing for Sunny Dale this year was at the Grafton Show in May where Sunny Dale Farrentino won the Junior Champion European Bull. This young bull continued his winning way when he then won his class in the hotly contested 12 months and under 16 months class against all other breeds at Casino Beef Week.

The northern New South Wales show season is now under way and Romagnolas will be exhibited at a number of shows throughout October and November.

Matt Black also has reported increased interest in the Romagnola breed at Primex Field Days earlier this year in June. Sunny Dale Romagnolas and Carramar Romagnolas, Maryborough shared a site and had a number of bulls and females on display. In particular a Brahmagnola heifer caught the eye of visitors and drew a number of positive comments regarding the attributes of the Romagnola/Brahman cross.

### Romagnola Beef Genetics & Wyoming Romagnola Studs Step Out at Queensland Shows

The Romagnola breed displayed a strong presence on the Queensland show circuit this year with success in Interbeed competitions at a number of regional shows. Romagnola Beef Genetics & the Wyoming Romagnola Studs hit the Queensland Show circuit with small but impressive teams of Romagnola cattle.

Between the two studs the shows of Roma, Mitchell, Emerald, Springsure, Clermont, Rockhampton, Finch Hatton, Mackay, Proserpine and Cloncurry were covered.

Cattle producers were provided with a great opportunity to see the up and coming sires of the Romagnola breed. For the Pullen family, Wyoming Fireman was awarded European Calf Champion bull at Roma and Calf Champion bull at Finch Hatton and Proserpine. He also drew many comments when he achieved Calf Champion bull at the Rockhampton Junior Beef Show. Wyoming Emmett was sashed Reserve Senior Champion European bull at Roma and Senior Champion bull at Finch Hatton and Mackay. Wyoming Francisco was sashed Calf Champion Bos Taurus bull at Rockhampton and went on to be named Calf Champion bull at Mackay.

The Romagnola Beef Genetics team kicked the year off at their local show Roma, where Italia Florence was sashed Champion European calf female and Remus Duchess was awarded Reserve Champion European female.

Mitchell show was next on the agenda with Romagnola Beef Genetics exhibiting the champion pair of unled bulls creating a great deal of interest among the local cattle fraternity who voted for the champion pen out of the top three selected by Central Queensland judges, John & Jan Burnett, "Bendemeer", Clermont. The RBG pair came up trumps against a number of breeds including Santa, Red Angus, Droughtmaster and Hereford. RBG also had bulls on display at Charleville and Cloncurry shows where a great deal of interest and discussion were generated.

Romagnola Beef Genetics exhibited at Clermont, Springsure and Emerald shows with their cattle entrusted to the professional team at Elite fitting services. Glen, Alyse, Travis and Ben did a fantastic job with Remus Duchess winning senior female in the Bos Taurus ring at all three shows and just got pipped for Interbeed Champion female at Emerald and Springsure. Duchess was impressive and drew plenty of comments with her strapping seven month old bull calf, "Gigolo" by Cesare at her side.

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#### **Directors 2011**



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#### Office Reminders

#### **Registration of calves**

I refer to the Regulation 3.6:

" each animal submitted for registration must be registered within 18 months of the date of calving and be the progeny of a sire and of a dam each of which is registered on the Data-Base or in some other Herd Book approved for the purpose by the Board.

Late fees will be applied to animals submitted for registration between 18 – 24 months of the date of calving. Over 24 months of age, a letter is required to be submitted to the Board requesting registration of the animal."

The Calf Registration form that you need to complete is available through the website. This form can be found by going to the website www.romagnola.com.au and choosing Forms in the main menu. Simply click on the link – Romagnola Registration form - and the form will open.

However if you are unable to access the forms please call the office and I will send them to you either by post, fax or email.

#### Facebook page

The Romagnola Breeders Society Ltd has a Facebook page. Please use the search function in Facebook to find the page. This contains all news, upcoming shows, field days and photos.

Tania Haynes Executive Secretary			
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#### **Business Directory**



#### Quinbrook Romagnolas

Visitors welcomed to the southwest of Western Australia

**Enquiries:** Harry and Denyss ALERS

PO Box 167 DUNSBOROUGH WA 6281 Phone/fax: (08) 97552821

email: quinbrook@westnet.net.au



# **CLOVERDALE**ROMAGNOLA STUD

Chris & Lainie McInerney "Cloverdale"

Boat Mountain, Murgon Qld 4605 Ph: 07 4168 1398 M: 0427 763 041



Dick & Rosemary Jeremy "Lonepine", Miles Qld Phone: 07 4628 2276 Fax: 07 4628 2276 Email: jeremys@activ8.net.au



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e: leggattfamily@hotmail.com



Inspections Always Welcome

Matthew Black 700 Jiggi Road, Jiggi. NSW 2480 M: 0419 758 439

### **Dundee Romagnolas**

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Waratah

Romagnolas

Quiet, Paddock Prepared Bulls Available for Inspection & Sale

Clayton & Julie James Kyogle Road, Bentley, NSW Ph: 02 6663 5042 M: 0416 013 031

# R-V-5 ROMAGNOLA VICTORIA STUD

Quality Bloodlines - Selling Out Registered Heifers and Cows & Calves Available for Sale Ex one of the old original studs (Yamba)

All enquiries welcome from members

Contact: George Gigas, Werribee Victoria Phone/Fax: 03 9742 1457 Mobile: 0407 868 145

# YOMING ROMAGNOLA STUD offering market Diversity



Wyoming Fireman: Reserve Champion Romagnola Bull Ekka 2011

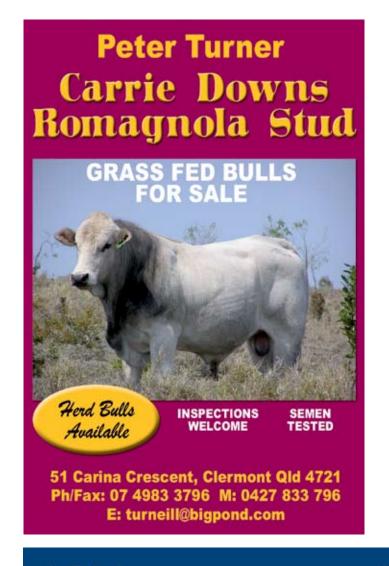
#### **Bulls, Females, Embryos & Semen Available for Sale**

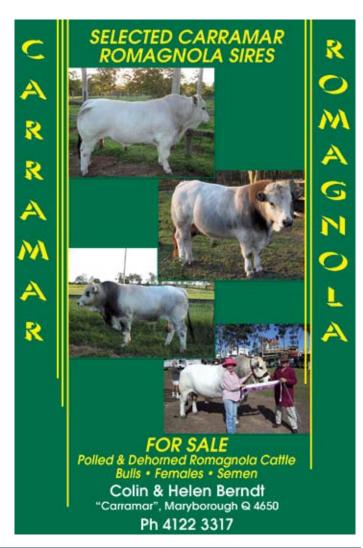
Inquiries may be directed through your preferred Agent or directly to:

Ron & Diane Pullen "Codrilla" Nebo QLD 4742

Ph: 07 4950 7115 • Mob: 0427 156 178

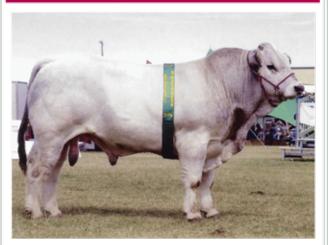
Email: codrilla@activ8.net.au • www.wyomingromagnolas.com.au







# Robur Romagnola Stud



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Ph: 07 4741 7484 M: 0429 411 670

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Ken Kazmaier

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