



# Beeftalk

Taking stock of your future

Prime news and views for beef producers of south-east Queensland

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## editorial

Apologies from the *Beeftalk* team for the lateness of this issue. We have been successful in securing funding from within DPI&F to continue producing *Beeftalk*. Our sincere thanks to readers who have supported us throughout this time by answering surveys, writing letters and generally offering support. It was your support that encouraged us to keep going in our search for funding.

The hot topic for most primary producers at this time of year is the seasonal outlook for summer. For some the start to the season has been quite good while others are still waiting for a decent break. How you manage your pasture coming out of a drought/dry season will have a major bearing on its long term productivity. Information in articles on pasture and weed management and plant identification help with decisions in this vital management area.

We have all heard about Equine Influenza and the need for everyone to be vigilant. Coupled with this is the need for everyone who has livestock to register their properties with the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries. Details on how to do this are in the articles 'Horse registration' and 'Responsibilities of owning livestock'.

The index to articles in *Beeftalk* issues 15 to 23 will help you find articles on topics that interest you. If you are interested in an article from an issue you do not have, give us a call and we will send you a copy.

The cost of producing and sorting *Beeftalk* continues to increase. In this 'electronic age' we may be able to reduce this cost by sending *Beeftalk* by email. If you would like to receive *Beeftalk* by email please let us know and we will include your address on the email database.

Happy reading  
The Ed



# Pasture management for drought recovery



Pastures need time to recover following prolonged drought or a series of poor growing seasons. Grazing systems that allow for pasture spelling, deferred restocking, continued drought feeding and prompt weed management are all tools to help achieve pasture recovery.

## **Heavy grazing during the first phase of grass growth weakens grass tussocks**

The basis of our pasture systems are perennial tropical grasses, both native species and exotic 'sown' species. The presence of productive, palatable and perennial (3P) grasses is a major indicator of land condition and productivity. Pasture management decisions should be aimed at promoting the growth and population of these grasses.



Source: *Grazing Land Management, MLA*

The tussock on the left has been clipped about three times during the growing season. The tussock on the right was clipped every 2–3 weeks to simulate continuous heavy grazing. Continuous overgrazing in the early phase of growth depletes stored root reserves and eventually weakens the tussock.

To promote new growth following a spring or summer break, perennial grasses draw on reserves of energy and nutrients stored in their root systems. They use these reserves to grow new leaf. Only when they have sufficient leaf area does photosynthesis take over the role of providing energy for continued growth. A tussock needs to be growing for about six weeks following rain to reach the stage when photosynthesis takes over. If the tussock is not growing for some of the time during this period, then it will take longer to produce sufficient leaf and the photosynthesis stage.

It is also in this fresh growth stage that the feed quality is highest. Digestibility can be as high as 70% and provide nearly 10MJ ME/kg DM. Protein is also at its peak and in some grasses on better land types can be as high as 20%. This means that the cattle growth rates are potentially as high as they can be. In fact the only thing that will limit production is the low yield and high water content restricting intake.

However, the down side of grazing these tussocks in this early phase of growth is that the tussock is forced to keep drawing on stored root reserves. If the grazing is severe enough for long enough, the tussock becomes less vigorous and can die.

This poses a dilemma for graziers; the key component of their production systems, the 3P tussock, is most susceptible to grazing at the same time that it is most nutritious as feed.

## **Impact of prolonged drought or consecutive poor seasons**

In most years when rainfall is near

or above average, and providing stocking rates do not exceed long term carrying capacity, the selective overgrazing of individual tussocks during the first phase of growth is not an issue. The tussock should be healthy with sufficient reserves in a vigorous root system.

However, consecutive seasons of poor rainfall or extended drought often mean the 3P tussocks are already under stress with depleted root reserves. This is especially the case when the preceding growing seasons were below average and consisted of several minor falls of rain.

## **Pastures respond to reduced grazing pressure during the growing season**

Grazing management that allows for pasture spelling during the early phases of growth ensures the 3P tussocks have time to replenish their root reserves. This is especially important during drought recovery.

Large paddocks can be spelled for a significant period of the growing season. An example of this is a four paddock, wet season spell where each paddock gets spelled for a full wet season once every four years.

Smaller paddocks can be spelled for shorter periods by rotation. Rotation systems for smaller paddocks include an intensive cell system where cattle move through small paddocks in a few days or a less intensive system where they move through larger paddocks in a couple of weeks. The critical aspect of these systems is ensuring that cattle don't come back into a paddock for around six to eight weeks.

Avoid restocking immediately following useful rain. Where stock numbers have been reduced due to drought, delaying restocking allows pastures time to recover. If the 'break' to the season turns out to be a false one, you are not left with the problem of trying to feed expensive stores on pastures that continue to be stressed.

Continue drought feeding for a few weeks. It never rains grass and

cattle can loose weight quickly chasing green pick. Maintaining an adequate plane of nutrition through supplementary feeding can offset this problem. The added benefit is that the grazing pressure on the pasture is reduced.

Be on the ball when it comes to weeds. Stressed pastures are susceptible to competition from weeds. In some cases, strategic weed management to reduce weed

density early can be a very cost effective way of ensuring pasture recovery.

Further information:



**Bill Schulke**

DPI&F, Bundaberg  
Phone: 07 4131 5828  
Email: bill.schulke@dpi.qld.gov.au

## Dry weather + introduced feeds = weeds

All beef producers will be counting on a decent wet season for relief after this record dry season. With rain the pasture will grow, but so will the weeds – including new weeds that may have been introduced during the drought. So what makes this time different from previous dry periods?

1. In comparison to previous droughts, a very high percentage of producers have fed hay or grain-based supplements.
2. Significant amounts of fodder have been transported all over Australia. Stock feeds can contain seeds of plants that are not a problem in their home territory but which could cause major disruption on properties in other areas. Sources of feed can be extremely difficult to trace, particularly grain mixes.
3. Concerns about strong demand and poor supply of feed may have overridden the due diligence many producers would normally have used in examining purchased fodder for weed contamination.
4. Movements of cattle and sheep to agistment and sale have not followed 'normal' patterns. Stock transported to distant locations may have carried new weed seeds with them.
5. The considerable areas of bare soil in holding paddocks and across large areas of grazing country create gaps for weeds.
6. After so long without rain and strong vegetative growth, soil nutrients will be elevated, contributing to vigorous growth of pasture – and existing or new weeds – when conditions improve.

All these factors mean that good rain could provide the opportunity for weed species to gain a foothold in new areas.

To avoid these potential weed problems:

1. Try to feed stock in designated areas away from watercourses.
2. Quarantine introduced stock in yards for 3 to 5 days to reduce the possibility of weed seeds spreading through the paddocks in their dung.
3. Monitor areas where fodder has been fed and inspect for weeds.
4. Ask feed suppliers for information on the source of fodder.
5. Consider using/asking for a Weed Hygiene declaration which covers not only feed but also animals and machinery. More details at: [http://www.nrw.qld.gov.au/pests/weeds/weed\\_spread/legal/weed\\_hygiene\\_dec.html](http://www.nrw.qld.gov.au/pests/weeds/weed_spread/legal/weed_hygiene_dec.html)
6. Keep records of purchased fodder, including origin.
7. Keep a lookout on local roadsides for weeds that may have been dropped by traffic.

Any unusual or unknown plants can be left at your local DPI&F office for identification or sent to the Herbarium in Brisbane for positive identification. See *BeefTalk* 22 for information on collecting and preserving plants for identification.

Potential problem weeds identified in small numbers are far easier and cheaper to control than weeds rampaging over large areas.

Further information:



**Damien O'Sullivan**

DPI&F, Kingaroy  
Phone: 07 4160 0717  
Email: damien.o'sullivan@dpi.qld.gov.au



# Kangaroo grass



Line drawings from *The Grasses of Southern Queensland* by JC Tothill and JB Hacker (1983).

Our native grasses still provide the most significant portion of grazing for beef and sheep in Queensland, and are the cheapest source of cattle feed available. However overgrazing and inappropriate burning regimes can reduce the viability and vigour of native grasses.

*Themeda triandra* the name is from Arabic – *thaemed* (a small quantity of water preserved in a ditch against a time of need) and *tri* (3) *andra* (anthers). Kangaroo grass was previously known as *Themeda australis* in Australia but it is now known to be the same species as *Themeda triandra* found in Africa.

