

Nose rings put to the test at Coolah

A MOB of 90 calves at Minnamurra Pastoral Company are boasting yellow Canadian-made nose rings as part of a trial into the benefits of the low stress weaning technique.

April-born calves at the Coolah-based Speckle Park herd will wear the QuietWean nose flap from JDA Livestock Innovations for about three weeks before being separated from their mothers. General manager Dennis Power said by using a low stress system they also hoped to get more accurate weaning weights.

"Particularly with the season like this, we have got the feed, we have got everything, so I don't think you could get any more low stress in weaning," he said.

"It just seemed like a good thing to do, particularly with our stud cattle, because we haven't got big numbers."

Breeders in Canada also

use the technique where the makers of the product believe it can take four to seven days for a calf to wean. They also state calves wearing the nose flaps spend 25 per cent more time eating and will pace around 24 kilometres less than traditional weaning. At Mount Mill calves are normally weaned early at 16 to 20 weeks of age.

"I'm a big believer in gut development in those young calves," Mr Power said.

"I know not many stud people do it but I'm a big believer in it and your calves, by the time they are 12 months old, they catch up that's for sure."

A few days into the trial the cows were already boasting big udders and there was silence in the paddock.

"It's nowhere near the reaction I'd thought it would be, it's been very quiet," he said.

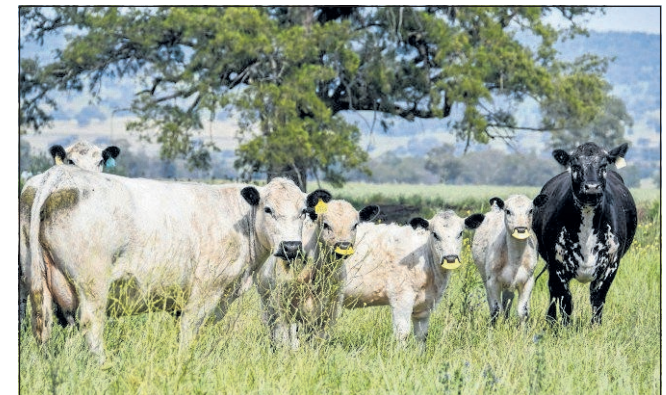
— LUCY KINBACHER



Dennis Power of Minnamurra Pastoral Company at Coolah with cows and calves currently being weaned as part of a nose flapper trial.



A cow and calf combination during the weaning process which was very silent throughout the paddock.



The Canadian company behind the nose flaps say calves wearing them will spend 25 per cent more time eating and pace less than traditional weaning.