



**Fleurieu Beef
Group Inc.
Annual report
2023**

*Began 1997,
Incorporated May 31st 2000*



Table of Contents

A Brief History	3
Vision, Mission, Objectives and Purpose	5
Vision Statement *	5
Mission Statement *	5
Objectives and Purpose	5
Officers and Members	6
Officers	6
Life Members	6
20 Year Members	6
Members	6
Fleurieu Beef Group Inc.	7
Chairman Report.....	7
Secretary Report.....	9
FBG Financial statement of the year ending June 30, 2023.....	10
Income.....	10
Total Income.....	10
Expenditure	10
Total Expenses.....	10
Profit.....	10
Balance Sheet at 30 June 2023.....	10
Treasurers Report 2022/23: notes on the financial statements	10
2023 FBG Program	11
Indonesian Delegation Visit to Fleurieu Beef Group.....	12
Fleurieu Beef Group Members in the Media	13
Projects	14
Field testing of three new dung beetle species on the Fleurieu Peninsula	14
Producer Technology Group Project	15
7 ways FBG have paved the way for carbon neutral beef	16
From the Archives	21

FRONT COVER: Beef Cattle on the beautiful Fleurieu Peninsula

A Brief History

In 1995 local agricultural service providers Tim Prance and Simon Ellis were commissioned to run a new course called “Prograze”; an eight session program delivered over several months and addressing the issues of pasture quality and quantity, together with animal requirements and performance. This program was delivered as a pilot course to two groups of livestock farmers; one situated on the western side of the Mt. Lofty Ranges, in Mt. Compass area and the other on the eastern side of the ranges, centred in the Port Elliot Mt. Jagged area. The Mt. Compass group comprised mainly cattle producers, whilst the other was a more diverse group in which there were both sheep and cattle producers.

At the conclusion of the Prograze course, the Mt. Compass group resolved to continue meeting through 1996 under the name “Mt. Compass Beef Discussion Group” Cattle producers from the Port Elliot Mt. Jagged area were invited to attend and thus in “Embryonic” form of the Fleurieu Beef Group was began. At a meeting on the 17th December 1996 the records show members in attendance : Margaret Sweeney, Elaine Trevilyan, Susie Gillies, Ian Gillies, Richard Lawrence, Geoff Davis, Mark Higgins, Rory Fitzpatrick, Brian Sinkinson, Kevin Young, Richard Willson, Adrian Burton, with Tim Prance, Mike Boerema, Doug McLaren, Brian Codd, Neil Arthur recorded as apologies.

At the end of 1996 a name change for the group was suggested in order to better reflect the wide spread of producer’s properties over the Fleurieu Peninsula. Thus early in 1997 the Fleurieu Beef Group was born, with Geoff Davis as Chairman and Adrian Burton as Secretary -Treasurer. Meetings were held in the mornings of the third Tuesday’s of each month and this pattern has continued to this day.

The inaugural chairman Geoff Davis held the office untill his retirement in December 2009, whilst the offices of secretary and treasurer were held at various times by Adrian Burton, Althea Grove, Richard Willson and Michelle Sinkinson. Barb Voysey was appointed to the secretary-treasurer office in December 2001 and continued for sixteen years, retiring in 2017. The vice chairman office, held by Rory Fitzpatrick till December 2009, when he was appointed chairman and upon his retirement in December 2014, Geoff Bowles was appointed to this office, retiring in December 2017. Mark Higgins followed on and remains chairman to the present day. Melissa Rebbeck retired from the Secretary office in December 2021, after four valuable years of service. Tom Cosentino was then appointed to this office.

Richard Willson retired from the treasurer role at the 2019 AGM, where David Macklin was appointed treasurer until his retirement at the 2022 AGM; Alastair Coles being voted into this office. The Vice Chair / Program Secretary office, held by Robin Smith until his retirement in December 2020, when at the AGM Cherry Macklin was appointed and she continued in this office till the 2022 AGM when Andrew Ewers was appointed.

In addition to monthly meetings, farm walks, guest speakers, various tours and farm training courses, the Group has always had a strong research and development arm. In 1998 a four year trial “Tools for Grazing Strategies” was launched at “Kimberly Park” Yundi, the home of Richard and Di Willson. The trial investigated the effects on pasture production and profit from various fertiliser applications and stocking rates as compared to the district average of both.

The years 2000 -2008 saw many significant funded projects undertaken which resulted in important outcomes on member’s properties and also on the whole Fleurieu Peninsula. Partnerships with Creation Care and Dung Beetle Solutions International saw the Group complete \$540K of funded projects for dung beetle establishment, and environmental works addressing fencing, revegetation and erosion control. Success was such that the beetle Bubas Bison, which was first released onto member’s properties, is now considered established over the whole Peninsula. The publication “Identifying Dung Beetles on the Fleurieu Peninsula” was also produced in 2003.

In addition to the partnerships mentioned above, the Group has maintained strong links with the Mt. Compass School, The University of Adelaide Roseworthy Campus and both the Natural Resource Management Boards in our region. In recent times we have also forged close links with Climate and Agricultural Support and Fleurieu Farming Systems. In 2019 the Fleurieu Beef Group inc. website was launched: <https://www.fleurieubeefgroup.com/>



CONTINGENT OF FBG MEMBERS ATTENDING STRUAN AGTEC DEMONSTRATIONS MARCH 2022

Vision, Mission, Objectives and Purpose

Vision Statement *

To be the first port of call for beef producers on the Fleurieu Peninsula to create sustainable, premium beef products for future world markets.

Mission Statement *

To equip members of the Fleurieu Beef group to contribute to the local, state and national economies, through the production and sale of high quality beef products, on farms exemplifying health of the land, the livestock and the people.

Objectives and Purpose (as per Constitution 2015)

- To identify and utilise methods of improving productivity of pastures.
- To identify and utilise cost effective control of pests and weeds.
- To promote effective pasture utilisation and optimisation of pasture nutrition.
- To identify and utilise methods of improving farm profitability.
- To promote improved farm property management and sustainable grazing systems.
- To encourage and promote the use of on farm quality assurance.
- To solicit aid from various statutory or sponsorship bodies for projects to benefit sustainability of farm practices.
- To facilitate co operation with various statutory bodies and sponsorship groups who may give support to the Group for various programs or projects or trials.
- To educate and inform members of the community through informative meetings, seminars or field days.

