



Wirruna Poll Hereford Stud (est. 1949)

# WIRRUNA NEWS

Newsletter  
Winter 2008

## Inside this issue:

EBV Talk - Hereford \$Index	2
Sire Profile - WNAA41	4
SBTS/Wirruna Workshop	5
Spring 2008 Sale	6

*"The widening gap between demand and supply will result in upward pressure on food prices and land values."*

(Bill Cordingly - RABOBANK)

## Dates for Diary:

- **Calving Ease Field Day**  
Tuesday, 22nd July, 2008
- **Southern Beef Week**  
Field Day Monday, 28th July, 2008
- **Wirruna Spring Sale**  
Wednesday, 27th August, 2008
- **Wirruna Autumn Sale**  
Thursday, 19th February, 2009

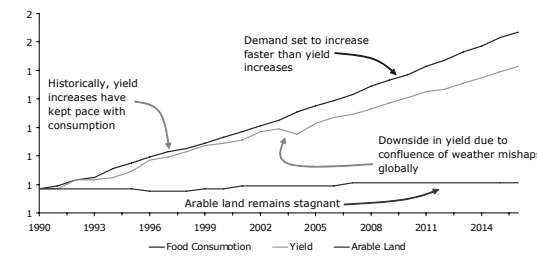
## EDITORIAL – A BREAK IN THE CYCLE

In a recent Rabobank seminar I attended in Wagga, the Food and Agribusiness Research division of Rabobank discussed changing fundamentals for food now being felt throughout the world market. The price of food is now driving global inflation concerns around the world. They argue that while this rise in soft commodity prices has not yet been felt at the farm gate in Australia, there are signs that a new era may unfold as the basic fundamentals of demand and supply begin to experience a widening gap.

The fortunes of the Australian Beef industry has always been heavily dependent upon what is happening to the cow herd in the U.S. The fact that Australia is heavily export dependant where in 2006-07, Australia exported 67.1% of its total beef and veal production (DAFF/ABS). With most of our beef competing head to head with US beef in just 3 major export markets, including the US, makes us vulnerable to changes in supply and demand factors.

### Global demand charging ahead of supply!

Food consumption vs. yield vs. arable land  
Source: FAO, Rabobank, 2008



Demand for food is growing with the UN predicting population growth from 6.4 billion to 9.5 billion in 2050. Most of this growth is occurring in Asia, Latin America and Africa. In addition, many of the emerging markets and developing economies of China, India, Russia and Brazil are seeing a change in diet demanding more quality food, converting from grains to meat consumption. In turn, more grains are being fed to animals. With higher oil and energy prices, there is an additional demand for grains and oilseeds as an alternative use as fuel, Bio-fuel.

As illustrated in the previous graph, supply usually has kept pace with growing demand and needs to grow at about 3.3%/annum. However, various supply shocks including Australia's drought and various floods as seen as gap form between demand and supply. There exists a large pressure on resources to increase supply. Rabobank predict that 21% more arable land is required for primary production than what is currently farmed. Clearly with regulated restrictions on clearing irrigation and other land use for environmental purposes and the growing urbanization requiring physical land the **growth in availability of arable land is unlikely.**

As exhibited in the following graph, in 2005 the US cattle cycle appeared to have turned towards herd expansion and price falls would eventually follow. However, the outlook for the US and global meat industry has now been dramatically altered. Clearly, the explosion in demand for farm-grown fuels has raised global crop prices, cattle ranches are being turned to crop, competition for land, water and feed resources are limiting any upturn in the US cow herd.

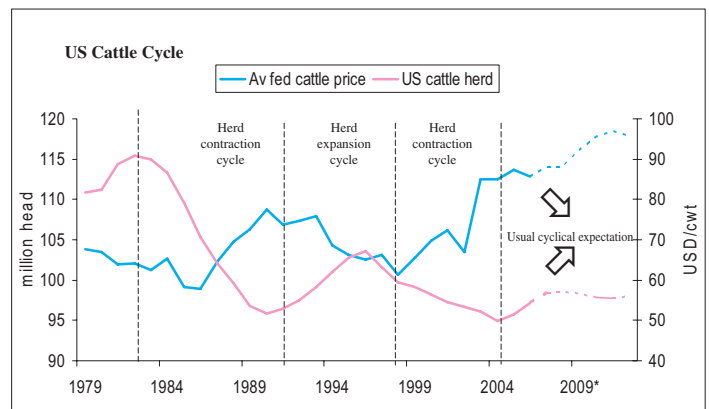
US farmers are already selling 20% of their corn to ethanol production and US legislation will see this increase. This is adding significant cost pressure on US feeders and ranchers. Nevertheless, beef

price is forecast to grow.

