

Devon Inspection School

During the weekend of 7th and 8th March, 2009, the Devon Cattle Breeders Society of Australia Ltd held an afternoon of Devon cattle assessment at Goulburn, followed by their AGM, with a dinner following on Saturday night.

The Devon cattle assessment was conducted by Bob Dent, DPI beef officer based at Glen Innes. Bob was kind enough to travel all the way from Glen Innes to Goulburn to talk to us about assessing the structure of Devon cattle and I'm sure we all learned something from the experience.

At Angus Gibson's place at Tirranna, Goulburn, Bob spoke and provided visual evidence of the varying structural assessment categories. This was interesting and invoked some discussion during the presentation, of factors influencing the various structural faults. As the Devon Society is now a member of the Australian Cattle Genetics Export Agency, it was advisable to set standards for acceptable mobility and structure for export animals. After a light lunch, kindly arranged by Angus and Ruth Gibson, with help from Angus's sister, Roddy Bell, our group adjourned to the yards for hands on cattle inspection.



Bob Dent and Angus Gibson at the inspection school

Angus Gibson had many Devons in the yard for us to assess, from young heifers to older cows, some in calf, some not in calf, some set aside for culling, so there were lots from which to choose. With animals going through the crush individually, Bob Dent was able to point out the various structures of each animal, and, with a worksheet for scoring, Devon members were able to visually assess these animals. Some members frame scored the animals, others checked the frame scores by measurement against a frame score chart.

Another group of young females was presented to the Society members for visual appraisal for export. After making our assessments, Bob Dent discussed our findings and advised the group which animals he would pass and why some would fail to meet export standards



Bob Dent assessing heifers during the inspection school

The Devon Cattle Breeders Society is indebted to Bob Crawford for putting the concept of an inspection school into reality, and working so hard to provide us with a comprehensive appraisal sheet, and Angus Gibson and Roddy Bell for organising all the animals for inspection.

Our Annual General Meeting was then held back at the motel. Office bearers from 2009 are the same as 2008, namely

President: Bob Crawford

Vice-President: Neil Edwards

Treasurer: Richard O'Leary

Public Officer: Diana O'Keeffe

Our thanks go to these and our other Board member, Mark Coombes for all their work and support during the year. Without their dedication, our Society would not exist.

On Sunday morning, some coastal members visited Bob & Jo Crawford's place at Bigga. They were amazed at how well Devons can grow with hardly any feed in the paddocks due to the prolonged dry conditions. Obviously, the soil hasn't been leached as the coastal soils are, otherwise the cattle wouldn't thrive as they are doing at Goulburn. It really highlights the great conversion ability Devons possess. Our thanks go to Bob & Jo and also to John Miller and Jacqui Crawford for organising a great group of cattle for Devon members to see.

A follow up assessment for Devon Breed Inspectors will be held to further standardise Devon phenotypic standards in the assessment of Devon cattle entering the Society's breed register.

DEVONS FIGHTBACK CAMPAIGN 2009-2012