

DUNG RAGAN

BEEF SHORTHORNS

SPRING 2011



COMING UP IN THE SPRING EDITION:

- Spotting a winner! Check out **Smashing Stuff!**
- Feedback - Internet Auction Results: 2011
- Autumn calving update
- Sale Bulls for 2012 - and they're **RED** (most of them)
- Spring calves and joining news
- Anyone know these bulls?

What's in a breed?

I take time out every week to read the Farmers' Weekly, and if my Afrikaans *nie so lomp was nie*, I would sort the Landbou Weekblad out as well, just to stay in touch. If I do see something interesting on the cover though, I grab it as well. I obviously pay special attention to any articles relating to beef cattle and related topics. If you read the FW, you will no doubt have seen the number of breed specific "promotional supplements" (have some breeds not caught the drift yet?) that have been in print, augmented by an ARC endorsed 1-pager for each breed in SA that have been appearing over the past few months. Looking at the promotional supplements specifically, is it just me, or is every breed under the sun known for con-



verting poor veldt into quality beef, tick resistance, fertility, heavy weaners, and is highly sought after by the feedlots (I see even Ngunis fall into this category)? Even notoriously shy breeders can do wonders for your fertility nowadays, and you would be crazy not to hunt down any available example of the

breed, at any price, and use it forthwith.

It brings me to what the Shorthorn write-up should be... We know they are different, or else we would not be in the game ourselves. They have a lot to offer, but what really makes them different? What are other breeders missing out on? How then do we talk them up, punt them, and convince people they are the right breed to use in their operations? What would you say if someone asked you why you breed Shorthorns and not something else? Think about it now, because if they are anything like me, they certainly aren't going to fall for anything generic. It's going to be a hard sell!



Spring 2011 Calving



tritional plane the cattle have been on since weaning in autumn, and conclude that nutrition plays a bigger role in birth weight in generation 1 than the heritable traits from the sire. We will trend this over time to see that we are in fact not going in the wrong direction. It is good to see that we do have good capacity in the cattle, as there were effectively no assisted births even with the larger calves.

The calves were sired as follows: 14 Spry's All Gold

Spring 2011 Crop

We have had a serious outbreak of the "white disease" this year. At one stage, every other calf born was snow white. But some of them are amazingly good as you will see later in the newsletter. Overall though, our 2011 spring calving season progressed really well. We have seen our birth weights go up considerably, and our first view was that it was the sire



D052 calves, 17 Redstone LBR0302 calves, 6 Duncraggan Oshkosh 0813 calves (all bulls!) and 4 Duncraggan Obvious 0806 calves. The progeny of our Australian import, Spry's All Gold D052, are once again looking excellent, showing good consistency across both heifers and bulls. Given that, one should not discount the home-bred progeny! We also seem to have the bone under control, and it appears to be the exception this year to have the finer boned progeny of yesteryear. We will continue however to focus in this area, as they say you can't pack muscle on a weak skeleton!

we used last year during the synchronised AI programme. Our fears were allayed though once the calves from

the pick-up bulls started arriving, and they were in the same ball-park. We put this down to the much higher nu-

SALE 2012 SALE 2012 SALE

OPEN DAY: SATURDAY 1 SEPTEMBER

INTERNET AUCTION: 31 AUGUST - 14 SEPTEMBER

SALE 2012 SALE 2012 SALE

Internet Auction and Open Day 2011



20 MONTH –OLD DUNCRAGGAN
PETRAEUS 065 EXCHANGED HANDS
FOR R27 500

Open Day 3 September

I took time off and flew down to Port Elizabeth to be a part of the open day we hosted on the 3rd of September. Al-listair had kept me posted with plenty of photos, and I had spent a good few hours arranging everything from Johannesburg, so it was good to see the stock and the bulls in the flesh finally.

The gales from the night before died down, and the weather played along quite well. It was really encourag-

ing to see the turn-out, and we were overwhelmed by the number of people who were able to attend. The support from near and far was excellent for our first attempt, and the feedback we have received has been positive. We believe being able to view the stock beforehand certainly goes a long way towards the success of the sale, as photographs do not always do justice to the bulls on sale. We will make the viewing day an integral part of the sale going forward.

