

The objective data adds up

Business Profile

DATA is key for the Speckle Park breed, which is recognised for its high yields and overall carcass quality, delivering increased profits to commercial producers.

Speckle Park genetics are performing for breeders by lifting traits that directly impact returns, with breeders reporting yields of more than 60 per cent.

The society is also doing its part to quantify carcass attributes of the breed, with Speckle Park International set to run a feedlot trial in the next 18 months which will look at the benefits of using Speckle Park genetics in commercial operations.

Minnamurra Speckle Park general manager Dennis Power has been in the breed for a decade, and he knows its strengths - in carcass yield and quality.

He's backed up all of his claims about the breed by entering his cattle in carcass competitions, with exceptional results, particularly through the RNA Paddock to Palate Competition, where they've had the highest individual index score for five years straight.

Mr Power has also had the champion 100-day carcass and they've taken out the eating quality awards multiple times.

They've also performed well in *The Land's* Beef Spectacular Feedback Trial, winning the overall carcass competition two years in a row.

"We're not trying to compete with the bigger European breeds when it comes to feedlot performance, but the Speckle Park carcass comes through at the end, with the dressing and boning percentages, and the yield is what's really important to the breed," Mr Power said.

"Consistently winning the award for highest MSA indexing steer means we're breeding cattle with the most profitable, edible cuts off a carcass."

The most recent carcass results, through the ANZ National Beef Carcass Competition, held as part of Beef Australia, included strong marks in class six - grain-fed pen of three export chiller bullocks from 300 kilograms to 420kg.

Minnamurra's two pens placed fifth and eighth, and while they weren't right at the top, they weren't far off the mark.

"There were only two points difference (out of a 300-point total) between first and fifth, so it was a strong class, and we were



CARCASS COMP SUCCESS: Minnamurra Speckle Park cattle have won many awards in carcass competitions, which help the stud benchmark their operation against other breeds. **Photo: Lucy Kinbacher**

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Dennis Power, Minnamurra Speckle Park

really pleased with our steers' performance," Mr Power said.

"We were very proud of them, because they went up against cattle entered from every state in the country, and every breed.

"A lot of these steers have been through drought as calves or weaners so it's hard to pick good lines of steers to compete, but

by doing these competitions all the time, it keeps giving you a good benchmark for where you're going with your cattle.

"We don't select our steers at an early stage, and with the timing of the competitions, our lead steers are over the entry weight because they're such early maturing cattle.

"It's nearly always our second-tier cattle, but I still want to be benchmarking those middle-of-the-road, average type cattle, because they give us a more realistic view of what Speckle Park cattle can do.

"Consistent quality, right across the board, is where a commercial producer makes money, not with the top pen of steers."

Speckle Park cattle are known for their consistency when it comes to carcass.

In May a line of purebred cull cows from Minnamurra were processed by HW Greenham at Moe in Victoria.

All 50 cows were Meat Standards Australia

(MSA) graded, with an average MSA index of 54.14 and up to 60.55, with minimal discounts for the very heavy cows.

The cows dressed at an average 54 per cent and averaged \$2288.90.

"That was the first time Greenhams had ever had 50 of any purebred cows, and that dressing percentage was incredible," Mr Power said.

"That's objective data that you can't argue with. They've made money for us with all their calves, but to make that money at the end is impressive."

Agent Andrew Hosken said it was particularly impressive to have all cows grade MSA.

"We've had some very good kills at Greenham, but taking into account the journey from Coolah to Moe, about 1000km, the dressing percentage was a tremendous result," Mr Hosken said.

"It's a reflection of the breed and the management of the cattle, and handling by the carrier."



Looking for Carcass Quality, Maternal Strength & that all important Terminal Advantage?

- **IMPRESSIVE MEAT** - Speckle Park produce high carcass dressing percentages (60% plus is common in a first cross) and great meat eating quality.
- **FERTILE. HARDY. RESILIENT** - Early calf vigour, hardiness in dry conditions, and excellent feed conversion rates are three major attributes of the Speckle Park breed.

To find out more breed benefits visit: www.specklepark.org



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