Kangaroo grass is distributed widely around the world with species found throughout Africa, Madagascar and Indonesia. The genus *Themeda* has 16 species worldwide with three in Australia. The other species native to Australia are *T. avenacea*, a tussock grass growing to 2.5 metres which is common in the Burnett region, and *T. arguens*, which occurs throughout the northern tropics. An introduced weed species, *Themeda quadrivalvis* (grader grass), is found in many parts of coastal and sub-coastal Queensland including the Burnett, Wide Bay and Moreton. Early explorers commented on verdant green pastures under large stands of timber, and it is probable this was kangaroo grass. Lack of fire and overgrazing has caused kangaroo grass to disappear from many pastures, especially in the southern states.

Kangaroo grass is a common species on all soil types and is one of the most widely distributed grassland and woodland species in Australia. It is a warm season grass, growing mainly in summer and generally dormant in winter.

Kangaroo grass is fire tolerant and responds well to regular burning and spelling. It responds quickly to the first rain of the season, growing an upright green leaf from the crown of the plant. Being very palatable it is preferentially grazed by cattle and horses. If the plants do not go to seed, they will not regenerate and remain in the pasture. Due to overgrazing in pasture, pure stands of kangaroo grass are mostly seen on roadsides.

The seed heads are produced in large numbers but with only one fertile 'spikelet'. This has a long, twisting black thread or awn projecting from the cluster. Seed is difficult to harvest and is best sown fresh or left for 12 months till its dormancy breaks.

Kangaroo grass is listed as a likely food source for the caterpillars of some moth species. Aboriginal people gathered the ripening seed in summer across the tableland and high country areas of New South Wales. They ground the seed to produce flour, which was mixed with water and cooked to make damper.

Kangaroo grass is a 3P species – Perennial, Palatable and Productive. Careful native pasture burning and spelling can encourage this grass to make a re-appearance and contribute to the quality of the grazing diet.

Further information:

**Damien O'Sullivan**

DPI&F, Kingaroy

Phone: 07 4160 0717

Email: [damien.o'sullivan@dpi.qld.gov.au](mailto:damien.o'sullivan@dpi.qld.gov.au)

# Lantana: Fighting the weed menace

The destructive force of *Lantana camara* is costing the Australian grazing industry an alarming \$104.3 million per year in lost production and management costs according to a recent economic report commissioned by the Lantana Weeds of National Significance group and Biosecurity Queensland.

If allowed to spread unchecked, lantana has the potential to cover more than 35 million hectares of the Australian landscape and cost the Australian grazing sector between \$1.2 and \$2.4 billion per annum (2005/06 figures).

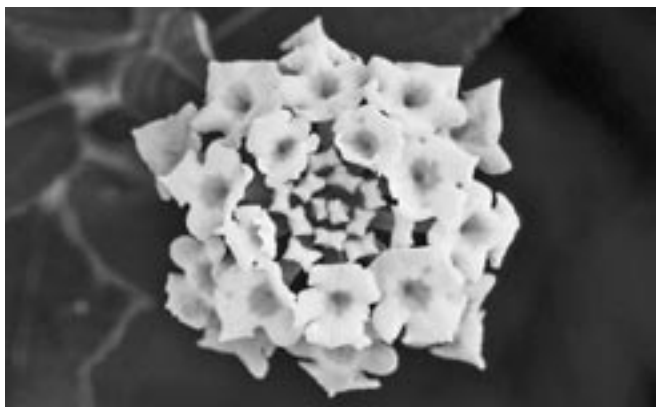
Even more worrying, the report suggests that current control practices are not returning a positive economic benefit, leading to concern that many land managers are not using best management practices to control their lantana.

Because of the diversity of lantana varieties (close to 30 are currently recognised) and the range of environmental conditions under which they grow, lantana management is not a simple proposition and activities must be tailored to the specific situation.

It may seem like common sense, but a strategic, integrated approach to lantana management is the best way to ensure the most economic use of resources when managing this weed.

The following basic principles apply:

1. Target the most strategic areas first, whether they are isolated infestations or areas that are impacting on cattle, crops or bushland. On a map of the property, outline areas of most value and areas of lantana infestation. Check for areas where the two outlines overlap or approach each other.
2. When you decide which areas to control, make



sure you budget (in terms of money and time) for at least three to four years of ongoing management.

3. Control areas completely before moving on to new areas. It's no use only half tackling an area and letting the lantana spread again in the same paddock. This just wastes time and money.
4. In controlled areas, check for seedlings or regrowth in the next and subsequent seasons. Lantana seeds are estimated to last in the soil for up to four years, so monitoring and follow-up control should continue for at least this long.

To provide landholders with additional guidance, the Lantana WoNS Group is currently undertaking a series of integrated control trials from which a decision support tool will be developed.

Designed to identify appropriate control sequences for different environments and land management situations, the decision support tool will be featured in the second edition of the Lantana Control Manual, expected to be completed by the end of 2008.

In the interim, detailed information on the range of available control techniques can be sourced from the Lantana Management Guide and a range of supplementary resources including our seasonal newsletter, Lantana Lowdown.

To request any of these free publications, or to be added to the mailing list for the Lantana Lowdown, contact:

**Clare Raven**, Lantana WoNS Project Officer

Phone: 07 3406 2511

Email: [clare.raven@dpi.qld.gov.au](mailto:clare.raven@dpi.qld.gov.au)

To download your own copy of Lantana Lowdown or other lantana resources, visit the Lantana WoNS website: [www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/lantana/](http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/lantana/)

For more information on how you can manage your lantana infestation most effectively, contact:

The Lantana WoNS Group

Email: [lantanaWoNS@dpi.qld.gov.au](mailto:lantanaWoNS@dpi.qld.gov.au)



## Pimelea

**P**imelea poisoning, also known as St George Disease, has been a major cause of cattle deaths in Queensland for many years and is causing problems in western Queensland again this season. Sheep are also affected by pimelea poisoning.

The impact of pimelea poisoning during the past few years has been significant in terms of production losses, stock deaths, control costs and extra management work for cattle producers in southern, south-west and central western Queensland, northern New South Wales and South Australia and parts of the Northern Territory. AgForce has estimated these losses to be around \$50 million.

For many years the cause of St George disease was unknown. Then in the early 1970s it was confirmed that three native annual species of pimelea were responsible for the disease. The plants are prevalent this season as a result of a series of dry summers followed by rain in autumn and winter.

Wherever pimelea is growing, grazing animals need to be observed constantly.

Although pimelea is a strong-smelling plant and not normally selected by stock, it can be eaten inadvertently when growing with preferred grasses and herbage.

Only cattle develop the full disease, which is characterised by subcutaneous oedema (seen as swelling) of the head, neck, and brisket, loss of condition and often a prominent jugular pulse.



Beast showing signs of pimelea poisoning



*Pimelea simplex* in the field west of Boulia and flower and leaf form

Cause of death is right-sided heart failure. In both sheep and cattle, the toxins in green pimelea can also cause gastric irritation and subsequent diarrhoea, followed by sudden death. Dry plants are still toxic. There is also a possibility that stock can be affected by inhaling pollen dust from pimelea plants when grazing adjacent forage.

At present all three species can be found widespread throughout Queensland:

- *P. simplex* is the most common pimelea to be found on the gidgee stone and lighter Mitchell grass soils in western and south-western Queensland. This species has grown extensively since the autumn and winter rains this year; areas have also been found around Cunnamulla and around Marree in SA. There are currently a number of reports of cattle being affected in the Longreach and Winton areas.
- *P. trichostachya* is growing well in the desert uplands and mulga areas of western Queensland. Reports of cattle scouring and losing condition in that region signal that alternative management strategies need to be put in place to avoid further exposure.
- In April/May, following the summer rains, a great deal of *P. elongata* was found in ephemeral lakes and floodout areas in south-western areas around Bollon, Cunnamulla and Quilpie. To date, stock seem unaffected in areas where *P. elongata* is the only species present.

By identifying plants early and closely observing grazing animals, producers can make timely decisions regarding alternative management strategies to avoid stock losses.

While we can only partially predict the response of pimelea to weather conditions, there are some key indicators to watch for:

- How prevalent is the plant?



