



2020 Annual Report

Fleurieu Beef Group Inc.

Incorporated May 31st 2000

Index

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	7
Fleurieu Beef Group Inc. Chairman Report.....	8
Secretary Report	10
Financial statements of the year ended 30th June, 2020.....	13
Income	13
Expenditure.....	13
Surplus	13
Balance Sheet at 30th June, 2020	13
Projects	14
Field testing of three new dung beetle species on the Fleurieu Peninsula.....	14
Producer Technology Group Project	15
2020 FBG Program.....	16
From the Archives	17

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 the Fleurieu Beef Group 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 Wilson, 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 until his retirement in December 2013, whilst the offices of secretary and treasurer were held at various times by Adrian Burton, Althea Grove, Richard Wilson 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 was continuously held by Rory Fitzpatrick till December 2013 when he was appointed chairman, and upon his retirement in December 2015, Geoff Bowles was appointed to this office, retiring in December 2017. Mark Higgins followed on and remains chairman to the present day.

FLEURIEU BEEF GROUP

Financial Statement For Period 19th Feb 1997 to 13th Feb 1998

OPENING BALANCE	19-Feb-97		\$0.00
CREDITS			
Subscriptions	6-Mar-97	\$175.00	
	10-Apr-97	\$50.00	
	2-May-97	\$50.00	
	8-May-97	\$25.00	
	29-May-97	\$75.00	
	11-Jul-97	\$200.00	
	31-Jul-97	\$25.00	
		\$600.00	
Chemical Course	8-May-97	\$400.00	
TOTAL			\$1,000.00
DEBITS			
Cheque Book	6-Mar-97	\$5.00	
Govt. Debits Tax	1-Apr-97	\$0.30	
	2-Jun-97	\$0.70	
	1-Aug-97	\$0.70	
		\$1.70	
State Govt. FID	4-Apr-97	\$0.11	
	2-May-97	\$0.03	
	6-Jun-97	\$0.38	
	8-Aug-97	\$0.13	
		\$0.65	
Chemical Course	16-May-97	\$400.00	
Secretarial	11-Jul-97	\$128.00	
TOTAL			\$535.40
CLOSING BALANCE	13-Feb-98		\$464.60

First FBG financial statement - February 1997

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 Wilson. 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 Inc. In 2019 the Fleurieu Beef Group Inc. website was launched: <https://www.fleurieubeefgroup.com/>

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

Mark Higgins - Chairman

Robin Smith – Vice Chairman and
Program Secretary

Melissa Rebbeck – Secretary

David Macklin – Treasurer

Life Members

Geoff Davis

Mark Higgins

Barb Voysey

20 Year Members

Geoff Bowles

Mark Higgins

Austin Johnson (#)

Richard Lawrence

Terry Sweetman

Richard Willing

Richard Wilson

Tim Prance

(#) Retired member

Mark Higgins (right) presents Life Membership certificate to retired, 17 year term Chairman, Geoff Davis



Members

Tom Adams *

David Ambrose

Bradley Arthur

Geoff Bowles

Tom Consentino *

David Dawes *

Keith Fryer

Janet Furler

Mark Higgins

Philip Jacques

Richard Lawrence

Cherry Macklin

David Macklin

Nan Mann

John McEvoy

Nigel McFadyen

Sandy Nott

Chelsea Parker *

Tim Prance

Jason Patullo

Stephen Rogers

Peter Rumbold

Andrew Robinson

Melissa Rebbeck

Stephen Schmitz

Robn Smith

Geoff Stuckey

Terry Sweetman

Matthew Viney *

Richard Willing

Richard Wilson

(*) New Member



Condition scoring : Members supporting and learning from each other, Waitpinga 2019

Fleurieu Beef Group Inc. Chairman Report

15 / 12 / 20

Welcome all members and guests to our 2020 FBG AGM, marking twenty four consecutive years of operation for the Group. This achievement could not have happened without the commitment of the membership and is truly a milestone we can all appreciate. Next year's AGM will thus mark our 25th anniversary and I would encourage members to put forth ideas to the Executive, which could be incorporated into our celebrations.

The Executive Committee, consisting of Melissa Rebbeck, Robin Smith, David Macklin and myself have met together once this year on the 17th November to plan for this AGM and next year's program. Usually we would also meet at the beginning of the year but the postponement of the 2019 AGM due to severe heat wave conditions and the onset of the Covid 19 Pandemic resulted not only in the cancelation of this executive meeting but also the April, May and June monthly meetings.

Whilst the FBG program has been disrupted somewhat by cancelation of meetings and government meeting regulations, there have been important outcomes achieved.

