



# RED MEAT UPDATES

## T A S M A N I A

27 July 2018

## Keeping a large-scale business simple

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Waverley Station  
King Island



# Waverley Station

- Family owned
- 30,000 Angus cattle
- 18,000 hectares
- 11,000 breeders
- Three properties
  - Scone - Hunter Valley, NSW
  - Gunnedah – Tablelands, NSW
  - King Island - Tasmania



# Waverley Station – King Island

- 16,000 Angus cattle
- 8000 breeders
- 10,000 ha
- 14 employees



# Waverley Station — History

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- Agisted cattle during 2003 drought in Tasmania
- Bought property on King Island as a drought-management strategy
- Been growing on King Island ever since



# Waverley Station – King Island

- Breeder and finishing operation
- Four farms
  - North breeding
    - Lighter country | lower rainfall
  - South finishing
    - Heavier country | higher rainfall
- Rainfall
  - North – 850 mm
  - South – 1000 mm



# Productivity



- On the breeder properties (north)
  - Rule of thumb 1.8 breeders/ha
  - 22 DSE/ha
  - 6600 kg DM/ha utilised
- On the finisher properties (south)
  - Rule of thumb three weaners/ha
  - 18 DSE/ha
  - 5400 kg DM/ha utilised
- Have been up to:
  - two breeders/ha
  - four weaners/ha
- Unsustainable at that time!

# Managing intensive systems

- Grazing
  - Shift 3–5 days
  - Large mobs (up to 450 cows)
  - Rotate through calving
  - Split cows on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle
  - Staff training
- Breeding
  - Six-week mating
  - Calving - heifers mid August, cows 1<sup>st</sup> September
  - Marking - 1<sup>st</sup> November for three weeks
  - Weaning February (earlier on CS) 7–9 days handling takes six weeks
  - Sell empties ASAP after pregnancy testing



# Staff management

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- Critical
  - Ownership
  - Education and training
  - An environment that accepts a few mistakes
  - One team
  - Simple repeatable systems and practices
- Challenges
  - Instilling morale and unity
  - Instilling ownership
  - Healthy competition
  - Team support

# Managing the challenges

- Focused on the basics (low-hanging fruit)
- Training
  - Pasture Principles
- Learning from my staff
  - Involving them in decisions
  - Communicating
- Make the decisions theirs
- Common focus
  - Common rules, principles, systems
    - But freedom to do things differently



# Decision drivers

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- Two factors
  1. It has to improve profit
  2. Weigh up profit vs people vs cattle impacts
- No business can be sustainable without profit
  - At our scale it's not possible without people!

*“So my biggest driver is.....**profit**, and my biggest consideration in achieving that is the impact on the .....**team!**”*

# Business goals 3–5 years

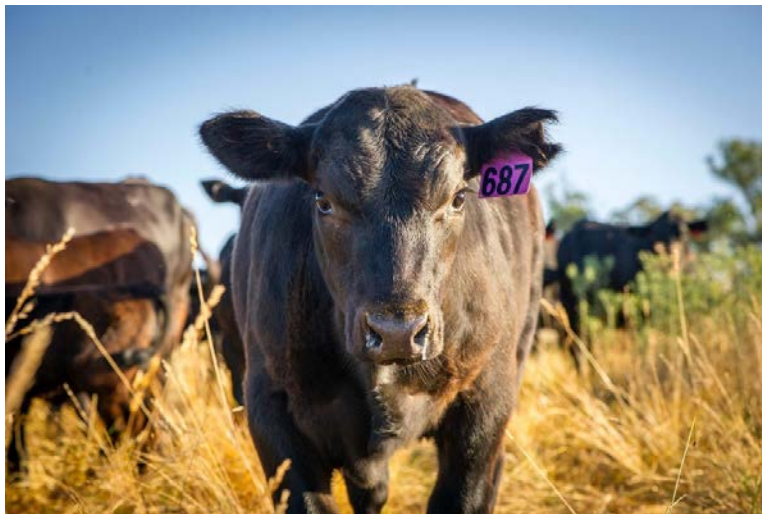
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- Increasing productivity (by 20%)
  - Driving pasture growth
  - Driving stocking rate
- Staff development
  - Make life easier
  - Increase their knowledge and skills
  - Increase independence
- I would not be worried about further growth
  - 6–12 months ago was a different story

# Top three take home messages

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1. Start with the low-hanging fruit
  - a) Soil fertility
  - b) Grazing management
2. Invest heavily in staff training
3. Match your production system to pasture supply



# Tools, resources and training

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- 1. Resources and training**
2. Soil fertility (Luke Taylor)
3. Benchmarking (Holmes Sackett)
4. Pasture Principles (Macquarie Franklin)
5. First aid

## **Tools**

1. AgriWebb
2. Feed budgets
3. Communication (talking!!!!)



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T A S M A N I A



**WAVERLEY STATION**

Premium Grass Fed Angus Beef

**Jamie Roebuck**

Waverley Station King Island

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