## Three day sickness – is it getting worse?

- What other plant species and what body of desirable feed is available for stock to graze?
- Is pimelea growing on its own or is it scattered through palatable pasture?
- Are the stock grazing the paddock locally raised or from other areas?
- How hungry are the stock?

If pimelea is the dominant plant species in a given area and there is accessible edible feed in other parts of the paddock, animals who have experienced it before are more likely to avoid the plant and graze in safer areas. However if pimelea is growing amongst other desirable herbage and grasses, the plant may be ingested accidentally with palatable species.

If you choose to leave stock in a paddock where pimelea is growing, it is imperative that the animals be closely observed for signs of poisoning. While the plants are green, affected cattle and sheep may show early signs of diarrhoea and/or unexpected loss of condition. In cattle these signs may be accompanied by a strong jugular pulse and/or swelling under the jaw and brisket. As the plants dry out, diarrhoea may not be obvious but the animals will still be at risk of developing other signs, so close monitoring must be continued. Signs of poisoning are often most obvious in late spring and early summer.

Keen observation of pastures and stock is the key to avoiding pimelea poisoning and related stock losses. Should you observe any signs of pimelea poisoning, remove the animals from the suspect area immediately to pimelea-free pasture. If the animals are moved early enough, many will recover.

Further information:

### **Jenny Milson**

DPI&F Longreach

Phone: 07 4658 4447

Email: [jenny.milson@dpi.qld.gov.au](mailto:jenny.milson@dpi.qld.gov.au)

Reports are coming from northern and central Queensland suggesting that cases of three-day sickness (TDS) have been more severe in recent years. In some cases animals have been down for much longer than usual and the death rate has been higher. From central Queensland last year there were reports of animals needing intensive treatment and being down for up to 14 days. Some animals were quite slow to recover, and some have had lingering problems with coordination.

Some TDS reports from central Queensland have described animals as having 'conventional' symptoms, whereas others have described a mixture of 'conventional' and 'severe' symptoms in the one herd.

Blood tests from 'severely' affected animals from northern and central Queensland have revealed infection by other viruses belonging to a group called the orbiviruses which, like TDS, are spread by biting insects. Some animals appeared to have been infected by both TDS and orbiviruses at the same time. In one unconfirmed case, severely affected animals had been vaccinated against TDS.

To investigate whether other viruses are involved in these TDS-like diseases, DPI&F is keen to obtain samples from animals suspected of having TDS that appear to be more severely affected or that are taking longer than usual to recover.

If you have an animal that appears to have a severe or prolonged case of TDS, please contact Rick Whittle or your local Biosecurity officer.

More information:

**Rick Whittle** DPI&F, Rockhampton

Phone: 07 4936 0201 or DPI&F 13 25 23

## Email and web options for *Beef*talk

As you are aware the cost of producing and posting *Beef*talk has been causing us some headaches.

One way we can reduce the cost is for readers to receive *Beef*talk by email. This would reduce the costs of both printing and posting.

Reducing costs will help us to ensure that *Beef*talk continues.

If you would like to receive *Beef*talk by email instead of post, please send an email (including your current postal address so we can remove you from the hardcopy mailing list) to Russ Tyler at: [russ.tyler@dpi.qld.gov.au](mailto:russ.tyler@dpi.qld.gov.au)

We will continue to post hardcopies to everyone else – who may have dodgy telecommunications or who, like me, prefer to be able to pick up a newsletter and read it wherever and whenever I like.

# Pin-pointing Northern Australia's best breeding cattle



The first results from research aiming to make northern breeding herds significantly more profitable and productive using genetics have been received.

The Beef Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) project is focussed on increasing weaning rates, one of the most important components in profitable northern cattle production.

Leading the research effort is Beef CRC researcher, Dr Rachel Hawken of CSIRO Livestock Industries, who is currently pin-pointing the genes and gene markers which affect the age at which heifers reach puberty. Age of puberty is the earliest component of reproductive performance in Brahman cattle and hence one of the most important.

Ideally northern cattle producers want a female that reaches puberty quickly allowing her to become pregnant and therefore calve earlier, but without compromising the survival of the cow or the calf or ignoring the cow's reproductive performance after her initial calving.

Using genetics, the Beef CRC's research is developing a selection tool to tailor production toward breeding females with a younger age of puberty, providing the potential for significant production and profit benefits for the producer.

Currently animals are selected for breeding purposes based on desired traits such as growth and carcass and beef quality. This new research will allow cattle producers to use a DNA test to remove some of the guesswork from selecting the best breeding females.

Using the Beef CRC's extensive database of accurate measurements in tropically adapted cattle, Dr Hawken was able to extract information from almost 600 Brahman animals which have been individually screened for 10 000 genetic markers. The genetic markers for each of these animals will be analysed against the measured performance information to uncover the relevant DNA tests.

Initial results have revealed a promising handful of markers closely associated with age of puberty. The next step, according to Dr Hawken, will involve determining how much earlier the heifers reach

puberty, discovering the associations between genes for puberty and subsequent cow breeding and re-breeding performance (to ensure no unfavourable consequences for either the cow or calf from earlier breeding), and validating the markers in other cattle populations.

The markers will be validated against a larger population to ensure the results are robust. Researchers will also take a closer look at these markers, in particular the neighbouring genome regions, to identify any other variations in the DNA which may help to explain the effect of age of puberty more precisely.

This research contributes to the Beef CRC's goal of increasing the gross revenue of Australia's beef industry by at least \$179 million per annum.

Project collaborators include CSIRO Livestock Industries, Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Animal Genetics and Breeding Unit, and University of Queensland.



Further information:

**Dr Rachel Hawken**

CSIRO Livestock Industries

Phone: 07 3214 2901

Email: [rachel.hawken@csiro.au](mailto:rachel.hawken@csiro.au)



## Managing a beef business in the subtropics

Managing a beef business in the subtropics provides information and tools to help you produce an environmentally friendly, market-driven beef product. It will assist you to proactively manage your business in an every-changing industry.

The book covers all aspects of subtropical beef production, including markets and selling, handling and husbandry, pasture and drought management, and cattle feeding, growth, breeding, and health. Contacts and sources of further information are listed to assist you in researching particular topics and keeping up with industry developments.

This book is a useful resource for commercial beef producers, small area landowners, agribusiness, consultants, students, and hobby farmers.

Stephen Smith, DPI&F  
PO Box 6014, Rockhampton Mail Centre  
QLD 4702  
Phone: 07 4936 0393  
Email: [beef@dpi.qld.gov.au](mailto:beef@dpi.qld.gov.au)

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## *From Science to Application –* Australian Society of Animal Production Conference 2008

The combined 27th Biennial Conference of the Australian Society of Animal Production (ASAP) and the 68th Annual Conference of the New Zealand Society of Animal Production (NZSAP) will be held at The University of Queensland, St Lucia Campus, Brisbane, from Tuesday 24 June to Friday 27 June 2008.

The focus of the conference is *From Science to Application*. The key conference themes will encompass:

- Post genome: where to from here and application in livestock systems;
- Transformational changes in livestock systems, e.g. global market trends and drivers;
- Animal welfare and animal production in Australia: conflict or synergy from a global perspective;

- Reproductive performance across livestock species (including monogastrics);
- Crop–livestock–pasture systems; and
- Smart technologies.

The conference will bring together international, Australian and New Zealand leading scientists in the fields of animal nutrition, reproduction, genetics, molecular biology, animal welfare, crop–livestock–pasture systems and smart technologies. The conference is an excellent opportunity to review recent advancements in animal production science and technologies.

Further information:

ASAP website: [www.asap.asn.au](http://www.asap.asn.au)

**Assoc. Prof. Dennis Poppi**

Federal President, ASAP

Phone: 07 3365 2573 Email: [d.poppi@uq.edu.au](mailto:d.poppi@uq.edu.au)



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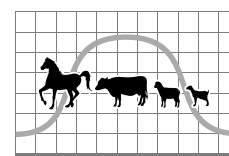
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# Do you own cattle, sheep or goats?

Protect our \$15 billion industry and update your LPA Accreditation now.

## When do I need to upgrade my LPA accreditation?

You can upgrade your LPA accreditation now. As of 1 March 2008, if you are not fully accredited you will not be permitted to use LPA NVDs. You don't need to order new LPA NVD forms, you just need to upgrade your status.