Internet Auction

Sheard Auctioneers, who have a long and illustrious history with the Shorthorn breed, pulled out all the stops to host a most successful internet sale for us. The fact that we were trying a new auctioning platform had us a little nervous initially, but as I spent more cyber-time dealing with Yolande I felt more and more comfortable that it would be a success. I believe it was a mammoth undertaking to align everything, and set up the platform and the

pages on the Sheard Auctioneers website (www.sheard.co.za). All the information was hosted on the site, from the catalogue, the photos of the bulls, pedigrees, right up to the auction platform, instructions and terms and conditions. It really was a one-stop site.

At the open day, the concept was tested and trialled with interested parties able to give it a test-run to see how it worked. Yolande was able to demonstrate the whole process from registration through to placing bids, which certainly assisted in helping first time users and tech-phobic buyers overcome the uncertainty of doing it online. This was all demonstrated on the big screen so everyone could follow and

become familiar.

Dr Thys Potgieter performed the health and fertility tests on the string of bulls for sale. Unfortunately we had to withdraw Duncraggan Obvious 0806, a solid red bull, due to an injured testicle. We are instead using him this season as a pasture bull, and then we will sell him to slaughter afterwards, as we cannot guarantee long term fertility with this problem. This reduced the number of bulls for sale down to five.

The sale itself progressed well, with strong demand for the bulls. On the closing day of the sale, bidding reached fever-pitch, with the prices rising sharply. The sale closed out with a new record price for a Shorthorn bull (R27 500), with the top three

bulls surpassing the previous record. Top price went to Wauldby Shorthorns (Robbie Blaine) for a Rigby's 02059 son and second and third top prices to Brosterlea Shorthorns (Jim Stretton) for two roan Nonen Gallipoli sons. For every good price on auction, there is an underbidder who pushed it to that point, and we would like to extend a special thanks to the underbidders and successful buyers for making the Duncraggan Beef Shorthorn Internet sale such an amazing success. With the dedication and help of Sheard Auctioneers, the 2012 sale will deliver an even better buying experience, and we will deliver even better bulls! A sneak preview of the 2012 bulls appears elsewhere in this edition.



DOES ANYONE KNOW THESE BULLS?



Introducing: Smashing Stuff 103



There is always a "pick of the crop" that just sticks out from all the others. Then, once every few years, there is a calf that comes along that falls into that "best ever/ the best we've bred/ pick of the decade" category.

Duncraggan Smashing Stuff 103 surely falls into that category. Out of surely one of the deepest, widest, traditional-type roan Nonen Hutton daughters we have, and sired by Spry's All Gold D052, Smashing Stuff has impressed since birth. Weighing 45kg at birth, with a 100 day weight of 172kg (index 116) he is using every last drop of his dam's ample milk supply. Watch him grow - anticlockwise from top left at 1 week of age to roughly 4 months of age at top right. Being difficult to please as usual - there will be better calves yet!



Spring 2011 joining news



We have had a fairly dry spring but, the cattle being in good condition, our A.I. programme went ahead as planned and we used a mix of genetics, some from the distant past. We used the last of our small inventory of

Rigby's T46, from Gray Edwards, our last from the Ca-



Our 2011 summer pasture sires include Duncraggan Obvious 0806, Duncraggan President 049, an early maturing WBB 03129 son, and Duncraggan Ronin 073 (Tukulu Lochinvar), our junior sire.



nadian import, Shadybrook Scotty 83K, a few of our Irish import, Deerpark Furty, and the remainder being Spry's All Gold D052.



Sale bulls for 2012—yearlings



Our 2010 yearling bulls, three by Spry's All Gold D052, one each by Redstone LBR0302 and Duncraggan Otis 0801, are looking excellent and should make a uniform string by spring 2012. We are impressed by the slick coats of the bulls, especially the Australian progeny. We think prospective buyers will notice an improvement in the presentation of the 2012 sale bulls as we have spent more effort in the growing out of the bulls post weaning.



Autumn 2011 calving update



Our autumn 2011 calves weaned at enormous weights, with the bulls averaging 290kg adjusted 200-day average. (We will get to 300kg off

the veldt at 200 day weaning weights still!) The worst two calves averaged 210.5kg, and went straight to the feedlots. We pocket-

ed an impressive R3999.50 each, clear! The highest weighing of the three bullocks here is the light roan, believe it or not.



DUNCRA GGAN

Putting **VIGOUR** in your **HYBRIDS**



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