

JAD
insights

JAD
SPECKLE PARK

BRED FOR LASTING PERFORMANCE



2023
MEAT RESEARCH
QUANTIFIES MERIT



2023
FEEDLOT TRIAL WORK
PROVES EFFICIENCY



2024
BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD
FOR SPECKLE PARK



patterned for profit.

INAUGURAL QLD SALE **FRIDAY 2 AUGUST 2024**



“If our farms are not **fun**,
not **profitable**, or are too much **work**,
our children will **not** want them.
Romancing the next generation,
is the **ultimate** test of sustainability”

– JOEL SALATIN





THE JAD STORY CONTINUES...

WE HAVE now had six on-property bull and female sales, and are gearing up for our very first dedicated bull sale in Queensland. We will produce 500 registerable purebred Speckle Park cattle this year, and we feel more confident than ever in the future of Speckle Park in Australia. Over the past 12 months, we have carried out extensive feedlot trial work (pages 22-23), and have invested nearly \$40,000 into meat research through the University of Newcastle (page 4).

This has all got us to a point now where we are having very significant conversations down the supply chain to open up new markets for Speckle Park-infused cattle - the progeny of your Speckle Park bulls. In years gone by, Justin spent a term on the breed society board, and Amy was co-chairman of the breed society's marketing sub-committee.

We learned that to achieve the level of advancement we wanted to for the breed, within appropriate timeframes, we needed to dig in and get the research and development (R&D) done ourselves. We are so excited by what these efforts have yielded and how they will benefit all breeders - stud and commercial - going forward.

What is your Speckle Park seedstock supplier doing to advance the breed and grow a market for the progeny of your bulls? As you will read in this newsletter, the positive influence of Speckle Park in commercial herds across Australia is significant, and these stories need to be shared. So, we engaged freelance agricultural journalists to gather them.

We hope to catch up with you at Beef Australia, AG-Grow Emerald field days on June 20-22, and hopefully at our Inaugural JAD Speckle Park and Angus QLD Bull Sale at Rolleston on August 2. As always, the bulls we bring to Queensland will have all passed our strict selection processes, which includes independent assessment for structure/docility, full performance recording, semen testing (motility and morphology), and all bulls will be backed by the extensive JAD Guarantee.



Justin, Amy, Jack and Mitchell Dickens.

SPECKLE PARK BEEF IS GOOD FOR YOU TOO!

TO promote the meat quality attributes of Speckle Park beef, we invested close to \$40,000 in meat research at the University of Newcastle last year.

We took live muscle biopsies from 50 yearling 2022-drop stud animals - 25 bulls and 25 heifers - then froze the biopsies and took them to the University of Newcastle.

Intramuscular fat (IMF) content, fat melting point (FMP), and omega-3 long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) composition are associated with beef consumer satisfaction and key eating quality attributes because of their associations with taste, smell, texture, tenderness, flavour and juiciness.

Overall, the samples came in with a low melting point average of 37.4 degrees for the females and 43.4 degrees for the males, with one sample recording a fat melting point of just 29.3 degrees.

That was about the lowest that has been recorded from animals of that age in that particular lab, across breeds. When it came to omega-3 long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids, 11 samples exceeded "source" levels of 30mg per 100g of tissue.

Fish is normally the richest source of omega-3 long chain PUFAs, while beef has minimal levels.



We are already using the information from this research in our breeding decisions at JAD, and will continue to invest in this type of research going forward.

We will also use it to help open up new pathways to market for the breed, to ultimately benefit our clients.

You're invited
to the



INAUGURAL JAD SPECKLE PARK + ANGUS QLD BULL SALE



Fri 2 August 2024
1pm start



Rolleston
QLD



CATALOGUE AVAILABLE SOON!

Contact:

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HANDSOME RETURNS AT COORANGA



**South Australian Success Shows
Why Speckle Park Deserves Wide Appeal**

BY BRAD COOPER



THE CHARM and good looks of Speckle Park first prompted South Australian beef and sheep producer, Wendy James, and her son, Alec Ross, to consider them as a crossbreeding option for their Angus females at Lucindale, in the state's southeast.

From that initial, cursory glance eight years ago, to running 30-40 Speckle Park bulls on their operation today, Wendy and Alec are convinced the value of Speckle Park runs substantially more than just skin deep.

"From the get-go they put beautiful soft calves on the ground," Wendy explains.

"I know everyone talks about that hybrid vigour kick-along that you get from the first cross, but these were in exceptional condition when we first presented them for sale as weaners.

"Even when the season and the feed tighten up, they just have that ability to hold on and maintain weight, which for us is a huge asset because we're turning off young cattle as our paddocks dry off and we head into summer."

A 'well-balanced' property

The James family's 10,000-hectare Cooranga enterprise is located within a 50km radius of Naracoorte Livestock Exchange - South Australia's biggest saleyards - and the Teys Australia's Naracoorte abattoir.

Trading as WV James & Co, the property carries 2200 Angus and Angus-cross cows, and 12,000 Merino ewes, joined to Border Leicester rams.

All lambs are sold on one day in an on-property sale each November, regarded as South Australia's largest on-farm lamb sale.

About 950 weaner steers and 450-500 surplus heifers are sold at Naracoorte Weaner Sale in December.

Described by Wendy as a "family farm", with her brother Jim and his son Nathan part of the management team, and her father Ian - into his 80s but still active in the business - Cooranga is flat country (about 21 metres above sea level) interspersed with sandy ranges.

Receiving an average annual rainfall of 550mm, the Cooranga management team has opted for a reticulated system, pumping from a shallow water table that provides



ample stock water to fill troughs and tanks.

Apart from some hay crops, Cooranga is an all-grazing operation with improved pasture, stocked at a rate of 8 DSE/ha.

"I'd call it a well-balanced property," Wendy says. "In a normal year, the summers are hot and dry, and the winters are cool and wet."

Style with substance

Wendy and Alec say they were not looking to address any specific challenges or problems when they first looked at incorporating Speckle Park genetics into their program.

"I saw a full-page photo in a magazine of a Speckle Park herd," Wendy said. "I hadn't seen them before and thought they looked incredibly eye-catching, so followed it up from there.

"Sometimes you just need to keep things a bit interesting." While conceding the initial decision to diversify the herd's composition may have been based on "aesthetic reasons", Alec said the Speckle Park influence had been anything but a cosmetic change.

The impact, he said, was as tangible as it was immediate. "There's no doubt we were early on the Speckle Park



bandwagon, and this certainly helped reinforce we had made the right decision,” he said.

“Just as buyers in southern Australia were switching onto their benefits and wanted them in bigger numbers, we had our supply coming through.

