

PERFORM

JANUARY 2015



TE MANIA ANGUS
BREEDING BETTER BEEF



AUTUMN SALE BULLS 2015

Regent sons shine again and we introduce GAR Twinhearts to the Australian market.

Our autumn bull sale line up this year includes sons of the ever impressive Tuwharetoa Regent D145.

Regent is a true super sire. He is a large framed, athletic bull who provides a boost to growth and carcass quality, without sacrificing shape in his progeny. Ranked first in Australia for the most progeny performance recorded in the last two years, his balanced EBVs endorse his performance, as a trait leader for growth at 600 days plus carcass weight and marbling (IMF%).

We purchased Regent in 2010 in partnership with Te Mania NZ and Dunoon Angus for \$50,000. He stood out for carcass quality, fertility and his very sound structure. His progeny continue to impress and he is in increasing demand internationally, with semen exported to NZ, USA and UK.

Te Mania Berkley B1 is the highest ranking sire on Angus Breedplan for the Heavy Grain \$Index and the second highest for the Angus Breeding \$Index. We will be offering sons of this magnificent bull in the sale this year.

He is very balanced with natural thickness and good length of body. He combines high growth

and carcass weight with good calving ease. B1 has progeny throughout 130+ herds, and they stand out for muscle pattern and capacity, blending calving ease with high growth and carcass weight.

He is the sire of Te Mania Emperor E343 who sold at auction in 2011 for \$91,000. As a mark of his standing in November 2010, possession and 50% of semen marketing rights were purchased by Hazeldean Angus for \$65,000. Semen has been sold to the UK and Ireland.

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TEAM TE MANIA ON LINE COMMERCIAL FEMALE SALE

Tuesday 3 March 2015 at 5pm – 100's of females

TE MANIA ANGUS SOUTHERN AUTUMN BULL SALE

Wednesday 4 March 2015 – 150 Bulls

2015 SALE BULLS

100%

of the TMA Autumn Sale bulls are in the top 35% of the breed for the Heavy Grain \$Index

89%

of the TMA Autumn Sale bulls are in the top 20% of the breed for Marbling

\$136

is the average Heavy Grain \$Index for the TMA sale bulls (breed \$100)

\$122

is the average Angus Breeding \$Index for the TMA sale bulls (breed \$100))

+2.8

is the average IMF% for the TMA Autumn Sale bulls (breed +1.4)

- Independent structural assessment by Jim Green
- All sale bulls are checked by a veterinarian to ensure they are ready to work.
- All cows are joined to strict commercial rules.
- The sale bulls have a good variation of rib and rump fat with 63% of the sale bulls in the top 50% of the breed for these traits.

2015 REFERENCE SIRE: TUWHARETOA REGENT D145



2015 REFERENCE SIRE: TE MANIA EMPEROR VTM E343



2015 REFERENCE SIRE: TE MANIA BERKLEY VTM B1



TE MANIA ANGUS SOUTHERN AUTUMN BULL SALE

2015 REFERENCE SIRE: **GAR TWINHEARTS 8418**



Introducing GAR Twinhearts 8414

We are very excited to be one of the only studs in the country able to offer sons of this outstanding sire in our March bull sale.

Twinhearts was the first bull to break the \$80 barrier for \$Beef in the USA! He was bred by Gardiner's Angus Ranch, Kansas, where he was sold to Twinhearts Angus Ranch, Montana for \$43,000 in 2010.

An extremely exciting and handsome outcross sire with outstanding \$Index values; \$178 for the Heavy Grain Fed \$Index, \$149 for the Heavy Grass Fed \$Index, \$141 for the Domestic Market and \$157 for the Angus Breedplan \$Index.

Twinhearts also offers a desirable combination of calving ease and high growth, with very good fertility and his renowned carcass attributes.

He is a trait leader for Calving Ease (dir), Gestation Length, 200, 400 and 600 Day Weight.

His sons in the sale look fantastic. They are muscly and well structured, with length and good temperament.

Our March bull sale will also feature sons of some of our outstanding home bred sires:

- Tuwharetoa Regent D145
- Te Mania Berkley VTMB1
- Te Mania Garth VTM G67
- Te Mania Gaskin VTM G555
- Te Mania Flame VTM F565 and
- Te Mania Fitzpatrick VTM F528.

