

JAD SPECKLE PARK – excerpt from July 2023 Newsletter

Exceptional feed conversion rates after 100 days on feed

We have had 168 Speckle Park-cross steers being custom fed at Ravensworth Feedlot, Hay NSW. They entered the feedlot in late-January averaging 361kg (795 pounds), with our primary goal being to gather data for internal breed promotion. To be credible as a breed, we can't rely on big statements about breed attributes without real proof. These steers were not specially selected. They were purchased from multiple breeders with their commonality being they were by a registered Speckle Park bull, and out of British-breed females.

At the 100-day mark, we did a bulk weigh and learned the steers had put on an average of 2.1kg (4.6 pounds)/day for the first 100 days, and they had achieved a feed conversion rate of 5.2:1. No-HGP. That means they consumed 5.2kg of dry matter for every 1kg of weight gain.

This feed conversion rate is not to be sneezed at. In a world with growing consumer attention around carbon footprint and methane emissions (feed intake and methane production are directly correlated - the more an animal eats, the more methane it produces), this kind of data is so important. It also helps to reaffirm our suspicions around efficiency and hardiness that we observe on a daily basis in our Speckle Park female herd on-farm. When we're in the midst of the next drought, we know which cows we would prefer to be running!

After 173 days on feed, two B Double loads of our steers averaged 682kg (1,503 pounds) liveweight and 377.09kg (831.34 pounds) carcass weight on exit, dressing at a pleasing 58.2% - with 5% taken off their exit weight (or 57% at 3% shrink, if you think 5% is too much). Other consignments of British-breed steers exiting at this time have been dressing at more like 52-54%. They converted at 5.78:1 for the entire time, with a 1.65kg/day ADG from induction weight. Of the 1466 non-HGP Angus steers fed at the same feedlot, over the same period, they converted at 6.64:1 with a 1.73kg/day ADG from induction. That difference of 0.86:1 feed conversion rate over 173 days equates to a feed saving of 24,995kg, totalling \$11,247, or \$66.96 per head.

Interestingly, the entire consignment only had three animals treated during their time on feed (one pinkeye, two respiratory). We are told the pull rate over this length of time on feed is usually 10-12% of the mob - so that number should have been more like 15-20 animals. This demonstrates the inbuilt resilience that we observe with the Speckle Park breed on-farm.