“The timing couldn’t have been better, although it was probably more good luck than good planning.”

With Cooranga’s business end of the season coming in the last two months of the calendar year, exquisite timing, adaptability, and impeccable contingency planning are integral to the operation.

Delivering on all goals means the James family purchase their Speckle Park bulls from Justin and Amy Dickens, principals of JAD Speckle Park stud, Yeoval, NSW.

“People like Justin and Amy are working very hard to promote the breed and we are happy to give them our support,” Alec said.

“Their enthusiasm knows no bounds. From a breeding perspective, they were one of the first studs to source genetics from overseas in a big way, while measuring and benchmarking to ensure their herd was always going forward and delivering commercially relevant traits.

“They have such a professional approach across their program, from the way they manage their cattle, to how they market their sales, invest in research, and communicate with the industry.

“Justin and Amy work very hard to promote the breed”.

“We are certain it is producing results because the best feedback we get is consistent repeat business – our buyers keep coming back to buy our weaners.”

The timing of JAD’s annual on-property bull and female sale also matches Cooranga’s cattle management calendar, with bulls naturally mated to females at a 3-4 per cent ratio from May.

The same month, selected 14-15-month-old heifers are artificially inseminated (AI), calving as rising two-year-old females from February.

Landing on ‘well-proportioned’ bulls

For the last five years, Wendy and Alec have made the 1000 kilometre trip north to Yeoval, near Dubbo, NSW to attend the JAD sale and acquire their next sires.

Before taking to the air for Yeoval in their twin-engine Beechcraft Baron, with licensed pilot Alec at the controls, they prepare rigorously by studying the JAD catalogue and videos but will confirm their final decision via visual appraisal.

“We’re looking for bulls with sound structure who walk correctly and freely, and have a quiet temperament,” Alec said.

“Essentially, we want well-proportioned bulls for AI and to cover older cows.

“They have to look like they’re capable of doing the business and delivering lower birthweight calves prior to the break of the season, when feed is tightening up.”

Acclimatising the bulls after the return journey is also seamless, according to Wendy.

“They are a bit footsore when they get here, but after a few days on the green they’re right and they go to work,” she said.

“Calving has been a breeze over the last three years, using Speckle Park bulls”.

Speckle Park bulls represent about a third of their overall sire battery, which is dominated by bloodlines from the Mandayan Angus stud at Keith, SA. However, it is not the first time Cooranga has engaged in crossbreeding.

Previous efforts had seen Simmental bulls joined to older cows, producing steers that sold well but struggled to maintain condition consistently when seasons deteriorated. “When we go to JAD for our Speckle Park bulls, we are handpicking the best rising sires to use over our best heifers to target short gestation and low birthweight calves,” Alec said.

“That has made calving a breeze over the last three years. The Speckle Park cross especially keeps its condition well and the two-year-old heifers coming up to calving in mid-February are always carrying a bit more weight, which gives those calves the best start when they drop.”

Moderation the key

With an AI program and back-up bulls, the James achieved 460 pregnancies from 500 heifers last May, providing further insurance for Cooranga’s weaner supply chain.

“The Speckle Park bulls, shall we say, are vigorous and enthusiastic workers when they are out in the paddock,” Alec said.

“We must be mindful that they are a medium-framed animal going over larger-framed females, so we’re looking to protect against injuries and breakdowns.



“But AI is also allowing us to finetune our genetic selection, allowing us to consistently hit the sweet spot of 345kg average weight for sale weaners - all off grass with no supplements.”

The ongoing goal, Wendy said, was to keep improving feed efficiency and conversion, in anticipation that seasons will continue to present more challenges and higher variability. “You have to do what’s in your control to change,” she said. **“The goal moving forward is to moderate the size of our maternal cow, maintain hybrid vigour and improve reproductive efficiency while weaning a greater percentage of calf weight to cow weight.”**

“Our herd has always been very fertile and good at calving. We didn’t introduce Speckle Park because there was a problem we were trying to address.

“But what they have brought is an enhancement to our operation and the product that we bring to market.”



SPECKLE PARK BRINGS THE **SIZZLE** TO SPRINGSURE BEEF

By Brad Cooper

A CHANCE encounter with the Speckle Park breed in the stud judging ring at Beef Australia 2018 continues to pay dividends for Central Queensland beef producers, Ken and Lauren Perrett.

Operating Barakee Pastoral, Springsure, with daughter Hayley and her partner Kyle White, the Perretts are into their sixth year of infusing Speckle Park genetics in their crossbreeding operation that benefits from a mix of Charolais, Droughtmaster and Simmental bloodlines across their sizeable herd.

Since introduced to their commercial operation of 16,200 hectares on mostly improved buffel grass country and 360 hectares of oats and 240ha of forage sorghum, the Speckle Park bulls have generated softer, easier-finishing calves that go forward even in the dry times, confirmed by objective measurement of steers sent to JBS Rockhampton during a carcass performance trial in 2022 that dressed 55%.

As far as Lauren and Ken are concerned, they don't need any more figures to tell them they've made the right decision to bring Speckle Parks into the fold, especially on the traits of conformation, temperament, do-ability, and fertility.

"Their conformation is amazing," Lauren says.

"They are very square and correct, deep in the flank, very long in the body and have plenty of eye muscle.

"From their appearance, they're built close to the ground, but they also have plenty of weight and scale to them."

And when it comes to their reputation as enthusiastic herd improvers, Lauren agrees it is a reputation well deserved.

"My jolly word they leave a speckle trail wherever they go," she said.

"They go about their business with a ruthless efficiency and they're good at it.

"And the calves they produce are these square little butter boxes that hit the ground running and just don't stop thriving until we turn them off and they go to Rocky."

To lift calving percentages with lower birthweight calves, the Perretts join 12 Speckle Park bulls to maiden Charolais/Droughtmaster cross heifers at the same 1:40 ratio applied across the total herd for 12 months of the year.



Lauren Perrett and daughter Hayley with Speckle Park heifers spayed at 600kg live and prepared for transporting to the processor.

"When they start looking a bit worse for wear, we'll pull them out and give them a spell, but usually by that stage they've done their job, leaving us with very few empty cows to cull for fertility," Lauren said.

"Every time I see them in the paddock it confirms the impression I formed when I first laid eyes on them at Beef. "I remember thinking, 'gee, I'd like to try them over our Droughtie cows'.

"What I liked about them then, and what I like about them now, is their frame is so structurally sound and they walk so well and cover the country with ease.

"You get really good bone, and they are the most amazing doers. They hang on when the season is tough, but they're also a lovely soft animal. When they're fat you just want to give them a big cuddle."