## How do I check whether I am Provisionally or Fully Accredited?

Go to [www.mla.com.au/lqs](http://www.mla.com.au/lqs) and click through to the LPA status check. Enter your Property Identification Code (PIC) and your status will be displayed. You can also check and upgrade your status by calling 1800 683 111 and agreeing to the LPA terms and conditions.

## What do I do if I am Provisionally Accredited?

Follow the prompts on screen at [www.mla.com.au/lqs](http://www.mla.com.au/lqs) and agree to the LPA terms and conditions and you will have your status upgraded on the LPA database. You can also call 1800 683 111 and upgrade over the phone. It's free to upgrade to full accreditation.

## I have Provisional LPA accreditation - isn't that good enough?

No. After 1 March you will not be able to use the LPA NVDs that you have at home if you are not fully accredited. You don't need to order LPA NVD books, you just need to upgrade your status. If you are not fully accredited, you cannot sell your stock using an LPA NVD. Buyers of livestock at saleyards will be able to check LPA accreditation status prior to sales through presale catalogues. Feedlots, processing plants or live export depots can check the status of producers through the LPA or NLIS databases for direct consignments.

## What are the benefits to upgrading my LPA status?

Individuals will benefit from being fully accredited as they will be able to use the LPA NVDs. As an industry, the move is aimed at further strengthening Australia's reputation as the world's leading supplier of safe, quality red meat.

## I'm just a small hobby farm with some goats, calves and lambs, why do I need to bother with this process?

When you want to sell your livestock, major customers are looking for LPA NVDs to verify the integrity of the products being sold. If you don't upgrade your accreditation, your LPA NVD will not be valid and your access to markets may be significantly decreased.

## What will happen if I don't upgrade my LPA status?

As of 1 March 2008, when you sell livestock through saleyards, feedlots, processing plants or live export depots, your LPA status may be noted or checked. If you send your livestock with an LPA NVD and you are not fully accredited, you are breaking the rules of LPA and your form will be invalid. Processors and exporters may not accept your livestock, agents can note in presale catalogues your provisional status and the market for your livestock may be reduced.

## Who made the decision to end provisional accreditation?

The LPA Advisory Committee, (the group representing all sectors of the livestock industry, including cattle, sheep, goat and dairy producers, livestock agents, processors and lot feeders), made the decision that there would only be one status on the LPA database and that is fully accredited. This was based on the fact that the majority of livestock properties in Australia selling through saleyards, processors and feedlots are already fully accredited.

## Where can I get more information or my questions answered?

Go to [www.mla.com.au/lqs](http://www.mla.com.au/lqs) or call 1800 683 111.

## How much will it cost me to become full accredited?

Nothing, just go to the website [www.mla.com.au/lqs](http://www.mla.com.au/lqs) or phone 1800 686 111.

# Accredited?

Time is running out for Provisional Accreditation of livestock producers in the LPA program. The LPA Advisory Committee has given until 1 March 2008 for producers to upgrade to Full Accreditation. If you fail to upgrade to Full Accreditation by 1 March 2008, you will no longer be allowed to use LPA NVDs to sell livestock. It only takes a couple of minutes online or on the telephone to agree to the LPA Terms and Conditions and it costs you nothing. Being in LPA and using an LPA NVD is a commitment to good farming practices and ensures access to red meat markets. Update your status now, [www.mla.com.au/lqs](http://www.mla.com.au/lqs) or call 1800 683 111.

Update LPA accreditation by March 1st

 **LIVESTOCK  
PRODUCTION  
ASSURANCE**

 **mla**  
MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA



# Timely tips for south-east Queensland

## BREEDING

### Spring

September, October, November

#### **Breeders and calves**

- A**ssess breeder condition for mating. First calf cows may need extra care.
- V**accinate maiden heifers for vibriosis. If a problem exists, give 2 vaccinations 4 to 6 weeks apart.
- V**accinate maiden heifers for leptospirosis (2 vaccinations 4 weeks apart).
- V**accinate all breeding cows for pestivirus. Vaccinate for three-day sickness.
- R**egularly check calving cows, especially heifers.
- R**ecord all cows and heifers that have calving problems and sell them and their calves as soon as is practical.
- O**rders NLIS ear tags or rumen boluses for calves branded this year.

#### **Bulls**

- E**valuate the information available on potential bull supplies.
- P**urchase bulls according to breeding objectives and performance.
- C**heck purchased bulls are in working condition, not sale condition.
- C**heck all bulls for soundness (physical and reproductive) as well as for:
  - injuries, stiffness of gait, cuts or swelling
  - signs of three-day sickness.
- C**ull bulls on age (over 6–7 years).
- C**ull any bulls with defects.
- V**accinate bulls for three-day sickness and vibriosis (2 doses 1 month apart initially, then annual booster).
- V**accinate bulls for pestivirus.
- C**heck that mating paddocks are secure.
- P**ut bulls out with breeders:
  - Mate heifers one month before the main herd where nutrition is adequate.
  - Mate young bulls with young cows.
  - Avoid mixing bulls of different ages if possible.

#### **Growing cattle (steers and cull heifers)**

- C**onsider vaccinating against three-day sickness, particularly stock to be sold in next 6 months.

### Summer

December, January, February

#### **Breeders and calves**

- B**rand, dehorn, castrate, tag and vaccinate calves (5-in-1 or 7-in-1).
- E**nter new calves onto herd performance recording program.
- E**nter new calves into NLIS database.

#### **Bulls**

- O**bserve bulls in mating paddocks. Are they all working?

#### **Growing cattle (steers and cull heifers)**

- W**eigh; assess individual performance rather than on average.
- A**ssess performance against required target.
- C**onsider HGP implants for steer calves for non-EU sale.
- E**valuate markets and plan sales. Do you have to book cattle into meatworks or feedlots?



# Timely tips for south-east Queensland

NUTRITION	PASTURES	PARASITES & DISEASES	BUSINESS	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE
<p><b>R</b>eview dry season management plan and climate forecasts.</p> <p><b>R</b>eassess pasture quantity and quality in relation to ground cover and feed values at the end of the dry season.</p> <p><b>W</b>here feed quality is low, feed energy and protein supplements to heavily pregnant or lactating breeders and weaners to maintain liveweight.</p> <p><b>E</b>valuate effectiveness and cost benefit of winter supplementation program.</p> <p><b>R</b>e-order supplements for next dry season.</p>	<p><b>C</b>heck pastures at the spring break:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there enough ground cover?</li> <li>• Consider spelling pastures early in the growing season for a positive impact on pasture composition.</li> <li>• Consider burning native pastures to maintain good pasture condition and control woody weeds.</li> <li>• Check and control weeds before they seed. Actively patrol known 'hot spots'. Check areas used for supplementary feeding.</li> </ul> <p><b>C</b>heck long-range weather forecasts for suitable time to plant pasture.</p> <p><b>C</b>heck firebreaks and fire-fighting equipment.</p> <p><b>S</b>ow pastures before November or after January to avoid heatwave conditions on young plants.</p>	<p><b>O</b>btain cattle dip analysis and adjust chemical level if necessary.</p> <p><b>C</b>heck early calves (late winter) for ticks. Start tick control program.</p> <p><b>C</b>heck weaners for worms (WormCheck program) one month after season has broken.</p>	<p><b>M</b>eet with all staff to discuss the progress of the business and plan for the future – retirement and succession planning.</p> <p><b>R</b>evise overall property management and any changes that may be necessary.</p> <p><b>R</b>evise breeding program; assess whether it is producing animals suitable for market requirements.</p>	<p><b>M</b>aintain fire-fighting equipment and extinguishers. Ensure staff are fully trained in their use.</p> <p><b>C</b>lean around buildings and check that gutters are free of leaves.</p> <p><b>E</b>nsure that fire breaks are maintained and serviceable.</p>
<p><b>S</b>tart phosphorus supplementation program in deficient areas. Continue until the end of the growing season.</p>	<p><b>E</b>valuate post-drought pasture management.</p> <p><b>S</b>pell leucaena for at least 2 months during the growing season.</p> <p><b>C</b>onsider applying maintenance fertiliser to sown pastures.</p> <p><b>S</b>pell paddocks to build pasture condition.</p> <p><b>C</b>onsider growing a summer forage crop to carry cattle while pasture paddocks are being spelled.</p>	<p><b>C</b>ontinue tick control program.</p> <p><b>C</b>heck young cattle for worms. Treat if necessary.</p> <p><b>C</b>ontrol buffalo fly where applicable with insecticidal ear tags and buffalo fly traps.</p>	<p><b>H</b>ave a break with family over Christmas.</p> <p><b>E</b>valuate markets and plan sales for coming year.</p> <p><b>R</b>evise marketing options.</p> <p><b>U</b>date the NLIS database regarding all cattle born, purchased, sold or deceased during the year.</p>	<p><b>C</b>arry out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• annual maintenance on pumps and windmills</li> <li>• annual maintenance on dry season supplement feed equipment</li> <li>• workplace health and safety audit of property</li> <li>• annual electrical safety check on all household and farm equipment.</li> </ul> <p><b>C</b>lean up shed.</p>

# Selling options for beef cattle

You may be able to improve your profitability depending on the selling systems you choose. Methods for selling beef cattle include:

- Paddock sale – direct to property, feedlot or butcher
- Saleyard auction
- Over the hook
- AuctionsPlus
- Forward contracts
- Alliances.