- 1) The Group now has its own Website up and running, enabling the posting of annual and project reports together with news and advertising material of interest to the community. Thank you to Melissa Rebbeck and Tom Consentino for their assistance. The website address is <https://www.fleurieubeefgroup.com/>
- 2) The 3 Species Dung Beetle Project was successfully completed and the important final report can be found on our website. This ground breaking report, prepared by Greg Dalton of Creation Care, presents the methodology for small colony, field nursery propagation of dung beetles together with habitat suitability for beetle breeding .It is essential reading. Thank you to all FBG members who offered their properties as nursery sites and managed the beetles over several months.
- 3) After much preliminary discussion and presentations at meetings last year, the new two year Technology Project began in July 2020. In preparation for this project two special planning meetings were held in May and July, attended by Tim Prance, Bradley Arthur and myself. Thank you Tim and Bradley. It must be acknowledged that this project would never have materialised without the considerable input of Tim Prance, both in the application process and in the project delivery.
- 4) The membership has continued to grow with five new members joining this year; welcome Tom Adams, Tom Consentino, David Dawes, Chelsea Parker and Mathew Viney. Member attendance has been excellent with twenty plus at most meetings. The October and November meetings were particularly well attended, considering it is such a busy time on our farms. This year we were able to celebrate a 90th birthday with Richard Willing; congratulations Richard. Sadly we acknowledge the retirement of Austin Johnson, also a long term member of the Group.
- 5) This year members have received record prices for their cattle, with markets in all categories reaching unprecedented levels. Of special note was the sale of a 10 month old vealer calf for \$2,000; Richard Lawrence being the happy vendor. Breeding females have boomed together with feedlot entry yearlings, with processer cattle making \$50,000 per deck and light weight weaner calves to \$7+ per kg live weight.

Fleurieu Beef Group's most important asset is its membership and I would thank all members for their contribution during 2020. Thank you to my executive team Melissa, Robin and David who have faithfully worked for the success of the Group; a great team I have enjoyed working with. Robin Smith, as you all know, has had a serious medical condition and yet, whilst still recovering has continued to serve FBG when able. It is possible he will not be able to continue working on the executive committee in 2021 and I would like now to acknowledge and thank him for his contribution to FBG throughout 2020 and his courage under difficult circumstances.

Thank you to Geoff Bowles for organising and booking venues for our monthly meetings and Richard Lawrence for his minute recording during our secretary's absence. To Steven Rodgers for opening his farm to us in October and presenting interesting and practical information on breeding cattle for today's markets; to Tim Prance for his enormous contribution to the Technology Project and to Professor Wayne Pitchford for maintaining our strong links with Roseworthy Campus of the University of Adelaide; thank you to you all. Hopefully we can all enjoy the return of Nann Mann's delicious morning teas in 2021, when government restrictions are lifted and whilst on the subject of food; thank you to Stephen Schmitz for sourcing the meat and being our Chef at the BBQ.

At this year's AGM we have the privilege of acknowledging and presenting certificates to those members who have attained the milestone of 20 or more year's membership. To Geoff Bowles, Austin Johnson, Richard Lawrence, Tim Prance, Terry Sweetman, Richard Willing and Richard Wilson; my heartiest congratulations and I am proud to stand with people who have such commitment and support of the Fleurieu Beef Group.

Happy Christmas and New Year to you all

Mark Higgins



"Bulls should look like bulls"



"Cows should look like cows" Tom Lasater

Secretary Report

We all know this will be a year to remember. As farmers we have been fortunate to be able to move around and do our work relatively freely and for that I am grateful. While we had less meetings this year, they were quality and we were fortunate to attract another 5 members to join FBG with one retiree our membership looks healthier than ever with 31 members in total.

This year we trust you have all enjoyed exploring the Ag Tech opportunities with Tim Prance and looking at heifer selection with Stephen Rogers and the great insights from Professor Wayne Pitchford.

Another highlight was the meeting at Mt Compass with Greg Dalton. Together we presented the opportunities of incorporating both dung beetles and biochar into our farm system to build the soil health and carbon. This project has been very rewarding working in with FBG members whom are all custodians of their soil and take a great interest in building its productivity. It will be exciting when finally, you can all release your spring active beetles and let them do their work to improve your soil.



Mount Compass Field Day 2020



*Only one nights work!! .. Dung Beetles in action
(Mark Higgins)*

We have also continued with a trial on Mark Higgins Farm and we have put in a replicated split plot block design to further investigate the benefit of incorporating biochar with dung (to simulate it going through an animal or broadcasting on the soil).

Our last lot of soil and pasture samples were taken in October and there is some great outcomes. I look forward to presenting these possibly in March or May 2021. The project would not have been possible without Mark Higgins and his hard work collecting dung, mixing biochar and placing on the plots. I have enjoyed going out to Marks farm and his entire family have helped with a little citizen science. Thank you Mark!



