

Red Poll Youth Camp

By Ben Sullivan

Friday morning arrived and instead of throwing on my usual work clothes and shoes I threw on the clothes and shoes that I will live and breath for the next three days. My cattle clothes and boots! I threw my bag and swag over my shoulder grabbed my car keys and hit the road towing my own heifer Truffle to Glen Innes, NSW to participate in the National Red Poll Youth Camp for the fourth year in a row.

Once arriving at the Glen Innes Show ground where the camp would take place for the next three days. I unloaded my heifer and set up my stall for the weekend, my main focus being that all my gear was easily accessible. I then went and had some morning tea and got to know some of the other camp participants. The morning session was allocation of cows and getting to know your animal more. It was then lunch time and the food is to be complimented highly on. At lunch we were told we were going to three lectures today. Well I thought I was back at school but once I got into the lectures they were informative and I learnt something in every single one, that not only helped me on the weekend but with my own breeding program for my stud which I feel is also important. Afternoon tea came and I was so thankful because my body needed some energy and brain power. We all then handled, fed and watered the animals and then had a delicious dinner. But it wasn't bed for us we played games and laughed till it was time for bed.

The sun rose on the second day and everyone in the camp was up and straight to work making sure that every animal had feed and water. Then it was off to a big breakfast. We were told that we would be participating in informative hands on demonstrations in areas of clipping, show prep and parading. I was glad that these ones were hands on, I couldn't handle another day of just sitting and listening. I listened intently at all of them knowing that it would give me a leading edge on show day. I was glad to see lunch time roll around. After lunch it was Prime Beef Cattle Judging and I knew this was a weak area for me but I focused on the job at hand, referred back to the lectures, shock the nerves away and I spoke with confidence. Then it was all down to the judge. We then fed and watered our animals. After a long second day and knowing tomorrow was big we had some dinner, made some rope halters which was a good laugh and jumped into bed too.

The morning of the third day was here and it was the big day. Today was parading and judging. At Breakfast everyone was very touchy and nervous but not me I was trying to stay cool, calm and collected. My first task for the day was to help my junior prepare their animal and themselves for the day ahead. After helping my junior I washed my cow and gave her a quick brush. To me she looked fine so that is all that matters. It was photo time I was looking hot as I always do. Then it was morning tea time I was starving it had been a long time since breakfast. I was glad to see that the kitchen still had a huge supply of food for a growing boy like me. It was then junior judging I just stayed calm and remembered everything I had learnt over the weekend hoping it would get me over the line. Judging was very draining and I needed some food so I was glad to see lunch time. After lunch I quickly went and prepared my heifer and she was ready. I also made sure my junior participants animal was ready and that the participant was ready as well. They were both

ready for the event. As well as helping out anyone else that needed the extra help. I was then ready for parading. My cow was looking good and I was looking even better. I was just hoping for a good outcome.

It was then presentation of the awards. I was not expecting anything but amazingly I received:

3rd Senior Paraders
1st Stud Beef Judge
1st Prime Beef Judge
Champion Judge Overall
Highest Score Judging
Red Poll Junior Member Award

I would really like to thank everyone that made the camp possible and look forward to joining the committee for the National Red Poll Youth Camp to help make 2015 camp successful for other youth members. I strongly encourage others if you have cattle or not to put in an application next year because it will be the best three days of your lives. You will meet great people, have the best food and the best experience.