

Australian BUFFALO

www.buffaloaustralia.org

New buffalo manual a first for Australia

Australia's foremost buffalo specialist, DPIR's Barry Lemcke, has amassed more than 40 years of field study findings to produce the comprehensive new *Australian Water Buffalo Manual*, which was launched in the Top End in August. Australia's first technical manual for the buffalo farming industry has been published by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC- now AgriFutures Australia).

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A LONG HARD BATTLE WON NSW buffalo producers celebrate decision to re-classify species

Jubilant NSW buffalo producers have been celebrating a recent classification change which means their former 'exotic' farm herds are now legally regarded as domestic livestock. On 1 July 2017, when the new NSW Biosecurity Act came into effect, buffalo were re-classified as 'cattle' – or domestic livestock, meaning they are no longer considered as 'exotic' animals. The change also covers banteng and bison kept in NSW. The re-classification is a major breakthrough for the state's buffalo farmers after what has been a long drawn-out and frustrating battle

with the NSW Government to have the status changed. Buffalo farmer and industry stalwart Doug Robertson, says the re-classification basically makes it easier for newcomers to join the industry. "The old legislation was very effective in discouraging newcomers and expansion," he says. The NSW buffalo industry, with Doug at the helm, had pursued a long-term goal to have buffalo re-classified as domestic animals such as sheep and cattle thus eliminating the need for licensing.

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**“Thompson’s beautiful buffalo milk” helps cheesemaker Trevor to victory!
SEE PAGE 5**

UPDATE: *Halal Buffalo Stunning Trial*

The CSIRO is looking to utilise a South East Asian slaughter facility to complete its current Halal Buffalo Stunning Trial after AACo was unable to continue its involvement.

Senior researcher Alison Small says the next steps in the trial are to gain the appropriate regulatory approvals to carry out the research in-market. "We need an approval from the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources to carry out work that is not 100% covered by ESCAS, and the South East Asian research authority" Alison says. "We already have Australian Animal Ethics approval so both of these should be fairly easy to secure, when we get the appropriate paperwork completed."

Alison says the timelines for completion have been extended and it is hoped that the research findings will now be available by mid-2018.



DPIR's Barry Lemcke pulls pin on 42 yrs of Top End buffalo work

Northern Territory-based buffalo expert and livestock research scientist, Barry Lemcke, will retire from his NT Primary Industry and Resources Department (DPIR) position on 27 October after 42 years of government employment.

Barry arrived in the Top End in 1972, straight after graduating from Sydney University with an Agricultural Science Degree and a Major in Animal Husbandry- and also finding time to gain a pilot's licence.

His first job was at Mudginberri Station where he worked on buffalo and pasture species production. He transferred to neighbouring Munmarlary in 1974 to oversee a new buffalo domestication program.

While working on the wetlands, Barry met his future wife Helen who was a station cook at Mudginberri.

They moved to town in the mid-1970s and Barry took up his first government job conducting cattle, rice and pasture trials at Tortilla Flats Agricultural Research Station near Adelaide River. In 1978, he transferred to Beatrice Hill research facility to work mainly on cattle and buffalo

grazing trials and continued there till 1989. Barry's buffalo work included overseeing a program to improve the quality of farmed swamp buffalo by selecting high-performing cows from different locations, mating them and retaining the best male offspring.

Barry also managed the groundbreaking riverine buffalo cross-breeding program, initially involving four bulls and four heifers imported from the US. Cross-breeding of these valuable imports has led to the emergence of Australia's successful buffalo dairy industry.

The completion and launch of his Australian Buffalo Manual in August was a major triumph. Barry is keen to continue his involvement with the buffalo industry- in between planned extensive travelling and other interests.

NTBIC Vice-President Michael Swart says the council continues to benefit greatly from Barry's wisdom and advice. "We've been extremely fortunate and have gained considerably through Barry's knowledge and representation of the industry both in Australia and overseas."

