



Nichols Poultry

A cold start on Saturday 3rd July, 2010, didn't deter 15 members of the Murray Grey Breed Promotion Group from visiting Nichols at Sassafras. In 2008 the company installed a Vestas V27 wind turbine to enable the company to produce power and help reduce the carbon footprint through the use of renewable wind energy. And it is this wind turbine that you can see from miles around, sitting at the entrance to Nichols Poultry. The family owned business has been producing Free Range Chicken and Turkey (when the chickens are willing) for the niche Tasmanian market for 2 decades, and produce in excess of 25,000 units per week. Rob Nichols,

pictured, welcomed us warmly and invited us to join him in his staff room for a talk before giving an interesting and informative tour of the plant, which was not in operation. Nichols poultry is a fully vertically integrated poultry producer and processor of chickens and turkeys. They have total control and ownership of all inputs to their products from breeding, feeding (sourcing all grain locally), to end processing and distribution. Rob also said the company is investigating using waste products to produce bio fuels and the company will install more wind turbines in the future, to further reduce their carbon footprint.

The members enjoyed a hearty lunch and cheerful conversation at the Axeman's Hall of Fame at Latrobe before commencing their Breed Promotion Group meeting.



Did you know?

The Inaugural Island State Invitation Murray Grey Sale was held at Parknook, Cressy on Saturday 9th April, 1983 at 5:00pm. The vendors were; Messrs. R.J. & D. M. Beswick, "Claremont", Derby; Messrs. E.A. & H.J. Booth, "Iden", Bagdad; Cawood Estate, "Cawood", Ouse; Messrs I.W. & E.M. Cordwell & sons, "Twin Rivers", Crabtree; Messrs. J. & N. Harnett, "Waldawn", Elliott; Messrs. P.J. & D.J. Harwood, "Wood-dale", Nubeena; Messrs. I.C. Heazlewood & Co., "Melton Vale", Whitmore; Messrs A.R. & J. E. McLennan, "Hazelmere", Scottsdale; Parknook Estate, "Parknook", Cressy.

Nine bulls and 18 "A" Class Females were offered. Woodbourn Annual Sale commenced at 11:30pm at Woodbourn and Windleigh Annual Sale commenced immediately upon the conclusion of Woodbourn Sale.

The agents in conjunction were Webster Limited, Launceston with after hours contacts, Robert Perkins and Peter Howard and Australian Stud Stock & Land Co Pty Ltd, Sydney with after hours contact David Marshall.

Stud History: The Claremont Stud

The Claremont Stud of Messrs. R.J. & D.M. Beswick of Derby was founded in April 1976 with the purchase of one "A" Class female (North East Bunny 2nd) and two "C" Class females from the "North East" Tasmanian Grey Stud. Further females were subsequently purchased from the North East and Valmont Studs. Artificial insemination was used during the first three years, following which two sires were purchased from Parknook.

Charles and his Greys

The man and the cattle.

'The Woodbourn Tasmanian Grey Stud was commenced in 1969 with the purchase of Parknook Silver Lead, who was mated to forty specially selected females from the Woodbourn Angus herd. These were predominantly Creekton blood. Some measure of the development of the stud can be gauged by the fact that show successes have continued to increase over the latter part of the seventies, due to the influence of bulls such as Silver Lead, Parknook Bruce, The Glen Heron, Harkaway Jura, Parknook Mustang and Woodbourn Dynamic. As breeding policy, we are constantly striving, through the considerable genetic material we have at our disposal, to breed grey cattle that are correct in their bone structure, that calve well, milk well and finish well. We believe we must marry breed type with commercial qualities to obtain the best "middle-of-the-road" characteristics.' This is an extract from the catalogue of the First Annual Production Sale of Woodbourn Tasmanian Grey Stud held on Saturday 12th April, 1908 at 11:00am at Cressy, Tasmania.

The first grey cattle in Tasmania appeared at Parknook in 1938, when Mr Bill Reed crossed an Angus bull with a white shorthorn cow and became fascinated with the grey offspring. He established a small herd of these Angus/Shorthorn crosses and retained a grey bull to put back over them. These grey cattle consistently out performed the Angus cattle, in carcass and steer trials and Mr Reed switched his herd to grey cattle. A young Charles Wallace who had jackarooed at Parknook saw the qualities of these Tasmanian Grey cattle.

