



Buffalo News

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Official newsletter of the Australian Buffalo Industry Council

More New Zealand exports as interest in our dairy buff grows



Heading across the Tasman: Northern Territory buffalo are yarded ready for loaded for the the first part of their long journey.



ABIC reps in Italy for World Buffalo Congress
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New Zealanders have been ordering more Australian live buffalo to help them meet a growing local demand for buffalo dairy products.

In the wake of an initial shipment of 18 Northern Territory buffalo to New Zealand last December, a total of 40 more buffalo were trucked from the Adelaide River area outside Darwin in two separate consignments in August and September.

They have gone first to a Quarantine holding farm near Melbourne in preparation for being airfreighted to their new home across the Tasman.

New Zealand regulations stipulate that prior to shipment to that country, the animals spend two months in quarantine, isolated from other animals and undergoing a series of tests.

The NT buffalo have been bought by a group of New Zealand business people who intend to use them for producing milk and cheese products to be supplied to a small farmers market near Auckland.

The August consignment of 18 yearling heifers and a bull departed Darwin destined for quarantine time in southern Australia before being flown to New Zealand on 28 October.

The September shipment is presently going through the quarantine phase in preparation for a December departure to New Zealand. This group consisted of six seven-eighth yearling heifers with the balance being weaners of both seven-eighth and three-quarter crosses.

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ABIC Website - www.buffaloaustralia.org

More Aussie buffalo New Zealand bound

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Two purebred weaner bulls also accompanied the September consignment.

"All three bulls in the last two shipments were Italian imported semen AI bulls from three different sires," Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries buffalo specialist Barry Lemcke said.

"This inclusion will allow the New Zealanders to cover their herd for four generations now without getting an inbreeding problem.

"The advantage of the weaner heifers and bulls is that there will now be a greater time before calving to allow for familiarity with the dairy and people.

Also, when the calves are eventually hand-reared, the training issues then become less difficult as they get used to human contact at a much earlier age and will be less nervous when people are at close quarters."

Meanwhile, news in relation to the inaugural shipment of Northern Territory buffalo to New Zealand last December is that there are now calves on the ground and milk is being collected.

"Four male calves from the first four born was not an auspicious start for the new venture," Barry Lemcke said.

"But as with most things biological, the sex ratios have got close to even in the meantime. That shipment contained 17 heifers and one bull."

The New Zealand owners are gearing up to produce cheese from their Australian investment.

They booked to attend this month's 8th World Buffalo Congress in Italy and were keen to participate in the pre-congress *Cheese Making Technologies* and *Buffalo Breeder Management* courses as well as the Congress sessions and post-congress tours.

ABIC reps attend World Buffalo Congress



Mitch Humphries (left) and Barry Lemcke - representing ABIC at world buffalo talks in Italy

ABIC representatives Mitch Humphries and Barry Lemcke are participating in this month's 8th World Buffalo Congress at Caserta in Italy.

Queensland buffalo dairy farmer Mitch and Top End based buffalo specialist Barry received RIRDC funding to attend the 10-day congress program which includes the main four-day session and pre and post congress activities. Mitch and Barry each booked to undertake one of two pre-congress courses - one on cheese manufacturing technologies and the other on buffalo breeding management. They will report back to ABIC members about their findings on their return home.

The main congress sessions are providing opportunities for delegates to discuss advances in relation to broad-ranging aspects of the world buffalo industry, including feeding and nutrition, management, reproduction, health, food safety and technology, genetics, milk and meat production, biotechnology, economics, rearing and environmental control.

A specific session focussed on issues associated with buffalo breeding in industrialized and rural areas of new developing countries.

Planned post-Congress activities include visits to state-of-the-art breeding farms and 'caseifici' - or cheese manufacturing - facilities.

Italian buffalo make up 17% of the world population, with local herd numbers increasing 13 fold in 40 years.

A comprehensive report on the congress will appear in the next issue of *Buffalo News*.

Buffalo News

We welcome contributions on any issue or activity relating to Australia's buffalo industry. Stories and/or photos can be sent to, or discussed with:

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Buffalo industry reps attend Canberra RIRDC meeting

Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) Buffalo Program manager Dr Peter McInnes and Buffalo Advisory Committee chairman Doug Robertson attended a one-day forum with the RIRDC board in Canberra on 10 September.

The forum was also attended by industry chairpersons and representatives from industry research providers, eg universities, state agricultural departments and the CSIRO.

