



NEWSLETTER
APRIL 2015

RED POLL
BEEF CATTLE

GRAND PARADE
SYDNEY FEATURE SHOW



Hello Everyone. As we are now through what has possibly resulted in one of the busiest 6 months period for Red Polls in some time, we should also reflect on how successful the outcomes have been.

Sincere thanks to all Exhibitors their family, friends and helpers, who participated at the Sydney Royal Feature Show. It was terrific to see so many young members at Sydney, willingly participating and enjoying the experience of being the Feature Breed.

The Grand Parade was another great spectacle which saw 30+ Red Polls on parade as the first Breed to enter the arena and the last of any exhibit to leave, this gave and left a great impression.

As a fellow Breeder and Exhibitor said to me after Judging “what a great positive day for Red Polls “

The Youth Committee’s Fund raising Auction was a great success with strong support and a lot of fun and laughs thrown in. Thanks to Tim Light for his very knowledgeable and entertaining Auctioneering!

In addition Red Poll carcass results were significant, 13 Pure Bred Steers with 9 medals awarded, Red Poll cross achieved the award for Virtual Taste Test Champion. For more detailed information on these excellent results please refer to our Web site.

Exposure in print and digital media from Fairfax has been very supportive and covered Nationally.

If Members have photos taken at the Sydney Feature could you please forward through to Keryn so our Breed can keep a file and utilise in the future.

Nominations for a Youth Member to participate at the SA Junior Heifer Expo are now open, I encourage youth members and

their parents to discuss and take the opportunity to nominate. Nominations Forms have been emailed however if you have not received them please contact Keryn Hutton.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

are working through options of holding Information sessions / workshops for Members later this year which is in line with our AGM about getting together, collaborating and harnessing positive Breed aspects for enhancement through the Industry. It is important as a way forward that we align our ideas for a streamlined approach. Communication is one key aspect, when used timely and efficiently it is an effective tool, encompassing the likes of Facebook, Web Site updates and information which gives endless opportunity’s to capture a huge audience and provides significant advantages. This is just one topic we could have on our Agenda to workshop, there will be more and I’m sure we’ll have at least one topic that will capture what you as member see as important. We will also introduce key aspects for our combined efforts to focus on again aligning our approach as a Breed. Remember our advantage is that we all know how good Red Polls are, we must take steps to prove it to the Industry. Once rolled out if these are successful, well supported and with Member feedback, we could look to hold more of the same style and format or conduct future workshops or information sessions in various other formats – more details to follow.

NATIONAL AGM

This will be hosted by WA Region on October 10th & 11th please keep these dates free. Following the World Congress Tour last year when Member feedback suggested. “We have shown our herds to the world...we should show them to Australia” the National Executive has decided to hold the AGM in association with a herd tour instead of a Show. As the AGM revolves around each region, Members will get the chance to progressively view the Nations

Presidents Post continued

herds. Once the program for the weekend is finalised we will advise. This will be a great chance for Members to spend time together, socialising and discussing our Breed opportunities.

Coming up we have Beef Australia 2015 in Rockhampton which will be supported by our Qld/Northern NSW Region. Then early August sees Members head north to exhibit at the Ekka – Brisbane Royal.

I'm looking forward to catching up with Members at various events and hope that those who need it will have good rains very soon, still in time for some autumn growth.

GAY WARD



NEW LOOK

Annual General Meeting

YOUR CHANCE TO PROGRESSIVELY VIEW THE RED
POLL HERDS OF AUSTRALIA

NOW TIED TO HERD TOURS INSTEAD OF A SHOW

- Save The Date-

The 2015 AGM will be held in Western Australia
October 10th and 11th

** You will need to be ready to roll early on Saturday the 10th

FURTHER DETAILS AS THEY EVOLVE

Feature Show ROUND UP

The Sydney 2015 Feature Show after so much preparation, has come, and now gone.

We would like to thank all the exhibitors for their support and commitment in providing quality stud stock not only to be viewed by the public but also to create such a competitive environment in the show ring.

In particular we appreciate the support, assistance and guidance by Gay Ward in the lead up to the show and Ross Draper for organising and overseeing the running of the sale. There were many others who contributed at crucial times to ensure things went smoothly and we thank them also.

After speaking with many of those who attended, there seems to have been a relaxed, friendly and enjoyable atmosphere. (Although for me relaxation didn't come until much later). Despite the competitiveness this may well be something that sets us apart from other breeds.