() subject for review*

Officers and Members

Officers

Chairman	Secretary	Vice Chairman & Program Secretary	Treasurer
Mark Higgins	Tom Cosentino	Andrew Ewers	Alistair Coles

Life Members

Geoff Davis †
Tim Prance

Barb Voysey
Mark Higgins

20 Year Members

Geoff Bowles
Mark Higgins ●
Austin Johnson †
Richard Lawrence ●

Tim Prance ●
Terry Sweetman ●
Richard Willing
Richard Willson ●

Cherry Macklin

(●) Foundation member
(†) Deceased

Members

Tom Adams
David Ambrose
Bradley Arthur
Alistair Coles
David Dawes
Keith Fryer
Janet Furler
Philip Jacques
Richard Lawrence
John McEvoy
Nan Mann
Richard Willing

Sandy Nott
Stephen Rogers
Peter Read
Jason Patullo
Peter Rumbold
Andrew Robinson
Stephen Schmitz
Robin Smith
Geoff Stuckey
Terry Sweetman
Matthew Viney
Melissa Rebbeck

Cherry Macklin
David Macklin
Lilly Culberts
Bryan Gill
John Humphrey
Andrew Ewers
Brian Lange
Angela Adams *
Geoffrey Swincer *

(*) New Member



DAVID GREENHOUGH (CHAIR HILLS & FLEURIEU LANDSCAPE BOARD) PRESENTS 20 YEAR MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATES TO TIM PRANCE, MARK HIGGINS, RICHARD WILLING, RICHARD LAWRENCE, TERRY SWEETMAN, RICHARD WILLSON. (LEFT TO RIGHT) GEOFF BOWLES AND AUSTIN JOHNSON ABSENT 2022

Fleurieu Beef Group Inc.

Chairman Report

Welcome all members and guests to the 2023 AGM, which also celebrates the 27th anniversary of the Fleurieu Beef Group.

Thank you to our hosts, Stephen and Peta Schmitz, “Jetty Farm” Hindmarsh Valley, who have continued the tradition of a venue which provides an atmosphere in which we can all relax and enjoy the evening.

The beef cattle business has experienced a very different year compared to the last three or four years. Whereas we have been experiencing compound rising prices for our products, since the last AGM there has been an initial hesitation followed by a “floundering” of prices received. The cause of this crash has been much debated and included over supply of product, shortage of labour in the processing plants, transportation blowouts, feedlot nervousness about prices going forward and of course the weather. The forecast in April of a strong El Nino event for Australia, which never eventuated in our region, was like an evil omen over livestock industries, depressing confidence throughout the year.

These things are mentioned because they have affected all members of the Fleurieu Beef Group, whether they produce restocker, feedlot, processor or breeding cattle. It is those members who are relatively new to the cattle industry who have been especially affected, having not experienced the extreme volatility in commodity prices which we have seen this year. Many years ago this very situation of tremendous swings in commodities was described as a part of our “short, uncertain earthly pilgrimage”. Cattle market volatility and uncertainty has happened many times before, as shown by the MLA data supplied by Prof Wayne Pitchford at our November meeting.

The executive committee has met twice this year, on 27th of January and on the 30th of November in order to plan the year ahead and enable the efficient working of FBG business. Both Andrew Ewers and Alastair Coles have completed their first year as members of the Executive, in the roles of Vice Chair / Program Secretary and Treasurer respectively; proving to be a pleasure to work closely with and faithful in carrying out their responsibilities. The Secretaries position is very important for communication of FBG business both within the membership and outside with other associations; it is the particular support that Tom Cosentino has provided to the Chair that I am especially grateful for.

Others of the membership, who it is my pleasure to thank and point out for their service through 2023:

- Member Peter Read who kindly recorded the meeting minutes during Tom’s absence.
- Nan Mann for her diligence in providing excellent morning teas.
- Stephen Schmitz for handling all the logistics of providing a barbeque meal at the December meeting.

- Venues have been provided by John Humphrey, Brian Gill, Andrew Ewers, Tom Adams, Andrew Robinson, Stephen Schmitz (twice) and Tom Cosentino.
- To those outside the Group who provided meeting venues: Mt. Compass School, Mt. Compass Sports Centre, Kilkerrin Poll Hereford Stud.
- Tim Prance for his facilitation of the two AgTec Project meetings.
- Tom Cosentino who has continued to update the photo show for the AGM.
- Jeff Edwards (Landscape SA), who has worked with the Group for many years and has, over the last six years given great assistance in the production of our Annual Reports.

The membership now stands at thirty nine including life members; with a few retirements and also new members joining. This has greatly contributed to good attendances at meetings and lively discussion; with average member attendance of twenty. New members joining this year are Angela Adams and Geoffrey Swincer; welcome to the Group.

Several significant events took place this year; the successful inclusion of FBG in the hosting of long term innovator sites as part of the research arm of the Future drought Fund; the visit of the delegation from Indonesia at our November meeting; The hay / silage testing workshop facilitated by Alice Morley from FPAG and the October meeting with Alexandrina Council, City of Victor Harbor and the District Council of Yankalilla. In regard to the meeting with the three Councils, I would particularly thank Andrew Ewers for his perseverance and facilitation skills; organising and contributing greatly to the success of this important meeting.

Member support is the absolute key to the success of Fleurieu Beef Group as a regular meeting incorporated body. This year your support has not gone unnoticed and I would take this opportunity to express my gratitude to you all. May we all continue to actively participate, creating a lively platform in which to participate and learn from one another.

Christmas and the holiday season are upon us again, a time when we can reflect on the wondrous events of the Nativity. An Australian poem comes to my mind at this season:



All the bells are gaily ringing,
Birds in every tree are singing;
Let us in the golden weather,
Gather Christmas Bush together.
Christ is born! The angels thunder
Thro' the heav'ns their tale of wonder,
While we pluck for His adorning
Christmas Bush this hallow'd morning.

