



angus **Raff**

2019 Newsletter

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BREEDING ANGUS FOR PROFITABLE BEEF PRODUCTION SINCE 1965

## Seven of our best destined for the Sydney Royal Angus Feature Show ... and SALE

*Following our move south there has been uncertainty within the industry about the direction of Raff Angus at a Seedstock production level.*

Combining the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Angus in Australia along with Angus being a feature breed at this year's Sydney show made for the decision to exhibit at this event. Further we are offering our complete show team for sale – they all sell Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April following the Angus judging. Judging runs over both Saturday & Sunday with entries expected to exceed 300 head.

Our show team comprises of four elite stud sires, one of which has been used, two magnificent joined heifers and one powerful cow/calf unit. We are very proud to offer such an exciting group of Raff Angus and strongly encourage enquiry and inspection of this show team. They are genetically different with performance beyond a graph and have 53 years of dedicated breeding behind them with our increased emphasis on weight for age, feed efficiency, carcase weight and retail beef yield.

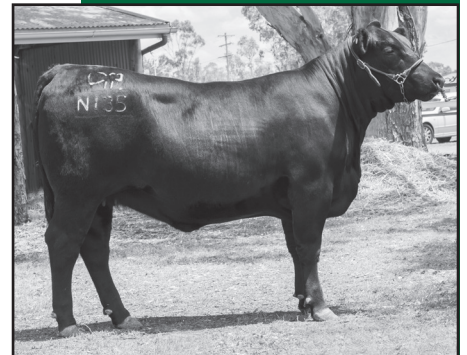


Raff Necessity N205 - he sells as lot 22

## Drillham Queensland to King Island Tasmania – was the move worth it?

*It has now been over three years since our move south in the quest for green grass and reliability of seasons.*

Moving into such a contrasting environment has literally seen our management practices turn on its head. Mud replaces dust, green grass is forever present not on occasions, intense pasture management and rotational grazing practices are now enhanced and increased numbers mean bigger mobs. We are delighted with our decision and have no regrets. We have been fortunate to have had numerous visitors following our move and not once has anyone left questioning our decision. As I often tell people – the move was simply not to a block in the centre of another state on mainland that did not fully eliminate any risk of drought. Moving to such a contrasting environment such as King Island not only offers reliability of seasons but also allows for a unique lifestyle and endless opportunity.



Raff Lady Durham N135 - she sells as lot 42

## Weaning weights break records...

Part of the excitement in moving south was knowing that our cattle will be raised in an environment where they are able to reach their true genetic potential naturally. Previously we often found ourselves having to place our sale cattle in an intense feed environment from a young age to allow genetic expression and to meet sale preparation deadlines. Since moving here, we have broken all records. Our 2017 autumn born bull calves averaged 420kg's at 9 months with three over 500 kilograms whilst our 2018 autumn born bulls averaged 438kgs at a similar age. They were all 100% grass fed – no hay or silage and no pellet supplements.



Raff Duchess N168 - she sells as lot 43



Raff Magnum M165 - pictured suckling dam when weighing 418kg at 8 months of age.

He sells as lot 2 at the Sydney Royal Show Angus Feature Sale - Sunday 14th April.



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THE OUTCROSS ANGUS GENETICS SOURCE

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# Raff Angus – what are we doing?

From 1965 through to 2015 - our 50<sup>th</sup> year celebration of Seedstock Production – we were almost in its entirety completely reliant on stud cattle sales. In fact, our historical statistic was that 94% of all bull calves weaned were sold for breeding duties with most of our income reliant from just one day of the year .... a crazy business model. In 2015 we were fortunate to acquire a large aggregation of land, by King Island standards, located within the higher rainfall and higher production area.

Here we intend to build our breeding numbers beyond 850 females. It is our intention to keep every female registered with Angus Australia with continued data collection for performance recording. However only our top 25% of bull calves (approx. 100) will be sold as breeding bulls. The remainder will become steers and fattened on farm in a 100% grass fed environment. Likewise, with the female portion, we intend to sell approx. 100 as breeding females with the remainder again to be fattened on farm in a 100% grass fed environment.

