DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

NORTHERN MUSTER

NO.11 APRIL, 1986.

TOWNSVILLE BOWEN AYR INGHAM CHARTERS TOWERS

P.O. Box 931, TOWNSVILLE. Phone 72 6566

IDENTIFYING VERANO - A HAIRY TALE

At this time of year, beefmen (or is it beef persons?) who have sown stylos are wondering about the result.

Seca is easy to identify, with its more rounded leaves and shrubby form. How do you separate Verano from Townsville Stylo?

The main difference is that verano has very little hair, merely one fine line of downy hair (less than 2 mm long) along one side of the stem. By contrast, Townsville Stylo has many large bristly hairs (3 to 5 mm long) at each node (or joint) as well as on the seed head.

Of course, all is revealed to those who wait. Firstly, the next few moist days will see Townsville Stylo collapse with the leaf disease anthracnose.

Secondly, Verano will still be green in mid-year when Townsville Stylo has finished its annual growth cycle and died off.

Currently, Townsville Stylo looks as good as Verano and it has been a valuable pasture. Now many of producers are doing well with the current champions Verano and Seca stylos.

Finally, do not despair about first year pastures as time and development of small plants will improve the picture. Also a proportion of hard seed in Verano and Seca Stylo seed allows the population to thicken on future rain.

Phil Anning, Extension Agronomist, Bowen. Phone 861341

IN THIS ISSUE:

	Page
F.M.D. IN ITALY	6
OPEN DAY - OONOONBA VET. LAB.	8
A NEW HORSE DISEASE	6
DR. BOB - TICK FEVER	6
POST-WEANING DIARRHOEA	4
EARLIER WEANING	5
NEW BEEF MARKET LANGUAGE	2
SELL & BE DAMNED	7
PRITIKIN ON BEEF	7
BEEF INDUSTRY SURVEY, 1984	8
U.S. BEEF SCENE	8

AUS MEAT - THE NEW MARKET REPORTING LANGUAGE

Aus Meat, a national language for use in saleyard market reporting came into use on March 1st, 1986. With this introduction, saleyard price reporting is the same through all Australian States.

While the basic format of reporting is the same as that used previously, some categories of cattle have different names and the weight ranges are different.

Vealers and young cattle have been separated into two classes, the Vealers having 5 weight ranges and Young Cattle, up to about 2 years old, having 3.

The Heifer classification now includes all females carrying 3-7 teeth (2-4 years old) with 50 kg weight ranges, beginning at 370 kg liveweight.

Cows will be all females showing 8 permanent teeth (over 4 years) in four weight ranges of 50 kg increments.

The classifications of Steers and Bullocks have now been combined to one - Steers - and will be males showing 3 or more permanent teeth (2 years and over) generally with 50 kg increments, while bulls will be any animals showing bull like features and spread over 3 weight ranges.

There has been only one change to the fat scoring system. The old score 5 is split into 2 classes with the codes and fat depths now being:

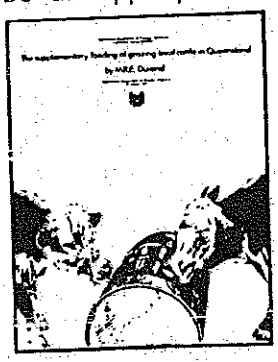
Fat Code	Fat Depth (rump)
1	0-2 mm
2	3-6 mm
3	7-12 mm
4	13-22 mm
5	23-32 mm
6	33 + mm

The markets being reported will continue as Cannon Hill, Toowoomba, Dalby, Warwick, Gracemere, Bohle, Mareeba and Charters Towers, with the reports being available through the ABC, rural press, or by phoning recorded market reports on (07) 221 2998.

Rick Beasley, Livestock Meat Authority, Mackay. Phone 512622

HAVE YOU READ -

The D.P.I. has many valuable publications on a wide range of topics of interest to the "man of the land". We will feature a different book in each issue of "The Muster". With the absence of the wet season AGAIN we felt this might be an appropriate start -



THE SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING OF GRAZING BEEF CATTLE IN QUEENSLAND.
(M.R.E. DURAND)

1983 - 32 PAGES - ILLUSTRATED $2.50

The role of supplements to improve stock performance and help animals survive during times of feed shortage are discussed. Home-mixed supplements and commercial products are compared.

