

REPORT ON SRPG PROMOTIONAL STAND AT SEYMOUR ALTERNATIVE FARMING EXPO

15 - 17 FEBRUARY 2019

Established in 1991, the Seymour Alternative Farming Expo has grown into the most successful alternative farming expo in the Southern Hemisphere. Held annually on the third weekend in February, the Seymour Alternative Farming Expo specialises in showcasing the latest innovation, technology and trends in small holdings farming, animal husbandry and rural lifestyle products and services. **In 2019, the Expo attracted 500 exhibitors and more than 22,000 visitors from across Australia over the three days.**

The Southern Regional Promotion Group (SRPG) of the Australian Lowline Cattle Association (ALCA) established a trade stand at the most recent 2019 Expo which was held on 15-17 February 2019. A roster of SRPG members staffed two shifts between 08.30 and 16.30 hours for each of the three days.

The SRPG stand was under cover and located beside the Cattle Pavilion. A wide variety of other cattle breeds were also exhibited by studs including Lowlines, Angus, Red Angus, Red Poll, Charolais, Limousins, Poll Highland, Highland, Belted Galloways and the Dexter Cattle Promotion Group.

The SRPG stand consisted of banners, a display board, and SRPG and ALCA promotional material. A selection of promotional material was made available in ALCA show bags. Regional maps indicating the location of Victorian and Tasmanian ALCA members were displayed and created considerable interest as visitors to the stand looked for studs located near to where they lived. People were pleased to see that there are Lowline breeders in all corners of Victoria..

A bull, a cow and a young calf kindly provided by Whitby Farm Lowlines attracted passing visitors and brilliantly demonstrated the size and tractability of the Lowline breed.

A clipboard was kept on the SRPG stand and those staffing the stand were encouraged to record details about enquiries. The stand was very busy so collecting detailed information was not always practical or possible.

However and conservatively, the number of highly interested visitors attending the SRPG stand (as distinct from passing interest = tyre kickers) was estimated to be approximately 160 over the three days, based on records kept. The fifty Lowline show bags available were distributed on Friday and Saturday leading to an urgent request for more for Sunday. Twenty five more were given out on Sunday.

Enquiries covered a range of areas:-

- The Lowline breed in general and its relationship to Angus cattle. The SRPG display of pictures of original Angus cattle at Trangie were a useful aid to discussions about the evolution of Lowlines.
- Older "retired" persons who had farmed and bred cattle in the past and were interested in starting again on a smaller holding. They did not want large cattle and were looking for smaller cattle with good temperaments. This was a very common observation.
- Steer availability - people wanting tractable small steers as lawn mowers and pets on small acreages.
- Commercial cattle availability - from Lowline herds close to location of the enquirer.

- Heifer/cow availability - and prices
- Schools - A follow up discussion was held with a representative of a Victorian school who at the 2018 Seymour Expo had indicated an interest in starting a school herd of Lowlines. The outcome of the discussion was a subsequent farm visit to a Lowline stud.
- Bull availability - owners of heifer/cows looking for details of bulls for lease/sale and high praise was received from a Gippsland dairy farmer about the benefits of Lowline bulls
- Semen - owners of cows/heifers also made enquiries about availability of semen and location of AI technicians
- New small holder owners - wanting to run a few cattle.
- Meat/butchers - looking for a source of Lowline beef. One butcher (from whom contact details were taken) advised that he wanted two grass fed and grass finished carcasses/week



SRPG attends Expos to promote the Lowline breed generically to potential new owners and markets. For maximum return on investment, we consider that it is important that SRPG promotional efforts target field days most likely to attract a large percentage of small property holders. The Seymour Alternative Farming Expo is the most successful alternative farming expo in the Southern Hemisphere.

This is the second year SRPG has exhibited at the Seymour Expo and once again it proved to be a key platform for the promotion of Lowlines.

