

SRPG Newsletter

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Southern Region Promotional Group – Australian Lowline Cattle Association

June 2010



SRPG Committee

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Vice Chairperson – Jane Ristrom

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Assistant Secretary –

Treasurer – John Herbig

Publicity Editor – Natarsha Canny

Members – David Ritter, Gary Turnham and Joanne Jackson

Victorian Studs dominate the major awards at the Sydney Royal Show

Every year the Sydney Royal Show attracts an impressive calibre of entrants. The Royal Sydney has a solid reputation for setting the benchmark in cattle competitions across Australia and this year was no different. With the largest number of Lowline cattle converging from breeders across each state in the country, it was certainly the finest line up of Lowline cattle ever seen in Australia.

The Australian Lowline judge, Bill Dunlop, has a long history in the livestock industry. In 1969 he was involved in the introduction of the first Charolais semen into Australia from the UK and France. He then spent a year working throughout South Africa, England and Europe on cattle properties and AI centres. Bill is heavily involved in the Charolais society and held the position of World President in 2008-2009. Bill considers judging at the Sydney Royal a great opportunity to communicate with breeders and producers about current and future industry requirements and profitable breeding of cattle.

It was the functional traits of the Lowline cattle on which Bill Dunlop, chose his Champion's. Bill chose his Senior, Grand Champion Cow and Best Exhibit, Lilliput Lady Catherine, for its overall balance and structural soundness. Bill chose Yarra Ranges Jackaroo as his Senior and Grand Champion Bull for his mobility, balance, soundness and muscularity.

Jackaroo is from Natarsha & John Canny's Yarra Ranges stud, while Lilliput Lady Catherine is from Bev Crowley & Graeme Podbury's Lilliput stud, setting the scene for a Victorian stand-off in the clash for feature breed champion. Lilliput Lady Catherine went on to win Best Exhibit!

Other Victorian studs who won major awards were Jane Ristrom, Elandra Park who took out the Reserve Champion Juvenile Bull with Elandra Park Elvis. The Rotherwood Stud owned by Vicki and Philip Gilbert won the Junior Champion Bull, Rotherwood Diablo, and Reserve Juvenile Female with Rotherwood Elegant Girl. While Greg and Julie Knight from Wanamara Stud won Juvenile Female with Wanamara Goanna Opal.

Overall the Victorian Studs won eight out of the fourteen major awards presented at Australia's most prestigious cattle show.

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Bendigo National Beef Results 2010

Hooray for Harry Turnham...

10 yr old Harry led the Supreme Exhibit

Barregowa Endeavour to success...Congratulations Harry!

Heifer 8 & not over 12 months

1. Lilliput Lowline Stud - G. Podbury & B. Crowley: Lilliput Dame Ellen;
2. Barregowa Lowline Stud - Mr Gary & Mrs Shelley Turnham; Barregowa Eva;
3. Whitby Farm - K. & G. Lorains: Whitby Farm Gypsie;

Heifer over 18 & not over 20 months

1. Fairlawn Lowline Stud - Mrs S. Herbig: Fairlawn Lucy;

Junior Champion Heifer

Lilliput Lowline Stud - G. Podbury & B. Crowley: Lilliput Lady Catherine;

Reserve Champion Heifer

Fairlawn Lowline Stud - Mrs S. Herbig: Fairlawn Lucy;

Heifer over 20 & not over 24 months

1. Ballarat Grammar Lowlines - Ballarat Grammar: Kawala View Dejavo;

Heifer over 24 & not over 36 months

1. Fairlawn Lowline Stud - Mrs S. Herbig: Fairlawn Lukie Kay;
2. Whitby Farm - K. & G. Lorains: Whitby Farm Molly;
3. Ballarat Grammar Lowlines - Ballarat Grammar; Fairlawn Kate-Lyn;

Cow over 36 months

1. Ballarat Grammar Lowlines - Ballarat Grammar: Tallowood Ebony;

Senior Champion Cow or Heifer

Fairlawn Lowline Stud - Mrs S. Herbig: Fairlawn Lukie Kay;

Reserve Senior Champion Cow or Heifer

Ballarat Grammar Lowlines - Ballarat Grammar: Kawala View Dejavo;