Soil health trial – Soil Sampling in Action



Soil health trial – Trail Plots



The Higgins family - some happy faces getting in the thick of it!



I look forward to continuing this work (fingers crossed) feeding biochar to beef cattle in some more trials with members as we await grant application results. In addition grant funding will determine if we will have a mobile pyrolysis unit on the Fleurieu soon to be able to make biochar locally. In the mean time I have been feeding it to my cows as per the picture. I have even had a visit from a Nuffield Scholar from Ireland, along with Bernard Doube (Dung Beetle Solutions Australia), to see the added benefit of biochar to activate the manure. As you can see my cows have certainly been happier, healthier and friendlier.



Biochar feeding trial - Nuffield Scholar from Ireland inspecting the feeding



Biochar feeding trial – Mel's Happy Cows

I continued to head up the SA Livestock Consultants Conference. With input from 20 independent livestock consultants we presented some of the latest research and innovation for the meat industry with over 90 attendees. It was great to see many of you attend again virtually this year and I trust you found it informative.

Again I thank Mark Higgins for his tireless work and drive that has made us all more united, Robin Smith for all of his excellent work with the programming, Richard Lawrence and Angela Moore for the minute taking and typing in my absence, David Macklin for his treasury work and all of the members that hosted or supported the meetings and activities.

I trust that 2021 will be less challenging than this year as we move forward with a mix of old and new members and your input to drive future meetings and extra-curricular activities.

I wish you all the best for a prosperous 2021.

Melissa Rebbeck

Financial statements of the year ended 30th June, 2020

Income

	\$
Membership subscriptions	1875
Interest received	7
Dung beetle project (Dept Env Water)	29932
Dung Beetle Admin Fee	1500
Total	\$ 33314

Expenditure

Honorariums	1440
Bank fees	8
Morning teas	380
Hall Hire	90
Dung beetle project - acquittal	29932
Life membership expenses	33
Christmas meeting costs	256
Total	\$ 32139

Surplus

Total (income minus expenditure)	\$ 1175
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Balance Sheet at 30th June, 2020

Accumulated funds 1st July 2019	3252
Surplus for the year	1175
Represented by Beyond Bank	\$ 4427

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 \$29850 GST exclusive from the South Australian Government 'Supporting Sustainable Primary Production' Grant through Natural Resources AMLR NRM Board. The project end date was June 2020 (with Creation Care supporting further analysis and field observations).

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, *O. Vacca*, *B. Bubalus* and *C. 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 this year 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.

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. A draft program for 2021 is drawn up, beginning in February.



Technology!! – The first ever Typewriter

In addition to the above, the Fleurieu Beef Group is also closely associated with-

- A survey of drenching strategies used by cattle producers and their observations of dung beetle activity, together with a trial testing the affect of two different drugs, used for internal parasite control, upon the breeding of dung beetles.
- A trial testing the affects of cattle dung and dung beetles, together with various applications of biochar, upon soil health.

2020 FBG Program

Date	Venue	Topic	Activity	Contacts
18 th February	Mt. Compass Sports Centre	Hay tests and fertiliser trials	Analysis of submitted hay samples	Tim Prance 0427 812655 Melissa Rebbeck 0427 273727
17 th March	Mt. Compass Sports Centre	Three species dung beetle project update. Biochar project update	Presentations on both topics in an open to the public meeting	Greg Dalton 0408 890416 Melissa Rebbeck 0427 273727
21 st April	<i>Cancelled due to Covid 19 regulations</i>			
19 th May	<i>Cancelled due to Covid 19 regulations</i>			
16 th June	<i>Cancelled due to Covid 19 regulations</i>			
21 st July	Mt. Compass Sports Centre	Technology Project introduction	Cattle enterprise survey and SWOT analysis	Tim Prance 0427 812655
18 th August	Yundi Hall	Feeding weaner cattle	Webinar from MLA cattle series	Benjamin Linn
15 th September	Mt. Compass Sports Centre	Technology Project session one	Carcase and Feedlot feedback using NLIS	Elke Hocking
20 th October	Clovelly-Willow Creek	Bull selection and breeding to meet market specifications	Live animal assessments and presentation.	Stephen Rogers 8598 5244
17 th November	Yundi Hall	Black baldy vs Pure Angus	Presentation of results from cross breeding project	Professor Wayne Pitchford. 0418 809688
15 th December	Cliff Farm - Ashbourne	December and AGM meetings	Elections and presentations	Chef Stephen Schmitz 0439 131958