I see this possible break in the usual US Cattle Cycle as a significant boost to the Australian Beef Industry with the opportunity for better overall market conditions for beef over the medium term. Notwithstanding that many of the same supply constraints and grain prices hampering US producers are also in action in Australia.

I hope you are in for rain over your patch.

Ian Locke



## EBV TALK – HEREFORD SELECTION INDEXES

*(This article has been compiled with the help of articles produced by Breedplan and Southern Beef Technology Services SBTS and include the views of WIRRUNA).*

### Key Points:

- Selection Index – Draws together many EBV's into a single \$Index EBV
- Tends to work against animals with extreme EBV's
- Like EBV's, this should not be treated as the only tool in your bag

### Brief Description

The selection indexes are designed to allow animals to be compared on a basis of how much profit (\$Index) they will generate, per cow joined, in a commercial herd.

A selection index draws together many EBV's into a single \$Index EBV derived using BreedObject technology. The \$Index is a perfect extension of BREEDPLAN EBV's as it is a useful tool for considering how much emphasis to give each EBV and tends to promote a balance of traits.

### New Hereford Selection Indexes

The Hereford Breed introduced selection indexes in 2002 and these have recently been revised to reflect a change in costs and typical market requirements.

As a result of these changes the Hereford Breed now calculate four different indexes:

- Supermarket Index
- Grass-fed Steer Index
- Grain-fed Steer Index
- EU Index

Each selection index describes a different production/market scenario and relates to a typical, self replacing Hereford herd in temperate Australia targeting the various specifications.

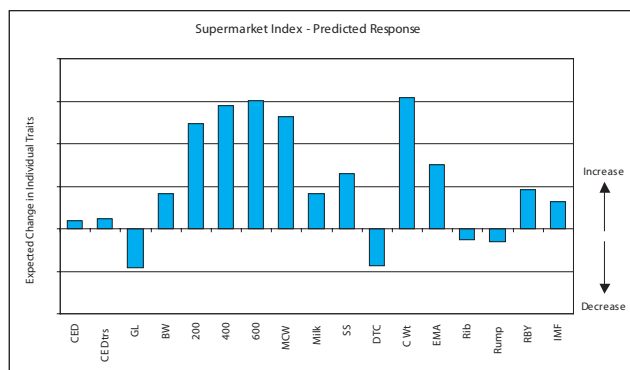
### \$Index Market Specifications

	Supermarket trade	Grass fed Steer	Grain fed Steer	EU
Market target	Domestic	Export/ Domestic	Export /Domestic	Export
Finished on Grass?	✓	✓	✗	✓
Finished on Grain?	✓ (50 → 70 days)	✗	✓ (125 days)	✗
Market weight (kg lw)	450 kg	600 kg	600 kg	620 kg
Age at Market weight	17 mths	23 mths	20 mths	24 mths
Emphasis on Marbling	✓	✓	✓✓✓	✗

A \$Index can be customized to better suit an individual producer as one WIRRUNA client has done in the Northern Territory. However, in my experience, most commercial producers can be readily aligned with one of the given standard indexes. Therefore each beef breeder should consider the one that best describes their particular cattle production system.

### What changes have occurred?

With the recent reassessment of input assumptions and profit drivers in a model production system, given the changed production environment since 2002, such as accounting for higher grain prices and heavier domestic kill weights. This has altered the various weightings on the various EBV's that form the basis of calculations in the Index. The following graph provides an indication of the relative change that would be expected in each individual trait if producers select the top 10% of Hereford Published Sires based on the revised Supermarket Selection Index. This differs from the previous \$Index predicted response with a greater emphasis on growth.



## Southern Beef Week Field Day

Date: Monday, July 28, 2008  
(Day 1)

Time: 9 am to 4 pm

All welcome to take this opportunity to visit our herd and talk to us about your breeding program and your requirements.

Sale bulls, breeding females and a sample of our breeding herd will be available for inspection.

Bull sale catalogues will be available on the day.



## EBV TALK – HEREFORD SELECTION INDEXES CONT.

*I see calving ease is the biggest issue for the Hereford Breed and the seedstock sector has to provide more leadership to tackle the problem*

The re-rankings of animals that have resulted from altering the emphasis on growth has caused a fair bit of angst from /Ha performance focused seedstock producers such as WIRRUNA as this re-weighted favouring growth has come at the expense of especially calving ease and mature cow weight. The table below shows a fictional bull representing the average of the top 50 sires selected on the Supermarket, Grass fed and Grain fed index.