I suppose the point of a feature is to turn the spotlight on a breed and promote those attributes which we know in Red Polls can positively influence commercial beef herds. Whether we have been successful in this regard, time will tell, but one means of providing evidence of these beef attributes is through carcass

competitions and at this feature our steers performed extremely well. There were 12 purebred steers and 2 Red Poll x trade steers entered. Of the purebred steers the awards given were 1 - Gold, 4 - Silver and 4 -Bronze and in the trade competition one of the steers won the virtual taste test. The average point score for purebreds was a staggering 83.75!

RICHARD WILKINSON



Taking a break in the stalls

Feature show RESULTS

Junior Champion Female

Reserve Junior Champion Female

Senior Champion Female

Reserve Senior Champion Female

Grand Champion Female

Junior Champion Bull

Reserve Junior Champion Bull

Senior Champion Bull

Reserve Senior Champion Bull

Grand Champion Bull

Supreme Exhibit

The Brigadier G S Hurst Perpetual
Prize for Grand Champion Bull

The W K Cowlshaw Perpetual Trophy
for the Red Poll Best Exhibit

Red Cactus Robtho

Eurimbla Rising Moon

Yongerellen Wattle Janelle

Eurimbla Next Door

Yongerellen Wattle Janelle

Eurimbla Toby

Baladeen Jericho

Red Cactus Jobe

Yongerellen Endeavour Imitator

Red Cactus Jobe

Yongerellen Wattle Janelle

Red Cactus Jobe

Yongerellen Wattle Janelle

Ross Draper

Ian & Jill Coghlan

J. Williams and Co

Ian & Jill Coghlan

J. Williams and Co

Ian & Jill Coghlan

Richard Wilkinson

Ross Draper

J. Williams and Co

Ross Draper

J. Williams and Co

Ross Draper

J. Williams and Co

Gold Medal

90 points - I & J Coghlan prepared by Yanco Agricultural High School

Silver Medals

88 points - Bellingen High School prepared by Prairiewood High School

87 points - RJ & SD Wilkinson prepared by Bede Polding College

87 points - Lagoona Red Polls prepared by Lagoona Red Polls

86.5 points - Garrick Mulcahy prepared by Garrick Mulcahy

Bronze Medals

85 points - Kookabookra Red Polls prepared by Kookabookra Red Polls

83 points - Belault Red Polls prepared by Braidwood Central School

82.5 points - Belault Red Polls prepared by Braidwood Central School

80 points - I & J Coghlan prepared by I & J Coghlan

Trade Steer

Winner Virtual Taste Test - RJ & SD Wilkinson prepared by Prairiewood High School



Harry Manuel and Nick Job, Cumnock, leading the Reserve Champion cow with exhibitor Ian Coghlan, Gerogery, NSW and Sharm Wilkinson, Bringelly, NSW.



Judging at Sydney 2015

Life Members Show the Way at *Sydney Feature Show*

When the Grand Champion bull Red Cactus Jobe and Grand Champion female Yongerellen Wattle Janelle strode into the ring to compete for the Supreme Red Poll Award, combined, they represented over 80 years of breeding Red Polls by life members Ross Draper and Murray Williams.

In many ways it was a fitting finale to a most successful Feature Show. If ever there was an opportunity for young breeders to learn from experience and example this was it. The two animals gave judge Michael O'Sullivan a real task as he teetered between the two before announcing that it was 'Always wise to keep the ladies happy', and selected the cow. It was a little bit of a false statement as the handlers on all of the animals were women, Ross and Murray both happy to take a back seat and let younger handlers display the animals they had bred.

The two breeders, although from different sides of the country, have competed against each other on numerous occasions, the first being the Feature Show at Adelaide Royal in 1981, but this was the first time they had been in a head to head for the Supreme exhibit.

Coincidentally Ross registered his first animal Red Cactus Printer MRD 1 born 13/3/75 in Vol 28 of the Herd Book while Murray registered his first animal Yongerellen Alpha J6H 1 in the same herd book, born just two weeks later on 27/3/75.

Now a little slower, stooped and arthritic, than in their prime both men have been stalwarts of the breed, doing a great deal to encourage and assist the development of the next generation.

MURRAY WILLIAMS

YOUTH COMMITTEE REPORT

The Youth Committee would like to acknowledge the support they received at the Sydney Feature Show.

This included the generous sponsors who donated articles for sale at the Youth Auction, and the participants who made the auction such a success. The money will be used wisely to further Red Poll Youth activities.