Grand Champion Cow or Heifer

Fairlawn Lowline Stud - Mrs S. Herbig: Fairlawn Lukie Kay;

Bull 8 & not over 12 months

1. Barregowa Lowline Stud - Mr Gary & Mrs Shelley Turnham: Barregowa Endeavour;
2. Whitby Farm - K. & G. Lorains: Whitby Farm Mandella;

Bull over 18 & not over 20 months

1. Lilliput Lowline Stud - G. Podbury & B. Crowley: Lilliput Lord Dean;
2. Barregowa Lowline Stud - Mr Gary & Mrs Shelley Turnham: Barregowa Delatite;

Junior Champion Bull

Barregowa Lowline Stud - Mr Gary & Mrs Shelley Turnham: Barregowa Endeavour;

Reserve Junior Champion Bull

Lilliput Lowline Stud - G. Podbury & B. Crowley: Lilliput Lord Dean;

Bull over 20 & not over 24 months

1. Karlee Park Lowlines - Peter & Sue Foureur: Karlee Park Desperado;

Bull over 30 months

1. Barregowa Lowline Stud - Mr Gary & Mrs Shelley Turnham: Urila Monsieur Bean;

Senior Champion Bull

Barregowa Lowline Stud - Mr Gary & Mrs Shelley Turnham: Urila Monsieur Bean;

Reserve Junior Champion Bull

Karlee Park Lowlines - Peter & Sue Foureur: Karlee Park Desperado;

Grand Champion Bull

Barregowa Lowline Stud - Mr Gary & Mrs Shelley Turnham: Barregowa Endeavour;

Supreme Exhibit - Australian Lowline

Barregowa Lowline Stud - Mr Gary & Mrs Shelley Turnham: Barregowa Endeavour;

Group of Three Both sexes represented & owned by the exhibitor

Barregowa Lowline Stud - Mr Gary & Mrs Shelley Turnham

Annual General Meeting

11am 1 August 2010

Pier 35 Meeting Room

**D'albora Marina, 263-329 Lorimer St,
Port Melbourne**

**Followed by Speaker: Dr Roger Barlow
Coffee, Tea and Biscuits provided.**

Speaker: Dr Roger Barlow was a distinguished scientist with the NSW Dept of Agriculture for over 30 year period during the 1960s through the 1990s. It was Roger Barlow that convinced the Dept of Agriculture to instigate a unique research study in the Trangie herd. This research involved establishing separate lines of cattle within the Trangie herd that were selected for differences in growth performance.

This is a unique opportunity to hear the true history of the Lowline breed and ask questions of the scientist who was instrumental in developing our beautiful Lowlines.

The Committee roles need to be filled for the 2010/11 year. If you are interested in any of these roles please contact Joan Adams.

**Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
Publicity
Newsletter
General members**

Handlers Camp

6 – 9th July

Entries Close 16 June 2010

Handlers camp is for all ages. It is run by Stud Beef Australia and is for people who want to learn more about cattle handling, husbandry, leading and showing. It is really a fun few days. Cattle can be provided if required. For more information go to www.studbeef.com.au

NEW SRPG BROCHURE

SRPG is completed and looks fantastic.

The brochure includes some general information on Lowlines, great pictures and information on SRPG member studs and locations.

The brochure has been handed out at all shows, information days and exhibitions. It is also included in the free information packs sent out via the SRPG website.

If you are having an event or need information brochures to hand out please contact me and I'll post them to you.
natarsha@yarrarangeslowline.com.au

If anyone has stories, information or cattle for sale that they would like to advertise in the newsletter please send the details to natarsha@yarrarangeslowline.com.au

Any suggestions or is there something you want SRPG to run please contact the Chairperson - Joan Adams. We welcome any input...

2010 Sydney Royal Competition Winners & Results

CATTLE -Beef: AUSTRALIAN LOWLINE - FEATURE BREED

CLASS: 100 Female, 9 & not over 12mths.

- 1 180 VICKI & PHILIP GILBERT - CANN RIVER VIC 3890
ROTHERWOOD ELEGANT GIRL
- 2 181 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830
ALLAMBIE ALESHA
- 3 182 THE WAMSLEY FAMILY TRUST - TAREE NSW 2430
SHOWDOWN GEM

CLASS: 101 Female, over 12 & not over 14mths.