Australian Buffalo

... is a newsletter produced by the **Australian Buffalo Industry Council (ABIC)** to disseminate information about the wide-ranging activities taking place across Australia in relation to buffalo harvesting, export and farming for meat, milk, cheese and other products
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BARRY'S FAREWELL BBQ - 3rd November

NTBIC members and other buffalo industry players have been invited to attend a DPIR farewell BBQ for Barry at Berrimah Research Farm from 4pm on Friday 3 November. For catering purposes, those wanting to attend are asked to confirm with Louise Bilato - 0400 107 223.

‘Commonsense wins out’ on new status for NSW buffalo

Doug Robertson says he’s ‘still a bit lost for words’ after NSW buffalo farmers fought for so long to get the permit system changed.

“It would be great to think that persistence paid off- and I’m sure that it played its part - but a number of other factors fell into line at the time to help achieve the final result.

“We should probably be saying ‘We won’ - but it’s far more satisfying to think that commonsense came out on top.”

Doug outlines the NSW industry’s frustrating journey towards July’s happy outcome:

“In the beginning, the new legislation that created the original outcry was so over the top that it was going to make keeping any licensed non-indigenous animal (NIA) impractical.

“Approaches we made to those concerned at the time and for several years following all fell on deaf ears, with the powers-that-be not willing to budge no matter at what level they were.

“However, a contract appointment to a position introduced a more listening ear. We approached this person face-to-face for a couple of hours with the same argument we’d been using for a number of years- and at least got some encouragement.

“Things went quiet for about 12

months and then NSW DPI took the plunge to draw up new biosecurity legislation which changed or replaced lots of existing legislation, - INCLUDING the Non-Indigenous Animals Act. When the draft legislation was circulated for comment it suggested that bison, banteng and buffalo be included with cattle and sheep as domestic animals under the same NLIS regulations. The buffalo industry strongly supported this move and it was included in the new legislation.”

Doug says he believes three species were moved into the NLIS system due to the draconian NIA conditions that have almost banned the keeping/ breeding/using of ‘other’ animals.

“We were fortunate that NSW introduced a new biosecurity approach at the right time, he says.

Doug says all states except the NT and now NSW have licensing requirements. “Victoria seems to be increasing its level of control, Queensland is very regulated and South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia are less stringent but do require special conditions - although it’s illegal in WA to keep buff above a certain latitude.”

Doug says he has had a request from Queensland to tell them how they did it. “I really think that timing and luck had a fair bit to do with it,” he says.

NZ disease outbreak forces ban on imports

The NT’s Beatrice Hill Farm was in final negotiations to export 40 mostly-pregnant buffalo heifers and a bull to buyers across the Tasman on 7 August when the New Zealand Government slapped an import ban on all Australian livestock imports until further notice. The action followed an outbreak of *Mycoplasma bovis* in the South Island.

DPIR’s Senior Livestock Manager Barry Lemcke says the ban was a precautionary measure while New Zealand determined a most likely entry route for the disease. There was no suggestion the outbreak came from Australia.

Quarantine authorities say live cattle are recognised to present the greatest risk for introduction of *Mycoplasma bovis* internationally. The suspension means there will be no live cattle imports allowed from Australia until further notice.

NZ authorities have advised the suspension will remain in force while the Ministry reviews current science and requirements in the standard with regards to *Mycoplasma bovis*.

“The main issue with NZ is timing of pregnancy in the buffalo,” Barry Lemcke says. “They have to be less than seven months pregnant at the time of transport for entry into NZ. If you add the minimum two months window for quarantine prior to shipment, that squeezes the interval for getting pregnant and also getting them into NZ during summer so they can acclimatise to the maximum for the coming winter.”

At time of publication, there had been no further advice regarding the ban.

... and the permit pressure eases in Victoria!

Victorian producers have also welcomed progress on streamlining of the permit process for buffalo in that state. VicBIC President Bryan Jans says while permits have just been renewed, the current permit system has been altered and once approved is now valid for two years instead of one.

