Minutes AGM held Sunday October 19 2015
2 Sims Road Mt. Rowan

Present: Joan Adams (Bembridge), Hilery & Bill Belton (Urila), Matt Dickinson (Ballarat Grammar), Jacqui & Richard Feagan (Tarrawarra), Adam Gleeson (Drakes Lodge), Tonia & David Goodman (Billabouri), Julie Knight (Wanamara), Gill & Ken Lorains (Whitby Farm), Maureen & Ian Morris (Galashiels), Alexie & Steve O'Brien (Ardeen), Sue Pace & Craig Davis (Black Label), David Ritter (Baminga), Jeanette & Peter Stebbins (Ardrossan), Jane Todd (Sunny Hollow)

Apologies: Jo-Ann Jackson (Yarra Valley), Gary & Shelly Turnham (Barregowa)

Welcome

Jeanette Stebbins welcomed members to the AGM, and introduced Matt Dickinson, who welcomed members to Ballarat Grammar’s Agricultural and Environmental Learning Centre at Mount Rowan, which is three kilometres from the main school site. Sustainability is a major theme of the building, with solar panels and natural ventilation, just to name a couple of features. Year 4 students spend four days a week at the centre, which is on 125 acres. Year 10-12 students manage the farm, which started with one heifer and five sheep. A recently completed central laneway makes moving stock much easier. Staff and parents, as well as the school, are customers for the meat produced by the farm. The farm participates in agribusiness cropping trials and is building links with other organisations, such as Federation University.

Presentations – Finishing Steers – From Birth to Processing

Adam Gleeson, Adam Tresize & Jeanette Stebbins

JS Ardrossan is part of a triangle, providing steers for Adam G. to finish, who then provides steers to Adam T. to butcher and make available through his shop, East Geelong’s Quality Butcher (www.eastgeelongsqualitybutcher.com).

We still sell through the farm and with regard to the supply of Lowlines – need to consider as breeders how to ensure supply and quality. Ardrossan leases bulls to dairy farms and then buys back any males (steers) born.

AG Acquires steers at around 300kg. Started with one heifer and six acres, then contacted Ardrossan and bought more heifers and leased a bull, and then bought two bulls. Passed a steer to a friend and Adam T. expressed interest. Sold the cows and calves to focus on the steers.

Home property is 16 acres with water, and it is not enough, so Crameri supplies feed (4 tonnes a time). It takes time for steers to become familiar, but then they stay on it, supplemented with grass hay and salt licks. My observations are that Lowlines are not the biggest, but they are great finishers. One customer said it was the best meat they’d tasted in over 30 years.

JS Adam G. and Adam T. recently attended the Portarlington Show where they sold “a million” Lowline sausages and generated much interest in the product.

AG Most difficulty is consistency of product. The animals are not moved much – they are unstressed and very happy with Crameri feed. Crossbreeds don’t seem to hold condition as well as Lowlines. Also noticed Lowlines don’t do as well without some grass.
Visual selection is more important than weight or age. The average weight for turning steers off is around 360-380kg. Carcasses need fat – fat is flavour.

Not yet able to spend much time recording genetics to see which lines might do better.

Animals are killed at Herd’s in Geelong – they are flexible about delivery and do early kills.

Remember feed affects colour and flavour. Grain fed meat presents better in the butcher’s shop.

Live weight to carcase weight is approximately 59%. Not able to provide meat to bone ratio.

This is a three tier system – agreed price for stock bought by Adam G. from Ardrossan. Flexibility is important in order to attract new customers.

Important to be aware of council regulations – the definition of intensive farming is bringing in more than 50% of required feed.

Second cross animals need to grow out bigger. Discussed difficulties of having Lowlines recognised at sales and how to address that.

Consider popularity of paleo diet – grass, not grain, fed meat.

AT Not happy with gas flushing to make meat look ‘better’ in the shop window.

When selecting stock, look from the top and the back of the animal.

Does buy other meat, but tries to use Lowlines for primary and secondary cuts. Some customers do notice the Lowline certification.

Julie Knight asked the presenters to consider writing an article for the national Lowline journal.

Conclusion: consider options to develop markets and how to supply them, including cooperative ways to work together.

Ken Lorains

- All about what you have on your farm
- Good animals can be weaned at around 220kg
- Can bring smaller animals up with new, larger bulls
- Different animals have different requirements: consider needs wet or dry cows, steers, bulls
- “Put grass in front of a Lowline and it will do well”
- Some stock lost weight over autumn, but recovered
- Consider available feed
- Keep up vaccinations
- Locals and family make good customers
- Look after steers – keep with heifers until they develop their frame
- Look at calving patterns – ideally want to be finishing steers when you have feed
- Everyone is different and has access to different resources
- 10-15mm fat is good for steer carcase
- Develop a good relationship with a butcher
- Consider and identify what consumers want – and how to supply it
- Consider what you can do – you have a good product – think outside the square
- What have you got? What can you do with it?
- Consumers are changing how they buy meat – moving away from supermarkets

AGM opened at 1:00pm

Jeanette opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming and for their support throughout the year.

Minutes from the previous meeting were accepted by Julie Knight and seconded by Ian Morris.

Special thanks to Matt Dickinson for hosting today’s AGM. Thanks also to Adam Gleson, Adam Tresize of East Geelong’s Quality Butcher, Jeanette Stebbins and Ken Lorains for speaking about today’s topic, finishing steers for the butcher.
Elections SRPG committee

No postal nominations were received. With the exception of Jo-Ann Jackson, who did not stand, the current committee was re-appointed. The position of chair was left vacant, but is expected to be filled at the first committee meeting to be held as soon as possible.

