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Producer Research Support

Leading beef producers show the way

Charleville Beef Improvement Association



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The project

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The objective of the bus trip was to meet and discuss management practices with producers who were recognised in the industry.

Group spokesman Michael Flynn said the idea was to shortcut their own property developments by learning from the experience of other successful breeders.

It was hoped that the producers involved would be inspired to:

- alter their practices at home to become more efficient;
- avoid similar costly mistakes that were made by the producers visited; and
- use what they saw to direct development of their pastures and cattle herd.

Objective

Tap into the experience of several identified Central Queensland Beef Producers in order to adapt and implement some of the known advances.

What was done

The sites visited as part of the five day tour were:

- Westech field days, Barcaldine;
- AA's Goonoo Feedlot Comet - Ian Iker;
- Berrigurra Blackwater - Peter Venamore;
- Belah Valley Marlborough - Alf Collins;
- Tropical Beef Centre, Rockhampton;
- Banana Station Banana - Richard Wilson;
- Racecourse Creek Rolleston - Bruce Mayne; and
- Austral Park Acadia Valley - Rob McKinlay.

Mr Flynn said travelling in a bus allowed all information collected to be reviewed as a group and allowed participants to tap into the considerable local knowledge available.

He said the tour appeared to have caused significant changes in enterprise management.

Key points

- Significant changes in enterprise management involving the selection of objectively bred bulls, the introduction of a third breed, shorter joining periods and the use of AI, two year old calving, early puberty, BREEDPLAN, how Hormone Growth Promotants (HGP) are used, cheek branding and the rotation of cattle onto deficient country.

Contact details

Michael Flynn
Valervale / Charleville QLD 4470
Tel 07 4654 5223
Fax 07 4654 5233

Producer Research Support

MLA Producer Research Support offers support funding of up to \$15,000 over three years for groups of producers keen to be active in on-farm research and demonstration trials.

These activities include:

- Producer Initiated Research and Development
- More Beef from Pastures demonstration trials
- Prime Time Wean More Lambs demonstration trials
- Sustainable and productive grazing grants.

Contact Gerald Martin
Producer Research Support Coordinator.

Tel 08 8556 2900 or
producersupport@mla.com.au

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"It is suspected that many of these changes had been thought about in the past but the tour encouraged a better understanding of the concept.

"These tours are effective in increasing understanding and exposure to how concepts can be implemented. They are also good at motivating producers to take the step to implement a new idea," Mr Flynn said.

He said review sessions after each visit seemed to be effective in ensuring all the important information was identified and discussed in terms of its application.

An evaluation carried out 12 months after the tour was completed gave participants time to return to their own property and review the information before making decisions to implement new strategies.

Discussion

Almost all people interviewed said the trip had resulted in some change in their enterprise. Most identified specific changes, while a couple saw benefit in providing them with direction for their own enterprise and identifying areas that needed to be improved.

A major area in which people have taken action has been in the area of breeding. This has involved the selection of objectively bred bulls, the introduction of a third breed to their herd, shorter joining periods and the use of AI. Also mentioned were two-year-old calving, early puberty, and the limitations of BREEDPLAN.

The tour was also credited with motivating people to increase their fencing to allow better control of their pastures and cattle.

Other changes in management were:

- how Hormone Growth Promotants (HGPs) are used;
- cheek branding; and
- rotation of cattle onto deficient country.

"Reality suggests that these people may well have been considering some of these practices prior to the trip, but the tour itself was a major motivation for them to make the changes."

He said the enthusiasm for such an activity was that it gave producers the opportunity to share and talk about ideas and practices in a way that would allow them to apply those at home.