**Paddock sales:** Stock are inspected at the vendor's property by the buyer and sold straight out of the paddock. Price is generally negotiated on a dollars per head (\$/hd) or cents per kg liveweight (c/kg) basis. Obviously if the sale is by weight the animals have to be weighed. This can be done on the property but is sometimes done on scales at a saleyard.

**Saleyard auction:** At present most cattle are sold through the saleyards auction system. Many larger saleyards have scales and sell on a liveweight basis. This usually involves a curfew where cattle have to be at the saleyard by a specific time before the sale. Cattle that do not make the curfew time are sold on a \$/head basis.

**Over the hooks sales:** With over the hooks sales, stock are delivered directly to the abattoir. Stock may be sold with or without an agent. Change of ownership takes place at the abattoir scales. The terms of sale will vary between different abattoirs. Generally transport to the abattoir and the transaction levy are paid by the vendor. You are not paid for condemned carcasses or bruise trim.

The actual carcass weight measured at the abattoir can vary depending on the carcass trim used, and whether it is a hot or cold weight. Initially, the carcass

is weighed at the end of the chain while it is still 'hot'. If the abattoir trades on cold weight, around 3% is deducted from the hot carcass weight to provide the cold weight. The actual deduction for the shrinkage varies from 2–4% to account for the water weight loss during cooling in the abattoir.

It is mandatory for all AUS-MEAT-accredited abattoirs to pay on hot weight and use AUSMEAT standard carcass trim. They must also provide carcass feedback. For abattoirs that are not AUS-MEAT-accredited, vendors need to check the conditions under which they will be trading. Stock are sold on an agreed c/kg carcass weight or via a price grid where premiums and discounts are calculated for different carcass attributes.

**AuctionsPlus:** AuctionsPlus began as CALM (i.e. Computer Aided Livestock Marketing) in 1987 as a method of selling livestock by description. It is owned 50% by Elders, 40% by Landmark and 10% by Rural Co. Cattle sales are held weekly and bids can be taken through your preferred agent or home computer nationally. The sale is on farm. Stock are assessed prior to sale by an accredited AuctionsPlus assessor who enters a description of the cattle including photos into a computer-based catalogue. Potential buyers must register and receive a usercode and password which allow them to view the catalogue. AuctionsPlus combines the best features of the saleyard system – access to a wide range of buyers – while allowing direct consignment to the buyer. Selling livestock on AuctionsPlus is through your preferred Agent. Cattle can be sold on the basis of \$/hd, c/kg liveweight or c/kg carcass weight, or on a grid. Transport costs are paid by the buyer and transit insurance is

offered by AuctionsPlus.

**Forward contracts:** A standard forward contract is essentially a contractual agreement between a producer and a processor for the producer to supply a given product at a given time for a given price. The contract includes details of:

- the number, age, sex, breed type, weight range and fat range of the contract cattle
- the fortnight during which they will be delivered (usually in winter or early spring)
- pricing arrangements.

**Alliances:** An alliance brings together some or all of the individuals involved in the beef supply chain from breeder to customer. The purpose is to improve the returns to all parties usually by supplying a consistent, high quality product to the consumer. For this to occur:

- the quality of the product needs to be accurately assessed (chiller assessment/yield)
- the price paid needs to be directly related to the quality of each product (value-based marketing)
- feedback on price and quality must be communicated from the consumer to the producer.

## Selling costs

- A transaction levy of \$5/head is paid to MLA on all cattle sales.
- Agents can assist with all forms of sales with commissions up to 5%. Using an agent includes del credere insurance which guarantees payment.
- Saleyard fees vary, and range around \$4 to \$7 per head. There is also an NLIS tag-reading fee in the order of \$1.10/head.
- AuctionsPlus has a listing fee of \$5.50/head.
- AuctionsPlus delivery is farm gate and the purchaser pays the freight unless offered.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Paddock sales</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal selling costs.</li> <li>Minimal transport and handling.</li> <li>Buyers know in advance the number and type of stock to be delivered to the abattoir.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited competition and carcase feedback.</li> <li>Inefficient for buyers if small numbers are to be sold.</li> <li>Potential for difficulties in agreeing on weights, for example, due to unregistered scales, non-defined curfews.</li> </ul>
<b>Saleyard auction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wide competition and accessibility.</li> <li>All stock types and lots of any size can be sold.</li> <li>Vendors can set a reserve price and can compare quality and price.</li> <li>Payment is guaranteed by the agents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transport costs, saleyard dues, weighing fees and commission must be paid.</li> <li>Possibility of buyer collusion and no negotiation between buyers and vendors.</li> <li>Limited feedback, no carcase feedback.</li> <li>Generally the vendor has to accept the price on the day because of the costs incurred whether or not the cattle are sold.</li> <li>Meat quality can be reduced by stress due to transport and handling.</li> </ul>
<b>Over the hooks sales</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subjective appearance values do not affect the price received.</li> <li>Vendors receive clear market and price signals relating to carcase quality and are provided with feedback.</li> <li>Minimal transport and handling and possibly no commission.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of competition unless selling using AuctionsPlus.</li> <li>Unless AUS-MEAT-accredited, abattoirs will set differing conditions regarding carcase trim, hot or cold weight, and feedback.</li> </ul>
<b>AuctionsPlus (formerly CALM)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competition and exposure is nationwide.</li> <li>Vendor can set a reserve price; stock do not have to leave the property until it is met.</li> <li>No transport costs for producers.</li> <li>Payment is guaranteed.</li> <li>Large range of buying and selling options.</li> <li>Particularly suits geographically isolated producers, although this method can be used anywhere with any numbers.</li> <li>Feedback is provided to producers for c/kg and grid sales.</li> <li>Minimal transport and handling damage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buyers have to adjust to using a computer and not viewing live animals.</li> <li>Vendors and buyers need to have confidence in the AuctionsPlus assessors.</li> </ul>
<b>Forward contracts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a guaranteed price, eliminating the risk of price fluctuations.</li> <li>Enables the producer to confidently plan the purchase of store cattle and feed.</li> <li>Enables the producer to implement appropriate feeding and grazing management strategies.</li> <li>A guaranteed return can be of assistance in negotiating loans and managing financial arrangements.</li> <li>Processors are able to clearly communicate their precise requirements to both producers and agents.</li> <li>Processors can guarantee continuity of supply and maintain the reputation and integrity of their product brands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Producer needs to have a high degree of control over the production system, supplying the specified product at the specified time (unforeseen circumstances may make this difficult).</li> <li>If the cattle cannot be supplied as specified in the contract, the producer is required to supply the shortfall with an equal number of animals from an alternative source within seven days of notification.</li> </ul>
<b>Alliances</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Price fluctuations are reduced.</li> <li>A consistent premium price can be achieved for a consistent premium product.</li> <li>Price reflects the retail value of the carcase, not supply and demand.</li> <li>Objective feedback from the consumer to the producer benefits breeding/selection decisions.</li> <li>Having a known outlet and likely returns provide security for the producer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Producer needs to have a high degree of control over the production system, supplying the specified product at the specified time (unforeseen circumstances may make this difficult).</li> <li>Higher or lower prices elsewhere test loyalties.</li> </ul>

Further information:



**Roger Sneath**

DPI&F, Dalby

Phone: 07 4669 0808

Email: roger.sneath@dpi.qld.gov.au



## New FarmBis subsidies

**F**armBis Queensland recently introduced new subsidies to assist Queensland beef producers, and to provide subsidies similar to those available through the new national FarmBis program.

