



Cracking pace: Dennis Power of Minnamurra Pastoral Company has his eyes firmly fixed on the future.

Minnamurra Pastoral Company: Shift to Speckle Park cattle turning heads

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A TOUCH of speckle is adding some serious sparkle to the bottom line of Minnamurra Pastoral Company's beef herd.

The company, founded by the Reid family in 1974, runs about 3500 predominantly Angus breeding cows across 118,510 hectares of owned and leased country over three districts in two states.

But it is its most recent foray into Speckle Park cattle, a breed native to the Canadian Saskatchewan province, that's turning heads and winning widespread industry acclaim.

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MINNAMURRA PASTORAL COMPANY

COOLAH, NSW

The dramatic shift in Minnamurra's focus followed a visit to the 2011 Calgary Stampede in Canada by general manager Dennis Power, who was taken aback by the breed and its distinctive white, black and grey hide.

“They really took my eye ... I couldn’t believe the carcasses on them,” Dennis said, adding the meat yields, and therefore value, of the Speckle Parks far outperformed other, more traditional, breeds.

Soon after Dennis’ return to Australia, a decision was made to import embryos and genetics from Canada to form the basis of the Minnamurra Speckle Park stud.

The stud currently comprises more than 300 purebred Speckle Park females run on the company’s 2510-hectare flagship property at Coolah in NSW.

In a bid to increase female numbers to about 500 “as soon as we can”, a further 270 embryos were implanted in Angus cows last year.

Not afraid of spending big money on top genetics to produce the best-possible beef, Minnamurra was part of a global syndicate that paid a world-record \$60,000 for a Speckle Park bull in 2016.

The company’s foray into Speckle Park couldn’t have been better timed. Dennis said commercial and stud demand for the breed has “gone berserk” over the past two years.

Minnamurra’s Speckle Park steers fetched as much as \$4.82/kg liveweight last year — a significant premium to the already strong beef market at the time — with pregnant heifers returning a whopping \$3800. And at its on-property bull auction last year, Minnamurra recorded a total clearance of 51 bulls to a top price of \$35,000 and an impressive average of \$11,392 — a massive feat in only its second year of sales.

This success, coupled with the performance of Minnamurra cattle in feedlot and carcass competitions, shows this speckle is unlikely to fade anytime soon.