Left: Bursaria spinosa (SA Christmas Bush)

Happy Christmas & New Year to you all,

Mark Higgins

Secretary Report

The Fleurieu Beef Group has done another lap around the sun and conducted another suite of successful meetings this year. Meeting presentations have been broad and diverse and we have had strong attendances at each and every meeting which is great to see. I especially enjoy the social aspect of the Group and I think that all of the members do also.

I have continued to gain knowledge from the experienced members of the group and have even started to on-board some of their advice - my herd is even getting blacker with every calving season.

We ended the last calendar year with record beef cattle prices and I hope that members were able to bank some profits as the New Year began a very slippery slope with prices across the country tumbling by more than 50% in some classes. At the time of writing this, we have seen a strong and steep recovery, but we are still a way back from the lofty heights of spring in 2022.

Rain events have also been interesting this year with some saying it has been 'the wettest and the driest year on record'.

I would like to thank Peter Read for filling in for me in my absence on two occasions this year. He does a terrific job and I'm grateful for him. Thanks also to Nan Mann who continues to provide elite catering at every meeting and is usually one of the first attendees to arrive month in month out.

I look forward to 2024 which will be another big and busy year for the FBG.

Thanks again for having me.

Tom Cosentino - Secretary

Fleurieu farmers for drought research

Bryan Littlely

A new research engine has been fired in South Australia with a significant \$8 million Federal Government Future Drought Fund grant – the largest to be awarded – and signals a new era of climate smart farming is on the horizon.

It will bring 39 research partners including farming and agri-business communities together under an \$11.7 million program to be led by Flinders University and the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) – the research division of the Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA).

Flinders Affiliate Associate Professor and SARDI Agronomy Program Leader Dr Rhianon Schilling, who heads the new program, says along with bringing the farming community to work with leading researchers, the program will establish a network of long-

term research trials to test applied science and climate-resilient solutions.

"We are bringing together leading South Australian farmers and researchers to develop new solutions to overcome future climate challenges," Affiliate Associate Professor Schilling says.

"We will test, refine and deliver drought-resilient innovations for dryland broadacre cropping, livestock and mixed farms."

A key aspect of this project being that it has been designed with farmer input and will continue to be developed and implemented with farmers through local Action Groups and participation in on ground activities.

The innovations tested will be aligned with key seasonal decisions being made by farmers leading into and out of drought combining real world experience with scientific data to support decision making into the future and the adoption of drought resilience practices.

All major farming system groups from across the state are involved in the project, including the Fleurieu Beef Group Incorporated and the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia.

"These groups will be hosting long-term innovator sites and will have the opportunity to be involved with the Discovery Farms," Dr Schilling said.

"There will also be Action Groups within each region where farmers can directly advise and ensure long-term trials are relevant for them.

"South Australian farmers are leading innovators. This project will work with farmers to develop and refine innovations to support more drought preparedness on their cropping, livestock or mixed farming properties. In particular we will develop outputs that can be directly used by farmers to equip them with the data and the confidence to use new technologies or practices.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Colin Stirling says Flinders University's research strengths and leadership will help cement South Australia's reputation as a world leader in climate-smart farming for the future.

"This research partnership will drive the development of solutions to tackle drought preparedness here in South Australia and beyond and Flinders University is excited to be part of this next era of pioneering research."

The \$8 million Future Drought Fund grant was the maximum to be announced by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Senator Murray Watt in August 2023.

The project team is more than happy to discuss with any farmer interested in learning more or in being involved. For further information contact project lead, SARDI's Agronomy Program Leader, Dr Rhianon Schilling at Rhianon.Schilling@sa.gov.au

SOURCE: FLEURIEU SUN/VICTOR HARBOR TIMES

FBG Financial statement of the year ending June 30, 2023

Income

Subscriptions	\$ 2,640.00
Grant Income	\$ 5,500.00
interest	\$ 0.75
cash deposits	\$ 60.00
ATO refunds	\$ 129.00
Total Income	\$ 8,329.75

Expenditure

Honorarium	\$ 1,920.00
Catering	\$ 880.21
Merchandise	\$ 557.83
Speakers	\$ 350.00
Tech Project	\$ 150.00
Venue Hire	\$ 100.00
ATO expense	\$ 60.00
Total Expenses	\$ 4,018.04

Profit	\$ 4,311.71
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Balance Sheet at 30 June 2023

Accumulated funds 1 July 2022	\$ 8,900.85
Profit for year	\$ 4,311.71
Cash at Bank - Bendigo 30 June 2023	\$ 13,212.56

Treasurers Report 2022/23: notes on the financial statements

Financial Year 2023 brought a slight increase in membership subscriptions for FBG. This increase coupled with additional Tech Project funding assisted the group to a strong year end. Additional Tech Project expenses are noted for the FY24 year, meaning timing of expenses should be considered when reviewing the figures provided.

2023 FBG Program

MONTH	DATE	VENUE	TOPIC	PRESENTER DETAILS
Feb	21	John Humphrey	AgTech - Beef Cattle	Scott Harlock scott@hpco.com.au
Mch	21	Mt Compass Area School	AgTech - Pastures	Alistair Rayner
April	18	Mt Compass Sports Club	Feed testing and nutrition	Colin Trengove, Tim Prance, Penny Schulz, Alice Morley
May	16	Michael Cobb and Trish Worth	Breeding and selecting sires and heifers	Michael Cobb and Trish Worth 0417 812 175
Jun	20	Bryan Gill	BLM research/methane research	Mariana Caetano 83131128 mariana.caetano@adelaide.edu.au
Jul	18	Andrew Ewers	Pasture walk	Tim Prance 0427 812 655 https://www.prance.net.au/
Aug	15	Tom Adams	Cattle health	Ben Weir 0477 576 255
Sept	19	Andrew Robertson	Liquid Fertilisers	Daryl Higginson 0487 419 513 daryl.higginson@incitecpivot.com.au
Oct	17	Steve Schmitz	Presentations from three Council representatives and discussion on key issues	Michael Scott, Alexandrina Council Beryl Price, Victor Harbor Council Amy Williams, Yankalilla Council
Nov	21	Tom Consentino	Roseworthy Team - Research Update	Wayne Pitchford and Indonesian delegation 8313 7642 wayne.pitchford@adelaide.edu.au
Dec	19	Steve Schmitz	Monthly Meeting and AGM	