In summary the changes are:

1. Travel subsidies for participants attending training in Queensland
2. Increased accommodation and meal allowances.

Detailed tax invoices must be submitted with the appropriate claim form to receive these subsidies.

### **Participant travel subsidies**

Travel subsidies have been introduced to make it easier for participants to attend training who have to travel long distances. These subsidies are only available for travel within Queensland and are available for all training activities regardless of duration.

1. Private vehicle use for more than 150 km one way – 65% of ATO rate (as at October 2007 = 70 cents per kilometre). The maximum subsidy that can be claimed is \$250 (approximately 550km). Only the driver of the vehicle can claim the subsidy.
2. Bus and train travel – 100% of ticket price.
3. Air travel – 65% of the best available ticket price.

### **Participant accommodation subsidies**

The accommodation subsidy rate has increased to 65% and can now also be claimed for reasonable expenses for meals purchased while attending training. The maximum subsidy payment for accommodation and meals has been increased to \$130 per person per night. The accommodation and meals subsidy is only available for training activities of two days' or more duration.

### **New forms**

New forms incorporating these changes are now available on the FarmBis website: [www.farmbis.qld.gov.au](http://www.farmbis.qld.gov.au)

If you have any questions or require further information please contact one of the FarmBis team.

Further information:

Phone: 07 3239 0724

Email: [farmbis@dpi.qld.gov.au](mailto:farmbis@dpi.qld.gov.au)

## handy hint



### **Vaccinations – Getting the needle right**

Like most people who have injected a mob of cattle with a repeat-vaccinator gun, you will probably have experienced two common problems:

- persistent post-vaccination lumps, especially after using oil-based vaccines
- high resistance (in the vaccinating gun) to injection on the first attempt, rectified by deeper insertion of the needle at a more perpendicular angle.

Both of these problems are usually caused by incorrect orientation of the needle on the syringe.

The objective is to get the opening of the needle resting between the skin and the underlying tissues. To achieve this, orientate the needle so that it enters the skin at a 45° angle with the bevel parallel to the skin.

If the bevel faces away from the skin, the opening of the needle may still be in the dermis (skin), resulting in high resistance in the gun. To counter this, a more perpendicular entry is often used on the second attempt. This results in the leading edge of the needle cutting into underlying tissues, with potential for intramuscular vaccine injection – thus the lumps.

Always keep a pair of pliers in the vaccination kit for correctly orienting the needle. This is easily done with robust metal guns but can be a challenge with disposable guns.



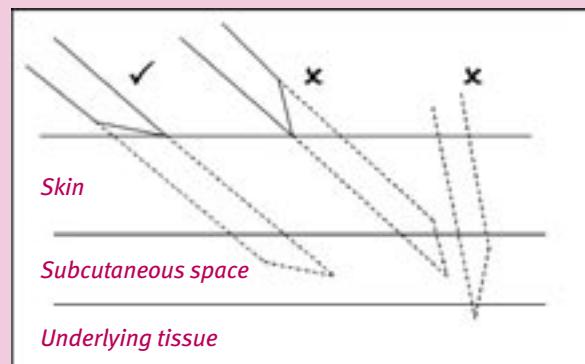
Further information:

**Geoffrey Fordyce,**

DPI&F, Charters Towers

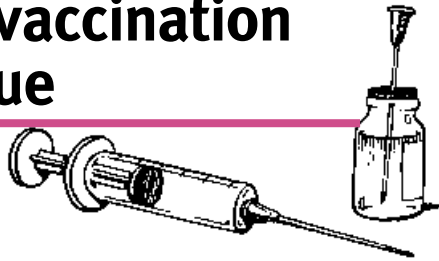
Phone: 07 4754 6123

Email: [geoffry.fordyce@dpi.qld.gov.au](mailto:geoffry.fordyce@dpi.qld.gov.au)





# Vaccine storage and correct vaccination technique



Many fatal or debilitating diseases of cattle can now be controlled by vaccination, including clostridial diseases, leptospirosis, pinkeye, vibriosis, pestivirus, tick fever, pneumonia and salmonella. The decision to vaccinate, and when, is influenced by the class of stock, seasonal conditions, previous property history, disease incidence and plain economics.

Whatever the vaccine to be used, beef producers are encouraged to protect their investment by ensuring vaccines are stored correctly and administered as per the manufacturer's directions. Using ineffective vaccines is a waste of time and money.

## Vaccine storage

Most vaccines require refrigeration between 2–8°C. Take an insulated container with a frozen ice brick with you when you go to purchase a vaccine. Keep the vaccine cool in this container until you get home and can put the vaccine into a refrigerator. It is important that vaccines are not allowed to freeze and are protected from light at all times.

When it is time to use the vaccine, transport it from the refrigerator to the cattle yards in an insulated container containing a frozen ice brick. Leave the vaccine in this container until you are ready to inject the cattle. Ensure you only take enough vaccine to the cattle yards to use that day. Once most vaccines are opened, it is recommended that they be used up within 24 hours.

## Correct vaccination technique

To minimise carcass damage and to prevent further infection after vaccination, it is important to pay careful attention to vaccination technique and hygiene. To help avoid carcass damage:

- Sterilise all needles and metal vaccinator guns by boiling in water for at least 10 minutes before use. Plastic vaccinator guns should be flushed with cool boiled water before use.
- Needles should be sharp, clean and replaced frequently (every 20–30 animals).
- If giving a subcutaneous injection, take care to inject under the skin and not into the muscle. This is best achieved by raising a fold of skin and

injecting the dose under the raised skin.

- For subcutaneous administration, the maximum needle size recommended is 15mm x 16 gauge.
- Avoid injecting animals during wet weather or under dusty conditions.
- Inject animals high up on the neck, behind the ear.

After use, the vaccinator gun should be cleaned thoroughly by flushing it with warm, soapy water, followed by clean water.

The general advice in this article is relevant to most cattle vaccines. However beef producers are reminded to fully read and understand the label directions of the particular vaccines you plan to use to ensure you store and administer those vaccines correctly.



Further information:

### Craig Stevenson

Technical Services Manager  
Coopers Animal Health  
Phone: 1800 226 511

## How to prepare for kids...



**Women:** To prepare for maternity, put on a dressing gown and stick a beanbag chair down the front. Leave it there for nine months. After nine months, remove 10% of the beans.

**Men:** To prepare for paternity, go the local chemist, tip the contents of your wallet on the counter, and tell the pharmacist to help himself. Next, go to the supermarket. Arrange to have your salary paid directly to its head office. Go home. Pick up the paper and read it for the last time.

Before you finally go ahead and have children, find a couple who are already parents and berate them about their methods of discipline, lack of patience, appallingly low tolerance levels, and how they have allowed their children to run wild. Suggest ways in which they might improve their child's sleeping habits, toilet training, table manners, and overall behaviour. Enjoy it -- it's the last time in your life that you will have all the answers.

To discover how the nights feel, walk around the living room from 5 pm until 10 pm carrying a wet bag weighing approximately 4-5 kg. At 10 pm put the bag down, set the alarm for midnight, and go to sleep. Get up at 12 am and walk around the living room again with the bag until 1 am. Put the alarm on for 3 am. Since you can't go back to sleep, get up at 2 am and make a pot of tea. Go to bed at 2:45 am. Get up again at 3 am when the alarm goes off, sing songs in the dark until 4 am. Put the alarm on for 5 am. Get up. Make breakfast. Keep this up for 5 years. Look cheerful.

# Best practice husbandry in cattle – branding, castrating and dehorning

A new guide to best practice methods for branding, castration and dehorning is available free from Meat & Livestock Australia.

The ‘Guide to best practice husbandry in beef cattle – branding, castrating and dehorning’ provides a set of standards for these animal husbandry practices. The guide sets out in practical terms how to best accomplish routine husbandry procedures to optimise welfare and production outcomes with minimal stress to the animal and the person carrying out the task.

A number of techniques are discussed along with equipment and maintenance needs, and important information on occupational health and safety considerations is provided.

