



At Denver this year, Rancher Karen Shockey parades Muddy Creek Ranch Opinionated, sired by Ardrossan Neron, while her husband, David (at the rear in the black hat) waits for the Judge's decision.

An April 08 calf, Muddy Creek Ranch Opinionated, had a Rib Eye Area of 10.3 sq inches, REA per CWT of 1.59, IMF of 3.74 and Tenderness of 22.

Muddy Creek has not previously had a calf with such good measurements. The Shockeys are very "opinionated" about beef, having their own rsnch restaurant which they supply themselves.

Jeanette Stebbins writes about her

Quest for the best genes



Peter and Jeanette Stebbins, pioneers in Lowline genetics.

I recently found a Lowline Journal dated 1997 in which Australian breeders were being warned about the prices offered by early American Lowline breeders in relation to the prices that could be obtained in the USA. In those days, prices for Lowline heifers in the USA were \$40,000 and sexed PTIC recipients \$25,000. After entertaining several American breeders at our stud at that time, we were offered very good money for our stock, but decided instead to build up our herd in numbers and diverse genetics, before we would pursue the US market.

Nine years later an article I was asked to write for an American magazine produced nearly 200 emails, many asking for stock, so Peter and I went on a fact finding tour of 13 US states.

As a result, we decided to form an alliance with an Angus breeder who adores Lowline cattle and have started our own stud in Minnesota, under the Ausmerica Alliance name.

Our aim is to supply US Lowline breeders with our diverse genetics in the form of bull semen, embryos and live cattle, and also to supply commercial US cattlemen with proven Lowline semen. The object is not just to use it over first calvers, but to increase GeneStar traits in all the animals they produce. For example, we have sold 200 straws to a Beef Shorthorn breeder who wants better marbling. This astute cattleman required tests of the protein in our bull's semen to identify a characteristic providing a higher pregnancy rate when using semen frozen. **And Yes, Jamberoo had it.** Our export of diverse Lowline genetics into the US and other countries will, we hope, lead to Lowlines becoming a truly international breed with genetics being exchanged between all countries.

This year was our third at the National Western Stock Show at Denver and we attended the Lowline auction which includes percentage animals (Cross Bred), full blood and pure bred Lowline cattle, flushes, recipients and embryos. We entered two lots, one being a flush to our resident cow in Minnesota, Ardrossan Jennavieve, the other a pregnant recipient with an embryo from Colombo Park Zeffirelli and Ardrossan Nardia, and were pleased to once again exceed our expectations.

Larger Lowline cattle were successful in both the sales ring and show ring this year at Denver. Fullblood cattle sired by current Australian bulls, Colombo Park Zeffirelli, Vitulus Yes Yes Yes, Trungley Tiger's Eye, Ardrossan Napoleon, Ardrossan Neron, Ardrossan Richmond and Ardrossan Jamberoo made up a large portion of the sale lots. For the second year in succession, cattle also came from Canada for the sale and show. Unfortunately, parentage of the show cattle was not shown in the catalogue.

Prior to the auction and sale, we caught up with the 2009 Australian Ambassador, Heidi Corey and Skye Battles, the American Ambassador from 2008. Many a pleasurable hour was spent with these delightful girls. The weather was hot and continued to get warmer until it reached 63F degrees, which was about the third hottest winter day that Denver had ever received. Winter layers were discarded for short sleeved shirts, if you had them, and when driving to the airport we were caught in a dust storm – never seen in Denver in winter before.

Flying home on the new Qantas A380-800, Peter and I reminisced over the 17 years that we have been breeding Lowline cattle. A lot has happened during that time but I am convinced that we took the right steps back in the early days, when we decided on the pursuit of genetic excellence.