The meeting's objective was to enable RIRDC, its key research providers and advisory committee members to consult on significant research and development policy and management issues and encourage dialogue between the bodies.

The first session was spent outlining RIRDC's new corporate plan and the structure and function of the three main research programs, namely (1) New Industries, (2) Established Industries and (3) National Rural Issues. A follow-



Doug Robertson (left) with ABIC Secretary Athel Smith during this year's ABIC Annual Conference in the NT

up workshop examined the main issues currently facing each of the industries and their research providers.

The third session explained the current government attitude to research structure, execution and funding and its effects on the trends and issues in research provider capacity.

"It was probably this session that was most important to the buffalo industry as its flexibility, or lack of it, will impact heavily on any possible relevant buffalo research," Doug Robertson said. "The final

session looked at the application procedure, currently known as 'CLARITY', that industry and researchers have to use when applying for RIRDC funding.

"Hopefully, by the time the next *Buffalo News* is distributed, the proceedings of this forum will have been circulated and a summary of the findings can be provided and any implications relating to the buffalo industry can be identified."

Latest AI results disappoint

The results of the AI effort at Millaa Millaa in Far North Queensland in June have been disappointing.

"The AI round at Mitch Humphries' property did not give results as well as expected," Researcher Barry Lemcke said.

"Only seven out of 25 buffalo inseminated have so far been confirmed as pregnant as a result of the June procedures."

During their attendance at the World Buffalo Conference in Italy in this month, Barry and Mitch have booked for workshops that they hope will help solve the low AI conception rates.

Live Buffalo exports September 2007

The number of buffalo exported live through the Port of Darwin now tallies 3117 for the year to date.

A total of 377 buffalo were exported in September, with 300 going to Indonesia and the rest to Sabah.

Indonesia remains Australia's strongest buyer of live buffalo with 2204 of this year's exports being shipped to that country. This year's other buyers have been West Malaysia (582), Brunei (179) and Sabah (152).

Live buffalo exports for 2006 totalled 7748.

New ABIC website 'Trading Post' to aid buffalo sales

The Australian Buffalo Industry Council (ABIC) website will soon incorporate a Trading Post.

Members will be able to use this facility to advertise buffalo being offered for sale.

The service is expected to be free of charge for ABIC members.

Others will be charged to advertise on the site.

Details will be finalised by the next issue.

ABIC website: www.buffaloaustralia.org

Buffalo News & Views . . .

from around the country

National

■ It is getting very close to final report time for the current RIRDC project and the establishment of the Buffalo Register by ABRI. If people want to be on the ground floor in getting their animals registered please contact Barry Lemcke as soon as possible after 1 November to discuss their numbers and how they need to be submitted.

Northern Territory

■ Northern Territory buffalo producers are still holding out hopes that the Litchfield Abattoir, which closed down recently, will be purchased soon and relocated close to Darwin, allowing the local TenderBuff market to re-commence. At present, some buffalo meat is being supplied from Pt Lincoln to the Quality Meats Wholesale

premises. It would be good to have a local outlet for Northern Territory producers for the cull cows and bulls that inevitably crop up in the well managed herds.

■ At the July 2007 Royal Darwin Show, the NT buffalo industry was again prominent through NTBIC's every popular TenderBuff Food Stall. Again the whole thing was ably executed by Ernie Schluep and his Swiss contingent. Ernie should be congratulated on his fine effort again to keep the flag flying. The logistics were not as simple as usual, because nine TenderBuff needed to be trucked to Gunbalanya's Oenpelli Abattoir and then the carcasses returned to Quality Meats for preparation into the steak, sausages and burgers. NTBIC thanks the Gunbalanya Meat Supply Co, Quality Meats Pty Ltd and Karl Mortensen (chiller truck) for their contributions to a successful 2007 show and despite the lack of electrical stimulation facilities at the abattoir, the final product was still suitably tender for the Show crowd's satisfaction.

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Processing TenderBuff at Gunbalanya for NTBIC's Darwin Show stall food supplies

New South Wales

■ While the ongoing dry conditions across NSW continue to keep things quiet on the buffalo production front, the state's ABIC representative Doug Robertson has been attending to industry matters in his capacity as chairman of RIRDC's Buffalo Advisory Committee. Doug recently travelled to Canberra for an important RIRDC forum on research and development policy and management issues. (See story Page 2).