For over 85 years Te Mania Angus has been breeding sound, quiet, highly fertile cattle with calving ease, high growth rates and exceptional carcass quality. This is your chance to select the right bull for your herd.

Contact us to make an appointment for an inspection of the sale bulls and the female herd on **03 5264 1606** or **hamish@temania.com.au**

**AUTUMN BULL SALE PREVIEW DAY,
BEEF WEEK FIELD DAY
2 FEBRUARY 2015**

**View all the sale bulls, plus sires
will also be on display. For more
information go to temania.com.au**

BREED AVERAGE V TE MANIA SALE BULL AVERAGE

	CALVING EASE				GROWTH & MATERNAL					FERTILITY		CWT
	DIR.	DTRS	GL	BWT	200	400	600	MWT	MILK	SS	D C	CWT
Breed Average 2013 drop	-0.2	0.0	-3.3	+4.4	+40	+74	+96	+86	+14	+1.6	-3.4	+53
Te Mania Bull Sale Average	+1.1	+0.9	-4.7	+4.0	+45	+82	+108	+93	+16	+2.1	-5.4	+61
	300KG CARCASS					INDEX\$						
	EMA	RIB	RUMP	RBV%	IMF%	Doc	ABI	DI	HGI	GI		
Breed Average 2013 drop	+4.4	-0.1	-0.1	+0.4	+1.4	+3.0	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100		
Te Mania Bull Sale Average	+5.4	-0.0	+0.1	-0.1	+2.8	+2.7	\$122	\$110	\$136	\$115		



Te Mania genetics on display at the world's largest Trade Fair

156,000 visitors from 100 countries descended upon Hanover, Germany in November for one of the world's leading trade fairs for animal production.

One of the animals on display was bred by Te Mania Angus client, Bernhard Delle, principal of Donaumooos-Angus, Gundelfingen in Germany. Zambo G176 is the grandson of one of 40 Te Mania Angus embryos that Bernhard and his wife Jutta imported from Te Mania Angus in 2008.

Bernhard value adds his Angus herd from breeding through to running a specialist Angus beef restaurant. He also brings together a group of farmers from every region in Germany to trade under the name of "Angus Group – Beef Cattle Trading"

Jutta Delle is the fourth generation to run the same hotel, butcher and restaurant – Landgasthof Sonne. Today, Bernhard and his son Martin, are specialist butchers, who prepare the meat. It is dry aged for 21-28 days.

In addition to serving prime cuts, they also cure the meat and make sausages and products such as liverwurst.

Farewell and thanks to Andrew Mole

After more than 20 years guiding us on all things marketing, Andrew Mole has moved on to bigger and better things with a busy new posting in Echuca.

We thank Andrew for his witty, intelligent and insightful contribution over the past two decades and wish him all the best in his new role.



Canadian beef group visits Te Mania Angus

Members of a beef group traveling with Down Under Travel in Canada, visited us at our Mortlake property recently.

The group, which included enthusiastic cattle breeders from various regions of Canada, began in the bull selling centre, where they viewed a demonstration of our calf tagging on YouTube and Tom explained many of the aspects of our breeding program, performance recording techniques, timing and practices.

The group was also able to witness the work going on in the cattle yards, with our heifers undergoing the 2nd round of our fixed time AI program, CIDR's out and heat detectors applied.

Lunch in the homestead included stunning Cape Grim eye fillet, local asparagus and salad, before a walk in the garden in the early summer heat. The high temperatures, a stark difference to what Canada is experiencing with temperatures recorded in Canada on the day of -29 C!!

Tom Gubbins speaking at British Cattle Conference in January

The next British Cattle Conference will be held in Shropshire, England, from 19-21 January 2015. Hosts of the conference, The British Cattle Breeders Club, provide a forum for exchange between scientists and breeders of beef and dairy cattle, from all corners of the globe.

"I was honored to be asked to attend and speak at the conference. This will be a great opportunity to meet with other beef cattle breeders and industry representatives to discuss many of the topics that affect us as livestock producers on a global platform." says Tom

Held annually, papers are presented by leading scientists, breeders, industry specialists and veterinarians. The conference is a truly international occasion, providing a unique opportunity for breeders and scientists to get together to discuss important issues for livestock at an international level.