VicBIC understands that a decision to abolish the requirement for a permit to keep buffalo has been signed off at the Biosecurity office and that this has been forwarded to the Department of Environment and Planning for the final sign-off. “We’re still waiting for this but things are looking positive for the re-classification of buffalo as a form of domestic livestock in Victoria,” Bryan says.

RIRDC now rebranded as AgriFutures Australia

The Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation (RIRDC) has been relaunched under a new trading name, AgriFutures Australia, effective from 30 August.

In a statement, Managing Director John Harvey said the change was “a thoroughly considered, strategic decision for RIRDC to remain relevant and at the forefront of agriculture for the stakeholders it serves”.

“The relaunch reflects the changing face of agriculture – where technology is transforming the sector and there is a new breed of highly skilled young professionals who are dynamic, entrepreneurial, commercially savvy and strongly connected. The needs of the sector moving forward are vastly different to when RIRDC first began.

“We are confident about the future of Australian agriculture and that confidence is reflected in our relaunch as AgriFutures Australia. “AgriFutures Australia is firmly focused on the future because it’s our job to anticipate what is coming next and – through research, innovation, technology and collaborations – prepare our rural industries for what’s ahead.

Mr Harvey said the rebranding process, started last December, involved rigorous and extensive consultations with the board and senior executive staff, and interviews with stakeholders at an individual and organisational level.

Industry stakeholders are encouraged to visit the new website (www.agrifutures.com.au), sign up for a regular newsletter and follow developments on Facebook and Twitter via @AgriFuturesAU

Ground-breaking buffalo farming manual launched

The aroma of sizzling barbecued buffalo steaks, burgers and sausages wafted through the air and ABC Country Hour broadcast live as guests congregated at Beatrice Hill Research Farm for the official August launch of Australia’s first-ever technical manual on buffalo farming.

The *Australian Water Buffalo Manual* was authored and compiled by Department of Primary Industry and Resources (DPIR) buffalo expert Barry Lemcke and published by RIRDC (now called AgriFutures Australia).

The 148-page manual includes findings from extensive research work at Australia’s only buffalo research and development facility, Beatrice Hill Farm, as well as from Barry’s 42 years of government buffalo-related work, conferences and other travels overseas.

Topics it covers include breeding, genetics, handling, products, transport, farming systems, abattoir operations, calf rearing and weaning, herd pasture and feed management, infrastructure and yard facilities, and artificial insemination as well as the world situation and local history in the NT. There is also an appendix on meat and cheese preparation.

The manual, officially launched by NT Primary Industry Minister Ken Vowles, forms a vital link between the department and industry sectors and will help support sustainable economic development of the buffalo industry.

The Australian Water Buffalo Manual is available for purchase or free download on the AgriFutures website. - www.agrifutures.com



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:

Barry Lemcke, Minister Vowles and DPIR Plant Industries Director Phil Hauser; Barry chats with ABC Country Hour’s Lydia Burton; the sizzling buffalo barbeque - tantalising hungry guests!

Trevor's cheesemaking and Marg's buffalo milk a winning combination!

Celebrated Queensland cheesemaker Trevor Hart has done it again- taking out the dairy category of Australia's 2017 Delicious / Meile Produce Awards with his own rendition of a regional French cheese created at his Cedar Street Cheeserie in Maleny.

Trevor's champion *A Love Supreme* is among an exquisite range of cheeses he handcrafts from a weekly 400 litres of fresh buffalo milk from down the road at Marg Thompson's 40 hectare buffalo farm. "This winning cheese honours the beautiful milk of the Thompson's buffaloes," he says.

Awards judge Christine Manfield said of the 2017 winner: "You can taste the love that goes into its making. Trevor's commitment to excellence is savoured with every bite. This is a consistently excellent cheese, from the purity and gentle sweetness of the buffalo milk, to the creamy smooth and velvety texture." Accomplished jazz musician Trevor only began making cheeses in 2008 and confesses to "many failures and quite a few tears!" He uses traditional farmhouse processes which, he says, allows the cheeses to gain a beautiful balance of flavour and texture.

