



RIRDC approves new national buffalo research project

An important new RIRDC-backed research project aimed at improving genetics and reproduction in Australia Water Buffalo began in the Northern Territory in November.

The three-year project is being funded jointly by the Northern Territory Government (45%), RIRDC (42%) and directly by industry interests (13%).

The project will be implemented in the Territory and, where suitable, in Queensland and other States.

Top End buffalo researcher and honorary ABIC board member Barry Lemcke is supervising the project, which has three key thrusts:

- To trial and recommend effective AI protocols Australia-wide.
- To analyse data collected from the Beatrice Hill buffalo research facility since 1983 for herd productivity indices including heritabilities, and obtain Breedplan data on all progeny produced.

- To set up a database and milk recording scheme to cover all buffalo in Australia.

Mr Lemcke said the need for effective national AI protocols was reinforced by the current 'dismal' rates of conception resulting from AI.

"The world literature will be scoured to find what recipes are being used successfully and adapt them to Australian use," he said.

"All states can be involved in this section of the project, provided there are economic numbers available for AI – more than 10 empty good condition cows at a location with good yard facilities and reasonable

access to an experienced AI technician.

Mr Lemcke said the proposed national database and milk recording scheme will be available for use by ABIC and state groups to keep track of all recorded buffalo that occur in Australia – while the job is still manageable.

"States will then be able to update these databases on a yearly basis, on a system that is compatible Australia-wide. Allowance will be made for milking data to be put on to the system."

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BUFFALO PIES, ANYONE?



Neroli and Geoff Eddy with some prize-winning buffalo pies

Buff pies outclass their rivals

Eddy's Gourmet Buffalo Meat is the supplier of meat to Parker Pies of Rutherglen, winner of a National Medal in the Gourmet Game Section at the recent Fine Food Show in Sydney. The Eddys, operating out of Numurkah in Victoria, supply two local bakeries with meat for their pies. The other, Strathmerton Bakery, won a silver medal at the same event.

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**ABIC
AGM 2004
Milla Milla
Queensland
7-8 February**



The short and the short of it!

NT Buffalo Industry Council Executive Officer Neil Ross (pictured right) is the first to concede that he's no 'Michael Jordan' when it comes to physical stature.

And nor was this rather squat water buffalo he came across while on a recent trip to Sabah in Malaysia to talk buffalo business with the local industry.

The talks focused on potential sales of Australian buffalo to be used for draught animals in Sabah palm plantations.

Follow-up talks were scheduled to take place in December, following the end of the Islamic Ramadan fasting period.

'Buffalo Bob' on the marketing trail

ABIC president Bob Cook and wife Chris have been actively campaigning to boost sales - and the result has included some valuable media attention in South Australia and beyond.

The fact that Bob and Chris Cook are running a successful farming venture in South Australia's dry mid north, based on species once only found in

the tropical Top End, has fascinated media outlets. The Adelaide Advertiser and the national Stock Journal have both run prominent recent features about the Cooks' thriving Gulf Buffalo venture at Warnertown. The Stock Journal headline read *Buffalo Bob muscles into meat marketing*.

The Cooks currently run 100 swamp and riverine buffalo, and processed 20 head this year for meat for value-added products including beer sticks, mettwurst, pepperoni and jerky. They expect to slaughter up to 45 animals in 2004.

BUFFALO EXPORT FIGURES

Destination	2002	YTD	Nov '03
Brunei	3359	2302	100
W/Malaysia	173	34	0
Sarawak	57	0	0
TOTAL	3589	2336	100

BUFFALO News

Contributions on any matter of interest to Australia's buffalo industry are most welcome and can be sent to, or discussed with:

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Queensland to host AGM

Queensland buffalo producers will host their first Australian Buffalo Industry Council AGM and Conference in February.

State and Territory representatives from throughout Australia will attend the gathering at Milla Milla in Far North Queensland on the weekend of 7-8 February 2004.

Meeting organisers are putting together an interesting program that will include a Sunday field trip to the Australian Dairy Buffalo Company's buffalo diary, owned and operated by Mitch Humphries in the Atherton Tablelands. Delegates will also visit the neighbouring cheese factory which is using Mitch's buffalo milk product as part of a current soft cheese research program.

