

Carcase Competitions in Victoria

Gippsland Beef Challenge

When: Middle of October
Where: Hoof Judging @ Sale Livestock Exchange
Hook Judging @ Cranbourne {Wagstaff's}

What it involves:

Hoof, Hook and Hide competition. Cattle arrive and are weighed and penned at the Sale Livestock Exchange. Exhibitors are allowed 1 hour to change classes if they are out of weight category {dressed weight}. Then judged on weight classes, pens, pairs and then a Champion and Reserve Champion are selected overall. Hook judging is scored at Wagstaffs and includes carcass viewing. Hides are also scored but are not viewed.

Special Notes:

Unlike other competitions there are three components which all count towards overall score. Hoof accounts for 25%, Hook 60% and Hide 15%. The competition usually attracts cattle from across Victoria and entries are split into Grass and Grain fed sections. Also known for its pen of three and pair's classes. The competition usual has anywhere between 50 and 100 entries and it is always a closely fought competition. The owner of the steers receives the carcass money and the top steers receive premiums for quality. Prize money is exceptional and trophies are also given out to champion place getters. The Elizabeth Meredith Memorial is awarded to the Supreme Exhibit and since its inception has only been won by two exhibitors. Caters for light to heavy steers/heifers. Also has a presentation dinner for all awards and a guest speaker. Full report of all results, measurements and scores are available.

Contact: Ross Meredith on 0408514035

Pakenham Hoof and Hook

When: First week in December
Where: Hoof judging @ Pakenham Livestock Exchange
Hook judging @ Warragul {Radford's}

What it involves:

Hoof and Hook competition. Cattle arrive and are weighed and penned at the Pakenham Livestock Exchange. Exhibitors are allowed 1 hour to change classes if they are out of category {dressed weight}. Individual classes only and Champion and Reserve Champion selected overall. Hook judging is scored at Radford's and includes carcass viewing. Scoring is 50% Hoof and 50% Hook.

Special Notes:

Cattle from across Gippsland attend and is usually puts grass against grain fed steers, with some interesting results. Sometimes targeted by the spring calves from the previous year however autumn drop calves straight off mother have succeeded in the light classes. The owner of the steers receives the carcass money and top steers receive premiums for quality. Prize money is good and the ribbons come framed. Caters for light to medium steers/heifers. Full report of all results, measurements and scores are available.

Contact: Roger Leamon on (03) 56291070

Lardner Park Steer Trial

When: Steers arrive in early June and are weighed four times between then and early December for 1st Turn off and processed early December, 2nd Turn off steers are weighed five times and processed in early January.

Where: Weighing and Gain recording Warragul @ Lardner Park
Carcase judging @ Warragul {Radford's}

What it involves:

A different competition where weight gain is assessed and scored, not visual assessment. There are two turnoffs, one in December after four weigh ins, and one in early January after five weigh ins. Entries are in pairs only and are weighed with the average weight gain at the end of the live competition scoring is based on live weight gain percentages as a pair {about 150 days for first turnoff and 200 days for second turnoff}. The carcass component is based on a scoring system and viewing is allowed at Radford's Warragul. Carcass value improvement over the period of the demonstration is shared on a 50/50 basis with Lardner Park events. Increase in carcass value is determined using the following formula {Final carcass weight minus half of starting liveweight multiplied by the carcass price} Cattle that do not meet fat requirements could be penalised up to \$0.50/kg. All entries are run together and are fed grass and supplements in unison.

Special Notes:

The strong point of the competition is that competitors that usually finish their competition steers on grain cannot do this and all steers enter at the same condition. Prize money is good and you get a full report on results and there is a presentation dinner with guest speakers. Also after live weigh in days there is a lunch and guest speaker. Suits lighter steers. Heifers are not permitted

Contact: Mark Cockerell on (03) 56261418

Noorat Carcass Competition

When: November

Where: Hoof judging @ Camperdown Saleyards
Hook judging @ Herds in Geelong

What it involves:

Animals arrive and are weighed after a curfew overnight. The following day they are judged live. Carcass judging is at Herds in Geelong and carcasses are able to be viewed. The two scores are kept separate and Champion Exhibit is based only on carcass points.