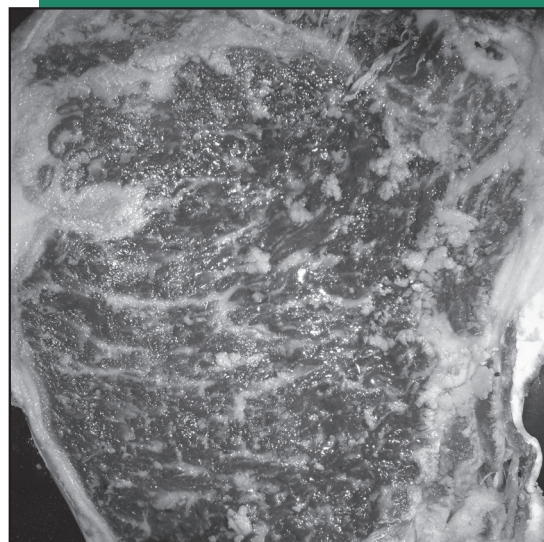
## Raff Angus Carcass Feedback – is science reporting our herd accurately?

***Our new business model and secure environment has allowed for every surplus Raff Angus animal to be grass fattened on farm*** and sold to either of the two active processors – JBS or Greenhams. This has allowed us to receive invaluable carcass feedback data. For many decades there has been an industry perception that Raff Angus cattle have difficulty finishing and do not have marbling. Unfortunately, this perception has predominately come about because science i.e. Breedplan has reported our herd as such. Not one animal processed this past two years has failed to meet minimum fat specifications whilst our AUS-MEAT Marbling score has measured 10% higher than the National average.

From January 2018 to current we have sold 181 animals for processing - 100% grass fattened on farm.

- The 54 MSA Raff heifers, 18 – 22 months, have had an average carcass weight of 318kg with 11.5mm fat  
*(above the National average for No HGP/Grass Fed animals)*
- The 69 MSA Raff steers, 18 – 22 months, have had an average carcass weight of 335kg with 9.4mm fat  
*(above the National average for No HGP/Grass Fed animals)*
- The combined total of 123 steers and heifers have had an MSA Index of 59.17  
*(above the National average for No HGP/Grass Fed animals)*
- The combined total of 123 steers and heifers have averaged a Marble score 1.61, grass fed only, *(above the National average for No HGP/Grass Fed animals)* with over 50% of the draft producing a marble score of 2 or greater – several graded a Marble score 6.... off grass.
- Our top dollar value steer, a milk tooth, had a carcass weight of 402kg, 8mm Fat, AUS-MEAT Marbling 2 and MSA Index 60.03 with a value of \$2,230.....off grass.

Further, the 58 MSA Raff Angus cows had an average carcass weight of 345kg with 13.5mm fat and a similar Marbling score of 1.62. This proves that we do have marbling, obviously not as much as other programs but certainly more than we are reported as having and enough to exceed minimum requirements to fit niche branded grass-fed products. Furthermore, it proves that our cattle are soft enough, but not too soft (fat) to ultimately compromise muscle, weight and yield.



## Increased premiums for Marbling

Last year a leading processor introduced a 20 cent/kg premium for carcasses that had a Marble Score 4 or greater with a minimum MSA Index of 64. However, Carcass Weight still proves the key driver to profitability – particularly for the grass-fed market. Raff Angus have always maintained that an Angus animal with traditional calving, maternal and carcass qualities with a heavier carcass weight at a younger age is most profitable.

