

# AUSTRALIAN RED DAIRY BREED PRESIDENTS REPORT 2008

Steve Snowdon

The volatility of our dairy industry is once again evident with the severe cuts in milk price that dairy farmers not only here in Australia, but globally will receive for their milk.

For those that are still drought affected, this will create an even larger challenge to remain viable and stay in the dairy industry.

This severe cut in milk income will also be major challenge for those farmers that have cows that are inflexible. Cows that require 2 tonne, 2.5 tonne and even 3 tonne of supplement to function adequately.

Our ARDB breeding objective to breed healthy, productive, feed efficient, genetically diverse and highly fertile dairy cows, capable of producing under a wide range of production systems and environments should see the Aussie Red Breed handle the new cost/price situation well.

In April Eileen and I were fortunate to be invited to both France by Coopex Montbeliarde and Germany by the German Red Cattle / Angler Association. We were given an insight into both breeds through farm visits, meetings and presentations.

Meetings held signalled the need for closer and trusting relationships to be built between all the Red Breeds globally. Working together will ensure that genetic gain and genetic diversity is being achieved within each of the individual Red Breeds. The aim being to help each other increase the size of market share as a whole for all the Red Breeds, with each of the individual Red Breeds achieving a larger slice.

The difficulty here for some will be in differentiating between the immediate needs to their own respective companies and/or breeds, and the bigger picture of the long term needs for the Red Breeds as a whole.

It was extremely pleasing to see the positive developments that have taken place over the past 12 months that will ensure the long term viability of the ARDB.

- Badly needed Field Work for the ARDB is now being funded and performed.  
The cost of promotional tee shirts and the first year's membership for new members is now also able to be funded.
- Competition in the market place now sees sales reps on the road dedicated to the Red Breeds. This initiative has seen the number of new farmers using Red Genetics for the first time grow rapidly.

- Reciprocal Progeny Testing (dual testing here and in another country) of our Progeny Test bulls has been a high priority for the development of the Aussie Red Breed for several years.  
We are extremely pleased that ABS has decided to set up a Progeny Test team for our Aussie Red bulls. These bulls will be tested here and in the UK.  
The German Red Angler Breed has also agreed in principal to a reciprocal arrangement with their PT Angler bulls.  
The Angler association is confident that our PT bulls would sell well in Germany. Likewise I am confident that Angler PT bulls would sell well in Australia.  
Reciprocal testing will give a higher reliability to a bulls proof and improve his Interbull rating. Reciprocal testing will also be a valuable tool for all the Red Breeds as we seek genetic diversity and improvement in our respective breeds.
- Contract matings of bull dams and a greater emphasis on mating selection for future bull dams is also being met.  
This development will help increase the rate of genetic gain for our Aussie Red Breed

The Lardner field days saw Joy and George Waltham man the ARDB tent for the tenth year running. This achievement shows the dedication that some members have for our Aussie Red Breed and we all are very appreciative of the time and effort they have dedicated to promoting the Aussie Reds.

I would like to thank Genetics Australia for its continued support of the ARDB with its promotion of ARDB bulls and successful Progeny Test program.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank James Hill for the work he has performed and helped me with during the past year.  
On behalf of all the ARDB members we wish James and Chris all the best during James' treatment and recovery from his illness.

I would like to wish everyone all the best for 2009, and from the ARDB's perspective, another big year of moving forward.

Best regards,  
Steve