From the Archives



I hope you won't think me too impertinent, but as I have a computer and printer, I thought I would offer my services as recorder for the start of our new round of exciting activities. Apart from the enormous salary, one of the advantages of assuming the role of Official Scribe, is to be able to comment on things which have never taken place. For example, it seems to me that as we now have some *very welcome* "new bloodlines" within our group, perhaps we might consider changing our name. Our former name, (the Mt Compass Beef Discussion Group), is possibly too restrictive and may no longer adequately describe our membership (which extends from Yankalilla to Meadows). More importantly, if the matters which were discussed in Richard Wilson's shed over morning coffee come to fruition, and some type of marketing group is formed over time, I believe it would be in our interests to have a name which covers a much broader area than just Mt Compass. Within this Newsletter, I have tried out "Fleurieu Peninsula" and "South Coast" as names. How do you feel about the matter? People may well say, "Who cares what the group is called." It's not meant to be a big deal.

TUESDAY 17th DECEMBER 1996.

SPECIAL SPEAKERS : Mike Milne and Tom Penna.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE : Margaret Sweeney, Elaine Trevilyan, Susie Gillies, Ian Gillies, Richard Lawrence, Geoff Davis, Mark Higgins, Rory Fitzpatrick, Brian Sinkinson, Kevin Young, Richard Wilson, Adrian Burton.

APOLOGIES : Tim Prance, Mike Boerema, Doug McLaren, Brian Codd, Neil Arthur

We met at Kevin Young's cattle yards at 8.30 am to assess (and particularly to fat score) a group of top quality Murray Grey vealers he has entered in the State Carcass Competition. Mike Milne, a Beef Adviser with Primary Industries based at Struan in the SE, gave a talk about a hand held unit for scanning fat on cattle. It is evidently possible to use an ultra sonic scanner, but their approximate cost of \$30,000 has put them well beyond the financial reach of most producers and producer groups. The unit Mike demonstrated was designed in Armadale NSW and costs approximately \$3,000. When beef producers purchased electronic scales they gained access to information which helped them make informed decisions about marketing their stock. The hand held scanner may become accepted as a similar technological breakthrough, giving producers yet more information about their livestock. The trend in our industry seems to have been that whilst we as producers argued that we should be more fairly paid for our product, the processors responded by setting out quite specific specifications (often involving a grid system) and invited us to meet their requirements (or pay the penalty for too much or too little fat cover etc). I think it fair to say that the specifications that now need to be met for the sale of cattle, other than at auction, are getting progressively tighter. The hand held scanner is designed to measure fat thickness at the P8 site. There are difficulties measuring live animals which move around etc and the accuracy can be affected by dirt in the coat of an animal. However, for readings up to 7mm the machine is quite accurate. It has an accuracy of 1-2mm in the range from 7 to 10 mm of fat and for readings between 15 and 20 mm it could be 3-4mm out either way. There are four of these machines currently in commercial use in the SE. A group of 12 producers in the Willalooka area have a machine, as do a similar group at Furner.

Continued on the next page

From the previous page

Mike ensured that everyone in attendance gained "hands on" experience in taking the fat score readings. As the animals were weighed, visually assessed for butt shape and fat scored, Tom Penna a stock agent with Elders at Victor Harbor, offered suggestions as to the type of market outlet they would best suit, to gain maximum financial return for the producer.

We then moved down to Richard Wilson's property at Yundi and enjoyed morning coffee in his shed. An interesting (and potentially quite significant) discussion took place about the possibility of forming some type of marketing group. After thinking about this conversation and some of the points that were made, I came up with the idea of having a graphic to capture the essence of a marketing strategy based on quality assurance. I fully realise that everything is still in its infancy, but I thought the following graphic may help to stimulate interest and discussion. I'm sure you will all give the concept plenty of thought and I await your alternative ideas.



After morning tea we assessed a group of top quality cross-bred vealers Richard has entered in the State Carcass Competition. It became quite apparent that it would be possible to put several of Richard's animals together with several having the same specifications from Kevin's place, to form an even line which may attract more competition than if they each sold their own stock independently of each other. By this time it was about 1.30pm and some members had to leave because of other commitments. Several of the "die hards" went on to Adrian Burton's to assess some yearling heifers he had purchased.



On Thursday 5th December 1996 a most successful evaluation and planning meeting was held at Elaine Trevilyan's property at Gould Road, Currency Creek. Whilst we managed to put quite a few plans on paper for the new year, the real highlight was the magnificent dinner Elaine provided. I understand that a number of bottles from her extensive wine collection were greatly appreciated.

Thank You for your hospitality Elaine.

The following dates have been set down as part of our 1997 programme :-
 Tuesday 28th Jan.
 Tuesday 25th Feb.
 Tuesday 18th March
 Tuesday 29th April
 Tuesday 27th May
 Tuesday 24th June
 Tuesday 22nd July