LEFT - A **VERY CHILLY** JUNE MORNING FINDS MEMBERS RUGGED UP AT "TOOPER SPRINGS" AND ATTENTIVELY LISTENING TO A PRESENTATION BY DR. MARIANA CAETANO FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE ROSEWORTHY CAMPUS, 2023

BELOW - THE CATTLE PATIENTLY WAIT IT OUT IN THE Paddock



Indonesian Delegation Visit to Fleurieu Beef Group

On the 21st November Fleurieu Beef Group met at “MacLoran”, Hindmarsh Valley and a delegation of Indonesian Officials, accompanied by Professor Wayne Pitchford of the University of Adelaide, attended the meeting. These guests were warmly received and it was apparent some FBG members had “brushed up” on the Indonesian language. After a delicious morning tea, prepared by member Nan Mann, we enjoyed a presentation by Dr. Irida Novianti titled “Beef Cattle in Indonesia”. At the conclusion of the presentation FBG and the delegation exchanged gifts.

Professor Wayne Pitchford completed the meeting with a thought provoking presentation on the “fall out” of non-pregnant cows over time in self replacing herds; the quantity of data conclusively showing this fall out to be much greater than generally accepted. Members were very appreciative of the privilege of not only meeting our Indonesian guests but also saw the interaction which took place, around the topic of beef cattle, as an important international relationship building experience.



FBG members present gifts to the delegates from Indonesia - a most memorable time together



(L to R) Prof. Wayne Pitchford, Director, Davies Livestock Research Centre, University of Adelaide
 Dr. Ir. Agus Susilo, Vice Dean, Finance and Administration, Faculty of Animal Science, University Brawijaya
 Prof. Dr. Ir. Lilik Eka Radiati, Head, Doctorate Program, Faculty of Animal Science, University Brawijaya
 Prof. Dr. Tri Eko Susilorini, Head, Masters Program, Faculty of Animal Science, University Brawijaya
 Dr. Irida Novianti, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Animal Science, University Brawijaya
 Prof. Dr. Ir. V. M. Ani Nurgiantiningsih, Head, International Relations, Faculty of Animal Science, University Brawijaya
 Mark Higgins, Fleurieu Beef Group Chair
 Tom Cosentino, Fleurieu Beef Group Secretary

Fleurieu Beef Group Members in the Media



CHAMPION CROSSBRED CARCASS STEER BRED BY FBG 20 YEAR MEMBER CHERRY MACKLIN



FBG SECRETARY TOM COSENTINO IS PRESENTED WITH A PRESTIGIOUS NUFFIELD SCHOLARSHIP. ON HIS RIGHT ROB BRADLEY, PAST CHAIR OF NUFFIELD AUSTRALIA AND ON HIS LEFT SALLY ROBERTS FROM THE FISHERIES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

Projects

Field testing of three new dung beetle species on the Fleurieu Peninsula

Project began in September 2019 in partnership with Creation Care and funding of \$29 850 GST exclusive from the South Australian Government 'Supporting Sustainable Primary Production' Grant through Natural Resources AMLR NRM Board. Projected end date June 2020 with ongoing works proposed.

Purpose: To improve beef farm grazing capacity and resilience, and reduce the impact of cattle dung carbon and nutrients in water bodies and the atmosphere by-

On nine pilot farms establishing three new spring active dung beetle species, *Onthophagus vacca*, *Bubus bubalus* and *Copris hispanus*.

Developing beef producer's knowledge of rearing and managing dung beetles.

Providing farmers with a "seed stock" of these new dung beetle species in order to breed more beetles for release on their farms.

Defining optimal environmental conditions for all three new species so that future beetle release sites can be selected that match the beetle's requirements.



O. vacca

B. bubalus

C. hispanus

(Photos courtesy of Creation Care)

The final report for this project was tabled 8th July 2020 and is available on the Fleurieu Beef Group website. Field results enabled all the objectives listed above to be achieved and the report is highly recommended as a breakthrough for establishing dung beetles on farms through the use of nurseries and relatively small colonies.

Creation Care and the South Australian Government, together with Fleurieu Beef Group members, who diligently managed the nurseries over several months, are all to be congratulated for delivering such a successful collaborative approach to the an important problem.

Although this project “officially” was ruled off in mid-2020, it was realised that we were on the verge of major breakthroughs with the beetles *Onthophagus vacca* and *Bubas bubalus*. Thus with oversight from Creation Care, several members kindly volunteered to continue the work on their properties and this effort continues today. The important results achieved thus far may be summarised as follows:

O. vacca: From the project successes, members realised that the successful nursery multiplication of beetles on their farms could be used as “mother ships” - able to send satellite colonies of beetles to other farms in the region, where they would be placed in nurseries for multiplication. This process has begun and should be repeatable indefinitely, site conditions considered.

B. bubalis: These beetles proved more difficult to multiply than *O. vacca*, with large variations in members results. However this important information has provided a basis for further studies which are continuing today. Three members achieved very good rates of multiplication which has resulted, in what we believe, the first release of farm bred *B. bubalus* in Australia. These trials, being ongoing have continued through 2023.

Producer Technology Group Project

July 2020 marked the commencement date of this two year project which is funded to the tune of \$25,000 by the South Australian Government through the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. Fleurieu Beef Group invited other livestock producers from the region, to join us in this important venture and Tim Prance of T Prance Rural Consulting is the overseeing consultant.

Areas of investigation are broad; including water, soils, pasture, livestock handling, genetics and other topics of Group interest. A plan of events has been established and it is anticipated to hold at least eight sessions over the two years. At the outset a SWOT analysis of farms was carried out and this was followed up by a session on using electronic identification to source individual animal carcass and feedlot performance.

This important project was ruled off in May of this year and the areas of investigation may be found in the 2022 FBG Program section of this report. The two day trip to the South east of South Australia and the field day in April were highlights for many members.

Additional funding was released by the Government in 2023, enabling two more meetings to be conducted on this topic; both being listed in our Program section of this Annual Report.

7 ways FBG have paved the way for carbon neutral beef

By Mark Higgins- chairperson FBG Inc.