- 1 189 G & J KNIGHT - MAJOR PLAINS VIC 3725
WANAMARA GOANNA OPAL
- 2 188 MRS L P SINGER-WHITEHEAD - SHOREHAM VIC 3916
COLOMBO PARK ELEKTRA
- 3 185 THE WAMSLEY FAMILY TRUST - TAREE NSW 2430
SHOWDOWN BONNIE
- 4 192 MR R C LABRIE - JANDOWAE QLD 4410
KOBBLEVALE FLEUR (ET)

CLASS: 102 Female, over 14 & not over 16mths.

- 1 195 KEITH & MOIRA SMITH - GOULBURN NSW 2580
KEIMOI ELLE MAY
- 2 1385 MR P A LABRIE - JANDOWAE QLD 4410
KOBBLEVALE TRENDAH
- 3 196 MR G PODBURY - TYLDEN VIC 3444
LILLIPUT LADY EXQUISITE

CLASS: S103 JUVENILE CHAMPION FEMALE

Winner 189 G & J KNIGHT - MAJOR PLAINS VIC 3725
WANAMARA GOANNA OPAL

CLASS: S104 RESERVE JUVENILE CHAMPION FEMALE

Winner 180 VICKI & PHILIP GILBERT - CANN RIVER VIC 3890
ROTHERWOOD ELEGANT GIRL

CLASS: 105 Female, over 16 & not over 18mths.

- 1 202 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830
ALLAMBIE BO DEREK
- 2 203 MR H N HOLLIS - THERESA PARK NSW 2570
RIVENMEAD DIAMANTE
- 3 200 MR DANIEL SCICLUNA - SCHOFIELDS NSW 2762
KOBBLEVALE ROMA
- 4 199 MR P A LABRIE - JANDOWAE QLD 4410
KOBBLEVALE RIANA (ET)

CLASS: 106 Female, over 18 & not over 19mths.

- 1 206 MRS C & DR M NOEL - WINDSOR DOWNS NSW 2756
SERENA DOWNS LADY ABIGAIL
- 2 205 W J & H M BELTON - MERRICKS VIC 3916
URILA DEVA
- 3 209 KEITH & MOIRA SMITH - GOULBURN NSW 2580
KEIMOI DREAM GIRL
- 4 208 MS MARGARET SMITH - BOONAH QLD 4310
KOUGARI DANCING QUEEN

CLASS: 107 Female, over 19 & not over 20mths.

- 1 222 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830
ALLAMBIE EVA
- 2 217 W J & H M BELTON - MERRICKS VIC 3916
URILA DUCHESS

3	216 KEITH & MOIRA SMITH - GOULBURN NSW 2580 KEIMOI DAZZLE
4	215 MS CHRISTINE FELDMANIS - WNDELLAMA NSW 2580 WINDELLAMA DOWNS WENDY
5	230 MISS C E CHANDLER - TENNYSON NSW 2754 ROTHERWOOD DELILAH
6	229 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830 ALLAMBIE CLAREVIEW
Highly Commended	224 VICKI & PHILIP GILBERT - CANN RIVER VIC 3890 ROTHERWOOD DESTINY
Highly Commended	228 VICKI & PHILIP GILBERT - CANN RIVER VIC 3890 ROTHERWOOD DREAM GIRL

CLASS: S108 JUNIOR CHAMPION FEMALE

Winner 222 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830
ALLAMBIE EVA

CLASS: S109 RESERVE JUNIOR CHAMPION FEMALE

Winner 206 MRS C & DR M NOEL - WINDSOR DOWNS NSW 2756
SERENA DOWNS LADY ABIGAIL

CLASS: 110 Female, over 20 & not over 24mths.

1	239 MRS S L FOUREUR - GLENCOE SA 5291 KARLEE PARK DELTA DAWN
2	240 MR G TURNHAM - GISBORNE VIC 3437 BARREGOWA DUSK
3	241 STEBBINS ENTERPRISES PTY LTD T/A ARDROSSAN LOWLINE STUD - PRINCETOWN VIC 3269 ARDROSSAN ONNA
4	232 MRS J M P SCHILLER - TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350 LIK LIK DESTINY
Highly Commended	231 MR P A LABRIE - JANDOWAE QLD 4410 KOBBLEVALE QUEANBEYAN (ET)

CLASS: 111 Female, over 24 & not over 30mths.