The assistance and mentoring received at this event has allowed youth members to learn, gain experience, meet industry experts, and build expertise within the breed.

Also important were the social activities, bringing together all ages with stories to share and friendships to build.

Thanks to All - YOUTH COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Stan Hill Steers

NSW



Grand Champion bull...Red Cactus Jobe...with exhibitor Ross Draper of Arthur's Creek, Vic; Judge Michael O'Sullivan, Lower Mt Walker, QLD; NSW RAS Cattle Committee Chairman, Greg Watson; handler Melissa Ball, Christmas Hills, Vic.

Being the Feature Breed at the Royal Sydney Show gave our wonderful breed an amazing amount of exposure. It was our turn to shine and we did it magnificently.

It was wonderful to have exhibitors and supporters come from all over the country. Old friends were reunited, new friends were made, and hopefully an enjoyable time was had by all. Dinner on the Saturday night after judging was held at the Novatel and approximately 90 people attended. The Youth committee held an auction during dinner that not only helped to raise some much need funds for them but was a lot of fun and very entertaining.

There were a total of 36 classes set down for judging not including the steers, which put our cattle in the ring for just on four hours. Our judge was Michael O'Sullivan and special thanks must go to him for his wonderful work on the day. In particular for the way he spoke about the breed and his reasons for awarding the places in each class. The complete listing of results can be found on the RAS website.

With an event like this there are so many people involved in making it a success it is hard to thank everyone personally. The work that is necessary in organising and setting up displays, signage, pamphlets, promotional items, getting food and drinks organised is huge and that is before you take into account the logistics of getting cattle, handlers, breeders and all their necessary equipment and feed organised and on display.

In general thank you to all of the committee members, exhibitors and supporters for helping to make this a successful Feature Show. However Special Thanks must go to...

- > Garrick Mulcahy and Richard Wilkinson for their tireless work and organisational skills
- > Gay Ward for all her help and support in the lead up to the event
- > Ross Draper for organising the auction
- > Anne Smith for her help in organising all the class prizes on the day

And finally to Jodie Napret the mother of one of our younger exhibitors who kindly donated her time and effort to feed everyone after judging.

Our wine fundraiser will continue to run for a bit longer to help rebuild the NSW bank balance a little. Thank you to everyone who have supported us so far and please continue to support us for a little longer.

JUDY ROBBINS

RED POLL HOW THEY COMPARED IN SYDNEY

Overview of the Sydney Royal Trade cattle results:

CARCASE POINTS AVERAGE FOR BREEDS WITH OVER 4 ENTRIES:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Angus 77.7 | • Shorthorn 82.3 |
| • Murray Grey 80 | • Charolais 82.5 |
| • Red Poll 83 | • Simmental 79.5 |
| • Hereford/Poll Hereford 75.6 | • Galloway 73.4 |
| • Limousin 83.7 | |

Source: *The Drover's Journal*

Putting Stock in Red Polls at Griffith

an Coghlan, Eurimbla, Gerogery, with eight-month-old embryo transfer heifers from New Zealand cows by a US bull

LATEST - IAN Coghlan grew up in a family that had bred Red Poll cattle since 1952, when his parents Bill and Mavis Coghlan formed the Ingleden Red Poll stud at Griffith.

One of his fond childhood memories is helping his father parade a Red Poll bull at the annual Griffith Show.

Since its establishment, the Ingleden herd was at the forefront of the Red Poll breed in its day with stud cattle sold across Australia and into New Zealand.

Growing up with Red Poll cattle and seeing the success his parents enjoyed at royal shows and in carcass competitions, it was easy for Mr Coghlan to have an ingrained belief in the breed.

"But the decision for my wife Jill and I to breed Red Poll cattle was firmly based upon our belief in their economic attributes," Mr Coghlan said.

Just a couple of weeks after they were married, the Eurimbla Red Poll stud was formed with the purchase of seven heifers at the first Ingleden on-farm production sale in 1974.

At the same time they borrowed the Ingleden bull of their choice.

In the following years, the Coghlan's sourced superior genetics from across Australia, the US and NZ to develop a herd that incorporates femininity, milk and muscle to optimise growth and consistently excel in steer trials and carcass competitions.

Most recently they have taken delivery of 12 embryo transfer-bred weaners that were conceived from breeding a US bull to a NZ cow.

Those six bull and six heifer weaners were on display when international and interstate Red Poll breeders attending the 2014 Red Poll World Conference visited Eurimbla, and they drew many positive comments.