For more information or to register for next year's conference, go to cattlebreeders.org.uk

Beef Australia 2015

Australia's national beef expo is on again. One of the world's great beef cattle events, it is held in Rockhampton, Queensland every three years. Beef Australia 2015 will be held from May 4 to 9 and Te Mania Angus will be there to celebrate the Australian beef industry. Featuring more than 4500 cattle from over 30 breeds; plus a trade fair promoting more than 500 businesses; a conference, seminars and property tours to deliver new research information to producers; and restaurants and cooking demonstrations for visitors to appreciate the quality and flavour of Australian beef. For more information visit beefaustralia.com.au Visit us at site number 4S in the Durack Pavilion.



Berkley B1 hits the USA

Te Mania Berkley B1 has just been registered in the USA. Extending his influence across the globe, B1 continues to excel with his magnificent phenotype and trait leading figures. We should be seeing his progeny in sales across the states in the near future.



For more news and update visit www.temaniaangus.com

High Country update

With James McCormack
Nenagh Pastoral Co, Mansfield

James and Emily McCormack run the Te Mania Angus donor and recipient program from their farm near Mansfield, at the foothills of Mt Buller and Mt Stirling National Parks.

Another 12 months has passed relatively quickly, delivering a completely different year.

An early Autumn break set us up for the Winter months which ended up extremely wet. So while down on the flats the cattle were enjoying plentiful grass, the ski slopes were enjoying the best snow they had seen for thirty years. The only flip side for the year was that we got to the spring months and Mother Nature all of a sudden forgot how to rain! So now we will be looking for another early Autumn break to cover the lack of dry feed we will experience by February.

Embryo production has all gone very well for the year, with 360 embryos collected. We have put in over 320 embryos in two rounds and are currently synchronising recipients for the third and final round. By the end of 2014, there should be 390-400 embryos implanted which will give us about 320 Embryo Transfer calves next year.

Why go to all of this expense and effort, you might say.

Embryo Transfer (ET) allows Te Mania Angus to deliver about 140 bulls a year to their clients out of cows that sit in the top 4% of the female herd. In the current year, the 25 donor cows have been selected from the herd of 1,500 stud cows.

These cows are what TMA believes to be the most suitable cows in the program for the commercial and seedstock industries. It is enabling us to have stringent rules placed on the female herd that are relevant to commercial production.

Every female in the breeding herd has to be fertile, structurally sound, productive and quiet with good calving ease. Any females that do not meet the strict criteria in any one of these areas receives an embryo, therefore that calf is out one of the best.

Alongside the 140 bulls, another 140-150 females are injected into the herd from the donors. More progeny out of individual females leads to more reliable EBV's on the female side of the equation, which would otherwise be restricted to only three to eight calves for a regular cow's life span. We only ever collect embryos from females that have passed all tests. The two most commercially relevant ones are calving unassisted and getting back in calf on their first lactation; which all Te Mania females must do. We simulate this in the donor mob by requiring them to have a standing heat within the joining period.

This is the main reason we have not embraced IVF techniques on heifers, although it would accelerate the breeding program it could very easily accelerate things in a direction detrimental to our clients.

On a personal level it is a pleasure to work with such a quiet herd of cattle. During some programs we have the kids in the yards, which the cattle tolerate very well and I can rest easily knowing that we don't have to watch out for them at all times. Some days in the yards it is not unknown to have a fat dachshund wandering around the legs of the cattle with the kids. Like I said, it is lucky the cattle have a great temperament on them.

I hope everyone has a prosperous year and Mother Nature delivers us with an industry as healthy as prime lambs.

James, Emily and family



Methane emission reduction in beef cattle

By Katrina Weatherly



When beef cattle belch they emit methane gas that creates up to ten per cent of Australia's greenhouse emissions.

And now the beef industry is under pressure to reduce these emissions.

"We've got an issue that's a perceived problem with cattle and Climate Change," said Tom Gubbins from Te Mania Angus.

"So we need to be on the front foot in reducing methane intensity," he said.

Tom believes there are some exciting positives to come out of the debate about methane emissions, beef cattle and Climate Change and he is keen to position Te Mania Angus to take advantage of changes that are likely to occur in the years ahead.

Australian cattle producers will be able to select and buy bulls to breed cattle with profitable traits for their production system, and at the same time reduce their carbon footprint by releasing less methane into the environment.

