

President's report 2011

I regret that this year was marred by the sad news of the passing of life member Harold Thompson. Harold was a founding member of our society and served on many committees for the development of the breed. He maintained a strong interest even after he sold his herd and retired from dairying. He will be sadly missed.

On a brighter note it's been a very successful year for the ARDB. Our progeny test program had probably its best year so far with seven out of twelve of the new bulls receiving reliable ABVs for the first time achieving APRs of over 100 and six of those seven with APRs over 150 in the August proof run. This is an outstanding result. With progeny test teams coming up with proofs like this, farmers can use our progeny test bulls with confidence. Progeny testing is the best tool we have for breed improvement. The main challenge is getting more farmers to use PT bulls.

The April ABV release saw the Red Dairy Cattle group (RDC) APR base move another 18.9 points. This is the highest increase of any breed. The increase for RDC in 2010 was 29.2. This means that in just two years the quality of red bulls available to dairy farmers has increased by 48.1 APR points. At this rate of improvement bulls like BOBDOWN and BONJOVI will become below average bulls in as little as 10 years. The RDC group includes all the red dairy cattle including ARDB, Illawarra, and Ayrshire cattle. The improvement in this group is being driven largely by the improvement in ARDB bulls.

Semen sales from GA have been roughly stable compared to last year with progeny test semen down a little. It is pleasing to see that the large increase in sales from 2010 (about 25% up on 2009) has been maintained in 2011.

2011 has seen the introduction of herd and individual cow awards. On behalf of the ARDB I'd like to thank the breed development committee for the work they did in getting these awards off the ground and Sharon Lister who designed the Elite Cow and ARDB Annual Awards Certificates. Also thank you to Genetics Australia and Viking genetics for sponsoring these awards.

Congratulations to the winners of these awards:

Jan Raleigh:

TOP ASI LARGE HERD

Greg & Kris Goulding: TOP ASI SMALL HERD
Terry & Shannon Blasche: MOST IMPROVED ASI LARGE HERD
Tom & Kyleigh Cochrane: MOST IMPROVED ASI SMALL HERD
Brian & Reta Sheppard: Highest New Entry Herd for ASI

Also congratulations to the Graham family for winning the James Hill perpetual shield for breeding the bull Beaulands Lorry (ARBLEX). The James Hill shield is awarded to the best new graduate from the Genetics Australia ARDB progeny test program.

Our website is proving to be a useful tool for members and interested people to keep in touch. Thanks to Sam Graham for maintaining this site. After some discussion in the forum of our website it was decided to write to the Illawarra Cattle Society to ask them if they would allow ARDB cattle to be shown in the same ring as Illawarra cattle. This would allow ARDB members with an interest in showing to have somewhere to show their cattle. The Illawarra cattle society has now passed a motion to that effect so as long as our cattle meet their requirements regarding colour and Holstein content they can now be shown alongside Illawarras. Cooperation between the two red breeds can only be good for both breeds in the long run.

I wish everyone a successful and prosperous 2012

Regards,

Michael Riggs,

ARDB President.