This is Cedar Street Cheeserie's second Delicious award. Trevor took home the dairy category's top trophy in 2012- along with the Best New Product award - for his buffalo haloumi. He also creates a buffalo mozzarella, bocconcini, burrata, fresh whey ricotta, yoghurt and more recently, a probiotic milk.

FOR MORE DETAILS: check out the Cedar Street Cheeserie on Facebook.



WINNER - 2017



WINNER - 2012



Thompson's Maleny buffalo

NTBIC stock handling scholarships for remote students

The NT Buffalo Industry Council (NTBIC) has offered two scholarships to students from western Arnhem Land's Gunbalanya Community School to attend a low stress stock handling training course in 2018.

The move follows a visit by NTBIC Vice-President Michael Swart and Executive Officer Louise Bilato to Gunbalanya on 9 August to attend the launch of the local school's Business Plan 2017-2022.

Michael says he was most impressed by the approach being taken towards community integration in education, and to read Goal 2.6 of the plan to look at partnering with rangers to develop and manage new businesses, including buffalo harvesting for meat production.

"Skills gained by those participants who complete the low stress stock handling training will be directly relevant to the buffalo industry as well as to the broader pastoral industry," he says. "Significant business benefits have been demonstrated through training and better understanding of stock handling and aligns with the future vision of the Njanjma Rangers *Healthy Country* plans as well as increasing employment opportunities at Gunbalanya Station and the local abattoir."

NORTHERN TERRITORY BUFFALO INDUSTRY UPDATE

NTBIC President stresses the benefits of strong membership

In his annual report to the NT Buffalo Industry Council's 2017 AGM, President Angus Fleming stressed the important role a strong membership base played for the industry.

"Memberships are slowly increasing, although we are aware of several stations with sizable buffalo herds that are yet to join up," he said. "Strengthening the viability of the industry requires the development of a long term strategic direction, and for that the Council is reliant upon a cohesive industry willing to consider the broader interests of the industry, alongside individual and specific business interests. Strengthening our membership base must remain a clear objective for the incoming committee, and forms an integral part of the work of the NTBIC's Executive Officer."

NT Buffalo Code consultations

The NT Buffalo Industry Council (NTBIC) is currently consulting with members to develop a voluntary, buffalo industry-specific Code of Practice setting out guidelines for how the NT industry conducts itself.

The code's purpose is to let both domestic and international customers understand what members agree to do at each point in the supply chain, in adherence with relevant laws and industry best practice. It forms part of the industry's self-regulation and helps build confidence. While the Buffalo Code of Conduct is voluntary, and many procedures and protocols are already well established in existing animal welfare and livestock transport regulations, it will include guidelines for mustering non-domesticated animals on a variety of land tenures.

Arnhem Land ranger talks

The NTBIC recently accepted an invitation to meet with the Njanjma Rangers at Gunbalanya in western Arnhem Land. During the productive meeting, CEO Trent Wilkinson shared information about a range of projects underway through the ranger group to implement its *Healthy People and Healthy Country* plans, as well as its *Working on Country* program.

Among further commercial business development considerations, the group would like to explore joint venture opportunities to sustainably harvest buffalo and pigs. The NTBIC sees genuine potential in the Njanjma Rangers' plans for buffalo because of the strong existing ties with Gunbalanya's well-established and fully-functional abattoir facility.

Shoring up support from NT's bush electorate members

NTBIC members have been 'talking all things buffalo' with Northern Territory Members of Parliament representing buffalo-inhabited Top End bush electorates.

On 17 August, they had talks with the Member for Arafura, Lawrence Costa, whose electorate covers the Tiwi Islands, as well as the Gunbalanya and Maningrida regions.