It is essential, from the viewpoint of animal welfare, animal productivity and the industry as a whole, that these husbandry tasks be performed in the best possible way.

All practices described in the guide comply with the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Cattle, which sets standards of animal welfare in the Australian cattle industry. The manual also details the different legal requirements in some states.

The guide is designed for livestock producers and also for training institutions such as TAFE and agricultural colleges. It was developed following extensive consultation with welfare organisations, agricultural colleges, veterinary schools, cattle industry bodies, pastoral companies and experienced cattle handlers.

A free copy of the guide can be obtained by contacting MLA on 1800 675 717 or ordering online at [www.mla.com.au/publications](http://www.mla.com.au/publications).

Further information:

**Russ Tyler**

DPI&F, Gayndah

Phone: 07 4161 3726

Email: [russ.tyler@dpi.qld.gov.au](mailto:russ.tyler@dpi.qld.gov.au)

## A quote from a producer who has read the book:

*‘I found this an excellent booklet. It is written in an easy to understand style and is accompanied by really good photographs and illustrations. It covers branding, castrating and de-horning with sensible advice for cattle management during such operations. It also covers the different ways you can do these jobs with clear illustrations of the various tools you can use.*

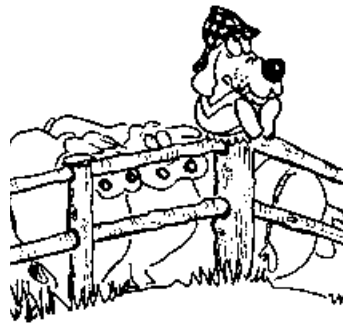
*There is also a good section on the maintenance and use of your branding irons, what you need to have at the ready before you begin any of these procedures, as well as general hygiene in the branding yards.*

*These days we all need to know all the Government rules pertaining to the care of our animals. This book covers everything you need to be aware of in the branding, castrating and dehorning component of cattle breeding.’*

## Nine words women use...

1. **Fine:** This is the word women use to end an argument when they are right and you need to shut up.
2. **Five minutes:** If she is getting dressed, this means a half an hour. Five minutes is only five minutes if you have just been given five more minutes to watch the game before helping around the house.
3. **Nothing:** This is the calm before the storm. This means something, and you should be on your toes. Arguments that begin with nothing usually end in fine.
4. **Go ahead:** This is a dare, not permission. Don’t Do It!
5. **Loud sigh:** This is actually a word, but is a non-verbal statement often misunderstood by men. A loud sigh means she thinks you are an idiot and wonders why she is wasting her time standing here and arguing with you about nothing. (Refer back to #3 for the meaning of nothing.)
6. **That’s okay:** This is one of the most dangerous statements a woman can make to a man. That’s okay means she wants to think long and hard before deciding how and when you will pay for your mistake.
7. **Thanks:** A woman is thanking you, do not question, or faint. Just say ‘you’re welcome’.
8. **Whatever:** Is a women’s way of saying ..... YOU!
9. **Don’t worry about it, I have done it:** Another dangerous statement, meaning this is something that a woman has told a man to do several times, but is now doing it herself. This will later result in a man asking ‘What’s wrong?’ For the woman’s response refer to #3.

# Yards for a small beef herd



Access to a well-designed and well-constructed cattle yard is essential for good cattle management, irrespective of how many cattle you own. Good yard design works with the natural movement of cattle and the operations you wish to carry out. If you are new to the beef industry, it is advisable to seek expert advice when designing a set of yards.

*Beefstalk 13* and *Beefstalk 14* carried articles on materials, designs and construction. The basic principles outlined in these articles apply to all yards irrespective of the number of cattle to be worked in the yards. The only difference between yards to hold large and small mobs of cattle will be the number and size of the yards.

When yards are constructed on a small beef property, all the materials often need to be bought in. This can make even a small yard relatively expensive to build.

Many manufacturers now offer portable (or relocatable) yards constructed with modular steel

components. Constructing a portable yard does not call for the skill that is required when building with raw materials.

Most manufacturers offer basic yard designs for which they supply all the materials as a package; this makes it a straightforward process to select a plan to meet your needs, purchase all the materials, and construct the yards. With portable yards, it is also relatively easy to change the design and add extra yards.

Within reason, the price of portable panels indicates the strength of the material used. Forcing yards and crushes need heavy material; lighter material may be suitable for receiving yards. As with everything, 'you get what you pay for'.

## Further reading

NSW Department of Primary Industries website has basic designs for mobs of 10 to 250 head: [www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/yardplans](http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/yardplans)

DPI&F publication: 'Cattle Yards – Design, materials and construction'. ISBN 0 7242 2259 6



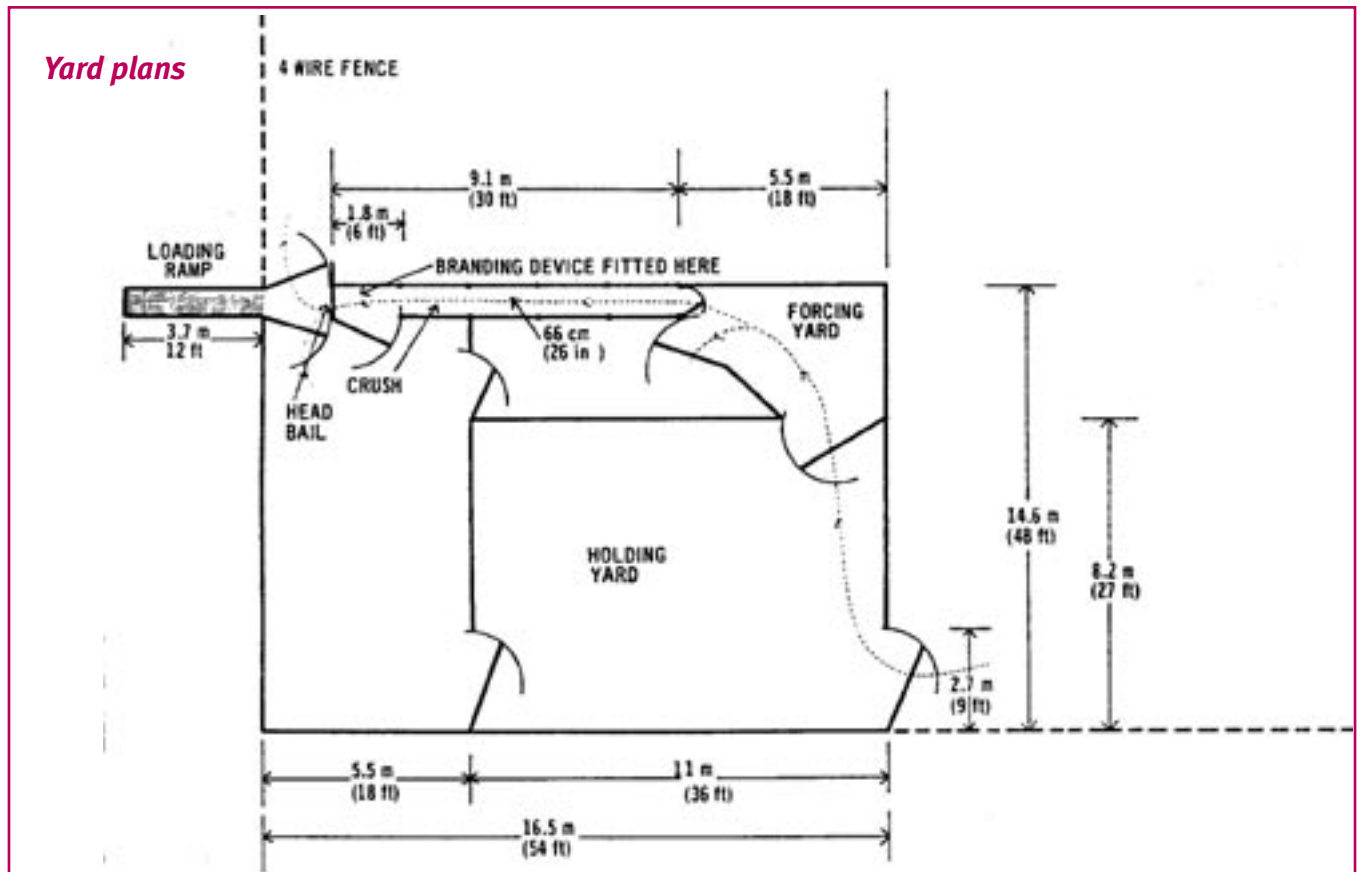
Further information:

**Russ Tyler**

DPI&F, Gayndah

Phone: 07 4161 3726

Email: [russ.tyler@dpi.qld.gov.au](mailto:russ.tyler@dpi.qld.gov.au)



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# Applying NLIS ear tags

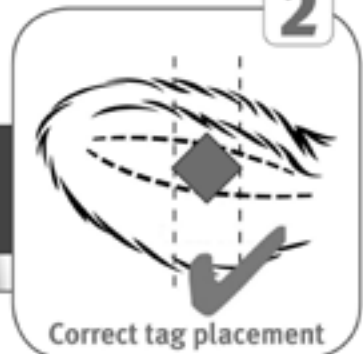
Use white **Breeder Tags** for cattle you have bred and that have never left your property. Use orange **Post-breeder Tags** for cattle you have purchased or for cattle whose property of birth is unknown. If cattle are already identified with an NLIS tag, do not attach a second NLIS tag.