Current research is showing a link between greenhouse emissions and beef cattle genetics, with large differences between animals.

The ability to individually measure methane in large numbers of cattle has been an important advance for researchers in the search for low methane emitting animals.

After measuring more than 500 animals Dr Robert Herd, Principal Research Scientist, NSW DPI, University of New England, has detected significant variations in the amount of methane emitted.

"Between the highest and lowest of methane emitters we are seeing a threefold variation," Dr Herd said.



“So that means, in our herds, there are some animals that are naturally producing quite low levels of methane.”

And because all animals are from stud research herds, it can easily be determined which sires produce progeny with a lower methane yield.

The size of the rumen has been estimated using a CT scanner and it's been shown there are differences in the size of the rumen and the rate of passage of food through the rumen. Those animals retaining more food in their rumen produce more methane.

“When we measure methane production we also measure feed intake because we know methane production is largely related to feed intake. So in our research we're very careful to make sure we identify those animals that eat

normally, are productive and are producing just a little bit less methane per kilo of feed intake. So our trait of interest is called 'methane yield', how much methane an animal produces per kilo of feed the animal eats,” Dr Herd said.

However, for Tom Gubbins at Te Mania there are concerns we may be robbing Peter to pay Paul.

“Animals emitting less methane have a faster digestive process and this involves some genetic processes like the ability of the rumen to function and the genotype of the animal.

As well there are environmental concerns like the higher the nitrate levels in pasture, the lower the methane output. Tom believes the economic food chain works best in Australia's arid areas where nitrate levels are very low.

“It would be a pity if these arid areas that are efficient at producing beef because nothing else grows there, were punished for producing higher methane products than the regions better dedicated to cropping.

However Tom believes the science is in place and now there's an interest in gradually filtering the process into the market place.

“I think in the not too distant future we're going to have pressure placed on us to come up with a reduced methane methodology that will show it's possible to buy animals producing less methane than others and at Te Mania Angus we are interested in being at that space,” Tom said.

“We've already expressed an interest in being involved. We're very close to getting some EBV's in place about whether an animal has high or low methane intensity and reducing the methane output,” Tom said.

“At this stage most of our work will be correlating science figures and data like fertility growth, fat levels and traits that connect or contribute to the pool of information.”

When methane emissions are indexed by Breedplan in the years ahead, Te Mania will be in a leading position to make full use of the information in their breeding program.

Since mid-2012 sixteen research projects have collected information on growth, carcass and fertility traits, which have had a significant impact on profitability in beef herds, and how they relate to methane emissions.

The message about reducing methane per kilogram of production requires the same management as increasing profits, ie getting animals to the meatworks as quickly as possible.

The methane issue centres round the production of methane per kilogram of production; the total amount of methane produced to reach a given weight.

Put simply, the major strategy for reducing methane production is also the key driver of profit in grazing – reducing the number of grazing days per kilogram of product.

“But whether you agree or disagree with Climate Change, the consensus in society is that we need to be doing something about greenhouse emissions,” Tom says.

“It's possibly something for our Direct Action plan; the government might be willing to spend money on Climate Change by reducing methane intensity and also increasing production,” Tom suggested. “It could be a win-win.”

In this sense Te Mania Angus is keen to benefit from the knowledge and practices aimed at reducing methane emissions from livestock. At the same time they would be improving feed efficiency, productivity, and farm income, while also helping lower Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and ensuring an environmentally sustainable future for Australia's beef industry.

Simplicity the key at Ardonachie

With Knox and Sarah Jane Paton
By Katrina Weatherly

Keep it simple. That's the philosophy behind Knox and Sarah Jane Paton's management at Ardonachie, Macarthur.

Running three separate enterprises on Ardonachie's 1200 hectares with only a casual labour force at peak times means management has to be simple.

Ardonachie runs a 500 breeding Angus cow herd as well as a prime lamb enterprise with 2,000 cross bred ewes.

"This year I've cut numbers back to 400 cows with calves at foot and we'll be joining 120 heifers so we'll hopefully still have our 500 cows calving next year," Knox said.

"Normally we calve 500 cows but this year we'll be calving down 400 cows and 120 heifers. But when we are at full capacity we run 600 cows."

In October John Pickford's Nationwide helps us run the AI program with 200 cows and 100 heifers joined each year.