The members said Lawrence was very receptive to exploring strategies to manage non-domesticated buffalo populations on the Tiwi Islands and other parts of his bush electorate

"One of the key points we took away from our meeting with Lawrence was that he is a strong advocate for sustainable buffalo management," NTBIC Vice-President Michael Swart says. "He was keen to find solutions to manage the very real environmental issues and restore the cultural integrity of homelands through the productive utilisation of buffalo."

On 24 August - they met with the Member for Arnhem, Selena Uibo, who they said demonstrated a solid handle on her electorate and was familiar with all key industry players. The Arnhem Electorate encompasses the largest population of non-domesticated buffalo in Australia and includes Bulman's long-established Gulin Gulin Buffalo Company

NTBIC President, Angus Fleming has expressed confidence in Selena's capacity to strengthen ties between the buffalo industry and traditional owners throughout her electorate.

New NTBIC Committee

The NT Buffalo Industry Council held its AGM at Darwin's Berrimah Research Farm on 14 June and elected the following committee members for 2017-2018:

- President – Angus Fleming
- Vice President – Michael Swart
- Secretary – Jed Fawcett (devolved to Exec Officer)
- Treasurer – Ernie Schlupe
- Committee Members - Chris Whatley, Noel Hassell, Ian Bradford

Elena 'the driving force' behind Burraduc venture

NSW buffalo farmer Elena Swegen recently featured on the ABC Open forum in this enlightening profile written by her daughter, Aleona.

Elena Swegen is a pioneer farmer and the driving force behind Burraduc Buffalo, NSW's first A-grade food safety licenced buffalo dairy and on-farm cheese making facility that she runs with husband Andrei in Bungwahl on the NSW mid-north coast.

In 2014, Elena was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to pursue a research project on innovation and welfare in the water buffalo dairy industry. The fellowship trip took her to a number of destinations across Europe.

The southern Italian region of Campania, with its strong tradition of Mediterranean buffalo breeding, old craft of mozzarella di bufala and rich Napolitan culture, had so much to offer that it has become a return destination for Elena to study Mediterranean buffalo bloodlines and to perfect her mozzarella making skills.

Everyone who comes to Burraduc is captivated by Elena's passion for her animals and her craft.

She is obsessed with Italian mozzarella, with following closely every detail of the traditional art of mozzarella-making and with capturing the experience unique to the buffalo farms of Southern Italy. Here the farms make and sell their own mozzarella and ricotta, products so fresh and delicate that they are not considered suitable for supermarket shelves but are only to be enjoyed locally and immediately.

Buffalo mozzarella is not exactly a staple of the Australian diet, but even those who have never tasted mozzarella seem to intuitively understand the nourishing, honest freshness of the hand-crafted cheese and many locals have become dedicated Burraduc customers.

Elena started on breeding and training a productive dairy herd of 40 Mediterranean buffaloes eight years ago, building up the numbers by embracing advanced reproductive technologies and importing sexed frozen semen of the best available dairy buffalo bulls from Italy.

Her lifelong interest in, and innate love and understanding of, animals, their behaviour and their biology, combined with a unique energy and determination were driving forces behind building up what is now a unique farming concept from scratch.

For those who have encountered water buffalo, Elena's success in taming and training these animals is, in itself, telling. These are charismatic and intelligent animals, strong-willed and not ones who can be forced to do anything against their will – they are stronger than any human, any cattle crush, any steel railing, and they know it.

Earning their trust is the only way to have their cooperation. Burraduc Farm is innovative in more than one way.

Keeping dairy calves on pasture with their mothers is one of the farm's key features that has many benefits for the



wellbeing of lactating animals and consequently for the quality of milk they produce.

But Elena will tell you that it is not only the welfare of production animals that is important for successful farming. She has been advocating for a change of attitude towards predators for many years, having noticed the immense degradation of areas where dingoes have been eliminated and consequently replaced by excessive numbers of grass eating animals (native and non-native) along with feral cats and foxes, leading to a change of landscape.