Buff cows needed for AI study



Eric Cox coaxes US import 'Bill' to prove his worth at Beatrice Hill research station

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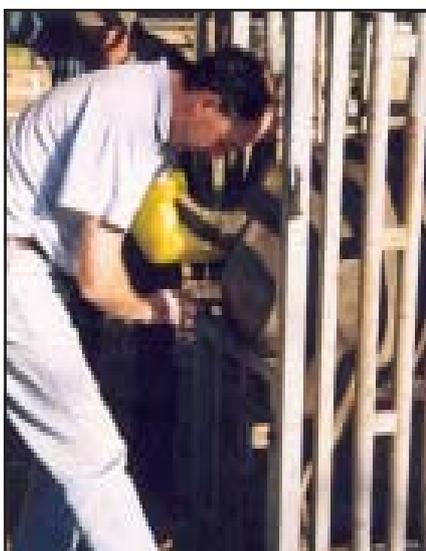
Any Australian buffalo producer interested in being involved in the new AI project, and with suitable cows available, should contact Barry Lemcke as soon as possible, during working hours on (08) 8999 2263 or after hours on (08) 8988 1689.

The AI will run for at least two years in order to prove up the protocols and will cover up to two inseminations – after synchronization and after return to heat if necessary in 21 days or so.

Southern breeders should aim to have calves born at the best time of the year for survival, ie: avoiding winter and early spring calving because of cold stress. Northern producers should only AI in the wet or early dry season.

Cows need to be in good condition – better than forward store (5 score out of 8 or 9 score system and must be non-pregnant. Overfat cows may be difficult to get pregnant (8 and 9 scores). Cows should be on an increasing plane of nutrition for best results. It is better to use cows than heifers. Cows are easier to inseminate than heifers.

Semen from 'Bill', one of the first two imports from the USA, is also available in storage in Darwin for those who may not want to purchase Italian semen. (NOTE: 'Bill' was the most docile of the NT-imported USA bulls).



AI in progress at Beatrice Hill

Buff pies tops

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Neroli Eddy says buffalo meat is becoming popular due to its nutritional advantages, including a higher iron content and lower cholesterol than both beef and chicken.

“Winning this award proves that people are willing to try the more healthy alternatives available to them these days,” Neroli says.

The Eddy's top priority is quality. They produce several different products, value-adding to ensure a wide range of goods is available. They wholesale these locally and in Melbourne. They run 60 breeders and handle all animals regularly to ensure that they are quiet.

Their products are promoted through the local Farmers Markets. They can be seen regularly at Albury and Echuca and at Numurkah throughout the year.

Neroli said customers are crying out for local quality produced products, which makes their range of low fat meats appealing to many.

Food and Wine Coordinator Libby O'Dwyer says, “Quality products sell themselves. There are opportunities in the region and inter-regionally for producers to value add their products”.

To find out more about the availability of their buffalo meat products, contact Geoff and Neroli Eddy on 0429438994.

More buffalo sent to boost Queensland herds

A consignment of 12 buffalo heifers and two bulls were sent to Queensland properties recently to boost local herd numbers.

The heifers are a mix of five-eighth and three-eighth cross animals, and both bulls are seven-eighth cross animals. The 12 females came from Bill and Maria Lane's Mabuhay Farm at Adelaide River and the bulls from the Beatrice Hill research facility.

One bull has gone to John Lloyd's Kempsey property and all remaining animals have gone to Mitch Humphries' buffalo dairy operation in the Atherton Tablelands.



STATE *by* STATE

Buffalo news from around the nation

VICTORIA

VicBIC attended Chesterfield Farms inaugural expo in the outer Melbourne suburb of Scoresby on the weekend of 11-12 October.

Alloway Gourmet Buffalo was also present and brought along a good supply of gourmet sausages for patrons to try.

Chesterfield Farm now has one buffalo bull and two buffalo cows on exhibition seven days a week.

VicBIC's Athel Smith said members of the public attending the expo showed keen interest and the weekend was successful.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

ABIC's Western Australian representative John Starr reports that the local industry is still in decline, despite the obvious benefits of buffalo meat as a health product.

"We are still having difficulty selling our product, mainly because of the lack of funds to help market the end product," John says.

John says he feels money being spent on buffalo AI and breeding programs is being wasted if assistance to sell the end buffalo product is not also funded. "Logically, at the end of the day, the industry will not expand," he says.

"The industry needs assistance to market its products, or a cooperative approach by becoming involved in value adding.

"Unless priorities change and there is some lateral thinking by the industry council, I can see no future for buffalo meat in today's competitive industrial productive systems."

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Darwin based ABIC vice-president Michael Swart recently found himself in unfamiliar terri-

tory - up to his elbows in 300 raw buffalo burgers.

NTBIC donates hundreds of buffalo burgers each year to Seven Darwin's Special Children's Christmas Party and Michael graciously offered to do the cooking for this year's event.

The party is always a huge success and the buffalo burgers remain a hot favourite among the young guests, many of whom are bussed in from remote communities for the occasion.

Tenarra buffalo tally for 2003

The Tenarra Abattoir at Batchelor near Darwin has reported a kill tally of 629 buffalo for 2003.

The abattoir stock was from free-range herds and was mustered from various parts of Arnhem Land.

The meat is sold throughout Australia to be used for small goods and manufactured meat products.

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