"The AI program has been really good for boosting heifer quality and early calves reach 400 kg AI joining weight. We get them in Monday for the synchronisation program, remove the CIDR's and vaccinate one week later, then inseminate on the following Wednesday," Knox explained. "It's a pretty straightforward operation repeated over three different mobs.

AI calves are born in July with normal calving beginning in early August and finishing early-to-mid September.

Generally calves are sold through the Hamilton saleyards or via Auctions Plus in May.

"I try to get them off in May so we don't freeze them to death during winter," Knox said. "It gets very cold and wet here in winter. One year we had nearly 1000mm and it was completely sodden underfoot. It was a dramatic increase from our usual 720mm."

However the dry this year has meant the

drought preparation plan has kicked into action. All but the core breeders have been shown the gate. "We'll feed calves and cows, and the calves will be taken through the summer and sold in May. We'll run them in paddocks that need renovating anyway," Knox added.

For the last five years bulls have been bought at Te Mania Angus at Mortlake.

"The data recording and genetic improvement at Te Mania is impressive and their records are easy to understand," Knox said. This allows Ardonachie to keep their enterprise simple but make genetic progress at the same time.

"We have achieved good growth and length using Te Mania bulls. And we're very happy that we only had to pull two calves from 500 cows this year. That was wonderful while I had a broken collarbone!" Knox laughed.

As well, Knox and Sarah Jane paid tribute to the excellent after sales and follow up service offered by Te Mania.

"We buy two bulls at Te Mania each year. By using AI we don't need any more than that. AI costs us about \$8,000 per year and that's the price of one bull," Knox said.

The sheep enterprise at Ardonachie buys in ewes, and joining takes place in late January or early February to lamb down in June/July. Lambs are weaned onto Lucerne pastures in an effort to get the weights for sales in January.

"But this year the dry season will mean we aim to get them sold before Xmas," Knox said.

Like the beef enterprise, the sheep program is kept simple. "I like to do things over one or two days," Knox explained. "Ewes are scanned on one day, drenched on one day, joined all at once, shorn all at once.

"Running a commercial enterprise is all about ease of operation. Keep it simple," Knox reiterated.

"We run a low labour input operation. So if I'm

doing something like preg testing, there will be 250-300 going through the yards in one day, while I have the labour on hand.

"Low stress stock handling has been a big winner here when handling larger mobs. When the cattle know what they have got to do it is a lot easier on everyone."

A point of difference about Ardonachie is the lime pit that's been in operation for the last four years, yielding ag as well as road lime.

"Knox's father just used the pit for paddock lime at Ardonachie. But then Knox got a quarry licence which was a long, slow process taking at least 12 months," Sarah Jane said.

"But the lime is now a profitable business enterprise that hums along quite nicely between January and May. Hopefully will last another 20 years," she added.

But the lime enterprise does tie up time for Knox who operates the loader at the pit site.

"This means the other sheep and cattle enterprises have to be straightforward. Sometimes it can be difficult keeping on top of three different enterprises. That's why I have to keep everything simple," Knox said.

And that's where the purchase of bulls from Te Mania has helped Knox and Sarah Jane Paton run an uncomplicated business. "Calving ease, good growth, Breedplan recording and the genetic improvements are all done for us by Te Mania," Knox explained.

For Sarah Jane and Knox the days of easy money in farming are long gone. "Farming is a tough business now. The overheads and inputs are continually rising while income has not risen accordingly."

But for Sarah Jane and Knox the lifestyle on Ardonachie is something they cherish. "We love it and we'd never give it up. We have a nice life and we're pretty lucky really," they agreed.

Time for a change

With Tom Gubbins



As time goes by, our cattle, our markets and our environment, all change.

These three factors contribute to the weightings in our selection indexes. So it stands to reason, as the main forces behind cattle breeding change, so should the selection indexes change to reflect this.

To the credit of Angus Australia, changes have recently been made to the selection indexes. It is a pity however, that the Angus Australia is put under so much pressure for making these necessary changes.

Whilst change can be difficult, we should try and become more accepting of regular changes to our selection indexes, so it is easier and less political.

When steering a ship, it is better to make small navigational corrections more often and avoid needing to make large corrections late!

Good, well bred cattle will perform and rank well in all the \$Indexes.