Special Notes:

Prize money, best in the state. \$1000 for Champion Carcass makes it appealing to everyone. Usually 80 to 100 entries. Awards given on hoof and hook but only Carcass points are considered in Supreme Exhibit. The owner of the steers receives the carcass money minus a small percentage for transport etc {4% roughly}. Also has a presentation night and guest speakers. For light to heavy steers/heifers however suits medium steers/heifers with correct fat especially for the carcass section. Full report with weights, measurements and placings provided.

Contact: Brad Gilmour 0408527836

There are also other competitions such as:

- Green Triangle at Hamilton in early February
- Melbourne Show in late September
- Beef National At Rockhampton {however Victorian entries can be judged at O Conner's Pakenham and last year was won by a Western Australian exhibitor}
- Bendigo Beef National {Led or unled}
- Elmore Beef Carcase Competition and many more

A few handy hints for SUCCESS

- Check the entry conditions to see if they suit your program and calving/ turnout periods. Weights and fat coverage are key elements that are easily rectified if time permits. So pick your competitions early. Most competitions will cater for heavy and light animals and its often a good idea to have a mix, the more you are in the better your chances are, nothing is better than having a clean sweep of classes.
- Separate your steers if possible, less competition for grass/grain. Also reduces chance of bruising from other animal and the rapid spread of illness if it was to occur. Also allows them to be monitored and allows visitors to have a look at certain stages throughout their preparation. Can become a real show piece to your herd
- Clean your animal up. Nothing looks more unsightly than a good steer, covered in manure dags or a winter coat. Brush or cut long unsightly hair and manure off. Also if possible clip the hair off the head, neck top line and tailhead. Not only does it look professional, it also enables the judge to remember your steer better as in a local competition it may well be the only one clipped. Take pride in the presentation of your animals.
- Weigh animals regularly. This allows you to predict classes and maintain the feed for your animals. Also gives you knowledge of how well that steers parents perform under certain conditions or if they do not perform at all.
- Attend the live and carcase viewing, the opportunity may arise to sell cattle and if you aren't there you will miss out. The other point here is if you win and aren't there to receive the awards, doesn't make you look interested and it's also good sportsmanship to see others collect awards too.
- Have business cards. The people you meet may be interested in your program/ cattle and future sales may arise. You may not sell cattle on the day, but maybe six months later they might want bull and forget who you were, very crucial to have info ready for people. Don't be afraid to introduce yourself and learn about their program either, maybe they do something that you may wish to try, you never know.
- Keep all your results as a comparison between your bloodlines over periods of time to see if you are improving or falling away in some areas. Also gives potential clients a look at the potential of your steers.

Main thing is to have a go and learn!!!

Feeding for Specifications and types of Feeding

This is controversial in some cases, some to choose too, others are against it, Feeding. Check with the competition specifications early or if in doubt ring the competition organiser. Ultimately it's up to you and the season. It is important however to be in specifications as it will reflect on your results and carcass value if they aren't {especially in the fat coverage and colour areas} and your placings.

These summaries to show what methods you can use to feed.

- Grass fed steers should have access to hay/silage as a supplement. This is classed as Grass Feeding. Some competitions will cater for these animals {e.g Lardner Steer trial and Gippsland Beef Challenge so do some homework. Shows how well your animals perform under normal commercial conditions however will take longer periods to hit specifications in some circumstances.

- Supplementary Feeding is when steers are run in a grass fed circumstance, but are also fed grain to make up between 15 to 30% of the diet. These steers are eligible to go into grass and grain fed competitions if you wish to do so. This is a good tactic to put fat on cattle 50 days before competition, will add 3 to 4 mm usually {on purebred Red Angus Steers} which can mean the difference between just enough fat and being in the middle of specifications which is the best place to be.

- Grain Feeding is when the steers have access to grain and hay {usually Oaten or Lucerne} only. No grass access and usually on feed for 100 days. Will give your animals fat, but may make them have too much.