Simple maths –

- 300kg carcass @ \$6.00/kg + 20 cent premium (300kg x \$6.20) = \$1,860
- 320 kg carcass @ \$6.00/kg with no premium (320kg x \$6.00) = \$1,920

**The heavier carcass weight that does not receive the 20 cent/kg premium is \$60 more profitable. We know our genetics weigh heavier at a younger age and we now can prove beyond a piece of paper that our genetics do have marbling and finishing ability. Marbling is important but producers must not lose sight of the fact that carcass weight is still king for particular markets.**

# Raff Angus Bulls for sale

*At full production one hundred bulls will remain for breeding duties selected from four hundred male calves.*

This year will be our 54<sup>th</sup> year of Angus Seedstock production. With a spring and autumn calving, two select groups of bulls bred for efficiency and heavier carcasses will be available for private sales throughout the year. Currently we have a select group of *Autumn 'N'* bulls for immediate sale with sixty *Spring bulls* following later in the year. The major difference following our move is that these bulls are 100% grass fed being selected from larger contemporary groups – these are the top 25%. Targeting two key selling times to work with the current bull selling seasons our bull prices will include delivery to mainland and on route to as far north as Roma. Our aim is to sell bulls that have the traditional calving, maternal and marbling qualities the breed is renown for but have an increased weight for age, a higher yielding body with a heavier carcass weight. Because of these selection criteria we

believe they are inherently more efficient. Genetic diversity is of great importance and you will find that the Raff Angus program is as genetically removed from mainstream a herd as you could find in Australia.



**Increased weight for age = More profit for the breeder. Feed Efficiency = More profit for the feeder**

**Carcass weight = More profit for the finisher. Retail Beef Yield = More profit for the processor**



## The land of opportunity - a cracking good time.

*Early on following the move to the island our family saw an opportunity to supply eggs to a number of outlets on King Island.* Our children Harry, Charlie, Georgina and Olivia manage and own Raff Farm Fresh Eggs. Converting an old calf rearing shed into a hen house and fencing an outside area off for them to roam allowed the business to start whilst their Level 2 license has just approved. This means that the numbers are on the increase. Hopefully there will be 500 hens producing over two hundred dozen eggs per week. However, Harry and Charlie are now at boarding school so our girls are contemplating if it is fair that they have to do all the work!!

## Organics

*the natural progression*

*We want to be more than sustainable, to be carbon positive not neutral. We want to increase plant diversity, improve soil health and create soil for our generations ahead.*

Most have heard this rhetoric before but we now believe it. Living in an environment where the grass is naturally salted from the easterly sea fogs and forever green, where temperature ranges are only moderate, where the air is regarded as some of the cleanest in the world and where you can access some of the key elements used for successful organic production all made for the obvious decision for us to pursue the organic path.

It is no longer 'what you eat' but it is now 'what you eat eats'.

## Raff Angus stud Females for sale

*As our intentions are to stay away from a one day of the year auction sale, we welcome any enquiry about the purchase of females.*

At full production we will be selling up to 400 females each year with every animal leaving our farm Herd Book Registered with Angus Australia. Maternal strength underpins the success of any breeding species or breeding program. We are proud of our depth of pedigree with built in longevity and structural integrity. For any enquiry please be sure to contact us.



**BRED BY CATTLEMEN – NOT COMPUTERS**

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## New cow to further strengthen maternal lines

*At the Anvil Dispersion sale, we purchased the aged cow Vermont Champagne C371.*

Strong maternal cows with generations of matrons with proven longevity but not diluted by this modern quest of perfect numbered pieces of paper with inferior built in breeding qualities are hard to come by, so, we had to buy her. Now at the Ced Wise AB Centre she is programmed for a number of flushes to utilize this well proven cows' genetics and breeding ability.



## Raff Angus Embryos FOR SALE

*The collection of embryos for genetic advantages has been a pivotal part of our breeding success since pioneering days in the 1980's.* We have a number of embryos in the tank and plan to flush late Autumn and throughout the year if requested. The heart of our herd can be accessed and offers a unique opportunity to fast track any breeding program. We would consider flushing selected cows of interest to sires of your choice if required.



Raff Blackbird E280 - her son sells as lot 22 at the Sydney Show Angus Feature Breed Sale Sunday 14th April.



## 2019 National Youth Roundup



*Thanks to the Bulliac Angus Stud and Team our three eldest children Harry, Charlie and Georgina attended this years Angus Youth Roundup held at Armidale early in the year. It was the second time for the boys and a first for Georgina. Congratulations to the committee and organisers for holding a most enjoyable event.*



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