1	248 MR G PODBURY - TYLDEN VIC 3444 LILLIPUT LADY CATHERINE
2	251 KEITH & MOIRA SMITH - GOULBURN NSW 2580 KEIMOI CHRISTABEL
3	244 W J & H M BELTON - MERRICKS VIC 3916 URILA DELIGHT
4	243 MR P A LABRIE - JANDOWAE QLD 4410 KOBBLEVALE SKYE (ET)
Highly Commended	250 MRS G L MARANIK - JILLIBY NSW 2259 MARAPARK CLOVER

CLASS: 112 Female, over 30 & not over 36mths.

1	260 M HAYES - THORNTON QLD 4341 VITULUS CHICKS RULE
2	265 J & D SAINSBURY - KUMEU, NEW ZEALAND 2830 ALLAMBIE PERFECT PRINCESS
3	258 MR G & J HALLAM - THERESA PARK NSW 2570 THE WINDMILL CECELIA
4	254 MRS C & DR M NOEL - WINDSOR DOWNS NSW 2756 KEIMOI PRUDENCE
5	253 STEBBINS ENTERPRISES PTY LTD T/A ARDROSSAN LOWLINE STUD - PRINCETOWN VIC 3269 ARDROSSAN LOTTIE(ET)
Highly Commended	262 MS MARGARET SMITH - BOONAH QLD 4310 KOUGARI CHAMPAGNE

CLASS: 113 Female, over 36 & not over 48mths.

1	266 K & G LORAINS - ZEERUST VIC 3634 WHITBY FARM RUBY
2	267 K R & T L FALKENHAGEN - BOONAH QLD 4310 TANVIEW BABY EVE
3	269 MISS A M KUIPERS - MULGOA NSW 2745 ASHDANVID ELIZABETH
4	268 MR P A LABRIE - JANDOWAE QLD 4410 KOBBLEVALE VEE 'C'

CLASS: 114 Female, over 48mths.

1	281 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830 ALLAMBIE MOONBEAM
2	293 MR G PODBURY - TYLDEN VIC 3444 LILLIPUT DAME MARGO
3	290 MRS L P SENGER-WHITEHEAD - SHOREHAM VIC 3916 COLOMBO PARK YAROSLAVNA
4	288 MRS C & DR M NOEL - WINDSOR DOWNS NSW 2756 MONTE ALLEGRO ROBERTA
5	283 MR P A LABRIE - JANDOWAE QLD 4410 KOBBLEVALE TABITA (ET)
6	282 B A & B A HIGGINS - BUNDANOON NSW 2578 TRUNGLEY SAPPHIRE
Highly Commended	273 MRS PAULEEN SPACKMAN - WINGHAM NSW 2429 TRALIN BLACK EMERALD
Highly Commended	276 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830 ALLAMBIE JAZZMONT
Highly Commended	294 MRS J RISTROM - LANG LANG VIC 3984 ELANDRA PARK EXOTIC (ET)

CLASS: S115 SENIOR CHAMPION FEMALE

Winner 248 MR G PODBURY - TYLDEN VIC 3444
LILLIPUT LADY CATHERINE

CLASS: S116 RESERVE SENIOR CHAMPION FEMALE

Winner 281 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830
ALLAMBIE MOONBEAM

CLASS: S117 GRAND CHAMPION FEMALE

Winner 248 MR G PODBURY - TYLDEN VIC 3444
LILLIPUT LADY CATHERINE

CLASS: 118 Two Females, not over 20mths.

1	303 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830
2	300 KEITH & MOIRA SMITH - GOULBURN NSW 2580
3	302 W J & H M BELTON - MERRICKS VIC 3916

CLASS: 119 DAM'S PROGENY - 2 animals, either or both sexes.

1	318 MRS J RISTROM - LANG LANG VIC 3984 TRANGIE J251
2	321 MRS L P SENGER-WHITEHEAD - SHOREHAM VIC 3916 MUGGA SABRINA
3	309 KEITH & MOIRA SMITH - GOULBURN NSW 2580 BRAMBLETYE NUMIDA 2ND

CLASS: 120 Bull, 9 & not over 12mths.

