# Carcase quality key for breed's next step

BY RUTH SCHWAGER

JASON Impey's passion for the Simmental breed started when he convinced his father-in-law to use a traditional Simmental over his Poll Herefords.

That was 25 years ago and now he and his wife Jacqui run their own stud, Mala-Daki Simmentals, now located at Loomberah, near Tamworth, NSW.

"Initially a mate of mine was working for Wendouree Simmentals at Cobbity and he convinced me they were great, and it didn't take much convincing once we had those first calves," Mr Impey said.

"There was such a big improvement in the first-cross, with much better growth and muscle compared with the straight Poll Hereford calves."

Foundation cattle for Mala-Daki came from Wendouree, a few private sales and stud dispersals, before the Impeys came across Buckingham Simmentals at Bungendore, which made a big impact in the stud.

They started with a dozen cows in the first four to five years, and grew the operation to 50 commercial breeders and 175 stud breeders before having to cut numbers significantly due to drought.

"We'll calve down about 70 breeders this year.

"We were at Bunnan, but we've joined forces with Caloona Park Charolais at Loomberah to help manage their property and run our own cattle.

"All of the commercial cattle went with drought, but we're hoping to build up both stud and commercial



**EATING QUALITY FOCUS:** Jason and Jacqui Impey with some of their Simmental cattle at Loomberah, near Tamworth, NSW. The Impeys have shifted their operation to Tamworth and destocked the commercial herd to focus on seedstock production.

numbers when the season improves.

"We had a nice line of commercial and stud cows before the drought hit, and now we're focusing on the best quality stud breeders."

That focus on quality led to success on the hoof and hook last year. The stud bred two of the three steers that took out the Stan Hill Trophy at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, and in October they had success in the RAS Beef Challenge.

One of their steers was overall champion in the 70-day domestic class, after being named the individual winner in live assessments and awarded grand champion individual carcase.

The steer, by Canadian sire KOP Spartan and from Mala-Daki Lolli G498 achieved an average daily gain of 2.49 kilograms, then dressed at 54.9 per cent and scored 20.83 points for carcase grid with an eye muscle area of 74

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square centimetres and five millimetres of fat on both the rump and rib.

"That was the second year we've entered steers in the RAS competition and in our first year we had the highest average daily weight gain for heavyweight steers and they placed third for feedlot total and second for profitability," Mr Impey said.

The Impeys have focused their genetic selection on carcase quality, and it's paying off, with a bronze medal in the taste test portion of the competition.

"I think eating quality and carcase quality is what we need to work on as a breed," Mr Impey said. "We've got the high growth but the next step is improving carcase quality, and the consistency of carcase, so our clients can breed lines of steers that will consistently meet specifications for their markets."

Mala-Daki clients were targeting varied markets, but

more people are selling over the hook, Mr Impey said.

"We've had one client at Crookwell whose cattle were getting too fat with British breeds over British females, but by using our bulls, they've been able to bring the fat cover back a little bit, but the big advantage is they're getting them off the place four months earlier at the target weights. So they're making more money because they can run a few more cows."

Mr Impey said the stud's success was due to the strong maternal side.

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