Feeders and methods of feeding are illustrated.

AT THE NORTH QUEENSLAND FIELD DAY

H.M. PRISON GROUND - TOWNSVILLE - 21-22 MAY

D.P.I. WILL FEATURE -

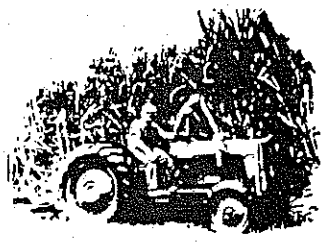
"SERVICES TO RURAL INDUSTRIES"

SEE HOW THE COMPUTERS CAN -

- IDENTIFY YOUR BRAND AND TRACE ITS HISTORY
- COMPRESS YEARS INTO SECONDS - WATCH YOUR HERD GROW AND MAKE MONEY
- CALCULATE GRAIN CROP PROFITS

PLUS

- MINIMUM TILLAGE IMPLEMENTS
- MOLASSES FEEDING FOR DROUGHT
- SOLAR POWERED ELECTRIC FENCES
- ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION DISPLAY
- EGG BREAKING DEMO'S - HOW TO PICK A GOOD EGG
- BEE HIVE ROBBING
- FISH PRODUCTION IN YOUR DAM
- MANGOES - ALL YOU WANTED TO KNOW!
- NOXIOUS AND POISONOUS WEEDS
- ANIMAL AND PLANT DISEASES
- ANIMAL AND PLANT QUARANTINE
- TROUGH WATER MEDICATION
- MEAT QUALITY DISPLAY
- BURDEKIN DAM - ITS EFFECTS
- FRUIT AND VEGETABLE MARKET REPORTING



IT'S A BIG SHOW, SO LOOK FOR THE BIG TENT!

DIRTY-TAILED WEANERS?
- PLEASE TELL US.

Calf weaning time is close again, so is post-weaning diarrhoea time. This is a good time to remind you about this problem, make a few suggestions about controlling it and ask your help in gathering more information.

We are available to answer questions and to give advice. We would welcome the opportunity of visiting properties experiencing outbreaks. More than anything else we need to know about outbreaks, where they are and the conditions under which they occurred. All this depends on you contacting us. So if you think we can help you in some way or if you have something to tell us please write or phone.

Post-weaning diarrhoea affects beef calves about one month after weaning. Most calves have some diarrhoea at this stage, with up to 10% being badly affected. Some may die others will rapidly lose weight but survive as "poor doers".

The disease is caused by coccidia, common gut parasites, particularly Eimeria zuernii. These parasites rarely cause disease in grazing animals. The outbreaks of disease after weaning are believed to follow a lowering of the animals resistance to disease caused by the stress of weaning. A shortage of food would obviously be an additional stress and it appears to be an important one. Our observations indicate that post-weaning coccidiosis is more likely to be a problem in very dry conditions with restricted feed, and several outbreaks have been seen in calves being fed only sufficient nutrition to maintain but not gain weight.

Treatment is difficult because most of the damage has been done before the signs of disease are obvious. The disease has been controlled experimentally with monensin (as Rumensin) and its use at the recommended level in supplementary feed would probably help in prevention.

Adequate nutrition to maintain weight gain is probably even more important. The coccidia are there and can't be removed. Weaning and associated procedures are necessary, and stress is inevitable, but, the level of nutrition is controllable and apparently important. We believe that coccidiosis is unlikely to be severe in well nourished and growing weaners.

We are rather cautious in our recommendations. We think we know how this disease occurs but there are many aspects we don't understand. It is a very difficult disease to work on in the laboratory and we must learn as much from the field as we can. This is another dry year. Post-weaning coccidiosis may be common. This is bad news for you, but your experiences can provide us with valuable information.

Rick Parker & Gareth Jones
Oonoonba Vet. Lab.
Phone 78 2688

EARLIER WEANING - YET AGAIN

For many years we as a branch have recommended earlier weaning of calves.

Earlier weaning reduces annual nutritional stress on breeders in this environment, thus reducing mortality rates of breeders and probably increasing branding rates.