The concept of neutral net Carbon emissions has been circulating in the scientific community for several years, but through 2021 it has become an issue spoken of by politicians and the wider community. Though the presence of Carbon in the atmosphere (CO_2) is widely known to be essential to all plant life, and thus animal life, including our own, it is the excess above certain thresholds which scientists state will lead to detrimental climatic conditions upon the Earth. Other gasses such as methane (CH_4), which enters the atmosphere from many different sources including cattle, who burp it out of their mouths as a consequence of their digestive processes, are known to be major contributors to these detrimental climatic conditions.

Since its earliest beginnings Fleurieu Beef Group members have been involved in a variety of trials, strategies and on ground works, which although they appear insignificant on their own in mitigating greenhouse emissions, yet when combined into a management package provide real means of contributing to Carbon neutral beef production on their farms. Although not an exhaustive list, the following will give the reader an indication of the trials, works and ongoing developments which are taking place on member's properties today.

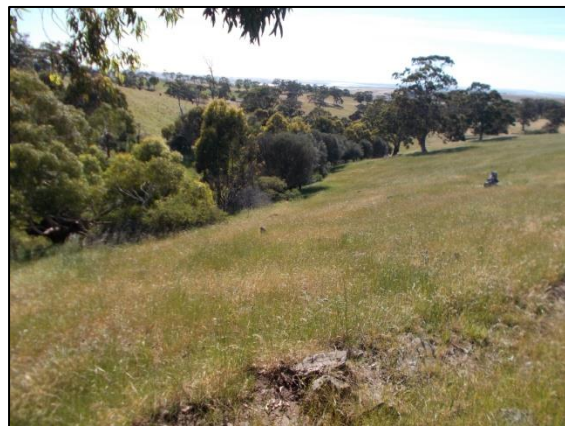
1

Removal of CO_2 from the atmosphere by woody vegetation

Through the process of photosynthesis, woody plants like Australian natives, remove carbon from the atmosphere and store it in their above and below ground masses, thus creating a net draw down and storage of atmospheric carbon (CO_2). This effective carbon sink is utilized by members of the Fleurieu Beef Group when they revegetate gullies, hills, water courses, erosion sites and poorer land class areas that are unsuitable for cattle production. These areas also provide shelter and comfort for the cattle, enhancing weight gains whilst also providing important wild life corridors for the movement and spread of native species across the landscape.



PLANTING ESTABLISHED IN 2005



CARBON SINK 2021

2

Storage of carbon in soils by dung beetles

Although Australia has its own native dung beetles, adapted to feed on dry fibrous pellets of marsupials, these proved to have minimal impact on dispersal and burial of cattle dung. Thus from late 1960's CSIRO began sourcing beetles from other countries and introducing them to Australia.

Fleurieu beef Group members began work in this area in 2002, and with the assistance and oversight of Dr Bernard Doube released the beetle *Bubas bison* onto their farms, which has now spread over the whole of the Fleurieu Peninsula.

Burying huge quantities of cattle dung through the long winters, this beetle increases soil carbon levels, again helping to resolve global warming issues. Another consequence of this timely dung burial is that it interferes with the life cycle of cattle intestinal parasites, thus dramatically reducing chemical means of treating this infection; not only mitigating the exposure of our food chain to industrial chemicals but also reducing the need to manufacture them.



DUNG BURIAL WITH SUMMER ACTIVE BEETLES



DUNG BURIAL WITH WINTER ACTIVE BEETLES

3 On-farm dung beetle nurseries ensure successful establishment of new species

Establishment of dung beetle nurseries on member's properties has great promise, for in these structures new species of dung beetles are rapidly propagated under controlled conditions, in order for donor colonies to be relocated to other regions, where the process can be repeated. This strategy, developed in conjunction with Creation Care, avoids the risk that large numbers of valuable and relatively rare species are exposed to unknown detrimental environmental factors. The ultimate objective of this strategy is to efficiently enable the establishment of dung beetles on Australian farms, so that in all seasons of the year, complete burial of dung takes place; thus storing carbon in the soil year round.



DUNG BEETLE NURSERY ON FARM

“I’d love to see sheep & cattle farms where you can see livestock breeding taking place and then alongside will be a dung beetle nursery where the mini livestock are bred and reared- and considered just as important. We believe they may have capacity to be a major force in on farm carbon neutrality programs”.

Dr Russ Barrow, Charles Sturt University

4 Biochar in cattle dung increases levels of soil carbon

Trials with Biochar also show promise: biochar is added to feedstuffs fed to cattle in order to increase efficiency of daily weight gain (feed conversion and hence methane reduction) and is then passed out in the dung. Consequently when buried by dung beetles, improves pasture production, soil carbon and microorganisms in the soil. The addition of Biochar to the dung compared to dung alone being buried had the effect of: increased pasture production; increased fungi by up to 10mg/kg; increase of 4tonnes/ ha soil carbon; 34mg/kg more phosphorus, with higher molybdenum and sulphur; improved pasture ME. The final report is available on the FBG website.

5

Extension and education improves cattle efficiency, lowering emissions


Fleurieu Beef Group has run many workshops, including “Bred Well Fed Well” where members have had opportunity to gain practical understanding of achieving real genetic progress in their cattle. This knowledge has helped in bull and heifer selection, while several members have also begun AI programs. Genetic gain achieved from these programs is direct and cumulative; improving the present and future generations of cattle. The learning paths explored through the technology project have also addressed strategies to achieve efficient production systems, as measured by emissions per kilogram of beef produced. Again, this improved production efficiency helps reduce atmospheric carbon contribution from agriculture.

FBG members have also participated in the “Farm 300” series of workshops, where many insights into reducing their on farm methane and carbon footprint were presented. Through this program members became much more aware of how improving their production efficiency, reduces methane intensity. The final report is available on the FBG website.

