

Long-acting drench the key to Old Droughtmaster success

By : HELEN WALKER : Queensland Country Life : 28th October 2010

Don McConnel, 29 and manager of one of Queensland's most historic beef properties, Mt Brisbane Station, says a switch to Cydectin long acting drench about three years ago has significantly boosted the efficiency of his family's beef breeding and finishing operation.

Mr McConnel – with his parents, John and Carli – runs 2,000 predominantly Droughtmaster cattle spread across about 4,500 hectares of river flats and undulating country near Esk in the Brisbane Valley, west of Brisbane.

He is one of two Queensland finalists in the beef category of the Virbac Proud Achievers Awards and, not surprisingly, would like to take the national prize of a \$12,000 international study tour.

Mr McConnel is a member of a high-achieving family including his sister, Susie, and brothers, Rob, Ian and Bruce.

Mt Brisbane Station is one of the earliest settled properties in Queensland, having been taken up by the Bigge Brothers in 1842.

In 1893 the McConnel family were appointed as managers and later partners and purchased the property outright in 1914.

Original a bullock finishing operating, the family started breeding and finishing from the 1960's and began a switch to purebred Droughtmasters in the 1970's when John and Carli McConnel were unable to buy the type and temperament of bulls they wanted.

The Mt Brisbane stud was registered in October, 1985.

The family now runs 500 commercial Droughtmaster breeders with the steer portion sold into the grassfed heavy trade alongside its Mt Brisbane Droughtmaster stud which includes 70 stud breeders.

"We sell direct to the processors – Swift Australia – and aim for the 345 cents a kilogram dressed weight grid," Don McConnel said.

Over time the family business has moved from just finishing store steers to include both breeding and finishing programs, he said.

"However, one of the major innovations was hearing about the long-acting Cydectin LA



drench about three years ago and subsequently using this product on all the younger cattle."

"We have been injecting our livestock with Cydectin LA as part of our worm management program since the product arrived on the market," he said.

"During this time we have noticed a dramatic improvement over other treatments we've used as we realised that ticks were also not a problem while using Cydectin LA."

"Our bullocks are a lot more contented and are not experiencing stress and are getting the full advantage of the nutrients from their feed."

"We are finishing cattle a lot earlier and instead of turning our bullocks off at 3 ½ years, they now go at least 12 months earlier at two to 2 ½ years as heavy trade steers."

The McConnells inject each beast with Cydectin LA at each of the three rounds of mustering or when stock is introduced to new paddocks.

"Not only has this product helped us shorten our grassed finishing time for our bullocks, but we have noticed a lift in fertility by 10 per cent in our females," Mr McConnel said.

"We have a tight joining period so our females have a three month joining and every empty cow at pregnancy test or branding or one with weedy calf is culled to be sold to slaughter," he said.