

# DEVONS IN OUR WORLD

## Producing Quality Beef



### SAFE FOODS

#### *Humans Demands*

As humans develop more complex lifestyles from increasing wealth and social standards the demand for more sophisticated food also increases. The highest aspirational protein source is beef. The taste and texture of red meat is the pinnacle of man's social ascendancy.

Cultures that increased the wealth of citizens in the 20th Century all exhibited increasing consumption of beef. Nations that are emerging as world industrial power-houses in the 21st Century are showing the same demand for beef.

A simple consequence of changing dietary demands is insistence for highest quality red meat products.

On a world wide basis Devon cattle are known as providing high quality beef from grass fattening operations. The "Red Rubies" are having a resurgence of recognition and production because of the safety of beef fattened on grass. This is the driving force behind a new beef industry in Britain and the demand for better beef in the USA.

In north Asia, food safety is so important to the Japanese that they will refuse to eat products that are perceived to contain chemical residues or be produced in a country where disease in food production is known.

Beef from Australia is produced under sophisticated regulations in a clean and healthy environment. **Food safety is high standard.** Devon breed marketing is all about eating the best meat available.

Some breeds have marketed themselves as differentiated product using brand names. In a country of only 20 million people, breed differentiation is dependent on continuous supply of carcasses (which is difficult) and the need to reach widely dispersed consumers.

Devon cattle are high performers under ideal conditions. Growth and carcass traits place them as superior producers of high quality beef. Where seasons, soils, pastures are less friendly they survive, go into calf readily and still produce valuable product.

***Disregarding hype about cattle breeds, the often forgotten aim of cattlemen is to produce high quality protein from minimal resources. Quality red meat produced from low quality fibre (pasture) over extensive rangelands has got to be good news for the human race.***

### BREED PURITY

#### *A Characteristic Ensuring Consistency*

Devon cattle are one of the few remaining breeds of cattle that have retained their purity of breed over many centuries. Breed purity is a valuable scientific tool. Purity of breed is an absolute necessity for successful crossbreeding and for production of composite cattle.



*From late 19th Century to late 20th Century.  
Two Devon bulls nearly 100 years apart*

Heterosis or hybrid vigour, is well known in the cattle industry but often not well used because of the misunderstood background of one or both parents. Bulls with mixed breeding used on cows of unknown or mixed parentage may not produce consistent results.

Some breeders depend on composite bulls, assuming their genetics stable enough to give uniform and predictable progeny. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Composite breeders use Devon females as a base herd because of their purity and the positive attributes of Devon cattle.

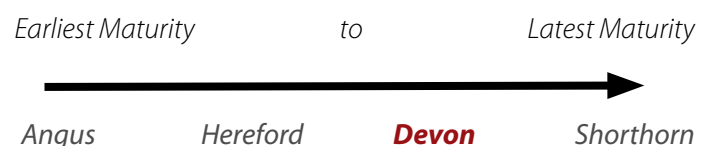
Many "breeds" in diverse parts of the world have used Devons as a starting point including South Devons (England), Wagyu (Japan), Montana (Brasil) and unnamed breeds in Australia. The Saler breed in France has connections to Devon cattle through Devon herds of French kings.

The need to produce cattle to fit "agrofactory" production systems has not overtaken the breed. **Devon cattle are a true resource for the beef industry.**

### GROWTH & MATURITY

#### *Avoiding 'One Size Fits All Markets'*

Until about 1960 traditional British breeds of cattle in Australia had maturity patterns in the following order:



In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century demand for heavier carcass weight meant earlier maturing types of British breeds were unsuitable for intensive feeding because of higher fat content at relatively low weights. Some breeds have changed their genetic base to overcome the needs of the market by giving up traditional maturity patterns.



*A late maturing Devon bull at 15 months weighing 654 kg.*

*Rump and rib fat scans of 8 mm and 5 mm.*

*Later as a mature bull his progeny will make ideal export steers, with carcass weights over 300 kg, ideal cover and produced off pasture!*

Devon cattle retain a wide mix of maturity types. The breed is unaffected by pressures of modern markets to make changes by introducing outside genetics. Effectively, the variations in the Devon breed make them suitable for most markets. Making the right choice of Devon bull in a breeding program can produce the desired result for each type of market.



*The benefits of selecting early maturing cattle: at 125 days age this calf weighed 218 kg.*

Cattle from **Devon Genetics Australia** typically are of mid to late maturity patterns. The advantages are many fold:

- Ability to finish on pasture at any age only dependent on the availability of good seasonal conditions for pasture growth.
- Short and long term finishing possible in intensive feeding situations without creating excessive fat.
- Heavier carcasses from larger framed prime stock.

There are also some genetic lines of earlier maturing bulls from **Devon Genetics Australia** that exhibit typical advantages of early maturing breeds:

- Finish cattle from pastures at a young age.
- Ideal fat cover on carcasses at young age.

Young stock that finish for light weight markets (180 - 220 kg carcass) can often be sold directly off the cow at 8 – 9 months of age. To finish young stock early, selection of dams for milk production can be made easier by choosing Devon sire lines for high milk performance. The right sires from **Devon Genetics Australia** can raise milk production in cows used to produce heavy young cattle.

For grass fed Devons to produce very high quality meat the final part of the equation is high quality and reliable pasture.



*For all her life this heifer was pasture fed. Weighing 457 kg live weight (full) at slaughter her carcass weighed 250 kg.*

*The taste, texture and colour of meat was judged as above average.*



When produced under ideal conditions, Devon meat has the following characteristics:

- Pink flesh
- Highly palatable milky flavour
- Very fine texture
- Served of moderate thickness
- Marbling

**Regardless of fashion in the beef industry Devons produce high quality meat from cattle that easily adapt to most environments.**

**Devon**  
Genetics Australia

[www.devongenetics.com](http://www.devongenetics.com)

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