

Devon World Congress 13th June 2016.

Australian Country Report, given by Di O'Keeffe

1. Australian Report of 2016 Devon World congress
2. Australia is well represented at the 2016 Devon World Congress by the significant number of Australian breeders who have made the journey to the UK. Di O'Keeffe, treasurer of the Society, is presenting the Australian report which is accompanied by a Power Point presentation compiled by Tania Hall. We appreciate the hard work that has been done to organise this event and hope that the Congress and tour are both informative and enjoyable for all participants.

Within our Society, membership numbers are stable at around 100 and, with the easing of drought conditions in at least some of Australia, the inventory and registration numbers increased in 2015. However, some breeders are still enduring very difficult times. With the vast distances, it is also more difficult for members to interact with each other.

3. Cattle prices in Australia are buoyant, with the Eastern Young Cattle Indicator (EYCI), shown here on the slide, which is the general benchmark of Australian cattle prices, remaining high. The EYCI is a rolling seven-day average from saleyards across New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria that includes vealer and yearling heifers and steers with score C2 or C3 and 200kg+ live weight.

The Meat and Livestock Authority (MLA), which is the controlling authority for the red meat industry in Australia, expects a decline in cattle numbers during the next two years which is likely to stimulate strong competition for the limited stock available and so there is confidence that the market will remain strong.

4. Meat Standards Australia (MSA) is a grading system developed by the MLA, to improve eating quality consistency in the red meat industry. It is based on almost 700,000 taste tests by over 100,000 consumers from 9 countries and takes into account all factors that affect eating quality from the paddock to the plate. Over 3,000 butchers, supermarkets and restaurants are licensed to promote MSA products in their business. The top premium grades are Grades 1-6.
5. Purebred Devon cattle grade very highly in the MSA scheme because of their ability to lay down fat evenly across the carcass and because of their marbling ability. The fat cover required is 4mm at the 12th rib and P8 rump sites. Their docile temperament means that they are less stressed by handling and transport keeping the pH levels of their meat low. Devons grade higher than the national MSA Index of 57.61. More breeders are selling through the MSA system at abattoirs rather than through the sale yards. This is because Devon breeders consistently report that 97% - 100% of Devon carcasses meet MSA grading standards. This compares with an overall breeds standard of 90%. Both abattoir and MSA data can be put on to Breedplan to complement the normal weights, scanning and other data able to be submitted for performance recording.
6. An earlier survey of 50,000 carcasses from a Queensland abattoir showed that Devon, Hereford and Poll Hereford had less than 1% outside the acceptable range for both pH and dark colour

and ranked above all other popular beef breeds for these important meat quality traits, this is due in large part to the docility of the pure bred Devon and their ability to withstand stress. Carcasses above 7.5 fail to grade.

(Source: Cabassi Consulting)

7. Data from the Northern Feedlot Trial compiled by Australian Meat Research Corporation with 6340 steers including over 500 Devon and Devon Cross steers, indicated that British breed steers and their crosses had a higher percentage of carcasses with required marbling scores than European and bos Indicus breeds and their crosses. 74% of purebred Devons marbled at higher levels than Devon crosses with other breeds. 57% of Saler / Devon cross steers achieved desired marbling score 2 or above.

Source: MRC 1995

8. Devons across Australia

Devons are found in many different environments – from the high rainfall area of the east coast to the semi-arid inland, the Mediterranean climate of the South West of Western Australia, the cooler temperatures of Tasmania and the monsoon north. Property sizes vary from small acreages of 50 acres to large cattle stations in excess of 20,000 acres. Devons thrive in all these conditions.

9. Map of Australia – found on the Devon Australia website showing the majority of Devon stud breeders. There are many other commercial breeders throughout Australia, not showing on this map. There is a concentration of breeders in north east New South Wales on the tableland and scarp. They are located here due to their adaptability to steeper country. Large herds are located inland and to the south of New South Wales, in Queensland and Western Australia. Herd sizes here range from 400 – 1000 cows.

The following photos show the diversity and adaptability of Devons to different environments

10. Jaibell, Queensland
11. Jaibell, Queensland
12. Ulcanbah Station Queensland
13. Mininer Station, Western Australia
14. Mininer Station, Western Australia
15. King Island Tasmania
16. Benoak Northern Tablelands New South Wales
17. Coonamon Western slopes and plain, New South Wales
18. Gundooee Western plains, New South Wales
19. Cartmill bulls, Nymbloida north east New South Wales
20. Mount Look South west plains New South Wales
21. Eastbank northern slopes New South Wales

22. Promotional Activities for the Society include:

- 2 main shows and many local shows
- 2 main field days, AgQuip at Gunnedah and Primex at Casino in NSW
- Beef Week at Rockhampton every 3 years
- Bulldust

The following photos show some of these activities

23. RAS – Sydney Royal Easter Show

24. Primex – Casino NSW

25. AgQuip – Gunnedah NSW

26. Beef Week – Rockhampton Queensland

27. EKKA – Royal Brisbane Show

28. Bulldust

29. The Society is involved with a variety of training activities for our members and youth

30. Photos of Youth Camp – This is a three-day camp where children from all backgrounds (country and city) are taught how to handle and judge cattle and prepare them for a show. The end result is a grand parade for all participants.

31. Youth Camp

32. Youth Camp

33. The Society supports 2 schools with Devon studs in New South Wales. This is a very good initiative.

34. Members training on assessing animal attributes. These training days were originally designed for inspectors who would assess animals suitable to be included in the herd book.

35. Thank you for your attention.