



Ardcairnie Angus

May 2013 Meanderings

1st May 2013

Dear Friends,

With an autumn feel in the air for about two and a half months, the early rains across much of the South West seem to have been very variable. We experienced a very impressive germination and some paddocks are still hanging in well while others have almost lost the lot. We hope to have a surprise after today's rain forecast.

Water continues to be our major concern, and this winter's rains will be critical to us regaining use of all the paddocks. We went into summer with a surprising body of dry feed, so our winter grazing strategies were rewarded. The mid-March rains re-enforced our feelings about perennial species—the few that we have responded well indicating, I believe, where our efforts should go if we continue to aim for lowcost production.. Our remaining bull group for sale still presents a good choice should you need more bull power. A considerable number should be safe heifer bulls with lower-than-average Birth Weight EBVs.

We trust you have good rains this time and a good long growing season.

Kind regards..

For Jim and Pam McGregor

When you listen with your ears, you begin to hear.
When you listen with your mind, you begin to think.
But when you listen with your heart, you begin to care.

(By E.G.H. but who that is, is not remembered!)

Our Web page and other electronic bits:

Over the next three months, our webpage www.ardcairnieangus.com will undergo major changes to (hopefully!) increase its ease of use and currency. We prepare our newsletters on Microsoft Publisher and our list of sale bulls on Microsoft Excel, and can convert these to pdf documents for emailing.

If any readers would like to receive newsletters by email rather than by Australia Post, please send us an email—MAYBENUP@bigpond.com and we will send future newsletters that way. We will still send the bull sale catalogues each January by Australia Post.

Cattlecare Accreditation?

Since this accreditation became available, we have undergone an annual audit as it is someone outside our business checking that we are doing what we ought.

When National Vendor Declaration Waybill Books came in, that became Level 1 of the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA), Scheme and Cattlecare became Level 2., and we chose to continue the annual audit.

However, we have been re-thinking our position on this—the audit checks all the paperwork required; from time to time will check the chemical store and the vaccines storage as well as the cattle yards. The audit does not cover how we handle the cattle, or feed them (although a listing of purchased feedstuffs is part of the audit).

In handling the stock, Bud Williams Low Stress Stockhandling (LSS) techniques are used, and we cull for temperament, resulting (for the most part!) in quiet cattle at Maybenup.

QUESTION: does the Cattlecare accreditation mean anything to you as a client or potential client purchasing Ardcairnie stock?

We'd be interested in your thoughts—ring us on 08 9831 0401 or email us at MAYBENUP@bigpond.com or text us on 0429 089 941—we would appreciate hearing from you!

Need a bull?

As mating time approaches, you may find you need some additional sire power. A list of Ardcairnie bulls still available is enclosed. Contact us or Elders.

Murdoch student

Our thirteenth student from Murdoch University spent a week with us last month. She is our second Animal Science student and, like all our students, was a delight to have on the farm and in our home. If you are interested in participating in the Extramural Farm Experience Scheme, contact Claire McNaughton, Student Placement Officer on 9310 7495 or email

Rainfall?

One might say, what's that! Total rainfall for 2012 from our north gauge was 342mms; southern 307mms (5kms apart—Maybenup is long and skinny!)

So far in 2013, there was no rain in January and February, March 36 / 49mms, April 8 / 11mms. Fingers crossed (and toes) for a truly wet winter for all farmers.

Sale bull mob for 2014

There are over 20 sires still represented in the mob of 105 bull calves from which the 2014 sale team will be chosen. Sires include T C Aberdeen, Lawsons Novak and Lawsons Nadal, GAR Objective, Sydgen Trust, 9074, Te Mania Berkley, and a bull from UK, Oakchurch Field Marshall, as well as several of our home bred sires. Their next trip to the yards will be next month for the 400 day weights. They have all had their vaccinations (two) using Vibrovax, Ultravac and Pestigard and will have their boosters before our next bull sale on Tuesday 4th February 2014. Of course there will be some culling before then, although any carriers for AM, NH or CA have already been steered, as have others not showing Dad potential!

A couple of quotes from the Meat Profit Day in Albany last September: "Transparency in what we do is no longer an option—someone is watching everything farmers do all the time, so make what we are doing positive" from Catherine Marriot AND "Good food is the first line of defence in keeping people healthy." from Richard Makim, NSW

From the Home Front

Lack of rain is still inhibiting the gardening half of the partnership, though the orchard has been quite prolific with pears, apples, peaches, nectarines and a couple of apricots—these trees have undergone grafting so there's hope for better results next summer! Families are all well and busy, busy, busy with various activities. So all is well!

Calving 2013

With nearly 40 calves on the ground, it's too early to say how calving is going but Jim is happy with the calves from the heifers' AI programme—all (so far) by Sydgen Trust and Bennet Absolute. We used the Trust bull in 2011 so there are 2012 born calves in the bull and heifer mobs. The calving heifers are in good condition, reflected by the birth weights of the calves being higher than we normally expect from heifers BUT they have, with two exceptions, calved on their own.

Mobs on Maybenup, 1st May!

- 1 Mixed age calving cows and a few calves
- 2 2011 born calving heifers and 37 calves
- 3 2011 sale and keeper bulls
- 4 2012 born bulls and steers
- 5 2012 born heifers and a few steers
- 6 Herd bulls

The herd bulls are set stocked, the other five mobs are moving round their allocated paddocks, with all mobs apart from the cows (they have some hay) having some pellets as supplementary feed. We aim to leave cover on the paddock when a mob leaves, and the good germination from the March rains confirmed that aim.

Contact details:

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Postal: P O Box 301, Kojonup WA 6395
Web page: www.ardcairnieangus.com
We welcome and enjoy visitors at all times—please contact us if you'd like to see the stock at any time, even while we are working (i.e. taking the 400 day weights!).
*****And we are looking for feedback to two queries ***overleaf—we look forward to hearing from you!**