Lauren says ample summer rain that has fallen throughout the Springsure district since mid-November currently has the Speckle Park cattle, along with the rest of their crossbreed herd, looking in peak condition. Average annual average rainfall for the district is recorded at 711mm.

Since November 18 to the time of writing this article in early February, Barakee had received 230mm in the gauge, inducing a big response from the enterprise's improved



pastures and across its undulating range and forest country, populated with dams and some natural water courses that will charge under the right conditions.

Calving throughout the year, weaners are grown out to a targeted kill weight of 360kg, usually as 2-3yo 2-tooth steers, although the current body of feed on the property and its nutritional value may see weaners rotated through the system much quicker, especially the Speckle Park progeny which has a natural inclination to lay down fat in a rapid sequence from the moment they're put on grass. "They just seem to be fat from the moment they emerge as calves and have this ability to hold onto their condition, which only accelerates the better the season gets," Lauren said.

"That's what we're seeing in our paddocks now – these blossoming calves and weaners that are just these fat, glossy gorgeous things turning grass into red meat and feeding our gross margins."

The Perretts have more than just faith that their Speckle Park steers and cull heifers are producing the kind of beef consumers want.

Every turn-off they'll hold a beast back for themselves, ensuring they have adequate supplies in their chiller.

"If I were a beef tasting judge, I'd say the final eating product is soft and tender and extremely flavoursome," Lauren said. "While I might describe them as fat in the paddock, the meat itself is not over fat; the carcass yields well.

"Visually, it's beautifully marbled, but not overdone. An even fat coverage that would present well in the butcher's window, in the supermarket or on a restaurant grill.

"And as producers, the eating quality of the animal is important to us. We have some highly renowned beef producing breeds in our herd, but I can confidently say that the Speckle Parks hold their own in this company and they really complement our operation.

"The Charolais still produces the heaviest article, but the Speckles aren't far behind, while they also bring incredible feed efficiency and get us the results we need at slaughter." At their peak, the Perretts were running about 19 Speckle Park bulls before settling with 12 this season after culling for age.

The favourable seasonal conditions have the Perretts strongly thinking of bolstering their Speckle Park numbers to maximise their gains, turning their attention to the

catalogue of JAD Speckle Park stud run by Justin and Amy Dickens, "Greenvale", Yeoval, NSW.

"We have enormous trust in the quality of Justin and Amy's bulls," Lauren said.

"They are always fertility tested and they come sound in overall health and acclimatise quickly ready to work.

"We'll be bringing more bulls back from JAD this year because they give us confidence the job will be right."



A baby calf receives the best start from its mother, with plenty of milk.



Quick maturing calves are typical of what the Droughtmaster females joined to Speckle Park bulls from JAD genetics are producing.



A two-year-old bullock shows the quality of the finished Speckle Park product.



SPECKLE PARK
FEMALES SEED
FERTILE GAINS
AT TRANGIE

By Brad Cooper



THE outstanding performance of Speckle Park females as breeders has inspired John Kater and Amanda Thorpe, of Gillawarrina Ag, Trangie, NSW, to aim for a finely tuned, highly functional commercial herd that will express the breed's best characteristics.

The couple are the owners and sole operators of the Gillawarrina Ag aggregation, comprising 7300 hectares in central west NSW across four properties – Mhyree, Warren, and Roslyn and Carinya, Coolabah, nearly 200 kilometres west from the home block at Gillawarrina, Trangie – where John and Amanda are roughly halfway towards their goal with F2 Speckle Park progeny now on the ground and selected females preparing to breed on.

“We’re working towards refining a high content Speckle Park commercial herd, progressing to F3 and F4 generations,” Amanda says.

“We’ll see how we go as we progress, but we’re happy with what they are delivering – fertility and conception rates, calving ease, weight for age, feed efficiency, carcase yield and meat quality.

“They tick all the boxes at every step of the supply chain.” While Amanda was an early and enthusiastic advocate for the inclusion of Speckle Parks, John took some convincing, and is still happy to concede his relatively recent conversion to the breed’s attributes.

A co-director of Egelabra Merino stud, Warren, as part of his family’s ownership of one of Australia’s oldest and best-known nurseries for elite sheep and wool genetics, John saw merit in maintaining a strong connection to the British breeds that have formed the base of Egelabra’s cattle business for decades.

When he and Amanda first contemplated widening the beef component of their mixed sheep and cropping enterprise, the investment the couple were making represented an opportunity to inject a different approach to their cattle program that would set Gillawarrina Ag in a new direction of scope and vision.

To accommodate their expansion plans amid a severe and persistent drought, tentative moves to edge away from Shorthorns, Angus, Herefords and Charolais soon accelerated with an irresistible force once Amanda brought two purchased PTIC F1 Speckle Park-Angus heifers into the operation in 2019.

“Conditions couldn’t have been worse and yet they just performed amazingly,” Amanda said.

“They calved easily and conceived again quickly and gave us two more beautiful calves without missing a beat. That won John over and sealed the deal.”

Off the back of those two foundational Speckle Park females, a Speckle Park sire was purchased from Minnamurra stud, Coolah, NSW, in 2021 at the same time the two Coolabah properties were purchased. This was followed by more sire acquisitions in 2021-2023 to maximise the gains the breed was delivering.

“Conditions couldn’t have been worse, yet they just performed amazingly”.

The investment continues to pay handsome dividends, with the Speckle Park sire battery growing to seven in the last three years, comprising a mix of bulls from Minnamurra stud and JAD Speckle Park stud, Yeoval, NSW, with the latter also the supplier of two exquisite purebred Speckle Park females, accompanying a third purchased from Topiram Speckle Park Stud, South Gippsland, Victoria.

Joining females, comprising a cross section of British breeds plus the F1 progeny from the first Speckle Park mating, female joining numbers are at 450 head, with the F2 and F1 weaner heifers to follow in future joining periods. Depending on market and seasonal conditions, steers have either been turned off as weaners or grown out on grass to about 400 kg and sold to feedlots, with a smaller portion destined for the independent retail channel, where butchers in larger regional centres such as Goulburn are offering tender, flavoursome Speckle Park beef to their discerning clientele.

“They just taste better and ultimately that’s what we grow beef for,” Amanda says.

“When we bought a bull from JAD they threw in a couple of T-bones and that was the best steak we’ve ever tasted. “People who don’t know a lot about Speckle Parks will often remark they look pretty in the paddock, but I can attest their performance on the hoof and hook is even more impressive.”

John and Amanda’s plan this season is to grow the F2 steers to a heavier bullock weight, while selected females will be retained to mate with Speckle Park bulls, although with breeder numbers at their optimum Amanda and John will cull much harder on structure and type going forward from this season.