The following is an extract from the Angus Society of Australia's web page. For more information go to angusaustralia.com.au

Selection indexes are utilised by livestock breeders of many species around the world and are considered an essential part of any modern livestock breeding program.

Selection indexes aid in the selection of animals for use within a breeding program where there are several traits of economic or functional importance by providing an overall "score" of an animal's genetic value. Selection indexes are calculated for a specific breeding purpose and are calculated based on weightings placed on individual traits that are

deemed to be important for that purpose.

Selection indexes assist beef producers in making "balanced" selection decisions, taking into account the relevant growth, carcass and fertility attributes of each animal to identify animals that are most suitable for use within their particular commercial enterprise. Selection indexes reflect both the short term profit generated by an animal through the sale of their progeny, and the longer term profit generated by their daughters in a self-replacing cow herd.

There are four selection indexes calculated for animals within the Angus BREEDPLAN analysis.

- Angus Breeding Index
- Domestic Index
- Heavy Grain Index
- Heavy Grass Index

The Angus Breeding Index is a general purpose selection index that is suitable for use in the majority of commercial beef operations, whereas the Domestic, Heavy Grain and Heavy Grass selection indexes are specific to beef operations targeting a defined production system and market endpoint.

Angus Breeding Index

Estimates the genetic differences between animals in net profitability per cow joined in a typical commercial self replacing herd using Angus bulls.

This selection index is not specific to a particular production system or market endpoint, but identifies animals that will improve overall profitability in the majority of commercial grass and grain finishing beef production systems.

The Angus Breeding Index is particularly suited to commercial producers who sell progeny into different markets, or to seedstock producers

supplying bulls to commercial clients who produce for a range of different production systems and market end points.

Domestic Index

Estimates the genetic differences between animals in net profitability per cow joined in a commercial self replacing herd targeting the domestic supermarket trade. Steers are assumed to be finished using either grass, grass supplemented by grain or grain (eg. 50–70 days) with steers slaughtered at 490 kg live weight (270 kg carcass weight with 12 mm P8 fat depth) at 16 months of age. Daughters are retained for breeding and therefore maternal traits are of importance. Emphasis has been placed on eating quality and tenderness to favour animals that are suited to MSA requirements.

Heavy Grain Index

Estimates the genetic differences between animals in net profitability per cow joined in a commercial self replacing herd targeting pasture grown steers with a 200 day feedlot finishing period for the grain fed high quality, highly marbled markets. Steers are assumed to be slaughtered at 760 kg live weight (420 kg carcass weight with 30 mm P8 fat depth) at 24 months of age. Daughters are retained for breeding and therefore maternal traits are of importance. There is a significant premium for steers that exhibit superior marbling.

Heavy Grass Index

Estimates the genetic differences between animals in net profitability per cow joined in a commercial self replacing herd targeting pasture finished steers. Steers are assumed to be slaughtered at 620 kg live weight (340 kg carcass weight with 12 mm P8 fat depth) at 22 months of age. Daughters are retained for breeding and therefore maternal traits are of importance. Emphasis has been placed on eating quality and tenderness to favour animals that are suited to MSA requirements.

In the business of Farming

With Rod and Alison Watkins, Glencoe

Words by Katrina Weatherly



Forget the sea change or the tree change. For Rod and Alison Watkins it's been a paddock change. Their busy board room corporate lives have been enriched by the 2008 purchase of Glencoe, a 2,500 acre property between Darlington and Camperdown in Victoria's Western District.

Alison's career has been a spectacular rise to her current position as Group Managing Director of the beverage giant Coca-Cola Amatil. Prior to that she was CEO of GrainCorp, the juice company Berri Limited, ASX 20 company Board Director, non-executive director of Woolworths Ltd, the ANZ banking Group as well as former partner of the management consulting firm McKinsey & Company.

For Rod there's been an Economics degree and an MBA followed by a working life spent mostly working for Malcolm Turnbull in the investment banking business and later for OzEmail, one of the original ISP's.

In 2001 Alison took on a job running rural banking and online banking with the ANZ bank that coincided with the birth of the couple's fourth child. At the same time Rod was experiencing a lull in his career and took time off to look after the children.

"It worked out really well," Rod said. "Alison was happy I was looking after the kids, and I loved the time off. So as Alison stepped up her career, I wound mine back."