She argues that progressive sustainable and ethical farming requires the farmer to recognise themselves as a part of the ecosystem and to accept that eliminating predators will eventually ruin the land and render it unsuitable for farming, so we need to look for other non-lethal options to protect livestock.

"We are surrounded by pristine national parks and lots of wildlife," Elena says. "The farm borders the Myall Lakes National Park, which is well known for its dingo population. "Unlike other areas where we farmed before, for the first time ever we don't have rabbits or any other grass eating animals on our pastures, and don't have to deal with foxes or feral cats.

"We attribute it to the dingo families we often see around, as well as other native predators like wedge-tailed eagles and pythons. Our livestock guardian dogs help ensure the calves and poultry are safe."

Burraduc Farm promotes non-lethal methods of protecting livestock (i.e using livestock guardian dogs).

Soils and pastures are organically managed and fresh cheeses are produced from 100 per cent pasture fed milk, with emphasis on minimising the time between milk harvesting and processing into cheeses.

Elena's ambitious goal is now being realised – she is developing a farming model that has the highest animal welfare standards, promotes conservation and supplies local area with uniquely fresh and nutritious produce, educating and connecting her customers to the sources of their food – the animals, the land, the environment and the farmer all as part of one ecosystem.

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<https://open.abc.net.au/explore/196391>

Eva Valley Meats catering to buff eaters' demands

Northern Territory station owners Peter Cogill and Fiona McBean built a small abattoir on their station a couple of years ago to process fresh beef, but they've been putting the facility to extra good use more recently to cover an 'overwhelming' public demand for buffalo products.

Pete and Fiona, who both come from long-standing Top End pastoral families, decided to build the meat house on their Old Cameron Downs Station, near Batchelor an hour south of Darwin, to help fill a niche demand from local restaurants, which were frustrated at the difficulty of sourcing the good locally-grown meat requested by tourists.

Once they were processing and selling their own beef, it became apparent there was also a strong and largely unmet demand for local buffalo meat products so they began targetting that market and are happy with the results.

Peter and Fiona have since been able to access regular buffalo supplies from Arnhem Land catcher, Noel Hassell, who operates out of Beswick Station which he leases from its Aboriginal owners.

Noel catches and delivers young buffalo of between 220-300 kg to be put through the Old Cameron Downs facility.

Peter and Fiona process and market their popular buffalo products through their trading name, Eva Valley Meats. The range includes their popular buffalo chilli sausages, buffalo patties and a slow-roasting buffalo porterhouse left on the bone. There has also been interest in buffalo jerky.

The burgeoning venture is fast gaining prominence, helped by the couple's regular stalls at a number of popular Top End markets, including the favourite rural Freds Pass Market every Saturday morning.

They also participate in major food events like this year's Darwin Taste Festival where thousands of local and tourists were able to sample buffalo.

Eva Valley Meats' cryovaccated buffalo products are sold in a number of local fresh food retail outlets where they're catching the eye and dollars of consumers looking to purchase authentic Territory food options for the dinner table.

Noel Hassell and his team of Aboriginal stockmen break in the young buffalo prior to them being trucked in from Arnhem Land. Peter says they arrive at Old Cameron Downs well educated, easy to handle in the yards, and easy for one person on a quad bike to muster.



ROBUST LIVE BUFFALO EXPORT FIGURES IN 2017

Increasing South East Asian demand for Australian live buffalo has seen the export trade set an all-time record on numbers this year, with a total of 7782 animals already shipped from the Port of Darwin. The previous top tally was 7748 in 2006, when most went to West Malaysia. Malaysian has been this year's biggest market with a total of 3971 animals shipped to that country, including 849 in September. Vietnam has also been a big importer, receiving 2969 buffalo so this year.

A total of 694 have so far gone to Indonesia- including 499 shipped in September. Brunei has also taken 148 buffalo this year.