Grey cattle were virtually unheard of until 1964 when a group of cattlemen in the Upper Murray formed a breed called Murray Greys. As these were the only other grey cattle known to Mr Reed, he approached the group with the idea of including his own cattle with theirs in the formation of this new breed. Upon rejection of the Parknook cattle, Mr Reed and Mr Burbury, who had purchased bulls for his Angus herd from Parknook, decided that they would eventually form a breed of their own. The Tasmanian Grey Beef Cattle Society was formed in 1968 which enabled such great foundation stock as Parknook Sarah, Parknook Thomas, and Parknook Tasman to be registered and eventually the society attracted 150 members. Charles Wallace became the third member of this society as a teenager and was very proactive in promoting and developing these Tasmanian Grey Cattle. Charles took on positions of leadership within the society before becoming president. After much discussion and negotiation in 1981 Charles Wallace and Alan Wakefield, president of the Murray Greys, eventually shook hands and the two organizations joined forces. This amalgamation opened up world wide markets for the Tasmanian cattle and the breed has never looked back.

With the high standard and good numbers of cattle at Woodbourn at the time of amalgamation, Charles found himself poised to capitalize on Tasmania's disease free status and he made a series of spectacular sales to England, Canada, New Zealand and Cuba. Charles, through long-time Murray Grey breeder, Murray Sutherland sold several cattle to Suliman Vanion in 1982 and 1983. These cattle realized record prices for the time and went on to be shown successfully in England. In 1982 Charles also sold a bull, Woodbourn Hercules to Scottish breeder, Robert Graham. The transportation of these cattle proved trying and interesting. Charles and Kaylene Rushton who helped arrange transport, delight in telling the stories of these cattle, planes and Launceston Airport. Later Charles sold a quarter share and North American semen rights of Woodbourn Fame to Canadian Breeder, Conway Bevan. Semen from Woodbourn Fame was also sold to North America, New Zealand and Cuba.

Charles' passion for breeding high quality Murray Grey cattle has continued and he has kept up with technology including being the second Murray Grey stud to register for Breedplan. Charles also subjects his herd to extensive testing, inoculating and vet checking in the endeavour to provide cattle in the healthiest possible condition.

The Murray Grey stud at Woodbourn is only a part of a highly diversified farming operation. Woodbourn also run a registered Angus herd, sheep for wool and prime lamb production and an intensive cropping operation, irrigating many acres from the Cressy-Longford irrigation scheme.



Bulls to call Tassie home

Two new bulls will call Tassie home after being purchased from the mainland. In April 2010 Woodbourn and Big Park jointly purchased the Junior Champion Bull at the National Show and Sale at Wodonga, Victoria. Lot 83, Onward Jeremiah, bred by Sue Francis from Dorrigo, NSW, stood against 16 Junior Bulls to be sashed by the judge, Peter Falls, as the Junior Champion Bull. At 18 months of age Onward Jeremiah weighed 800kgs, EMA of 116cms, fat cover of 9mm, and scrotal circumference of 45cms. Onward Jeremiah is by Onward Manuka out of a Robern Mister Muscle female, Ondiong Jennifer 118th and was Supreme Murray Grey exhibit at the North Coast National '09 at 11 months.

In a recent exchange of genetics between Bundaleer (WA) and the joint effort between Wiltshire and Murfield Murray Greys Studs, two proven sires have been exchanged. Bundaleer took delivery of Murfield Apache whilst Bundaleer True Blue has recently taken his first steps on Tasmanian soil. Whilst never seeing True Blue in the flesh Rob Wilson from Wiltshire has always been impressed with True Blue as a younger bull on his sheer performance and phenotype. He boasts the fastest growth rate and largest EMA for any bull bred at Bundaleer at 17 months of age. Rob Wilson had this to say. "True Blue has arrived safe and well—took 10 days & travelled via Dubbo. He looks a little down in nick otherwise he looks fantastic. Great length, bone and feet. Has tremendous jump muscle expression for a bull in his condition and great depth of muscling. Good topline and tracks well for a bull of his length. Extremely quiet also."

Woodbourn Sale Results

When the first car drove in at 8.30am for an 11.30am sale, the principals of Woodbourn Murray Grey stud were aware that something special was about to happen. The cars kept rolling in to be the largest gathering of Murray Grey people from around Australia to ever gather at Woodbourn.

Overall from the twenty nine bulls and thirty one females offered at Woodbourn this year, eight bulls and ten females went to the mainland, eleven animals to King Island and the remainder throughout Tasmania. The top priced bull, Lot 10 Woodbourn Chanooka D84, was hotly contested and landed by a partnership between G Connelly of Central Coast Murray Greys, Ulverstone and G Carter, New Zealand.