“What we’re finding is no matter what the Speckle Park bull goes over, we’re getting a very consistent line,” Amanda said.

“Even cows that we wouldn’t normally think of as special, when they get a Speckle over them, they are producing exceptional calves.”

John describes them as “fridges on legs” with a well-proportioned “bubble butt” that exemplifies the breed’s deserved reputation as a generous yielding, quality-eating beef article.

“They are a compact, powerfully built animal but still have softness.”

“They are built low to the ground, but underneath the low line it’s not just loose skin and hair, which you don’t get paid for, it’s all red meat,” John said.

“You could perch a couple of beers on their back because they are that square and solid and flat through the topline. “They are a compact, powerfully built animal but still have some softness. The forequarters are all there and there’s extra meat on the rump without compromising conformation and mobility.”

While bull fertility and performance often capture the attention of buyers, Amanda is convinced the traits of the Speckle Park breeding female are an equal match.

“In our case, they’ve certainly been the cornerstone of our success while the Speckle Park bulls in combination have given us more flexibility, resilience and the impetus to go forward,” Amanda said.

“In many respects the Speckle Park female presents with the same impressive physical traits as the Speckle Park

bull – strong and square with plenty of volume, but also still very feminine.

“That go-forward attitude is reflected in their calves. They are constantly going ahead. They hunt the milk down, they feed well, and they are always foraging with intent, whether that’s on grass or on our cropping area or in our harsher, western scrub country at Coolabah.”

While Speckle Parks have brought success to Gillawarrina, John is convinced the breed offers more benefits to commercial beef producers regardless of their location or the markets they are targeting.

“For the wider industry they offer a good option if you’re looking for a medium-framed cow that offers great growth rates due to the milking ability of the females, their feeding efficiency generally, and their yield once processed,” John said.



“The way I see it, why spend a lot of money raising up big-framed beasts when it takes more inputs and more grass and there’s still the risk of them breaking down?”

“If I can run two medium-framed cows who have two calves a year, that’s much better for me than running one and a half, or one and a quarter whopping huge-framed cows that are producing one or one and a quarter calves per year.

“Whether you’re running sheep or cattle the big issue for livestock producers is feed efficiency, utilising the pasture we have available with animals that are structurally sound and offer longevity.

“If we have cows and bulls that are breaking down because they’re carrying too much weight, I’ll take the medium framed cow that yields a higher percentage any day of the week.

“That’s why with Speckle Parks we’re definitely winning.”



SPECKLE PARK LIFT CALVING RATES AT ROCKLAND SPRING

By Brad Cooper

A LESS than promising start on their Speckle Park journey almost five years ago has taken a wildly positive turn for beef producers Stephen and Dominique Biles at Rockland Spring, Comet, QLD.

The managers of the bullock-producing operation, trading as Mespine Pty Ltd in Central Queensland, purchased their first trio of Speckle Park bulls at the Rocky All Breeds Sale in February 2019 as part of a plan to increase their calving percentages with lower birthweight calves.

“We just wanted something that would give us those low birthweight calves that we could put over a tropically adapted female with some Droughtmaster or Brahman influence with confidence,” Stephen said.

“We’re on that Brigalow country here and the heifers grow out quick. We had tried different breeds of bulls to achieve that goal, but none had produced that winning result – low birthweight, high growth calves that don’t burn up all your grass to reach the ideal weight.”

As Stephen explains, initial plans looked to be going awry when one of the bulls broke his pizzle and the other died from a mishap in the paddock.

“But the last one gave us about 20 calves of such impressive quality that were right on spec and exactly what we were looking for,” Stephen said.

“They were so exceptional that we haven’t looked back and so Speckle Park genetics now play a critical role in our operation to produce small, quick-growing calves that bring us the benefits of being very efficient converters and early maturing animals.”

From those humble beginnings, the Speckle Park sire group has increased five-fold on the 10,000 hectare property, run in a controlled joining window over summer at a ratio of one to 35 maiden heifers drawn from the operation’s 1200 strong Droughtmaster, Charolais, Brangus cross breeding herd.

“We like to get our calves to drop to time with the arrival of summer storms, so they get the benefit of new grass coming through the system,” Stephen said.

“That means we’ll wait as long as we can into summer to give us the best chance of dropping calves when the drier time of the year breaks.

“Those Speckle Park bulls are such fertile little buggers that we have the confidence the timing will be right, and they won’t let us down.

“We cull hard for fertility here, so as long as the female is holding up her end of the bargain, we’ll get very few scanning empty.”

During the last summer joining window of 2023, heifers

mated to Speckle Park bulls conceived at a rate of 89%.

“We were really happy to have 350 PTIC young heifers from that mating, a terrific result,” Stephen said.

“The empty females were culled, so our goal is to always keep improving and going forward. The Speckle Park bulls are helping us achieve our goals.”

Breeding groups serviced by the Speckle Park bulls have increased their calving percentages by at least 20 per cent, Stephen says.



“That was one of the big things we were having trouble with – young females producing big calves that we’d either lose or have to pull,” he said.

“Now we have the situation where they emerge smaller but hit the ground running and put on weight from the excellent start they get from their mothers then bloom further once they’re on grass.

“We do a first weigh at weaning, then another two to assess their progress. Feeding on grass and improved pastures with some cottonseed supplement when it’s dry, they average about a 0.6kg increase per day.

“But with the season we’ve had since November, with all this steady rain, I wouldn’t mind betting that will push to 1kg.”

The aim at Rockland Spring is to produce 600 kg heavy steers, turned-off at 480kg before trucked south to Condamine, where they will feed for 100 days in the feedlot of Lloyd Pastoral Co.

“The feedback we get from our feedlot operator is that they finish strongly and retain condition right through to

processing in Brisbane,” Stephen said.

“As producers it’s important we have cattle that help us to be efficient and control costs in the paddock, but which also deliver an article at the other end that dresses well and provides a good experience for the consumer. Speckle Parks tick all those boxes.”

While impressed with the Speckle Park cross steers’ feed efficiency, conversion rates, and carcase yield, coupled with the bulls’ fertility, Stephen also injects Speckle Park genetics into his high tropical content breeders to flatten the hump without compromising their slick coats.

“They produce that flat-back calf no worries at all, without taking away from their progeny’s ability to be able to withstand heat and pest pressure,” he said.

“In our type of country that combination is gold.” With Speckle Park bulls well entrenched in the operation, purchased from Justin and Amy Dickens’ JAD stud in Yeoval, NSW, the plan at Rockland Spring may extend crossing back Speckle Park F1 females with another breed of bull to maintain hybrid vigour.

“I’d like to take advantage of this excellent season we’re having by extending the Speckle Park influence through our herd,” Stephen said.