Data source: Pastoral Market Update

THE SAD DEMISE OF '55'

One of the original four riverine heifers imported to Australia from the USA in the 1990s has died at Beatrice Hill Research Farm. The mother of 13 calves was one of five older heifers in the farm's geriatric group which had not been with a bull since last December.

"She had been a little lower in condition than normal for a year or so, probably due to the declining efficiency of her teeth which were worn out," DPIR's senior buffalo officer Barry Lemcke says. "She died after giving birth to her latest calf which weighed 31.5 kg, and Mum was too weak to be able to get up. As we have to submit fresh brain samples for all these four cows for BSE at their end, it was decided to euthanize her, which the vets did to recover post-mortem samples. The live calf was pod-died."

Heifer 55 was born in the US on 18 August 1995 and was the biggest and most productive of the four imports in terms of calves conceived. She had her first calf in 1998 and followed that with another 12, the final two born in February 2015 and June 2017 respectively. Seven of the calves resulted from AI and the last two from natural mating to a bull. Six of 55's 13 offspring were female. The remaining three imported cows, known as 28, 30 and 56, have produced a total of 32 progeny, of which 20 have been AI babies.



ABOVE: (L-R) The imported US heifers 30, 56, 28 and 55 grazing at Beatrice Hill in February 2007.

28 - was born in May 1994 and has had 12 calves (last two in 2015 and 2016). Eight were female and four resulted from AI

30 - was born in April 1994 and has had 10 calves (last two in 2013 and 2014). All but the last one were female- and only five resulted from AI

56 - was born in March 1996 and had 10 calves (last two in 2014 and 2016). Six of them were girl and seven resulted from AI

Barry says the bull was withdrawn from the geriatric group in December 2016 so there may still be more babies to come!!

Heifers 28 and 30 are owned by Swim Creek Station's Alan and Sheree Fisher who, Barry says, had demonstrated 'a giant leap of faith' in having the foresight to purchase them on the original shipment.



Auto calf-feeder working well for Koroop buffalo

Victorian Dairy Buffalo Co's Jack and Alice Blow, installed an automatic calf feeding system for the buffalo at Koroop Buffalo Farm, north of Melbourne, in August.

Farm partner Mitch Humphries says the curious nature inherent in the buffalo calves means they take to their new 'techno mum' relatively easily.

Koroop is currently milking 240 head of buffalo a day and have another 120 cows ready to calf in the next few months.

The dairy is also in the process of increasing its milking capacity, extending from a 20 double-up herringbone to a 50 double-up herringbone facility.

Buffalo industry provides feedback on new web content

Buffalo industry reps have helped to evaluate the effectiveness of new biosecurity-focussed materials for Animal Health Australia's Farm Biosecurity website.

The two phase RIRDC-funded project, coordinated by Charles Sturt University researchers, was aimed at raising awareness of on-farm biosecurity practices and emergency animal disease (EAD) preparedness in new, emerging and maturing industries, which include Australia's buffalo sector.

The evaluation process focussed on materials previously disseminated by Animal Health Australia.

NSW buffalo farmer Jo Miller (Robertson) took up the invitation to review and provide feedback on the site's buffalo-related materials.



The project's Phase 1 began in 2015 with industry participants completing a questionnaire, the results of which assisted in the development of animal health information materials.

FOR MORE BUFFALO-RELATED INFORMATION, VISIT:

<http://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/industry/new-and-emerging-livestock-industries/#Buffalo>



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New biosecurity hub to protect the north

A new biosecurity hub will be built in Darwin as part of an \$8 million joint Australian and Northern Territory Government project to help guard against foreign pests and diseases.

The project includes an ultra-modern diagnostics laboratory that NT Primary Industry and Resources Department CEO Alister Trier said will boost market opportunities for North Australian agriculture.

The new facility will be located next to the existing veterinary and botany laboratories at the Berrimah agricultural research farm on the outskirts of Darwin. Currently, the Top End relies on the Australian Animal Health Laboratory in Victoria and other interstate facilities that offer molecular diagnostic services.