But Alison and Rod had grown up in Tasmania. In fact Alison had spent a very happy childhood on a farm in the Tasmanian midlands where she grew up believing her lot in life was to be a farmer's wife.

The story, related often by Alison, was that instead, she married Rod Watkins, a man with zero farming background. Over the next 30 years Alison has joked that she turned him into the farmer she'd dreamt about in her youth.

"Alison had such fun growing up on the farm

and we always enjoyed going to relative's country properties so we harboured this desire to one day have a property of our own," Rod explained. "We looked at Glencoe and liked the feel of the place even though it was much larger than the hobby farm we had imagined buying. For someone with no farming experience or knowledge, 2,500 acres seemed a lot of acres," laughed Rod.

But being in their late forties Rod and Alison decided there was no time to wait; in they dived making sure they had good advice to cover them. They've never regretted the decision, and have cherished the warm way they've been welcomed into the community.

"People like James Richardson gave us valuable practical help and Clarke Roycroft from Elders helped us think about our objectives. I have complete trust in Clarke," Rod said.

"Early on we decided to run an operational and profitable farm, not too complicated for our complicated lifestyle.

The first cross Wagyu cattle operation run on Glencoe was ended. "We wanted to simplify things," Rod said. "So we kept most of the Angus cows and brought in Angus bulls.

"Clarke persuaded us Te Mania was a great business to work with and clearly they are a very professional group. We've used their bulls for six years now and we're very happy with the constant improvement in the quality of progeny we're getting," Rod said.

The cattle enterprise runs 600 cows, but improved pastures will allow a lift in the stocking rate to 700 next year. But Rod is keen to keep the stocking rate fairly conservative. "I don't want this farming experience to be too stressful for us," he said.

In 2008 Glencoe had a split calving system with 400 calving in spring and 200 in autumn. There's now a move to 100 percent spring calving.

"Originally we thought it would be good to

spread the cash flow over the year, but it's simpler to have everything calving in spring," Rod said.

To make the changeover, progeny will be retained in the herd, autumn calving cows will be sold and spring calving cows purchased instead of holding autumn calvers over for six months.

"Because we are keeping more heifers, we are after low birth weight bulls. We take advantage of the records kept by Te Mania, where Hamish McFarlane has helped us select low birth weight bulls and we've had very little calving trouble.

"Geoff Risbey who manages the cattle operation at Glencoe, makes sure he puts the right bulls over the right cows or heifers," Rod said.

"As long as the cow is structurally sound and is producing a good calf, the cow is kept. But if they don't produce a calf they're gone," he said.

All cattle are naturally mated and run under strict commercial conditions with only a small amount of hay being fed. "We make our own hay and haven't started feeding cattle yet," Rod said. "We are lucky to benefit from a good mix of country, with high ground as well as more low lying, heavier country that drops down about ten to 15 feet."

Cattle are sold at the Camperdown market, go to feedlots or overseas. Glencoe has EU accreditation, which enables them to participate in shipping cattle overseas. A few years ago heifers were sent to Kazakhstan when Clarke Roycroft was filling an order.

In the first few years at Glencoe 350 hectares were cropped annually to clean up the paddocks. This acreage has now been reduced to 160 hectares with a wheat and canola rotation.

"David Manifold is responsible for our crops and it works well; he's a great guy and essentially he's added an extra paddock to his contracting business."

Since purchasing the property six years ago there has been heavy investment in pasture improvement, water and fencing as well as trees that have improved the visual outlook of the property.

The paddocks under crop are subsequently sown down to pasture. "It's an ongoing program that increases stocking rates and makes us less reliant on having to buy feed," Rod said.

Glencoe has the blessing of good water and an upgraded system has lifted stocking rates and made it more comfortable when the wind doesn't blow. "Water is critical so we've upgraded the water system from windmills to a good bore with pumps that reticulate the water to pretty much anywhere on the farm."

Some paddocks have undergone subdivision with one big cropping paddock now halved.

The tree planting program has involved fencing. "16,000 native trees have been planted on the western boundaries of paddocks because it gets pretty brutal here in winter," Rod said.

The place is run with a low labour input with Geoff Risbey employed full time with occasional help at calf marking and peak times.