1



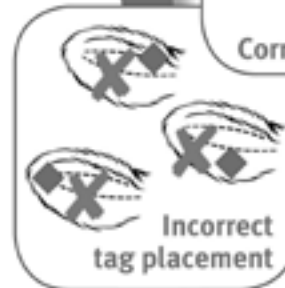
Locate the correct position for the tag.  
Tags must be applied to the **RIGHT** (offside) ear.

2



Tags should be placed in the middle of the ear to reduce tag loss and the risk of infection.

Correct tag placement



Incorrect tag placement

3

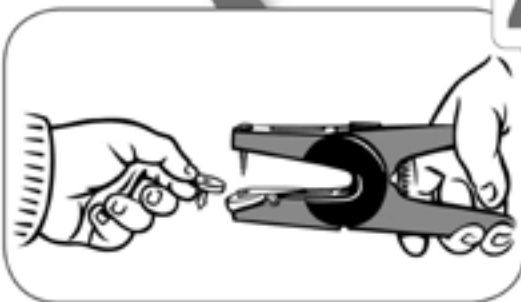
The female part of the NLIS ear tag with the printed NLIS number on its face also contains the microchip or RFID.

To insert the female part of the tag into the applicator, depress the spring clip and slide the tag into place.

Insert female tag under the spring clip



4



Slip male part of tag completely onto application pin.

Dip jaws of applicator holding tag into antiseptic or disinfectant solution.

5



With the correct position located, apply the tag firmly, always with the male tag entering from the **BACK** (outside) of the ear.

6

Correct position for NLIS tag



**IMPORTANT**

Always use the correct applicator to ensure that the microchip is not damaged and that the tag is attached securely. Failure to follow individual manufacturers instructions may result in damage to the microchip.



Queensland Government  
Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries

## HORSE PROPERTY REGISTRATION – a requirement for ALL horse owners

To assist with the control and eradication of Equine Influenza, it is now a requirement to register all places where horses are kept. This allows the allocation of a property identification code (PIC) to the place where the horses are kept. This requirement applies to commercial enterprises and businesses as well as those owning horses for recreational or sporting purposes.

This brings requirements for places where horses are kept in line with other livestock including cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, buffalo, deer, camelids (camels, llama, alpaca), 100 or more poultry or any avian species.

Data on where horses are kept is critical to both the veterinary and communications aspects of the fight against equine influenza. This registration can be done on the internet at [http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/cps/rde/xchg/dpi/hs.xsl/4790\\_6011\\_ENA\\_HTML.htm](http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/cps/rde/xchg/dpi/hs.xsl/4790_6011_ENA_HTML.htm) or by calling the DPI&F Business Information Centre (13 25 23) or by contacting your local DPI&F office. If you already have a PIC, a further registration is not necessary but please advise your local office of current horse numbers (if any) so that records can be updated.

All horse owners who also register with an email address at [http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/cps/rde/xchg/dpi/hs.xsl/27\\_7416\\_ENA\\_HTML.htm](http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/cps/rde/xchg/dpi/hs.xsl/27_7416_ENA_HTML.htm) will receive the Equine Influenza E-newsletter update, published 3 times per week.

## WSG book free to land holders



A new manual explaining how to control weeds that cost the pastoral industry \$60 million a year is now available free to all land managers.

The Best Practice Manual for the management of weedy sporobolus grasses with emphasis on giant rat's tail and giant Parramatta grass, provides extensive grazing land managers with up to date, well planned control guidelines.

GRT is a particularly difficult pest to control as it cannot be killed by fire, slashing or grazing.

These extremely aggressive, invasive and unpalatable weedy grasses that now infest an estimated 450,000 hectares of grazing land in eastern Queensland and New South Wales thrive in the more than 700 mm annual rainfall belt.

DPI&F Biosecurity Queensland land protection has categorised WSG as a declared Class 2 pest which means that landholders have a legal obligation to take reasonable steps to keep their land free of this pest which could have adverse economic, environmental or social impacts.

This invaluable 'how-to' guide is available free through the DPI&F by calling 13 25 23 or by emailing [beef@dpi.qld.gov.au](mailto:beef@dpi.qld.gov.au)

If you would like a copy of Beeftalk mailed to you, please complete the following form and send to Editor, Beeftalk, DPI&F, PO Box 118, Gayndah, Qld 4625 or Email [russ.tyler@dpi.qld.gov.au](mailto:russ.tyler@dpi.qld.gov.au)

Name: .....

Address: .....

Postcode: ..... Shire: ..... Property Number: ..... No. of cattle: .....

Phone: ..... Fax: ..... Email: .....

Which of the following best describes you?

Beef producer  Agribusiness outlet  Education  Other (please state) .....

# Responsibilities of owning livestock

If you own livestock, no matter how many, you must be aware of certain legal requirements and responsibilities. The introduction of the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) has again emphasised this fact.

## Property registration

If you own one or more horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, buffalo or camelids (camels, llama, alpaca) or more than 100 poultry (of any species), your property must be registered with the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries.

Registered properties are issued with a Property Identification Code (PIC), which is used on many documents relating to the property and livestock on that property.

## Identification

### Branding

Branding is the legal method of establishing ownership of a number of species of livestock, principally cattle and horses.

All cattle of 100 kg or more liveweight and all pigs of 30 kg or more liveweight are legally required to be branded before sale.

### National Livestock Identification System (NLIS)

All cattle, sheep and goats leaving a property for any destination must carry an NLIS device. These are electronic ear tags or rumen boluses. All movements of livestock with NLIS devices have to be recorded on the national database administered by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA). Contact your local DPI&F office to

order NLIS tags or boluses and find out your responsibilities under this national system.

## Welfare

If you own livestock you are legally responsible for their welfare. The main considerations are that animals have adequate food, water and shelter. Codes of practice for the welfare of most species of livestock have been developed.

Copies of these codes of practice are available free from:

Website: <http://www.publish.csiro.au/nid/22/sid/11.htm>

Phone: DPI&F on 13 25 23.

## Livestock Production Assurance (LPA)

When cattle, sheep and lambs, bobby calves and goats are sold they must be accompanied by an LPA form. It is important to know that there are two LPA forms for cattle: one for EU-accredited cattle and another for all other groups. The LPA form identifies the animals being sold and details their husbandry history, specifically the use of growth promotants, withholding periods for veterinary chemicals and vaccines, and feeding in relation to any possible contamination.

These forms must be signed by the owner or the person responsible for the husbandry of the cattle. Random audits are carried out to ensure that information provided on LPA forms is correct.

LPA forms are available from:

Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA)

Phone: 1800 683 111

Website: [www.mla.com.au/lpa](http://www.mla.com.au/lpa)

Further information:

Your local DPI&F office

### Editorial Committee

Russ Tyler, Vince Edmondston, Rebecca Farrell, Jim Kidd, Felicity McIntosh, Damien O'Sullivan, Bill Schulke, Roger Sneath, Carli McConnel representing the South East Queensland Regional Beef Research Committee.

### Enquiries

Russ Tyler  
PO Box 118, Gayndah Qld 4625  
Phone: 07 4161 3726  
Email: [russ.tyler@dpi.qld.gov.au](mailto:russ.tyler@dpi.qld.gov.au)

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