The Eurimbla Red Poll stud herd comprises about 170 breeding females and are run on two properties owned by the Coghlan family.

Stud bulls and females have been sold across Australia and to New Zealand, however, the primary market area is in central and southern NSW, as well as across Victoria.

A draft of 60 to 70 springing heifers is sold each year in the Wodonga January sales where they meet excellent demand from commercial buyers.

Steers are sold off improved pastures to feedlot buyers in April

each year at an average weight of about 500 kilograms.

In 2014, semen from a Eurimbla stud sire, Eurimbla Leopold, was exported to Canada and New Zealand.

And international visitors attending the 2014 Red Poll World Congress showed keen interest in accessing semen from Eurimbla Atlas.

All of the Eurimbla-bred cattle are performance tested through 10 Breedplan traits with a particular emphasis on breeding easy calving cattle that quickly hit market weights with large eye muscle area, positive fat covers and good intramuscular fat.

To date, about 2500 progeny have been recorded.

The cattle are also benchmarked against other breeds through feedback from steer trials and carcass competitions, and feedlots.

Eurimbla-bred steers have been entered in growth rate trials and carcass competitions for a little over 20 years, winning champion heavy weight carcass at Sydney Royal in 1994 and following that success with royal show, and regional competition champions through the years.

"A primary attribute of my sires is being able to breed top bulls, very efficient females and fast-growing, high-yielding steers with good fat cover," Mr Coghlan said.

In breeding Red Poll stud cattle, the Coghlan's aspire to produce the best possible cattle that can cost-efficiently maximise their returns and meet the needs of changing and discerning buyers.

"However, beyond that it is the people, the encouragement and the friendships that add another pleasurable dimension to our business," Mr Coghlan said.



A primary attribute of my sires is being able to breed top bulls and very efficient females

Red Poll Supreme to WA Stud

BY JAMIE-LEE OLDFIELD, THE LAND

The long haul across the country was made all the more worthwhile for Yongerellan stud when they collected the best exhibit sash in the feature showing of Red Polls at the Sydney Royal.

Yongerellan Wattle Janelle was selected by principal Murray Williams for the 60 hour trek to Sydney from Western Australia, because he thought it was "the best cow we had".

Judge Michael O'Sullivan, O'Sullivan's Limousin, Lower Mount Walker, Queensland, was equally impressed with the dam, sashing her senior and grand champion female and best exhibit.

The four and a half year old cow had only been broken to halter in January, and had an eight month old heifer calf at foot by English sire Longandale Unique.

Mr O'Sullivan commended the cow on its sweet feminine qualities, wedge shape, and sound structure and udder.

The grand champion bull in the Red Poll ring also hailed from interstate, this time coming from Victoria.

Red Cactus Jobe was a two and a half year old sire weighing 980 kilograms with an eye muscle area scan of 122 square centimeters.

Exhibited by Ross Draper, Red Cactus Red Polls, Arthurs Creek, Victoria, Mr O'Sullivan was impressed with the senior and grand bulls muscularity, masculinity and movement.



Supreme Exhibit at the Sydney Red Poll Feature Show Yongerellen Wattle Janelle, with Yongerellen stud principal Murray Williams, Quairading WA and handlers Laurina Park, Australind WA and Casey Morris, Donnybrook WA; Judge Michael O'Sullivan, Lower Mt Walker Qld; Pamela Kent Merriwa, NSW and RAS Cattle Councillor Edgar Downes, Camden NSW.

Mr Draper also exhibited the junior champion Red Poll female, Red Cactus Robtho, and at just 11 months of age, the heifer was the youngest Red Poll exhibit at the show.

Junior champion bull went to Eurimbla Toby, a 12 month old sire weighing 530kg from the Coghlan family's Eurimbla stud, Gerogery.

PROGENY TEST GROUP REPORT

The progeny test group continues to have ongoing discussion about aspects of the breed which lend themselves to progeny testing.

The group has selected a bull to use this year in an AI program across most of their herds. This will give good linkage across herds for greater accuracies in assessing the performance of cattle.

In late April the Group is participating in a trial Webinar (A seminar using the 'web') to discuss 'Interpreting EBVs and performance recording'. This is a trial to see if it is a useful way to provide information within the breed.

Anyone interested in the work of the group, or in joining the group is invited to contact Richard Daley, (08) 8664 1463, moylepark@ozemail.com.au.

SA

This year has a very familiar start as last year but without a tour to organize which will allow us to concentrate on regional issues more intently.