The purchase of Glencoe reflects Rod and Alison's view that there's a great future in agriculture. "There's a lot said about the rapidly growing number of people upgrading the quality of protein they want to eat and we buy into that story," Rod explained. "I see Australia being in a good position to supply those growing markets."

There's an unassuming modesty about Rod. "I don't know it all and I don't pretend to," he said. "I regularly look for advice and talk to people who know a lot more about farming than I do. So I wouldn't be arrogant enough to think that I knew how to run a business better than some of the farmers around here who've been doing it for generations," he said. "We are still learning so we don't want to run this place in a way that creates stress for anyone."

So while Glencoe might be a long way from the board rooms of Melbourne or Sydney, the family all love the rural lifestyle offered to them in the country.

"The kids love it and Alison enjoys seeing them have a bit of exposure to what she enjoyed in her childhood. They learn to do stuff, helping on motorbikes, getting their hands dirty and getting filthy. It's good," Rod said with a glow.



**RELISHING THE LIFESTYLE CHANGE –
ROD WATKINS WITH HIS DAUGHTER ILSA**

25 years of scanning at Te Mania Angus

With Jim Green, Beef Xcel

Twenty five years ago I obtained an accreditation to scan cattle for carcase traits. Little did I know where this would take me.

Not long married to Patti, with one child born, I hit the road and started visiting stud beef cattle producers, scanning their cattle for rib and rump fat, marbling and eye muscle area.

The Intramuscular fat scanned images that were captured at Te Mania Angus, were sent by mail, in BETA video format, to Iowa State University to Dr's Wilson and Rouse where

they were assessed for marbling. How things have changed in 25 years!

The last 25 years have been very educational for me, although I have probably learnt as much about people as I have cattle. Over twenty five years, we have been able to improve carcase quality, yield and increase production but I have also been involved with some of the most remarkable people in the world.

The Gubbins family virtually launched my career. Andrew Gubbins has been a mentor

and friend to me for twenty five years. It is not only a cattle connection we have but also a unique friendship.

Other families have guided me along the way, families such as the Corrigans, Goughs, Harbisons, Litchfields, Grahams and Lawsons.

Over the last twenty five years, we have seen change in many ways. Most for the better. Better carcase, better structure and better production.

Better carcase. Better structure. Better production.

People like the Gubbins' have not only helped me, but have been instigators in moving the beef cattle industry forward. If it wasn't for forward thinking people we would all be floundering.

I have also been structurally assessing Te Mania Angus cattle since 1994, as part of their intensive structural assessment program.

Not only is every bull assessed, but every female is assessed prior to joining for the first three years of its breeding life. Donor cows are assessed each year, regardless of age.

The cattle are assessed in line with the Beef Class Structural Assessment System for leg and foot structure.

Currently, the annual structural assessment program is as follows:

December:

Every yearling bull is assessed. Management groups are observed as in all performance recording, and this data is submitted to Breedplan and genetically analysed, with structure EBVs calculated. This data is presented in the Te Mania Angus bull sale catalogues.

January/February:

At weaning all first, second and third-calving cows are assessed for structure including teat size and shape, udder attachment and udder evenness.

May:

All bulls in the spring bull sale team are reassessed so they all have current assessments.

July:

All maiden heifers are assessed before calving so the next joining decisions can be made. This data is also genetically analysed using Angus Group Breedplan.

Any animal at any assessment which scores outside the acceptable range is culled – regardless of figures and no questions asked.

Clients and potential clients of Te Mania Angus can be confident they are being provided with a product which is structurally sound due to Te Mania Angus' dedication to structure.

Thank you to all those forward thinking people for contributing to my 25 years in the industry, I look forward to continuing to work with you in the future

Regards Jim

PROVEN PERFORMERS



PHOTO BY LEANNE HALL

“ The performance and reputation of Te Mania bloodlines give our cattle a distinct marketing edge. They are reliable, quiet, and highly fertile, producing even lines of weaners with good carcass results. ”

GARRY HALL, THE MOLE, WARREN NSW

2 February	Beef Week Field Day Mortlake, Victoria	Preview sale bulls Tour property
3 March	Team Te Mania Commercial Cow Sale, AuctionsPlus Only	500+ Te Mania Angus bloodlines sold from vendor properties
4 March	Te Mania Angus Autumn On-Property Sale	150 Bulls, 18 months

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