Few producers argue with these statements but **"WHAT ABOUT THE WOODY WEANER!"**

Investigations will be conducted on two properties in the Charters Towers area this year, to gain information on the performance of young weaners from 4 months of age and older.

Some calves will be weaned at this age and fed on a cottonseed or meatmeal supplement for 2-3 months when they will be compared to a similar group which remained on their mothers.

Performance will again be checked following the 'wet' (hopefully) early in 1987. It may also be possible to obtain turnoff information of some of these weaners in the future.

Initially the aim of this work is to demonstrate what is required to ensure satisfactory survival and growth rates of young weaners.

The eventual aim of the work is to move the major weaning time forward from July/August to April/May, to reduce breeder losses and/or the need to survival feed large numbers of breeders.

The emphasis will become weaner feeding rather than breeder feeding.

It is sad but true that over the last 4 years females have only represented about 30% of the total kill at north Queensland meatworks. This means that up to 40% of the female calves branded, do not end up as beef. As most cull heifers are sold within the region covered by these meatworks, I believe this statistic to be valid.

Maybe earlier weaning will improve this situation.

Peter Smith, Charters Towers
Phone 872155

Cattle herd numbers at 31 March 1985 were estimated to be 22.7 million head, 2.6% higher than the previous year. This was the first increase after eight years of declining herd size. The turn-around in herd numbers indicates that producers have responded to improving prices and reasonably favourable seasonal conditions. The AMLC projects a continuation of herd rebuilding although only a modest rate of recovery in herd numbers is projected, reaching 26.2 million head by 1990.

Beef and veal exports in 1985 totalled around 460,000 tonnes (boneless equivalent) and a similar level of exports is projected for 1986. A gradual expansion in export levels is then projected through to the end of the decade with sales in 1990 expected to be around 540,000 tonnes.

Source: A.M.L.C. In Brief, March 1986.

FOOT & MOUTH OUTBREAK IN ITALY

The Quarantine Service is keeping a close watch on an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Italy.

The disease has been active since mid November 1985, affecting pigs, cattle and goats in the provinces of Modena, Reggio-Emilia and Verona.

Family ties between Australia and Italy give this outbreak added significance because of the considerable movement of relatives, friends and business people between the two countries. Parcels Post is also a strong link.

Meat and dairy products are banned from Italy yet Quarantine Officers frequently have to seize these products (especially salamis) from travellers from Italy. Foot-wear and clothing is also given close attention.

Reports indicate the source of this outbreak as either "Middle East motor transports" or "garbage of Argentinian origin", highlighting how easily the disease can spread.

Travellers from Italy are urged to bear in mind the infectious nature of FMD and the disasterous effects an outbreak in Australia would have on the whole community.

Bruce Nelson, Quarantine Officer, Townsville. Phone 72 6566

DID YOU KNOW -

. **That 60% of properties are visited by a D.P.I. officer at least once per year;**

. **That rubbervine is regarded as a major problem by 40% of property owners & a minor problem by 37%.**

Source: 1984 Beef Industry Survey

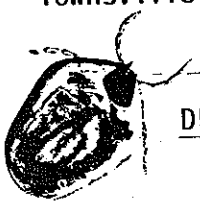
POTOMAC HORSE FEVER - A NEW DISEASE

Come to grips with one disease and they run in another! Potomac Horse Fever is a new horse disease reported from U.S.A. All ages and breeds of horses are susceptible but usually only 5-7% of the herd is attacked.

The U.S.A. picture is one of high fever, laminitis, diarrhoea and profound sickness, leading to death in about 30% of cases.

The means of transmission is not clear - another headache for Animal Quarantine!

Bruce Nelson, Quarantine Officer, Townsville. Phone 72 6566



DR. BOB'S COLUMN

TICK FEVER

It seems incredible that Tick Fever could occur in high percentage Brahman cattle in a normally Ticky area. **IT HAS OCCURRED.** The reason is simply lack of sufficient ticks to circulate the organism causing tick fever to young cattle, providing life long immunity without risk of disease. If your young cattle have had low to non-existing tick burdens for the last few years, this year's weaners are at risk.

THE SOLUTION:

Vaccinate weaners with two-germ blood prior to placing them in the paddock. Blood is ordered directly from Wacol by phoning (07) 271 2577 or through your agent.