Our finances are an issue as we have had to rely on our promotion levies to sustain our region and with few members it has been hard to find fund raising events. Our carcass successes have cost us in advertising and prize money to successful schools. The National Executive has been understanding of our situation.

We will continue with the support to schools with steers and two studs will also show at Adelaide to maintain the Red Poll involvement. This was agreed at our annual lunch meeting at Balaklava in February.

The S.A. Field Days were again supported by Moyle Park. Registered cattle were sold to two Red Poll studs. One of these

studs, Regaler Red, prefix REG, of John Stockham from Harrogate in the Adelaide hills, has been founded on these cattle.

John is now our newest member, relegating David Lines of Stockridge Red Poll Stud our new member two years ago, down the list. It would be nice to have more new members but we are very pleased to have David and now John on board.

Alan and Marilyn Wilson and Richard and Kay Daley represented the S.A. Region at the Sydney Red Poll Feature Show and Moyle Park exhibited a cow and calf. We would like to commend the NSW Region for staging a great event. It brought together many breeders and past members for a very exciting day.

The dinner at night was a special highlight as there were so many young people attending. The region will look forward to hosting one of these young breeders to the S.A. Heifer Expo in July. Hopefully by then the winter rains will be well established and our crops up and growing.

RICHARD DALEY

THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HEIFER SHOW

by Murray Williams

Now running for over thirty years and averaging around 100 participants from eight to twenty five years of age the SA Heifer show is recognised as the major multibreed youth cattle school in the nation.

The major award is a study trip to the USA and there are a number of other awards for various parts of the program.

So where do Red Polls fit?

Each year the National Executive authorises a sponsorship of \$165 to the Heifer Show on behalf of the Red Poll breed. This enables us to supply merchandise and memorabilia and things like the Red Poll Annual to be put into the satchels of all participants. This gives the breed a great exposure not only to the participants but their parents as well who are often seen reading the Annual.

The breed then goes onto sponsor a successful participant, who is selected by application. Along with this the entry fee and travel expenses are also subsidised.

Following on from this Federal commitment, the South Australian Region then undertakes the supply of a heifer for our participant and to look after the participant during their time in SA.

In recent times this commitment has been undertaken by Richard and Kay Daley who have given most generously of their time. This involves travelling to Adelaide to pick up the

participant and taking them back to the farm at Jamestown for a couple of days to look over the farm and cattle and familiarise themselves with their heifer. They then travel back to Adelaide, often with an extra heifer, for the duration of the school before putting the participant on a plane for home. On occasions, where the participant has been young, the Daley's have also hosted a parent.

This commitment is willingly given to provide opportunities for the Red Poll youth and is greatly appreciated by all who have been successful participants.

SA Junior Heifer Expo 13th-16th July 2015
Adelaide Showground

The Australian Red Poll Cattle Breeders Inc. will offer a junior member of the ARPCBI the opportunity to attend the South Australian Junior Heifer Expo. Please contact the Executive Officer for an application form or download from the Red Poll website under tab 'Youth Camps'.

VIC

This quarter, our activities have included representing Red Polls at several Field Days, a Sale at Whittlesea and the Red Poll Feature and Sale at Sydney Royal Easter Show.

Firstly, Don Castle and Greg Abbot provided their ongoing support of the Red Poll stand at Sungold Field Days on 11th-13th February. This Field day is held in a largely dairy farming area and whilst there has previously been strong interest by the Dairy industry in using Red Poll bulls there is now a shift to pure dairy so they can capture opportunities in the growing dairy Export market. The whole Field day seems to be following and heading in this direction.

Ross Draper again held his stand at the Seymour Alternative Farming Expo on 20-22 February and had some interest in his cattle. Gay Ward also gave a public presentation at the event. Ian and Nell Staff assisted Mark Harris and his family at Farm World at Lardner Park on 26-29 March. Mark showed great dedication in participating, as he and Elke left for Germany at 10am the morning after the event. Sophronites and Ketlang cattle graced the stand, and some sales are likely to result from the display.

The Red Poll and Maine-Anjou Sale was held at Whittlesea Showgrounds on March 14. Congratulations go to the Storm Family whose cattle sold well and also to Paul Tanner who sold his heifer. Dry conditions saw decreased demand for Bulls and Commercials.

Our annual On Farm Challenge was not held this year as we had difficulties in obtaining Judges for various reasons. Our intention is to continue with the On Farm Challenge again next year.