Note that the average Birthweight EBV of the top 50 supermarket sires is +6.4. This ranks in the highest 10% of the breed. This would see an average calving ease EBV of -1.4 ranking in the bottom 40% of the breed. The Mature Cow weight EBV of 98 ranks in the top 1% of the breed.

I strongly believe that the breed have lost many commercial Hereford breeders to other breeds because of poor calving ease. The theory that we can keep pushing growth, and the correlated birthweights, because the daughters will then have better calving ease just doesn't work in southern beef systems that spring calving into high quality pasture.

The signal that the revised \$Index rankings provide to the seedstock and commercial breeders does not provide the correct leadership signals on calving ease and mature cow weight. We all want growth in our cattle, but not at the expenses of calving ease and mature cow weight, as is clearly a happening side effect in the new rankings.

### Problems with \$Index

There is conjecture on whether the \$Index is a true indicator of relative profitability. It is always murky when a Profit/head concept is considered in a Profit/Ha environment – They can often be negatively correlated.

My concern with the model deriving \$Index is that traits are treated as a linear function. Eg, A milk EBV of 18 is seen as better than breed average 10, and 25 is better than 18. I would instead argue that for milk breed average is good, but the further you are from Breed average at extremes becomes less desired. Excessively high milk or excessively low milk can be devastating on cow herd profitability. Likewise with mature cow weight. There is a good tolerance level around breed average, but

extremes are highly undesirable where cows become too small and low yielding or too big and lean.

With regards to joining heifers there is a limitation, the \$Index model assumes eight age groups of cows (ie up to 10 year old cows), only a portion of these are 1st calf heifers, and therefore calving ease is considered on average over the herd, not just over the heifers.

In the revised Supermarket \$Index values, 36 of the top 100 published sires have a birthweight EBV over 7, with only 5% of the Hereford population over 7 for BW EBV, I would consider them mostly terminal! I question whether the model is appropriately accounting for the cost of these higher birthweight genetics.

The \$Index model should treat birthweight as an exponential function. The higher the birthweight EBV, the greater the degree of negative influence on calving ease. 2 year old heifers tend to hit a threshold where most birthweights are tolerated, but over this threshold every extra ounce of birthweight becomes a dystocia nightmare.

### WIRRUNA support Selection Indexes

Although I am critical of the growth message that the revised indexes sends to our commercial breeders, I also want to re-iterate our support for selection indexes.

We consider them to be a very important tool for our clients and the commercial beef producer appears quick to adopt this tool. The system is a valid attempt to better balance traits selected and make the system simpler for the commercial producer. We are better off to work with the scientist and economist to improve the system than dismiss it.

It is vitally important, however, to use \$Index in conjunction with some specific limits on particular EBV's that are critical in your environment and bull purpose. In southern beef systems and for bulls used over heifers, it is critical that upper and lower limits are set on EBV's such as calving ease, birth weight and mature cow weights.

Like all selection tools, \$Index should not be treated as the only tool in your bag. However, used correctly, it is one of the more valuable tools.

*WIRRUNA encourage the use of \$Index for selection decisions – but . . . within considered EBV ranges for traits that are critical to your production system*

Winter 2008 Group Breedplan EBV's

Sire Name	CALVING EASE				GROWTH & MATERNAL					FERTILITY		CARCASS DATA EBV's					
	Calv Eas Dir	Calv Eas Dis	GL Days	Birth Weight	200-Day Growth	400-Day Weight	600-Day Weight	Mature Weight	Genetic Milk	Sexual Size EBV	Days to Calving	CWT (kg)	EMA (sq cm)	Rib Fat (mm)	PS Fat (mm)	RBV (%)	IMF (%)
A MR TOP 50 SUPERMARKET	-1.4	+0.8	-1.6	+6.4	+41	+67	+95	+98	+14	+1.9	-3.0	+59.0	+3.2	+0.0	+0.3	+1.2	+0.6
B MR TOP 50 GRASS FED	+0.0	+1.2	-1.6	+5.3	+38	+63	+89	+89	+14	+2.2	-4.1	+57.1	+3.4	+0.3	+0.1	+1.1	+0.5
C MR TOP 50 GRAIN FED	+1.3	+0.3	-1.2	+5.0	+37	+60	+85	+82	+13	+2.2	-3.9	+54.7	+3.1	+0.4	+0.2	+0.8	+0.9
Breed Ave. '06 drop	-0.6	+0.3	-0.2	+4.4	+25	+39	+55	+55	+10	+1.0	-1.5	+33	+2.1	+0.2	+0.1	+0.7	+0.1