Bulls throughout the line up met strong competition with two very young bulls, Lot 29 going all the way to Tenterfield, NSW to Linda Martin and Lot 20 Woodbourn Lucky Move D103 to Lyn Nicholson, Qld. Victorian Craig Grant of Kelso Murray Grey Stud purchased Lot 9 Woodbourn Naturally Hot D88 for \$6,000, also going to Victoria was Lot 17 Woodbourn Bold Crusade bought by G & J Drew for \$5,000 and females to A. Pate, Mr Colee and the Pell family. Cameron Harris from WA bought Lot 8 Woodbourn Phoenix D87, and three purchasers joined the bidding from south Australia, with Brian Luke securing Lot 23, Darren Koopman Lots 33 and 40 and G Koopman a young heifer

Lot 42 Woodbourn Miss Jeanette D65.

From the North West of Tasmania three bulls will go to Vic Abblitt, one to Paul Saward, one to Lauchlan Avery and one to Megan Russell, while Alan Clingelev and Des Harding each secured a Woodbourn female.

Heading North East was Lot 7 Woodbourn Bear Hug D56 to Milton Smith and son Daniel at Telegraph, Gladstone.

"Something special was about to happen"

"To see so many cattle selling to every state, and to New Zealand and so many return buyers from Tasmania, is a great thrill," Charles said. "

Island State Sale Results

The 21 month old bull, Wiltshire Dominik, reached the top price of \$8,500 at the Island State Sale on 10th May, 2010 sold by R & C Wilson and purchased by G & L Connelly, Central Coast Greys of Ulverstone. Dominik was Reserve Junior Champion at the Royal Launceston Murray Grey Feature Show in October, 2009 and his full brother sold to two NSW studs in 2009 for \$10,350. The next top prices for bulls came for the 760kg bull, Big Park Daicos which sold for \$3,750 to strong supporters of the sales, V & E Abblitt of Redpa and the low birth weight bull, Cam Grove Woosha sold for \$3,500 to another continued supporter of the Murray Grey sales, Paul Saward also of Redpa. Five bulls sold for an average of \$3,950.

\$2,100 was the top price for a mature stud female, Ultimate Cherry Blossom purchased by J. Geratly from NSW, \$2000 was realized for Lot 8, a big volume cow, Parknook Sarah Lee, with a month old calf at foot by Gilldon Corey, purchased by G & C Duniam of East Ridgley. Graeme and Judy Drew from Graju Park Murray Greys, Victoria purchased a young cow with calf at foot, Byronfield C20 for \$1,600. 14 mature stud females sold for an average of \$1,571. Lot 18 Big Park Vitello, a yearling stud heifer sired by the 2009 National Show and Sale Junior Champion Onward Sam, sold for \$2,000 to Clinton Watling, Smithton, who is keen to start up a stud and was one of several volume buyers. 2 pens of commercial heifers sold for \$560 each and \$540 each respectively.



Wiltshire Dominik

This is the first, of hopefully many, newsletters containing stories of Murray Grey Cattle, the people who breed them, grow them out, handle them or process them. If you have any interesting stories to tell, know someone who does, have a great photo to share, want to know where to source some Murray Grey cattle or have some to sell please let me know - menegon@bigpark.com.au or 0438 030 342



Tasmanian Murray Grey Breed
Promotion Group

Chairman-Rob Wilson
Secretary/Treasurer-Cindy Coad
Vice Chairman-Gail Menegon

***Come along to a meeting or field
trip!***



HEADING HOME

IN BRIEF

Greenham love temperament of Murray Greys

Rob Wilson, Chairman of MGBPG met with Graeme Pretty of Greenham, Smithton to discuss the ongoing “working together” of Greenham and Murray Grey Beef Cattle producers. Greenham do not pay a premium for a particular breed. Murray Greys are loved at the works because of their temperament as well as their carcass qualities. Greenham are keen to get more Murray Greys through their works.

Congratulations!!!

The MGBPG Tas would like to extend their congratulations to Ashley Hobbins, Murray Grey Youth Member, who is studying a Bachelor of Applied Science at the University of Tasmania. Ashley is the recipient of support from RIRDC in receiving financial assistance throughout her degree, as well as access to a mentor and relevant work placements. The recipients of the Investing in Youth studentship all share a passion for primary industries and a commitment to use the skills they learn in the classroom and implement them in the paddock in the future. We wish Ashley all the best with her studies and for the future.

Special points of interest

- **August, 2010 -Next MGBPG Meeting date to be advised**
- **7-9 October, 2010—Royal Launceston Show**
- **20-23 October, 2010—Royal Hobart Show**
- **27 October, 2010—Premier MG Sale, Wodonga, Vic**
- **5th, 6th & 7th May 2011—Agfest**
- **9th May 2011—Woodbourn & Island State Sales**