STELLAR

(AMF,CAF,DDF,NHF,DWF,MAF,MHF,OHF,OSF)

Sitz Stellar 726D | 29AN2025
Owned by: Sitz Angus Farm, MT; ABS Global, Inc., WI



Stellar Performance and Design

- THE go-to USA bull to add extreme mass, power, thickness and faultless structure to your breeding program
- Boasting structural data and visual appraisal, Stellar is unquestionably one of the safest structural bulls available to the Australian cattle sector
- Combine Stellar's structural EBVs with big calving ease, low birth weight, super growth data and big EMA & Fats combination, and he becomes unsurpassed in the Angus breed
- Super thick topped and deep bodied, Stellar only improved his powerhouse phenotype while breeding cows as a yearling
- Stellar sons are flying in the sale rings already in Australia and are in demand for their extreme mass and impeccable structure
- Sexcel® sexed female product available

Reg. No.	USA18397542	Benfield Substance 8506	
Born	23/01/2016	Mohnen Substantial 272	
Birth Weight	30kg	Mohnen Glyn Mawr Elba 1758	
Weight 205 days	411kg	Connealy Final Product	
Weight 365 days	595kg	Sitz Pride 200B	
SS 12 months	37cm	Sitz Pride 308Y	
FS Mature	6.2		

	CE-DIR	CE-DT	GL	BW	200D	400D	600D	MCW	Milk	DTC	SS	DOC	CWT	EMA	Rib	Rump	RBY	IMF	NFI-F	Claw	Foot	Leg	\$A	\$A-L
EBV	+4.9	+7.4	-9.6	+2.6	+5	+105	+132	+98	+18	-6.5	+1.4	+25	+63	+4.9	+4.0	+3.8	+0.0	+1.4	+0.33	+0.60	+0.78	+1.14	\$252	\$420
ACC	79%	50%	98%	98%	97%	96%	96%	89%	82%	43%	93%	92%	85%	85%	83%	80%	76%	85%	56%	99%	99%	78%		
%Rank	32	9	3	20	29	13	20	54	43	10	75	28	60	66	2	4	77	69	69	9	11	81	6	5

EBVs as at Mid-July 2023 TOP 20%

SOURCE: 2023-2024 ABS BEEF SIRE DIRECTORY; USED BY PERMISSION

6

Improved pasture production draws down atmospheric carbon (CO²)

The grazing of pasture by cattle stimulates the growth rates of these pastures. People in urban areas observe this effect when they cut their lawns; the more often they mow the grass, it responds with vigorous growth. Fleurieu beef producers utilise this principal, adding pasture rest periods so that maximum growth from photosynthesis, due to adequate leaf area, takes place. This continuous cycle of rested growth followed by harvest of the pasture mass, improves the effectiveness of drawing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Cattle provide many advantages in this cycle, as compared to mowing the grass, for they are able to convert the grass into a high quality foodstuff (beef), whilst their residues of dung and urine are important organic fertilisers which further stimulate pasture growth. The increased root mass of the pasture is also an important means of directly increasing levels of soil carbon.

7

Research and outreach

The Fleurieu Beef Group has developed and mutually maintained close links with professionals who are leaders in their field and who require access to farms, in order to carry out their research and trials. These partnerships are vital to achieve carbon neutral beef production, creating a real sense of personal ownership and involvement, as our members participate in “Citizen Science” whilst forging life time friendships with industry leaders.




GEOFF BOWLES SPREADING BIOCHAR WITH THE AIM OF IMPROVING SOIL HEALTH, BUILDING SOIL CARBON AND MAXIMIZING PRODUCTION OF HIS LUCERNE Paddock

Acknowledgements: Dr Bernard Doube and Melissa Rebbeck for their assistance in the preparation of this article.

From the Archives

FLEURIEU BEEF GROUP NEWSLETTER #4



Meeting Held On 25th Feb. 1997
at "Ferndale Park", Hindmarsh Tiers: the
property of G & B Davis.

Members Present: Richard Willson, Tim Prance, Geoff Davis, Ian Gillies, Susie Gillies, Margaret Sweeney, Mike Boerema, Terry Sweetman, Elaine Trevillyan, Brian Sinkinson and Adrian Burton.

Special Welcome to Neil Arthur.
 Special Thanks to Bet Davis for her hospitality
 Invited Speaker: Peter Rix from Proud Irrigation, Victor Harbor.

Because of the extensive printed notes which were provided, the inefficient Secretary didn't take additional notes: (that's the feeble excuse). It was agreed to proceed with the application for PIRD funding in accordance with the draft. **Please note the enclosed material on irrigation costs, supplied by Tim Prance.**

Meeting Held On 18th March 1997
at "Kimberley Park", Yundi:
the property of R & D Willson.

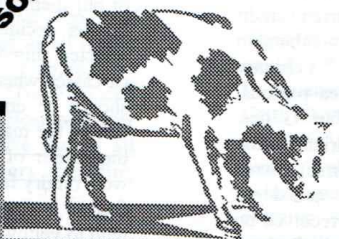
Members Present: Richard Willson, Geoff Davis, Tim Prance, Ian Gillies, Susie Gillies, Margaret Sweeney, Terry Sweetman, Mike Boerema, Richard Lawrence, Brian Sinkinson, and Adrian Burton.

Visitor: Nigel Wood from Finnis.
 Invited Speakers: Grant Lyon who has the Hi-Fert Agency at Strathalbyn.
 Barry Bull who is the Chief Agronomist for Hi-Fert

Apologies: Neil Arthur and Brian Codd.
Special Achievement Award: won by Ian and Susie Gillies who are believed to have created a record for punctuality by arriving for this meeting at approximately 7.30am – just in time to enjoy breakfast with Richard.

*Fleurieu
Fleurieu.*

Put some Fleurieu in your fridge



(For convenience, the report of the meeting held on 18th March has been divided into three sections)

Section One : The Fleurieu Beef Business Sessions Chaired by Geoff Davis.