1	327 MRS J RISTROM - LANG LANG VIC 3984 ELANDRA PARK ELVIS
2	325 MRS L P SENGER-WHITEHEAD - SHOREHAM VIC 3916 COLOMBO PARK ENCORE
3	326 M HAYES - THORNTON QLD 4341 VITULUS EXCEPTIONABULL
4	329 J & D SAINSBURY - KUMEU, NEW ZEALAND CASABLANCA JEBEL MUSA

CLASS: 121 Bull, 12 & not over 14mths.

1	332 MR G PODBURY - TYLDEN VIC 3444 LILLIPUT LORD ELLINGTON (ET)
2	331 MRS L P SENGER-WHITEHEAD - SHOREHAM VIC 3916 COLOMBO PARK EINSTEIN
3	330 MISS L A & L M KUIPERS - LONDONDERRY NSW 2753 ELLE KAY EXCALIBUR
4	334 MS E J BAKER - SOUTH MAROOTA NSW 2756 HIDDEN VALLEY PINJARRA

CLASS: 122 Bull, 14 & not over 16mths.

1 335 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830
ALLAMBIE E DER JAZZMAN

CLASS: S123 JUVENILE CHAMPION BULL

Winner 335 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830
ALLAMBIE E DER JAZZMAN

CLASS: S124 RESERVE JUVENILE CHAMPION BULL

Winner 327 MRS J RISTROM - LANG LANG VIC 3984
ELANDRA PARK ELVIS

CLASS: 125 Bull, over 16 & not over 18mths.

1 337 KEITH & MOIRA SMITH - GOULBURN NSW 2580
KEIMOI DYNASTY
2 336 INTERNATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH PRODUCTS PTY LTD - SCHOFIELDS NSW 2762
AUSBRED DYNAMITE

CLASS: 126 Bull, over 18 & not over 19mths.

1 342 VICKI & PHILIP GILBERT - CANN RIVER VIC 3890
ROTHERWOOD DIABLO
2 340 MR G PODBURY - TYLDEN VIC 3444
LILLIPUT LORD DEAN
3 343 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830
ALLAMBIE DIAMONT BOY
4 341 MRS J M P SCHILLER - TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350
LIK LIK DOUBLE OR NOTHING

CLASS: 127 Bull, over 19 & not over 20mths.

1 345 MR G & J HALLAM - THERESA PARK NSW 2570
THE WINDMILL DONALD
2 344 STEBBINS ENTERPRISES PTY LTD T/A ARDROSSAN LOWLINE STUD - PRINCETOWN VIC 3269
ARDROSSAN OLYMPUS

CLASS: S128 JUNIOR CHAMPION BULL

Winner 342 VICKI & PHILIP GILBERT - CANN RIVER VIC 3890
ROTHERWOOD DIABLO

CLASS: S129 RESERVE JUNIOR CHAMPION BULL

Winner 337 KEITH & MOIRA SMITH - GOULBURN NSW 2580
KEIMOI DYNASTY

CLASS: 130 Bull, over 20 & not over 24mths.

1 348 INTERNATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH PRODUCTS PTY LTD - SCHOFIELDS NSW 2762
AUSBRED DOMINATOR
2 353 MR G TURNHAM - GISBORNE VIC 3437
BARREGOWA BENDIGO
3 346 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830
ALLAMBIE DYNAMITE
4 350 B A & B A HIGGINS - BUNDANOON NSW 2578
TRUNGLEY KRYPTANITE

CLASS: 131 Bull, over 24 & not over 30mths.

1 360 NATARSHA & JOHN CANNY - MOLESWORTH VIC 3718
YARRA RANGES JACKAROO
2 354 MRS C & DR M NOEL - WINDSOR DOWNS NSW 2756
SERENA DOWNS CAPTAIN ARTHUR
3 356 B A & B A HIGGINS - BUNDANOON NSW 2578
TRUNGLEY NUGGET
4 358 MR G & MRS D GUTHRIE - ASHBURTON, NEW ZEALAND.
COLOMBO PARK DVORAK

CLASS: 132 Bull, over 30 & not over 36mths.

