



Huge growth at Mount Major

STOCK & LAND
BEEF WEEK
DAY 6

The big thing making a difference to the breed at the moment is the silver coat and its ability to avoid heat stress.

- BRETT DAVIDSON,
Mount Major,
Yabba North

■ **LEFT:** Sarah Chaplin and Brett Davidon, Mount Major Murray Greys, Yabba North, with their children Maise and Ted and their dog Shaza. The family will participate in Beef Week for the second year.

Murray Grey

- ◆ **The stud:** Mount Major, Yabba North
- ◆ **The genetics:** Dajory, Lindsay, Willalooka
- ◆ **Gates open:** Day 6 – Wednesday, February 1



By JAMIE-LEE OLDFIELD

MOUNT Major Murray Greys is using the breed's known carcass traits as the foundation for its herd, with outstanding results.

The stud's herd sires all have estimated breeding values (EBVs) in the top one per cent of the breed, while the 2010-drop of calves is in the top 25pc.

Principals Brett Davidson and Sarah Chaplin have been using Breedplan since they founded their stud seven years ago and have now added carcass scanning and structural scoring to their recording system.

Mr Davidson said this ensured his herd continued to increase in quality and therefore profitability.

"We are focusing on high-quality stock with an emphasis on low birth weights, high growth and outstanding intramuscular fat (IMF) traits," he said.

"Through the structural scoring and carcass scanning for Breedplan we are seeing an increase in growth, a lowering of birth weights and an increase in the intramuscular fat in our young stock.

"We recently had two calves that put on 1.6 kilograms a day for the first 200 days just off of grass and their mother, which is incredible."

Mr Davidson said EBVs played a large role in the stud and were

a good tool to help improve a herd over time.

"They're basically the building blocks of going forward, and with our carcass trait EBVs being in front of other studs, hopefully we can develop a good client base and tailor-make bulls for people to improve their profitability and long-term viability," he said.

"We have four bulls in the top 100 for \$index values at the moment, which is starting to create interest in the stud.

"By having those figures it really helps a young stud starting out, especially when they are published online and through Breedplan.

"People get to know and hopefully see the carcass start to flow through clients and breeders, and then butchers and buyers will start targeting those animals."

Mr Davidson said on top of the Murray Grey's carcass quality, low birth weight and strong maternal instinct making easy-care cattle, was their silver coat.

"The big thing making a difference to the breed at the moment is the silver coat and its ability to avoid heat stress," he said.

"We have had strong interest from northern States and are getting inquiries about providing large numbers of bulls to go up north.

"A few years ago, the Kidman Cattle Company bought the Willalooka Murray Grey Stud to breed silver Murray Grey bulls to go to all its properties because their carcass traits and quality could match it with Angus and they don't have the heat stress."

Mount Major Murray Greys, eight kilometres north of Dookie, is participating in Beef Week for the second year, after last year's event helped build new relationships with clients.

The stud will have bulls headed for the national sale, as well as herd sires, cows, calves and mated heifers on display.

Calves by the recently purchased Dajory Echuca, which was in the top three figures for his breed last year, will also be on display, as well as the bull himself.

30 Top quality performance tested bulls
15 Stud Heifers PTIC (live calf guarantee)
12 Commercial Heifers PTIC

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59 Angus Sires Auction Thursday Feb 16th

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 +4.6 BW +116 600 Day weight Frame 6.8

LOT 33 by Anvil Chewbacca, HCA F105
 +1.2 calving Ease +3.9 BW +95 600 Day weight

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 Shane & Jodie Foster 03 5581 1965, 0407 811 656

Field Days Feb 3rd 'Clifton', Hamilton
 Landmark Casterton
 Greg Bright 0408 430 668
 Andrew Harrison 0419 928 145
 Andrew Sloan 0428 522 204

Feb 6th 'Boonaroo', Casterton
 Miller, Whan & John
 Peter Creek 0428 838 332
 Office 08 8723 1066
 Andrew Whan 0427 799 406
 Scott Miller 0427 799 407

Elders Casterton
 Sim Flanders 0418 838 078
 Rick Smith 0428 545 664
 Ross Milne 0408 057 558
 Graham Winnell 0419 600 355



Smart moves: Brett Davidson teaches stock breeders best handling practice at Bendigo National Beef last week.

Easy does it best

By GEMMA GADD

A HAPPY cow is a productive cow, says animal behaviour expert and stockman Brett Davidson.

“Stressed handlers create more work for themselves and make the job harder, more dangerous and longer,” he told a group of 50 young breeders at Bendigo National Beef last week.

Mr Davidson’s Stock Handling Workshop, produced and presented with the North East Victoria Breed Promotion

Group, is based on animal behavioral science to help handlers of all ages work with livestock safely and efficiently.

“It’s as simple as knowing when you are in the animal’s flight zone,” he said. “You only need to take one step forward to move the animal in the right direction. It’s about keeping things calm and low key, which doesn’t necessarily mean slower.”

Mr Davidson said education in livestock handling, for professionals from the saleyards

through to the abattoir, was the best way to counter growing scrutiny from animal rights groups.

And starting young was the key, said Mr Davidson, who often works with veterinary students and high school students.

“Knowing the trigger point and the animal’s point of balance means you can move it more safely and easily,” he said. “Understanding what you’ve done wrong and why the cow has reacted the way she has is equally as important.”