Robert Hedlefs, Veterinary Officer, Townsville. Phone 72 6566

SELL AND BE DAMNED BUT SELL

Many areas of the Dalrymple Shire have little feed and are facing serious drought problems.

I believe that old saying "he who hesitates is lost" and recommend that drought management decisions should be made and acted on now.

The first thought should be to reduce cattle numbers to a level more in line with the amount of feed available now.

Selling to reduce numbers has, more often than not, proved to be more successful in the long term than agisting.

Some thoughts on classes of cattle to be sold are listed below in my order of priority. Your priorities may be different.

1. **Normal turnoff bullocks and steers.** Bullocks are generally in reasonable condition in these areas and probably won't get much better.

2. **Dry Cows.** A majority of these dry cows will be pregnant and will calve later in the year when there could be a major drought risk. Dry cows are generally in good condition and should attract meatworks competition.

3. **Cows with young calves.** These would probably be the next priority, although the store female market is not particularly strong at present. However, these are my next priority as the calves would not be old enough to wean for some months and weaners can be high drought risks.

These are the highest priority groups that should be considered now. The numbers of cattle sold will depend on your individual property situation and feed supply.

It may be an idea to seek good agistment for fattening for next years male turnoff if your situation is desperate.

My drought management recommendation at this time is to reduce numbers. Selling has generally proved to be a better management and economic proposition than agisting.

Peter Smith, Charters Towers
Phone 872155

PRITIKIN ON BEEF

Source: Farm Magazine, November, 1985.

Nathan Pritikin, internationally acclaimed dietary expert, who died last year, made this claim in his last interview that was published recently.

On beef he said: "Actually, no beef in this country (United States) is fit for human consumption. Graded beef is marbled and has 81 percent of its calories in fat. But if you get grassfed meat, the cholestrol levels are just as low as chicken. You can get it at any butcher shop, just ask for commercial grade, which is supposedly for dogs. Just tell the butcher you have a large dog at home. Also, it's half the price. **AUSTRALIA HAS MARVELLOUS BEEF THAT'S NON-MARBLED".**

BEEF INDUSTRY SURVEY 1984

In late 1983 and 1984, I interviewed 68 cattlemen in Dalrymple and Bowen Shires. Since then I have been processing the information.

Some of the most interesting results will be printed in each newsletter, and a full report will be sent to participants later this year.

I wanted to identify the stages of property development in the area, and the relevance of research information to property managers.

Over 80% of managers were aware of most of the information available, and about half had applied it to their properties. The main reasons given for not using practices were:

1. Undesirable consequences were anticipated.

2. The established practice works well and does not warrant changing, particularly where costs and effort are involved.

3. Property development is not adequate to use the practice at this stage.

4. The practice has been tried unsuccessfully, or is used in exceptional circumstances only.

This means that any new practice must show an obvious economic and practical advantage over the existing system and must be applicable to the present stage of development.

Bruce Frank, Townsville
Phone 72 6566

THE U.S. BEEF SCENE

Increased beef production and low cattle prices in U.S.A. in 1985 has led to a continuing reduction in the national herd and a beef supply reduction in 1986 of 5 to 10 percent. Beef production in U.S.A. should continue to decrease during the next two years.

As a result, average cattle prices should increase, depending upon other factors such as consumer incomes, consumer attitudes and competing meat supplies.

Beef consumption is expected to decline to about 74 pounds per capita. Demand is a key factor. 1985 saw a decline in spending for all meats and this trend is expected to continue into 1986. However, relative spending on beef has been constant.

The U.S. economy should be fairly stable with modest economic growth and no increase in interest rates.

The cattle herd of 110 million in 1985 reduced to 106 million at the start of 1986 and should reduce to 104 million by the end of this year. This includes a reduction of 1.5 million cows and a calf drop smaller by 1.4 million.

Condensed from AMLC Market Notes

OPEN DAY - OONOONBA VET. LAB.

Ever wondered what happens in a diagnostic lab?

Oonoonba Vet. Lab. welcome you to their OPEN DAY on 19TH MAY 1986, or they will be happy to see you by appointment any time between 20th and 23rd May.

ANY ENQUIRIES PHONE 78 2688