Chair: vacant
Treasurer: Tonia Goodman
Secretary: Sue Pace
Committee member: Jacqui Feagan
Committee member: Ken Lorains
Committee member: David Ritter
Committee member: Jeanette Stebbins

Addendum: Jeanette decided to stand down from the committee on October 23. Jo-Ann Jackson was approached by Jeanette to replace her. See Attachment 1 for a copy of Jeanette’s message. After the first committee meeting, Ken Lorains agreed to accept the nomination for chair (SP 16-Nov-15).

Chair’s report

The SRPG Committee has had another very busy year, as we continue to work on innovative ideas to support our Victorian members. One of these initiatives is the upgrade of the Victorian Lowlines website, www.victorianlowlines.com.au. Work is already well underway and due for completion September / October 15. The website is undergoing a complete transformation, with a new look and feel, pictures, and format. The new technology being used will make the site more user friendly and professional in appearance. In addition to providing information, the website is also a great place for members to advertise cattle for sale, with links from the ALCA website ensuring enquiries are easily directed to local studs. The members advertising package was again opened to those wishing to have their stud included in the breeders of Victoria brochure, giving smaller studs the opportunity to advertise in a cost effective way at field days and in information packs. Discussion regarding a separate drop down box to show all members is yet to be held.

Without a lot of breeder support, the periodic newsletter will be discontinued as an email to breeders with an equivalent “What’s Happening” appearing on the web site.

I was invited, along with other promotional group leaders, to participate in a meeting with ALCA councillors in Brisbane, in October. Hopefully, from this brainstorming gathering of likeminded breeders, the promotion of the breed will be at the forefront of ALCA and promotional groups’ advertising of both stud and commercial cattle in the future.

July saw the launch of a fantastic fund raiser effort, the brain child of Ken Lorains, from Whitby Farm. The prize was a Lowline weather vane, which would complement any shed beautifully! Tickets went on sale in July, with the prize draw taking place after judging at Melbourne Show in September, where SPRG again sponsored the Supreme Exhibit. Our Treasurer will elaborate of the funds raised from this raffle.

A Show Handlers weekend for members was held on June 13th & 14th at the Whittlesea Showgrounds, with 10 participants and 4 instructors taking part. The enthusiasm and interest shown by the participants was fantastic and every one pitched in to make the event a success. Ken & Gill Lorains and Julie Knight instructed participants on everything they needed to know about show preparation, fitting, clipping and leading, while Gary Turnham expertly drilled the group on the art of showing. Their knowledge, patience and support encouraged everyone to get in and have a go. Members were amazed as heifers in paddock condition were transformed into sleek show animals under the expert tuition. This weekend gave some breeders the confidence to show their cattle at Royal Melbourne Show in September.

Approx 30 Lowlines were entered at Melbourne Royal in September with a presentation afternoon tea that followed sponsored by SRPG.

It was also very pleasing to hear from the SA Promotion Group that they took some inspiration from the Victorian on farm challenge, and held their own, which by all accounts was a great success. This type of event is another way breeders can exhibit and promote their cattle without the preparation required for the more traditional show.
ALCA AGM together with a breed forum was held last weekend in Melbourne and it was disappointing to see the lack of support at this function. ALCA is an association run for the breeders to assist with the promotion of the Lowline breed. Without the breeders’ support, Lowlines will not flourish and become the viable breed that some breeders have worked hard to make inroads into both the commercial and stud areas of the industry.

The committee continues to work enthusiastically to provide members with the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities, but we need breeders’ support to make these events work and keep them viable.

Finally, thank you to the Committee, especially our Secretary and Treasurer who have worked tirelessly throughout the year making sure the SRPG has been kept current and active.

**Treasurer’s Report – For the period 1st July 2014 to 30th June 2015**

Funds as at 1\textsuperscript{st} July 2014 4893.84

Add Receipts for the period:
- ALCA Promotion Pool Funding - Brochure 1000.00
- ALCA Annual Membership Rebate Payment 804.00
- Entries Showing Skill Workshop 800.00
- Advertising Package 765.00
- AGM Lunch Takings 125.00
- Bank Interest 0.31

\[ 3494.31 \]

Less Payments for the period:
- OFC Fuel & Function Room Hire 205.00
- Showing Skills Workshop 1332.67
- Website Hosting / Domain Name Renewal 137.50
- Stud Beef Affiliation Fee 55.00
- Sponsorship Stud Beef Handlers Camp 275.00
- Advertising 784.84
- Postage 78.75
- AGM Catering 88.19
- Brochure Artwork & Printing 2024.00
- Royal Show – Catering, Trophy & Postage 416.27
- Equipment purchase ALCA – Lowline Banners x 2 180.55

\[ 5577.77 \]

Funds as at 30\textsuperscript{th} June 2015 2810.38

Receipt pending from Whittlesea Ag Society – Refund Bond 660.00

**General discussion**

Members discussed the SRPG media package and website.

Meeting closed at 3:30pm.
Hi All,

I just wanted to confirm that, after due consideration, I have decided to stand down from participation in the SRPG Committee.

I have spoken to Jo-Ann Jackson, who is willing to again be part of the Committee in my place.

I will, however, be available for assistance at any time should extra hands be needed.

My wish is that the SRPG keep working towards promoting the Lowline Breed and that breeders support SRPG in making the Breed viable in both the Stud and Commercial Beef Industries.

I hope there are exciting times ahead for all Breeders.

Kind regards,

Jeanette Stebbins