

NSW studs dominate eating quality awards

NEW South Wales entrants have dominated the eating quality section of the RNA Paddock to Palate competition, with Eaglehawk Angus and Minnamurra Pastoral Company featuring among the winners list.

A SIXTH WIN FOR MINNAMURRA

Returning to the competition in 2021, the Coolah-based Minnamurra Pastoral Company etched up its sixth consecutive win of the highest individual MSA Index score and the eating quality award of their respective classes with their Speckle Park/Angus-cross exhibits.

Running at least 1000 first cross females, 2000 Angus cows and 400-odd purebred Speckle Park breeders, Minnamurra is rebuilding after the drought but is considered the largest Speckle Park stud in the world. They currently market 60 bulls annually, with the aim of building that to 100 bulls per annum over the next two to five years.

With a strong focus on their cow herd and provid-

ing bulls for their commercial clients, Minnamurra is breeding cattle for the commercial industry focusing on meat eating quality, yield and good female traits.

In Class 37, the 100 day export class, Minnamurra placed second and third for eating quality with team scores of 339.39 points and 336.26pts, with the highest individual index score carcase of the class with an MSA Index of 59.93 a part of the third placed team.

They were once again on the winners' board in Class 38, 70 day trade, claiming the eating quality award with 342.37 points, and the highest individual index score of 61.39. They also scored 680 points overall to place 10th in the class.

Dennis Power, general manager of Minnamurra Pastoral, said they were very pleased with the results of the steers out of their Te Mania blood Angus cows by Speckle Park bulls, which were a cross section of what they produce.

"These types of competi-

tions are realistic, and they give you such a great benchmark because all breeds and top producers from all over the eastern states are entered," he said.

"For the last 10-15 years, Minnamurra has been breeding for what is under the skin and it is coming through. To perform consistently in eating quality is rewarding and shows it is there and has a lot to do with the cows."

Mr Power said they are getting to the stage now where they will look at ways to link results from these trials to bloodlines within their program.

"Single sire joining is out of the question when you have 3000 cows, but we will look at putting a line of bulls with 200 females and doing a lot more AI work where we are able to, to sire identify calves a lot more."

EAGLEHAWK EXCELS IN HGP-FREE CLASS

First-time entrants Ian and Sally Vivers of Eaglehawk Angus, Glen Innes, were tri-



First-time entrants Ian and Sally Vivers, Eaglehawk Angus, Glen Innes, NSW, were triumphant with two teams in the 100-day HGP-free class.

umphant with two teams in the 100-day hormone growth promotant-free class, coming away with the highest individual MSA Index of the competition, as well as first and third for eating quality.

With an MSA Index of 66.32, the Eaglehawk carcase was a purebred Angus that was also part of the Vivers' third-placed eating quality team in the 100 day HGP-free class.

Entering two teams of six Angus steers of their own bloodlines, the other team won the eating quality award on 385.4pts and placed seventh in the class with an overall point score of 671.25.

Eaglehawk Angus was started in 1994 and now con-

sists of around 700 registered breeders, of which 300 are used as recipients. They sell 200 bulls annually and aim to produce functional cattle that are efficient to run, and produce a quality eating article off grass or through the feedlot.

The Vivers previously had their own beef product, supplying 20 carcasses around the 330 kilogram mark each week into their Sydney shop.

"It formed the foundation and direction we took with our Angus stud," Mr Vivers said. "What we learnt from breeding, finishing, cutting up and retailing our own product helped us form the way we approach breeding of our genetics."

He said IMF was not one of the Eaglehawk stud's breeding objectives, saying they look to produce easy doing cattle that are fleshy and have some fat cover - "soft easy doing cattle produce soft eating meat."

Entering steers that represented the ideal type they aim to produce, Mr Vivers said the steers were sire and dam identified and from a range of different bloodlines, meaning they can trace back and see which genetics did better than others. "What it has shown us is that with our breeding program, we are on the right track in terms of our goal of producing a superior eating quality."

— HANNAH POWE