Sydney Royal Easter Red Poll Feature Show 2015 was attended by many of our members with those who exhibited having 19 animals in total. Outstanding performances were recorded by Ross Draper, who won Senior and Grand Champion Red Poll Bull with Red Cactus Jobe, Junior Champion Heifer Red Cactus Robtho, 1st Breeders Group and Most Successful Exhibitor. Ross added to this success by selling both his entries in the Sale, with Jobe achieving top price of \$5000 purchased by D.N. Payne "Woodburn" Kilmore Victoria.

In 2014, Melissa Neal won the Title of Rural Ambassador of Victoria against very stiff competition. She used some of her prize money to attend a Conference of the Royal Agricultural Societies of the Commonwealth in Brisbane to learn more about the running and planning of Agricultural Shows for the future. As the Victorian Ambassador, she competed at the National level at the Sydney Royal Easter Show 2015. Whilst she did not win the National Competition, she gained a great insight into the behind the scenes operation of the Show and represented us at the highest level. Her website is <http://melissaneal.com.au/shows>

Our region provides sponsorship for the Victorian Stud Beef Handlers Camp which is held annually during the July School Holidays, with Breeders also providing heifers for participants to use at the Camp.

In conclusion, thank you to Shezanne Hooper for the production of a wonderful Congress Annual.

IAN STAFF



Red Cactus Jobe
(Photo Courtesy
Wayne Jenkins)



Got a Story to Share?

If you have any stories or pictures you would like included in the next edition or the website, please send to red.poll@abri.une.edu.au

Or Fax to (02) 6772 5376
with ATT: Keryn

Note: A library of photos with a link on the website is to be established for future reference.

INTRODUCING Catriona Millen

Catriona Millen is now the Technical Officer responsible for Red Poll within Southern Beef Technology Services SBTS.



Catriona is currently completing her PhD in dairy cattle genomics at the University of Melbourne and the Victorian Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transports and Resources (formerly DEPI).

Her PhD project involved searching for casual mutations and candidate genes underlying milk production traits and feed conversion efficiency in Australian Holstein and Jersey cattle.

Prior to embarking on her PhD project Catriona completed a Bachelor of Science at Monash University in 2008 and a Bachelor of Agricultural Science (Honours) at the University of Melbourne in 2009.

She has also worked as a genetics demonstrator at La Trobe University and was recently awarded the Best Overall Student Presentation Award at the 2014 Dairy Futures Cooperative Research Centre Forum.

Gemma Wilkinson is mentoring Catriona as she learns the ropes.

Please feel free to contact your SBTS representative with any queries on herd recording practises, including getting the most out of pedigree records, AI and ET recording, and BREEDPLAN.

EXECUTIVE'S DESK



Recently in The Land there was an article titled 'A Royal (lack of) engagement' - Jessie Davies (16th April, 2015).

A passage from the article:

'About 900,000 people passed through the gates across 10 days of the show - a unique opportunity for producers to meet the consumers of their products.

But did the producers make the most of their golden opportunity?

Dairy farmer and Art4Agriculture founder Lynne Strong, Clover Hill Dairy, Jamberoo, thinks farmers have a long way to go when it comes to engaging the general public.

For years she's noticed dairy exhibitors in the ring ignore the public, too focused on preparing their animals and presenting them for judging.

"Most farmers recognise it is really important to engage with the public, and they don't get many opportunities to do that, but when it comes to the Sydney Royal, they're so focused on the blue ribbon they tend to find the general public a distraction."

As a volunteer for the NSW Apiarist Association at the Sydney Royal this year I witnessed firsthand the curiosity of the public. Bee keeping and honey production has been in the media of late due to the threat of disease, and corresponding reduction in pollination of food producing crops. Overseas, there have been the stories of adulteration of honey and other agricultural commodities.

Australian agriculture can benefit by promoting the high standards under which it operates and this needs to be communicated to the ever growing urban population. How best to do this is the question. I think connection with individual farmers at events where a large urban population attends could help by influencing buying decisions.

Questions from the public for the apiarists included:

- Is the honey from real bees?
- Is the honey pure?
- Why are there so many different flavours?
- Has the honey been heated?

The stand was very popular and honey sold like the proverbial hot cakes once people were reassured that the product was "real".

The message for me was that it is increasingly important to promote the reliability of Australian products. Imported products may be cheaper, but are they value for money? I thought the honey reasonably expensive however the public wanted the genuine article and were prepared to pay.

KERYN HUTTON - EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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