**SIRE PROFILE: WIRRUNA ABRACADABRA A85**

- Attractive stud sire with outstanding temperament
- Top weight gainer in age group - Excellent early growth
- All progeny to date are clean polled (31 progeny)
- Rates in top 1% for Grain Fed \$Index, EMA & IMF%
- Combines carcase traits, growth and moderate mature cow size

"A85 has exceptional structure"  
Dr Reon Holmes

Birth Date: 20-Aug-05  
Society ID: WNAA85  
Horn/Scurs/Poll: Poll

**Semen Price**  
**\$40/straw**



FELTONS 524 (IMP USA)

EF F524 FELLIS 821C  
EF VICKI SLEW 5X

Sire: **MOUNT DIFFICULT FELLIS Y12 (AI) MTTY12**  
MOUNT DIFFICULT SAFEGUARD  
MOUNT DIFFICULT TIGRESS U5  
MOUNT DIFFICULT TIGRESS S9

GLENTREVOR TRAINER M137  
GLENTREVOR TRAINER T4  
GLENTREVOR MARITANA

Dam: **WIRRUNA TIGRESS W32**  
SOUTH BUKALONG WAKEFIELD  
WIRRUNA TIGRESS U74  
WIRRUNA TIGRESS S7











Black highlight: Ranks with top 5% of breed

Grey highlight: Ranks with top 20% of breed


WINTER 2008 GROUP BREEDPLAN EBV's

CALVING EASE				GROWTH & MATERNAL				
Calving Ease DIR (%)	Calving Ease DTRS (%)	Gestation Length (days)	Birth Weight	200-Day Growth	400-Day Weight	600-Day Weight	Mat Cow Weight	Genetic Milk
+1.6	+0.7	<b>-3.8</b>	+3.5	<b>+34</b>	<b>+51</b>	+59	+46	+8
56%	42%	76%	90%	85%	77%	76%	64%	50%

FERTILITY		CARCASE						MUSCLE SCORE
Scrotal Size (cm)	Days to Calving	Carc Weight	EMA (sq cm)	Rib Fat (mm)	Rump Fat (mm)	RBV (%)	IMF (%)	
+1.4	-	+45	+4.6	<b>+0.7</b>	<b>+0.9</b>	<b>+1.2</b>	<b>+1.3</b>	B-
77%		65%	51%	61%	61%	58%	55%	

STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENT							29-Oct-06	Temp.
							11-Oct-06	
7	5	6	6	5	5	4	35	2

SINDEK VALUE			
Supermarket	Grass Fed	Grain Fed	EU Index
<b>\$81</b>	<b>\$81</b>	<b>\$99</b>	<b>\$86</b>

EYES	
	Eye Pigment
4	100/100

"Rare combination of marbling and muscle in an easy calving and herd improving package"

"The best bull bred at Wirruna for many years"  
Ian Locke



## WIRRUNA FIELD DAY "How to Improve Calving Ease"

### Workshop Program – 22nd July 2008

- 8.00 am Registration**
- 8.15 am Welcome**  
Ian Locke, Wurruna Poll Herefords
- 8.30 am Effective Selection of Breeding Cattle**  
Christian Duff & Andrew Byrne (SBTS)
- 9.00 am Understanding and Interpreting Breeding Values**  
A brief overview of BREEDPLAN and a guide to interpreting EBVs
- 9.30 am Improve Calving Ease in Your Heifers with Your next Bull Purchase**
- 10.15 am Morning Tea**
- 10.45 am Management Options to Improve Calving Ease in Your Herd**  
Reon Holmes (Holbrook Vet Centre)
- 11.15 am Improving Calving Ease in Your Herd (Yard Session)**  
Interactive discussion on improving calving ease in your herd by combining genetics and management
- 12.00 pm Simplifying Selection with the Hereford Selection Indexes**  
A guide to interpreting and using Selection Indexes
- 12.30 pm Lunch (provided)**
- 1.30 pm Gene Markers – The Silver Bullet or a Blank Round**  
Christian Duff & Andrew Byrne (SBTS)
- 2.00 pm The Bull Buyer and BREEDPLAN (Yards Session)**  
Bull selection with demonstration cattle
- 3.30 pm Closing Remarks and General Discussion**