1. **Geoff Davis** reported that he had recently attended a meeting at Yankalilla where he met and had a discussion with Mr Kerin the Minister for Primary Industries and Mr Ian Heinrich who is the Manager of Rural Finance and Development with PISA. If we make a correct application, it appears there is a likelihood that our group may receive financial assistance for members to participate in a Farm Chemical Course. David Walker (14th Floor, 25 Grenfell Street, Adelaide. Phone 08 8226-1886) is the Senior Project Officer. Under the RAS Group Training Grants, a grant, limited to 75% of the eligible cost of a group activity, is available to eligible applicants for the purpose of coordination, organising and/or engaging a training provider to deliver group activities.
2. It was suggested that if our group becomes heavily involved with the marketing of our own stock, we should consider establishing contact with Mr Ray Sayers from the **Fleurieu Regional Development Corporation** which may help us set our goals and develop a business plan.
3. **Tim Prance** advised us that a "ProGraze Plus" course is currently being piloted at Yass and Warrambool. It is likely that this intensive five day course (which is an extension of the initial ProGraze course we undertook) will be further trialed in SA. Tim indicated that both himself and Simon Ellis could be involved in conducting this trial, which has funding from the Meat Research Corporation. In its "polished" version, this course could retail for approximately \$1200 but it may be possible for our group to participate in the trial course for \$200. Please carefully read the course outline Tim has provided on separate sheets enclosed. Members of our group who wish to undertake this course will need to register their interest by early May of this year.
4. After using the funds of the group to settle his account for a six week holiday in the Greek Isles, the Treasurer reported that the group's bank account (at the Mt Compass Branch of Bank SA : Account Number 15428640) had a current credit of \$175. This comprises the \$25 membership subscription received on Tuesday 25th February 1997, from each of the following seven persons: Terry Sweetman, Brian Sinkinson, Ian Gillies, Margaret Sweeney, Mike Boerema, Adrian Burton and (by kind courtesy of his wife's purse), Geoff Davis. To this amount should be added an additional \$50, being the subscriptions received on 18th March from Brian Codd and Richard Lawrence.
5. **Brian Sinkinson** gave a report on the discussions he had held with beef processors and retailers.
 - 5.1 Brian gave the following brief outline of our group to the companies concerned:
 - we could offer a combined total of about 1400 head of milk vealers per season
 - they would dress between 160 and 200 kg
 - we could possibly offer buyers semi-loads of cattle, all yarded at the one location
 - we could possibly put up 70 head and allow the buyer to reject any 10
 - all vealers could be weighed, fat scored and assessed for butt shape prior to the arrival of the buyer
 - no HGP's would be used on any cattle
 - we would make every effort to minimise bruising and hide damage
 - only cattle from accredited members of our group would be presented
 - 5.2 Brian reported that all of the companies he spoke to, are now working on a grid system.
 - 5.3 Geoff Wellington, from Hirds at Geelong, emphasised the C butt shape.
 - 5.4 Woolworths said they would take vealers up to 250 kg dressed, and they prefer British breeds or up to one third Euro crosses. They prefer milk calves. They are not interested in grass fed cattle or ~~stock out of a feedlot~~. They believe anything with more than 1/3 Euro cross is too lean and too coarse.
 - 5.5 Coles are not as selective. They will take grass fed cattle. Their current price for steers is \$1.80 per kilo dressed and \$1.60 per kilo dressed, for heifers.
 - 5.6 Independent Wholesalers emphasised the importance of having lines of cattle of very similar weight and fat score. They encourage groups of 2-3 producers to visit the works. They would like all members of our group to visit the works during the course of a year. If we wanted, they would be prepared to operate directly with our group (ie without the involvement of a third party such as an agent.)
 - 5.7 Thank you for a job well done, Brian.
6. It was agreed that we should prepare some written information to send to the agents, CALM etc.
7. **Terry Sweetman** reported that he had made a booking for Thursday 20th March for a small group of our members to visit the Normanville Abattoir. It was decided to meet at 7.30 am. to follow selected animals through the works and assess the carcasses when they come off the chain. The visit should be completed by 9.30 to 10 am. Bruce Webb, the manager of the works, commented that the colour of the fat was better when the stock were on dry feed. When there was a flush of spring feed, a hormone in the feed called carotene could tend to yellow the fat.

8. **Mike Boerema** reported that the only fat scanner accredited by the MRC is the "Easy Scan" unit (as demonstrated by Mike Milne) which costs \$3,000. There was considerable discussion about how we should proceed. Following a motion put by Mike Boerema and seconded by Richard Willson, there was a clear indication by vote, that we go ahead and purchase a machine as soon as possible. Those people wishing to be a joint owner of the machine will be charged no more than \$360 and these members will pay 20 cents per head for fat scoring their cattle. All other people will be charged \$4 per head, with \$2 going to the joint owners and \$2 to the member doing the job.
9. It was agreed that all members of our group should use a common ear tag with the name Fleurieu Beef. It was further agreed that we proceed to purchase 1500 tags and that **Richard Lawrence** and **Terry Sweetman** investigate the matter.
10. **Ian Gillies** showed us samples of a range of printed logos he had prepared on his computer. These aroused considerable comment. It was agreed that we register "Fleurieu Beef" as a business name and Ian offered to continue to oversee this aspect of our operation. Thanks, Ian.
11. It was agreed that we sponsor a Farm Chemicals Course on 13th-14th May 1997.
 - 11.1 It will be necessary for a minimum of twelve people to attend.
 - 11.2 Those who were interested to attend were asked to record their name with **Richard Willson** who offered to continue to liaise with John Hill (Onkaparinga branch -TAFE).
 - 11.3 *(It is important to note that our group is having difficulty finding sufficient people to attend this course. Please encourage any neighbours or friends to attend, as we don't want to have the first activity sponsored by our group, run at a loss. Apart from the poor image this could convey, we will have to make up any "financial shortfall".)*
12. **The next meeting of our group will be held at the property of Margaret and John Sweeney, Ridge Road, Nangkita, on Tuesday 29th April at 8.15 am for a prompt start at 8.30 am.**
(Ian and Susie please carefully note the time !!)
 - 12.1 It was agreed that Brian Sinkinson invite the chief buyer for Woolworths to address us.
 - 12.2 It was also agreed that Tim Prance be invited to address us on the general topic of "Benchmarking". Tim provided us all with a four page printed handout prepared by Agriculture Victoria, entitled "The Financial Performance of Herds in the Beef Manager Programme, 1991 to 1994." **We should all carefully read this article before attending the next meeting.**
13. We have meetings planned for 27th May, 24th June and 22nd July 1997, so please mark your calendar.

Section Two. The Meat Research Corporation Session chaired by Geoff Davis.