The proposed molecular lab will support animal and plant industries in the north of Australia, particularly in the detection of pests and disease.

Alister Trier said the new facility would increase the capacity for north Australian industries in to diagnose and respond to threats. "It's very important that we can identify any potential new diseases coming into the Territory and into Australia, and deal with them quickly," he said.

"The molecular lab is only part of that picture but it's a very important part. The second component is that we trade in the international marketplace on the credentials of being clean, natural and safe, and we have to be able to continue to demonstrate those credentials."

Buffalo Round-up

RIRDC staff changes

RIRDC advised ABIC at its AGM that the corporation's Animal R&D programs will be taken back in-house by new staff in Wagga.

Julie Bird finished up as New and Emerging Animal Industries External Program Manager at the end of July. Duncan Farquhar will now look after the RIRDC New and Emerging Animal Programs. To contact Duncan, Phone: 02 69236912 / 0429495499 or Email: duncan.farquhar@rirdc.gov.au

Athel vacates RIRDC

buffalo panel chair

Athel Smith has retired as the RIRDC Buffalo Panel Chair, and representative on the larger New, Developing and Maturing Animal Advisory Panel. Jo Miller has taken Athel's place as the Buffalo Panel Chair, and attended a meeting of all Animal Panel members at Werribee in May.

Queensland buffalo go to the show

Some sweet-natured Maleny buffalo were on hand to woo the crowds at this year's Royal National Association (RNA) Show in Brisbane.

"They were included in the exhibits at the Beef Pavillion and put in the ring so showgoers could learn about them and pat them," Marg Thompson says. "There are a lot of fears and misconceptions about buffalo, but people who got close to these ones were being licked to death. It's important for us to make people aware that buffalo are not the wild and aggressive animals they're widely thought to be."

Display buffalo return to Territory Wildlife Park

The Top End's multi-award winning Territory Wildlife Park has recently reintroduced buffalo in a special education exhibit at the 40 hectare

Berry Springs facility south of Darwin. Buffalo were displayed for several years after the park first opened in the 1980s, but the exhibit was later closed down.

Lack of farmer info drove buffalo book's production

New buffalo manual author Barry Lemcke says the driving force behind the publication was "a clear lack of information available for prospective Australian buffalo farmers".

"It gives anyone in Australia who wants to farm buffalo an introduction into how to do it," he says. "It gives beginners the benefit of a few years experience, and an idea of what to look out for, perhaps in regards to pitfalls, and therefore hopefully enables them to do things right instead of by mistake." NTBIC Vice-President Michael Swart describes the book as 'absolutely brilliant'. "It gives us direction because everyone will be on the same page, so they can see how they can operate in a particular part of the

Growing buffalo live export demand welcomed

NTBIC President Angus Fleming has welcomed the recent growing demand for the live export of buffalo to Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam. In his AGM report, he said the long wet season posed challenges for buffalo producers, unable to get out mustering animals. "There has been some disquiet regarding the potential loss of the Vietnam market, at least on an interim basis, if a blue tongue ban is imposed by the Vietnamese Government, but exporters have expressed confidence that other markets will continue to demand buffalo while cattle prices remain high."

He also addressed the issue of Kakadu buffalo culling activities. "The council has taken every opportunity to strongly denounce the Federal Government's tacit approval through provision of funding to Parks Australia North for 'shoot to waste' culling programs which are currently ongoing in Kakadu National Park."

Victoria's interest in buff produce rising



VicBIC President Bryan Jans reports that apart from welcome changes on the buffalo permits front in Victoria, things continue to go well for the buffalo milk and dairy sector in the state. Bryan says new products are under development and there seems to have been more interest in buffalo meat both locally and for export. **PICTURED:** Bryan's young milkers soaking up some well-deserved Spring sunshine on Sunrise Plains after 'putting in a super milk-producing effort this year!'