1 363 VICKI & PHILIP GILBERT - CANN RIVER VIC 3890
ROTHERWOOD CHEROKEE
2 365 G & J KNIGHT - MAJOR PLAINS VIC 3725

- 3 SOUTHERN CROSS CASANOVA
366 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830
ALLAMBIE COMMIT
- 4 361 KEITH & MOIRA SMITH - GOULBURN NSW 2580
KEIMOI KINSMAN

CLASS: S133 SENIOR CHAMPION BULL

Winner 360 NATARSHA & JOHN CANNY - MOLESWORTH VIC 3718
YARRA RANGES JACKAROO

CLASS: S134 RESERVE SENIOR CHAMPION BULL

Winner 354 MRS C & DR M NOEL - WINDSOR DOWNS NSW 2756
SERENA DOWNS CAPTAIN ARTHUR

CLASS: S135 GRAND CHAMPION BULL

Winner 360 NATARSHA & JOHN CANNY - MOLESWORTH VIC 3718
YARRA RANGES JACKAROO

CLASS: 136 Two Bulls, not over 24mths.

- 1 373 INTERNATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH PRODUCTS PTY LTD - SCHOFIELDS NSW 2762
- 2 371 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830
- 3 372 MRS L P SENGER-WHITEHEAD - SHOREHAM VIC 3916

CLASS: 137 SIRE'S PROGENY - 3 animals representing both sexes.

- 1 377 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830
ALLAMBIE ARISTOCRAT
- 2 378 MRS L P SENGER-WHITEHEAD - SHOREHAM VIC 3916
COLOMBO PARK TANNHAUSER
- 3 375 VICKI & PHILIP GILBERT - CANN RIVER VIC 3890
ROTHERWOOD BOXER

CLASS: 138 BREEDERS GROUP - 3 animals, both sexes represented, bred & owned by Exhibitor.

- 1 391 P & R MILLER & T BREUER - DUBBO NSW 2830
P & R MILLER & T BREUER - ALLAMBIE
- 2 381 MR G PODBURY - TYLDEN VIC 3444
MR G PODBURY - LILLIPUT LOWLINES
- 3 385 MRS C & DR M NOEL - WINDSOR DOWNS NSW 2756
MRS C & DR M NOEL - SERENA DOWNS

CLASS: S139 BEST EXHIBIT

Winner 248 MR G PODBURY - TYLDEN VIC 3444
LILLIPUT LADY CATHERINE

CLASS: S139A The Roger Barlow Perpetual Trophy for the Best Exhibit, donated by Betty and Brian Higgins.

Winner 248 MR G PODBURY - TYLDEN VIC 3444
LILLIPUT LADY CATHERINE

ASTRALGUS®



lowline stud & vineyard

“Would you like a wine with your Lowline?”

This is a question that Rod McNeil hopes to be asking later this year at the ASTRALGUS Lowline Stud & Vineyard in Gisborne, Victoria. “We have been developing the vineyard for 8 years, as it has always been a dream of ours to grow and bottle our own wine. We are expecting our first vintage this year.” The passion for Lowlines, on the other hand, is more recent, and one that has arisen almost by accident.

How did you start with Lowlines?

My wife Karen and I both took a day off work around 2 years ago, as I had to undergo some medical tests. All being well, we decided to go for a relaxing drive in the country north of Gisborne. For years I had spent day after day trying to keep our 50 acre property vaguely under control as we developed the vineyard - slashing grass, spraying fence lines and weeds. I wondered if having a cow or two may assist, and as I had read a few articles about these Lowline cattle, we dropped in almost unannounced at John and Ann Rowe’s Yerrinbank Stud in Kyneton. I think we went from never having touched a cow to being totally mesmerized within a few hours. John and Ann patiently and kindly answered all our questions over several cups of tea and a tour of their lovely property.”

I then spent a great deal of time reading books on cattle farming, both Australian and from the USA. I also made a nuisance of myself, visiting the Elandra Park, Barregowa and Vitulus studs, and asking hours of questions from Jane Ristrom, Gary Turnham, John and Ann (on numerous other unannounced visits), Graeme Podbury & Bev Crowley, Peter & Jeanette Stebbins and Margo Hayes. Eventually, we purchased some cows, heifers and our mighty bull “Bullistic” to start our stud and commercial herds.