“We will continue to put Speckle Park bulls over our tropical females, with sires purchased from JAD who ensure their bulls are fertility tested and come prepared to get around the cows and do their job from the moment they are delivered to the paddock.

“We lightly work them in the first year they arrive, then from the second year they are well acclimatised and conditioned, and they go about their work efficiently and with no hassle.”

EARLY ADOPTER CHOOSES LOW MAINTENANCE AND LONGEVITY

By Lucy Kirk



DISILLUSIONED with the trajectory of the Angus breed in the 1990s, Dunbar Wilkinson of Montreal Partnership began a number of crossbreeding experiments until he landed his first Speckle Park Bull in 2010, and fell head over hoof.

Now boasting a high-percentage Speckle Park herd, the Cooma-based producer is one of Australia's longest-standing commercial Speckle Park breeders. Plans for his future herd are in the works, with some recent genetics purchased from JAD Speckle Park.

The history of Montreal

Montreal partnership began in 2000 after family succession gave Dunabr and Jane the opportunity to purchase part of the property that has family connections dating back to the 1860s and a multi-generational relationship with Angus cattle. Dunbar's late father Robert Wilkinson, was renowned on the Monaro for his quality Angus herd which he helped develop by acquiring reputable bulls through cost sharing arrangements with a neighbour.

The Monaro property is characterised by open country with rocky basalt hills on top of the Great Dividing Range, looking straight onto the main range of the Snowy Mountains. The naturally treeless landscape experiences extreme temperature changes, high winds and frequent droughts.

"When we began our own operations here after 2000, I delved into crossbreeding experiments, with one of the motivating factors being my discomfort with seeing black cattle under the summer sun in our treeless country," said Dunbar. "It always seemed wrong to me."

Despite both Dunbar and his parents combined efforts to create shaded areas through planting and fencing regenerative plots, much of Montreal remains devoid of shelter.

"I ventured into crossbreeding with one of the aims being to get rid of the black coat on our cattle and assess its impact on performance in our environment," he said.

As a teenager and into his mid-20s, Dunbar had worked on various properties across Australia, mainly on larger stations in Western Australia and Queensland, gaining exposure to diverse cattle breeds. It was in the West where he first saw an old line of Blue Roan cattle - a cross

between Angus and White Shorthorn - thriving in arid conditions and still raising great calves. Many years later, advertisements in The Land newspaper for Speckle Park cattle captured Dunbar's attention.

"I thought to myself, they look a lot like what I've been trying to breed," he said.

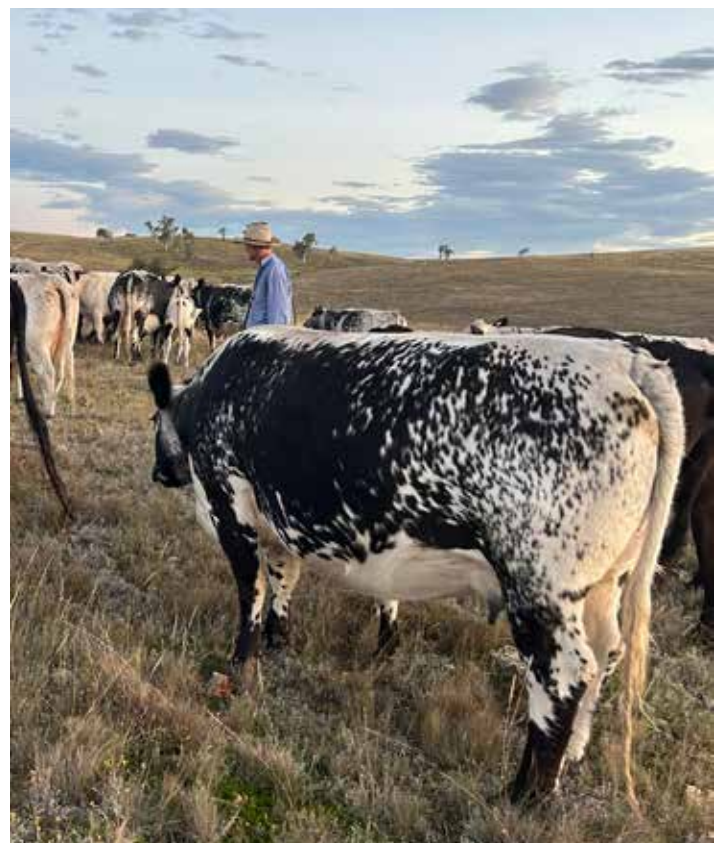
The journey to Speckle Park

Dunbar had been attempting to breed an animal similar to both the Blue Roan cattle in the West and the Angus cattle he had grown up with in the 1980s, which, in his opinion, were lower-maintenance and boasted desirable traits like ease of calving and deep feminine bodies within a moderate frame.

"I thought to myself, they look a lot like what I've been trying to breed."

"If you take away the colour difference between Angus and Speckle Park cattle I think there are a lot of similarities between the traditional old style Angus cattle - pre the 90s American influence - and today's Speckle Park," he said.

Dunbar admits that he had grown disillusioned with the direction the Angus breed was heading, particularly in the late 1990s. As they surged in popularity alongside the booming feedlot industry, he felt they began to lose some of their inherent qualities.





“The soft easy-doing Angus of the 1980s and prior seemed to diminish over time, and the shift in focus towards more extreme and less adaptable animals left me questioning the breed’s trajectory,” Dunbar said.

According to Dunbar, the feedlot industry began exerting considerable influence on breeding decisions in the 1990s, coinciding with the rise in use of Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs). This allowed feedlot operators to scrutinise factors like fat deposition and weight gain more closely, favouring later-maturing animals with superior marbling characteristics.

“Large, high-maintenance cows can struggle in the dry years.”

“During this period I felt Angus females were trending towards a more masculine type, I think this was an accidental by-product of the genetics feedlots were encouraging breeders to use. They were selecting for larger, later maturing animals to suit the feedlot system,” Dunbar said.

“So, what started happening was feedlots began offering premiums for cattle sired by specific bulls they approved of, while penalising those not meeting their criteria. It became a bit of a carrot-and-stick scenario,” he said.

“As a producer, I wasn’t keen on letting feedlot operators become my masters on breeding decisions while they had such a narrow focus.”

In Cooma’s harsh conditions at the foothills of the mountains, resilient cattle that can maintain their own condition, rear a calf and get back in calf again, are an important asset.

“Large, high-maintenance cows can struggle to balance these demands in the dry years,” said Dunbar.

So, in May 2010, Dunbar made his way to one of the first Speckle Park bull sales in the country.