1. We all viewed a video programme about "Marketlink" which is sponsored by the MRC.
 - On the slaughter floor Video Image Analysis, known as VIASCAN, takes a freeze-frame of the carcass. In its simplest form VIASCAN provides a picture record of an individual carcass which can then be matched to producer records of the live animal.
 - That picture is immediately analysed by an advanced computer programme which measures the composition and dimension of each carcass, butt profile, external fat cover and distribution and the bruising score.
 - It then calculates the saleable meat yield, providing feedback to all members of the marketing chain.
 - In chilled meat carcasses, the VIASCAN chiller assessment unit measures meat colour, fat colour, marbling and fat depth in the rib-eye area.
 - It will also provide the processing sector with the value of the carcass, in terms of saleable yield.
 - The VIASCAN portion assessment unit is a breakthrough for the food service sector and the wholesalers which supply it, because it determines the exact parameters of individual portions or retain cuts.
 - The VIASCAN analysis includes the two key factors which influence consumer acceptability fat colour and marbling.
 - It also assesses the commercial yield by measuring fat depth and eye muscle area.
 - Importantly, all the information which is gathered through VIASCAN in meatworks is completely objective.
2. Many thanks to Geoff Davis for obtaining the video which for many of us, was probably "a real eye-opener". Unfortunately due to time constraints we were unable to discuss our impressions of the video and implications which arise from the information it conveys.
3. It is interesting to note that "Marketlink" is supported by a training package covering meat quality assessment, Quality Assurance procedures, objective measurement technology, best practise management, animal health and hygiene. There could well be aspects of this package which would be of particular interest to our group.
4. Geoff Davis also offered each of us a copy of the 1995-96 Annual Report of the MRC. This 74 page glossy publication with coloured photographs (which must have cost "a fortune" to produce), contains some very interesting information:- (especially some of the Financial Statements !!!)

Section Three: The Invited Guest Speaker Session Chaired by Richard Willson.

Richard welcomed and introduced:

- **Grant Lyon** the proprietor of the Hi-Fert Agency in Strathalbyn
- **Barry Bull**, Chief Agronomist with Hi-Fert.

The following points were made by Barry Bull.

1. Hi-Fert is owned by Western Mining. Thus far the company has been an importer and marketer of finished products. A significant fertiliser deposit has recently been discovered near Mt Isa. When in production, it is expected that about half of the Dutches Deposit will be used for local consumption and half will be used for export.
2. Although triple super is low in sulphur, the technology now exists to coat triple super with sulphur. Producers in an intensive production situation might use DAP (Di Ammonium Phosphate) or MAP (Mono Ammonium Phosphate) which has been sulphur coated.
3. In general it is not possible to put rock phosphate directly onto the soil because it isn't soluble. However, reactive rock phosphates can be an effective source of phosphorous under acidic soils and are slow release.
4. Phosphorous can move through the soil, over time.
5. Fertiliser is applied to:
 - correct a nutrient deficiency
 - maintain or improve soil fertility
 - maintain or improve carrying capacity
 - improve farm productivity
6. Stage 1 of applying fertilisers is to overcome deficiencies (which is only playing "catch-up").
7. We should all be aiming to achieve Stage 2, in which we have built up the soil to a level where there is no obvious response to fertiliser. Because our beef/pasture production uses up nutrient, all we have to do each year is to apply a maintenance application (which is more desirable because we are really only playing "top-up"). If we are aiming to maximise our production, we must ensure that the outputs are at least matched by additional inputs of nutrients.
8. Only 20% of applied fertiliser is used by the plants in the year of application, the remainder is what has been applied in previous years and the plants take up from the soil.
9. In a fertiliser programme, the top priority should be to get the phosphorous level correct. There is an important relationship between phosphorous levels and digestability of pastures.
10. We need to be alert to the possibility that if we start pushing productivity hard, there may be issues arise which we didn't have before. For example, if we make improvements in pasture productivity we will also need to make appropriate changes to our stocking level or we will encounter problems with under-grazing.
11. It may be worth considering applying a capital dressing of fertiliser on a selected paddock. This means putting on a large dose of phosphorous which, because of the high cost, probably may not be economic in the short term, but may prove to be economic in the long term.
12. The golden rule for sandy soils is to treat them with a light application, often. In contrast, clay/loam soils have a much better ability to hold nutrition because the soil particles are much smaller and therefore have more surface area to hold the nutrition. One of the most important factors in a fertiliser programme is the ability of the soil to hold the nutrient. We should always remember that all soils can be improved by building up the organic component and hence the soil's fertility. In simple terms, soil fertility makes pasture dollars.
13. A well fertilised paddock may "look like a lawn" because of the palatability of the pasture (but under grazing can lead to reduced palatability). In contrast, poorly fertilised pasture can result in reduced productivity.
14. Soil testing should be one of the starting points of any sound fertiliser programme. Because constant monitoring is important, we should continue with the soil tests on a regular basis on clearly defined test "patterns" (ie markers on fence lines). This will help us determine whether our fertiliser application programme is working. Tissue testing is another important monitoring tool. Observation and recording are also vital components of a sound programme. Have we detected that some paddocks are better producers than others? Why?
15. An annual rainfall of 30 inches or more, on moderate soil types should allow us to carry a Dry Sheep Equivalent in the low to mid 20's. The controlling factors are rainfall, sunlight and temperature. (If it were possible for us to utilise to its maximum potential, all of the rain, sun and temperature, we should be able to produce 20 to 25 tonnes of pasture per hectare.) A maintenance application of phosphorous in this area, running 20 dse would be 20 kg per hectare.
16. An interesting trial would be to apply up to 100 kg of phosphorous and 100 kg of potash over two acres. If there is no noticeable change, the news is very good. However, if there is a large improvement in the pasture or we notice that the stock prefer to graze that area etc., there are most likely to be gains from applying heavier rates of fertiliser on the remainder of the property.
17. **We need to be mindful that:**
 - the height of feed is not a true indicator of the capacity of a paddock to produce beef
 - where there is an increase in fertiliser application and an increased stocking rate, the feed may be shorter but it may produce more beef.

Fleurieu Beef Group Inc

Advance your beef enterprise



“Cattle breeding is a relatively simple endeavor.
The only difficult part is to keep it simple” Tom Lasater.