All is going well, and we now have a stud herd of 12 cows and heifers, 12 commercial cows and heifers (including 3 Murray Grey whom we have put Bullistic over), and some fine young bulls for sale. We can now get increasingly active in ALCA and SRPG affairs, which we are looking forward to.

The thing that has amazed us from the outset is what a great bunch of people are involved with Lowlines, with such a tremendous generosity of spirit. It’s been at times quite overwhelming...for example, when I first visited Elandra Park, Jane Ristrom and Robin Bjorksten took me on a lengthy tour of the property over

several hours, and then Robin sent me several pages of notes and reference materials about caring for cattle and his advice on looking after Lowlines. I re-read those notes often!

And the wine?

The only people whom I have met who are as mad and passionate about their business as Lowline people are - wine people! These days, anyone running a small vineyard in Australia is by definition “insane”. All you have to do is read the newspapers to see what dire straits the wine industry now finds itself in...especially small growers.

Furthermore, the Macedon Ranges is the coldest wine region on the mainland, and the down side to our property having great views across to Mt Macedon is that it is fully exposed to winter winds. We have come to realize that “cold” and “wind” are two of the worst 4 letter words!

So.....cold winds, frosts, rocks, weeds, pruning, trellising, spraying, fixing equipment damage, birds, netting, trying to be sustainable, liquor licensing requirements, hares, irrigation leaks, snakes, redbacks, managing the soil.....the list goes on and on.

But we love it!

Walking through the vineyard at budburst, with the first heat of Spring and the first leaves emerging from the vines is as wonderful as an unexpected tongue lick from a Lowie.



Can Lowlines and wine coexist?

Actually, somewhat by accident last February, we found out how much Lowlines also love vine leaves and grapes. As you may recall it was very dry, and we were already buying in feed. Yet our vineyard was in full bloom and full of grapes. Given that we had decided not to proceed to vintage last year, we let the Lowlines into the top 7 acres of the vineyard, and they were happy for a month!

But we should have known, as a previous neighbour's cattle had broken in to our property several years earlier and they made a bee line for our Chardonnay. They cleaned up several rows within a few hours before we were able to move them back to their property.

So we have now divided up the vineyard into 2 blocks, and in any year that we do not intend to make Shiraz and Semillon (some years it is simply too cold, and some years we won't be able to), we plan to let the Lowlines into the vineyard to graze. They are in there as I write this (March 2010).



Highlights?

Calving, no question? We were fortunate early on to witness a birth over 2 hours, from start to finish, and it was amazing to actually see what we had read about in the calving texts (Karen is a doctor, and we have 5 kids, so it was not a total mystery to us).

I also like simply spending time with the herd ...I simply toot the horn and the herd comes running. Watching the cows with their own calves is fascinating.

Learning about the cattle's zone of influence was a major breakthrough for us....I have become something of a "cattle whisperer", now able to move the cattle around simply with calm words and the correct angle of approach.

As for the wine, just getting a crop is hugely satisfying. Watching the annual cycle in the vineyard, and starting to understand the relationship between soil, vine health, sunlight, wind, water and the condition of the grapes is really interesting.

We have also now started growing some additional feed, and that has been a wonderful journey, learning about oats, barley, Lucerne, triticale and sorghum.

Lowlights?

The only real lowlight with the Lowlines has been some fence damage and their habit of eating everything....I ignorantly left the cattle trailer in their paddock, only to find that they ate every part of the trailer that isn't steel.

There are lots more lowlights with the wine....pretty much every financial aspect, which means that it is occasionally hard to remember exactly why we are out working in the vineyard, but that soon disappears once the sun shines and the grapes sparkle!

Birds are every viticulturalist's enemy, but even they can be wonderfully impressive as they circle the vineyard, and the nets pretty much take care of the grapes.

The future?

I have a simple dream....serving our ASTRALGUS wine, initially our "Crowbar" Chardonnay, "Fiddleleaf" Sauvignon Blanc, and "Loopz" Pinot Noir, to our Stud cattle clients as we inspect the latest Astralgus offspring.

Doesn't sound too bad, really.

Rod McNeil ASTRALGUS Lowline Stud & Vineyard