“I’d done a fair bit of crossbreeding by this stage, and had already purchased several different breeds of bulls, so as I headed up to the sale near Bathurst I assured my wife I’d cap my budget to \$5000. When I arrived, I found myself at a sale that seemed to have more buyers than bulls and I was getting consistently outbid. Eventually, I managed to get a bull for around \$7000. They say it’s easier to seek forgiveness than permission,” he joked.

The future of Montreal

After the success of his first bull and its initial progeny, Dunbar continued breeding Speckle Park cattle, buying bulls from several different studs over the years and also doing an artificial insemination program. One particular pain point, however, saw him eventually turn to JAD Speckle Park for his genetics.

“The big focus for me at any sale is structure. To me, it all comes back to longevity. If a bull is athletic and can move well, he’s got a much better chance of being able to get into a fight with another bull and not get hurt. He’s also a better bet for being able to cover ground and find females that are cycling in a rocky environment.”

At bull sales, Dunbar makes a point of making the bull walk, checking its feet and seeing how it moves. “If you’ve got cows with bad feet in a drought, they’ll just fall in a heap because they’ve got to cover a lot of rocky ground to sustain themselves and their offspring,” he says.

“At the majority of the bull sales where I’ve purchased before, I nearly have a nervous breakdown because you’ve got bulls presented where they’re all standing in sawdust or grass that’s six inches long. It’s really hard to see their feet.”

Dunbar and his daughter are familiar sights in the Speckle Park world, often found crouched down looking at bulls’ feet. He never feels confident spending money on a bull whose feet he hasn’t inspected properly.



“I was very impressed when I went to the JAD sale, it was a breath of fresh air. They had the bulls in big pens on dirt where we could see their feet and really make them walk out,” said Dunbar.

“To me, Speckle Park are a big step towards what I’d been looking for.”

“What you see is what you get at JAD and Justin’s upfront about what his bulls are, and aren’t. Justin and Amy are really striving to breed soft, structurally sound cattle that are practical for commercial and stud breeders alike. Justin acknowledges there’s still room for improvement and I really respect the importance he places on having good confirmation within the JAD herd.”

In terms of the future of his breeding program, Dunbar says that he’s always striving to improve his herd, aiming for what he believes suits his country best.

“There are still plenty of areas where I see room for improvement, such as reducing the pink pigment in our animals. While the white coat of Speckle Park cattle offers advantages in heat tolerance, the underlying pink skin can make them more susceptible to issues like lice infestation

and more prone to skin cancer. I’m working on breeding for darker pigmentation beneath the white hair, but it’s a slow process,” he said.

“To me, Speckle Park are a big step towards what I’d been looking for. I think the term soft, easy-doing cattle is used pretty loosely in the cattle game, particularly in the stud world. It’s one thing to say it, but another thing to have it.”

“At Montreal, I liked what I saw and over the years I’ve just kept going down that track of breeding more Speckle Park females. In this country, having done the experiments I’ve done, I think there’s something to be said for running a moderate frame female herd with an efficient feed conversion ratio.”

On crossbreeding, Dunbar adds that while he has moved away from it now he’s going down the Speckle Park track, he wouldn’t rule crossbreeding out in the future.

“It would make sense if you’re wanting bigger cattle with some hybrid vigour. You could run the moderate frame female herd and bring in a bigger terminal sire if you wanted heavier weights on the steers and heifers at sale. That way you’re only running a minority of big animals (your bulls) without the inefficiencies that can go with running a mob of large framed breeders,” he said.

And Dunbar’s advice for others considering Speckle Park? “They yield like a Euro breed, but eat like a British breed, and are well represented by females that are more feminine in type than many other breeds. They generally yield about 5 per cent better than other British breeds and for me that’s a measurable difference.”

OUR STRATEGIC PATHWAY



GLOBAL GENETICS

Travel Canada and New Zealand in person to research and source the best Speckle Park genetics that meet our breeding objectives, and infuse these at JAD via AI/ET.



PERFORMANCE RECORD

Measure the cattle often and in large contemporary groups, maintaining a five-star Breedplan Completeness of Performance to give clients confidence in JAD.