**Cost \$15**  
**Book in as numbers limited**

Please RSVP by 18th July 2008:

I/We would like to attend the Wurruna Field Day

FAX: (02) 6036 3060

Email: [locke.ian@bigpond.com](mailto:locke.ian@bigpond.com)

**Wurruna Poll Hereford Stud**  
**"Spring Valley"**  
Holbrook  
NSW 2644

Name/s: \_\_\_\_\_ No. attending \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



# SPRING BULL & FEMALE SALE

## 27TH AUGUST 2008

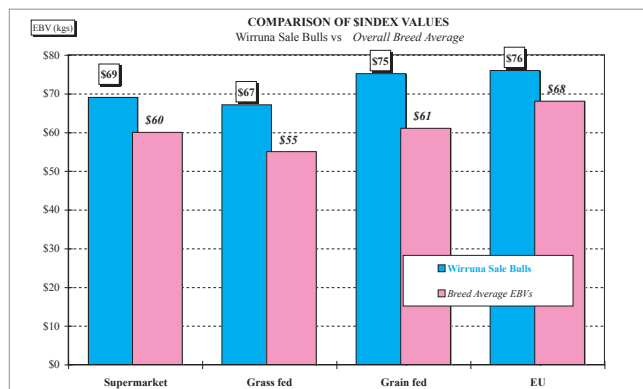
### SPRING SALE

50 Bulls and 12 Heifers will be offered in this years' Spring Helmsman sale on property at "Spring Valley".

Catalogues will be out by late July, and will include the usual selection of used Wirruna sires, specialist heifer bulls, muscle bulls, growth bulls and herd bulls as listed in the following table. As an indication of price, the average prices for each category are also provided.

Pen No.	Purpose	No.	Selected for ....	Prev Average \$'s 2005-2008
1	Muscle Bulls	13	... boosting muscle. High EMA EBV	\$3,544
2	Growth Bulls	10	... improve growth. High growth EBVs	\$3,522
3	Wirruna Sires	5	... trait leading sires used at Wirruna	\$5,531
4 & 5	Specialist Heifer Bulls	11	... ease of calving. Body shape & calving ease genetics	\$3,560
6	Good Herd Bulls	8	... for various breeding objectives	\$2,813
7	PTIC Heifers	12	... adding high quality females due to calve in Autumn 2009	

As you come to expect from Wirruna, we are offering bulls that are genetically superior to breed average and are in their working clothes ready for active service.



beef producer. Sires represented include: Koanui Rocket, Mount Difficult Fellis Y12, Mount Difficult Ungar U46, Heatherdale Opium U78, Quamby Plains Stockmaster Y118, Markowen Author 2, Wirruna Vickery, Elite J7C X54, Feltons Endurance 745 and Debarry Image.

If you don't normally receive a catalogue and would like one please either ring Ian or fill out the cut-out slip provided on this page.

All Wirruna Sale bulls are independently assessed for structure and fertility including serving ability tests and are backed by Wirruna's guarantee and back-up services. They have been run in a single large management group to best identify the favourable genetics and achieve the best quality Breedplan data.

We think you will be very impressed with the line-up for this sale. There are some great Wirruna sires being offered and many breed leading genetics designed for the commercial

Should you be unable to attend our sale, we do have arrangements such as telephone bidding and placement of pre-sale orders. We are very interested to discuss these arrangements and any other requirements that you may have.

Inspections of the sale bull are welcome anytime by appointment.

Ian & Diana Locke

## AUTUMN BULL & FEMALE SALE

### 19TH FEB 2009

#### Contact Details:

**Wirruna Poll Hereford Stud**  
**"Spring Valley"**  
**HOLBROOK**  
**NSW 2644**

**Ian & Diana Locke**  
**Bus/Fax: (02) 6036 3060**  
**Mob: 0408 637 267**  
**Home: (02) 6036 2877**  
**Email: locke.ian@bigpond.com**  
**Website: www.wirruna.com**

**Richard & Diane Locke**  
**Phone: (02) 6036 2559**

Please send me a bull sale catalogue:

Wirruna Poll Herefords  
 FAX: (02) 6036 3060  
 Email: locke.ian@bigpond.com

**Wirruna Poll Hereford Stud**  
**"Spring Valley"**  
**Holbrook**  
**NSW 2644**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax No. ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Or  Please remove my name from your mailing list.