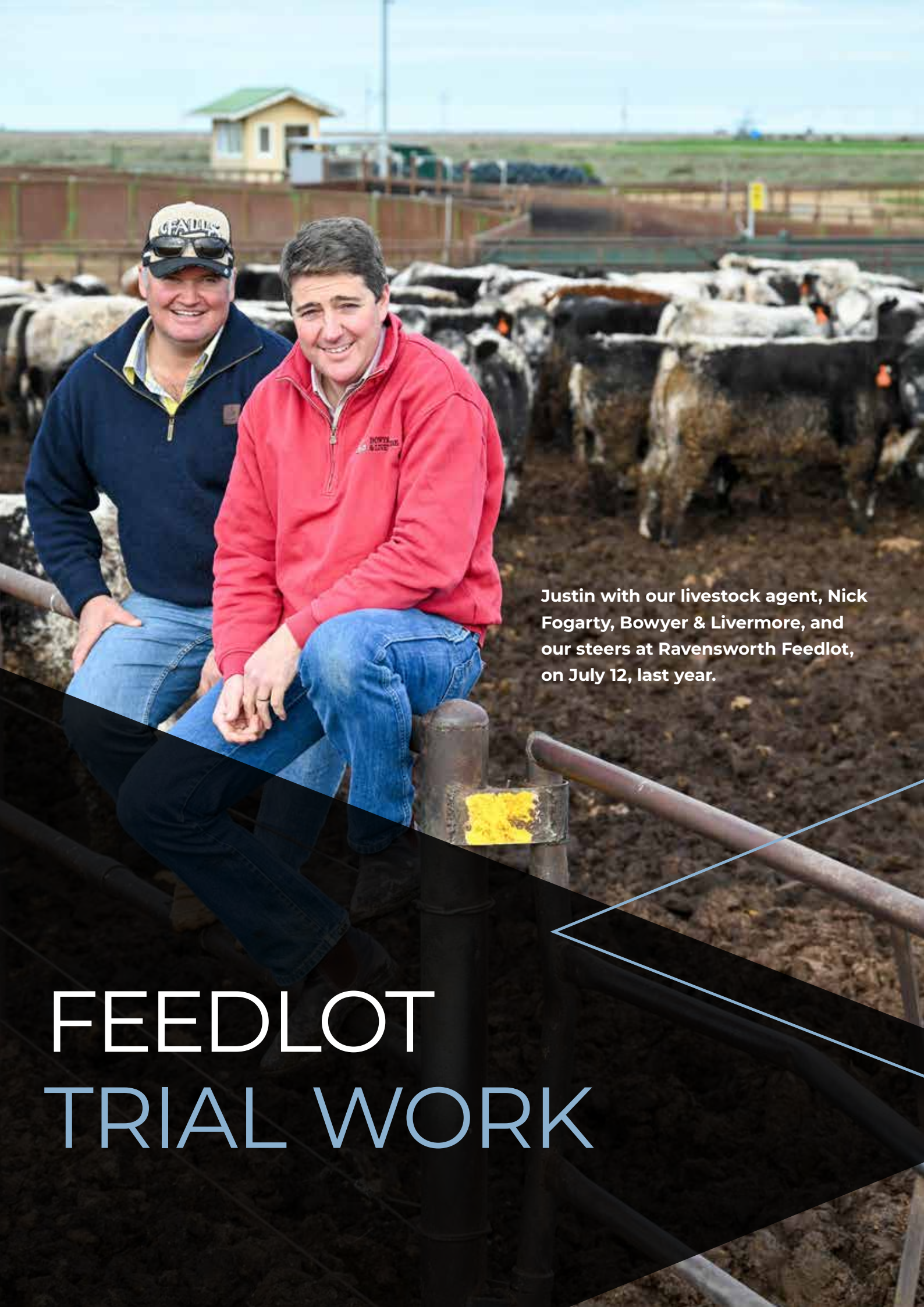
SELECT WITHIN

Select sires from within the JAD herd of performance-recorded bulls, using few sires instead of many to achieve greater uniformity and predictability in the resulting progeny.



REPLICATE OUR BEST

There are few herds worldwide with as much genetic diversity as JAD. Select what works, complementary join, and replicate the best to supply our growing client base.



Justin with our livestock agent, Nick Fogarty, Bowyer & Livermore, and our steers at Ravensworth Feedlot, on July 12, last year.

FEEDLOT TRIAL WORK

LAST Year, we 'put our money where our mouth was' and set out to help demonstrate the feed efficiency attributes on Speckle Park, on feed.

We custom-fed 168 Speckle Park-cross steers at Ravensworth Feedlot, Hay NSW, entering in late-January at an averaged of 361kg.

These steers were not specially selected - they were purchased from multiple breeders with their commonality being they were by a registered Speckle Park bull, and out of British-breed females.

At the 100-day mark, we did a bulk weigh and learned the steers had put on an average of 2.1kg/day for the first 100 days, and they had achieved a feed conversion rate of 5.2:1. No-HGP.

That means they consumed 5.2kg of dry matter for every 1kg of weight gain.

This feed conversion rate is not to be sneezed at.

In a world with growing consumer attention around carbon footprint and methane emissions (feed intake and methane production are directly correlated - the more an animal eats, the more methane it produces), this kind of data is so important.

It also helps to reaffirm our suspicions around efficiency and hardiness that we observe on a daily basis in our Speckle Park female herd on-farm.

When we're in the midst of the next drought, we know which cows we would prefer to be running!

After 173 days on feed, the lead two B Double loads averaged 682kg on exit, having converted at 5.78:1 for the entire time, with a 1.65kg/day

ADG from induction weight. Of the 1466 non-HGP Angus steers fed at the same feedlot, over the same period, they converted at 6.64:1 with a 1.73kg/day ADG from induction.

That difference of 0.86:1 feed conversion rate over 173 days equates to a feed saving of 24,995kg, totalling \$11,247, or \$66.96 per head.

These 96 lead steers that exited after 173 days on feed had a 377.09kg carcass weight, dressing at a pleasing 58.2% - with 5% taken off their exit weight (or 57% at 3% shrink, if you think 5% is too much). They were processed by JBS.

Other consignments of British-breed steers exiting at this time had been dressing at more like 52-54%.

Interestingly, the entire consignment only had three animals treated during their time on feed (one pinkeye, two respiratory).

We are told the pull rate over this length of time on feed is usually 10-12% of the mob - so that number should have been more like 15-20 animals.

This demonstrates the inbuilt resilience that we observe with the Speckle Park breed on-farm.



INTRODUCING
OUR EXCITING NEW SIRE
JAD THE MARSHALL
T87 (JAD T87)



JAD THE MARSHALL T87 (JAD T87)



Sire: Maungahina Promise (MAU P194).

We are excited to reveal our latest sire, one we have high hopes will deliver great things for the future of Speckle Park.

The Marshall T87 is outstanding in so many ways. He is exceptionally docile and stands on impeccable feet and legs - Dick Whale scored him a perfect 8 out of 8 for these all-important attributes. He is a trait leader for growth, sits in the top 1% of the breed for scrotal size, and is in the top 10% of the breed for all three fats.



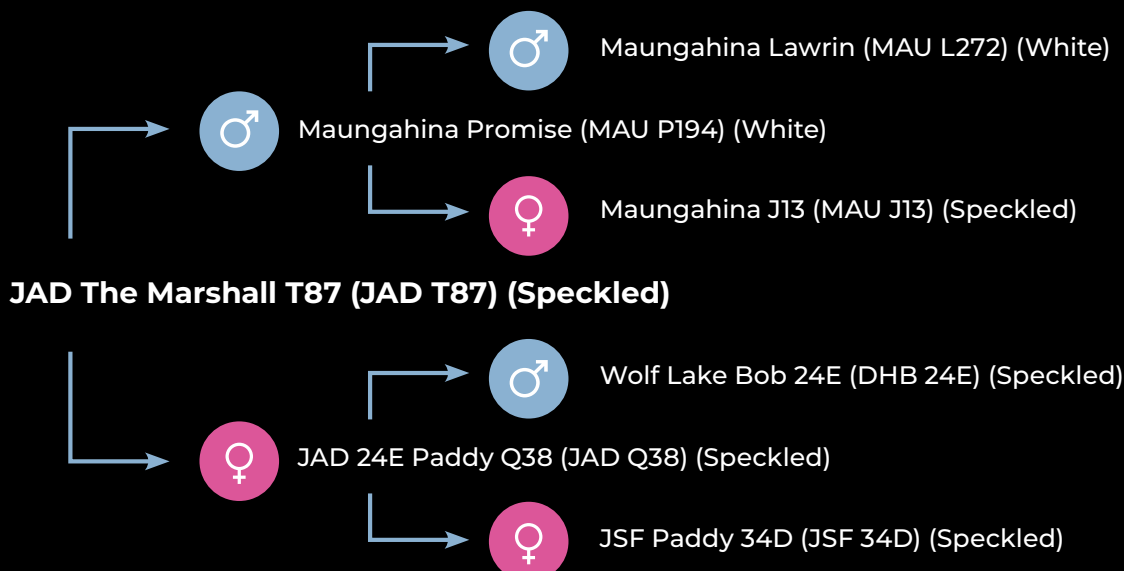
Dam: JAD 24E Paddy Q38 (JAD Q38).

We sold The Marshall T87's dam as a heifer at our 2021 sale, and purchased her back in January 2024. We flushed her prior to selling her, delivering four calves from four embryos recovered. One produced the top-priced heifer of our 2023 sale, one produced a heifer exported last month to Dubai, one produced a further heifer we elected to retain, and the final embryo produced The Marshall. An outstanding strike rate, with an outstanding pedigree both top and bottom for this young sire. His maternal granddam is also the dam of another of our sires, JAD Quistacat Q48.



The Marshall T87 at five weeks old.

PEDIGREE ON POINT





THE JAD ADVANTAGE

We are a commercial and customer-focused Speckle Park breeding operation which aims to deliver seedstock that will improve the long-term efficiency and profitability of the beef industry, and consistently “plate up” a unique and memorable beef eating experience for the end consumer.

We feel strongly that the Speckle Park breed in Australia will benefit from bulls and females that have been bred under our strict standards, and they are backed by our 12-month “JAD Guarantee” – we are in this journey together.

When you buy a JAD Speckle Park, you can be assured that they have been heavily measured and scrutinised. Our stud carries a five-star BREEDPLAN Completeness of Performance rating, acknowledging the effort we make

to measurement and maintaining contemporary group completeness right through to 15-17 months old, in an effort to achieve more accurate EBVs. We aim for a balanced set of objectively measured traits, and work to gradually optimise growth and carcass traits – not in quantum leaps.

We put in the hard work to give our clients the confidence to back us and our cattle.

We are passionate about our cattle and hold a strong female-focused vision for what we want our herd to look like. Our cattle must be structurally sound, medium-framed, deep-barrelled, thick, and soft with good temperaments, longevity, and a low maintenance requirement. The result is progeny that will calve easily, grow, finish quickly, and grade highly.

We look forward to working in partnership with you.



A GLOBAL INFLUENCE

We travel to Canada and New Zealand regularly to get to know the different breeders and their breeding programs, to see genetic lines in the flesh, and to select our “picks” to infuse into our herd through extensive ET and AI programs.



INDEPENDENTLY ASSESSED

All bulls are semen tested, reproductive organs are examined in all bulls and purebred females, and all purebreds are independently assessed for structural soundness and temperament.



DATA RECORDED

JAD carries a five-star BREEDPLAN Completeness of Performance rating. Our extra effort is to improve the accuracy of resultant EBVs and deliver real value to our clients to assist them in their decision-making.



TEAMWORK + CUSTOMER SERVICE

We are both just as passionate about Speckle Park cattle as each other, and we are committed to helping our clients achieve their goals in a long-lasting partnership.



SOCIAL SCENE 2024 SALE



thank you

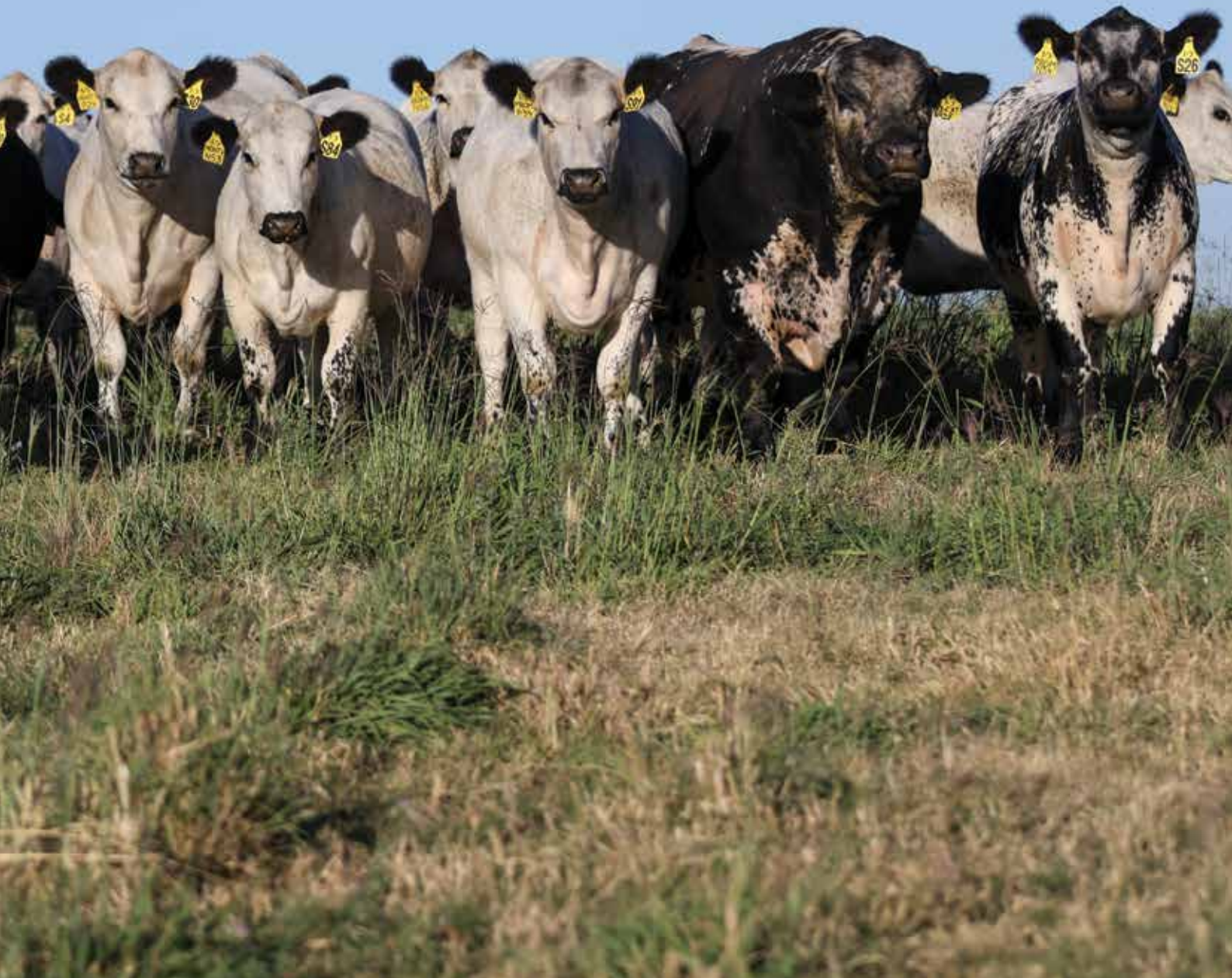
to all buyers and underbidders
for supporting our JAD program





BRED FOR
LASTING
PERFORMANCE

SPECKLE PARK | ANGUS



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