

# Sydney carcass champs

## Speckle Park reigns supreme

BY LEA COGHLAN

BUSINESS PROFILE

**T**HE Speckle Park breed has proved it can compete alongside Australia's most well-established beef breeds at the flagship royal show in the country - and finish triumphantly.

Exhibiting as a feature breed for the first time at the 2023 Sydney Royal Easter Show, a team of three Speckle Park steers took out the prestigious Stan Hill Memorial Perpetual Trophy.

The interbreed group of three purebred steers achieved a combined total carcass score of 249.93, holding out teams from 11 other beef breeds.

The team comprised Ewyn Tellmemore T09, exhibited by Jackungah and Ewyn Speckle Park, Victoria; Sowden Goodguyswearblack, exhibited by the Sowden Family, South Burnett, and Pinnacle Park Extra Special, exhibited by Troy Hepburn and Tania Paget, The Summit, Stanthorpe, Queensland.

The accolades did not stop there.

Stannies Robin, a Speckle Park-cross steer exhibited by St Stanislaus' College, Bathurst, NSW, was named champion trade steer while Sowden Goodguyswearblack was also named reserve champion middleweight steer and reserve champion middleweight carcass.

Slim, a Speckle Park-



Sowden Goodguyswearblack also named grand champion Speckle Park steer, grand champion Speckle Park carcass, reserve champion middleweight steer and reserve champion middleweight carcass. Photo supplied



The victorious Speckle Park team, winners of the Stan Hill Memorial Perpetual Trophy at the 2023 Sydney Royal Easter Show. Photo by Branded Ag Marketing

cross steer exhibited by Braidwood Central School, Braidwood, NSW, and Kikiamah Speckle Park, Araluen, NSW, won champion virtual taste test trade carcass (highest MSA score). The steer received an MSA index of 63.06, the highest MSA index across all trade and purebred steers.

On April 6, during the steer auction, Speckle Park steers sold for an average of 512.2c/kg, some 24.7 per cent higher than all

other breed averages. Nine Speckle Park steers sold were butchered at Roberts Meats in Singleton, dressing out as high as 63.85 pc, with an average of 60.1 pc.

The Gould family, Meadow View Farms Speckle Park, continued the breed's success over the hook taking out grand champion carcass with a Speckle Park-cross steer, bred by Dwight and Noela Wyatt, at Casino Beef Week in May.

Speckle Park arrived in

Australia 16 years ago and have taken the beef industry by storm, highly sought-after for their carcass qualities and commercial benefits in crossbreeding operations.

The breed's success at Sydney Royal - the 260 Speckle Park animals exhibited was the largest showing of Speckle Park animals in the world - has piqued the interest of other royal shows, keen to showcase the breed.

Mitch Warrenner, who chairs the breed's Australasian association, Speckle Park International (SPI), said the Sydney Royal results validated the carcass qualities of the breed.

"The breed's achievements at the show substantiate the carcass merits of Speckle Park animals," Mr Warrenner said.

"As breeders we have a strong opinion of the merits of the animals we produce. But this certainly provides more evidence and facts to support that opinion.

This speaks volumes for the breed's high yielding, high grade (MSA) carcass.

"We scan animals for IMF and EMA as raw data, but this provides further evidence, and compared with other breeds, that the quality of carcass and meat eating qualities are there."

Tania Paget, Pinnacle Park Speckles, was part of the victorious Stan Hill Memorial Perpetual Trophy team. Ms Paget, who exhibited Pinnacle Park Extra Special with fellow Speckle Park breeder Troy Hepburn, Foxtail Hill Speckle Park, established Pinnacle Park Speckles in 2015, after following the breed's achievements in the carcass competitions held at the Calgary Stampede in Canada.

Sydney Royal was the first time Pinnacle Park presented a purebred Speckle Park steer, with Pete, a 16-month-old, 590kg attributing 86.73 points to the win.

"It was an honour to be

part of the winning team but the culmination of a lot of hard work and effort that we have put into our breeding program over the years," Ms Paget said.

Pinnacle Park Speckles focus on structure and temperament, followed closely by meat eating qualities and carcass traits.

Ms Paget said interest in the breed had grown exponentially, particularly from commercial breeders who were using Speckle Park to add hybrid vigour and produce a carcass with more marbling on less inputs.

In a massive achievement for the Speckle Park breed, single step genomic EBVs are due to be unlocked this month (July), providing improved trait accuracy and the ability to select sires at a younger age.

"We've needed time to pass to build our phenotypic data to a threshold point across the reference population, given our members have long since invested in full genotype data," Mr Warrenner said. "We have now reached that point.

"We've been able to get an understanding and appreciation of certain sire lines and how they are performing. That's a really exciting step.

"With the amount of phenotypic data we're now seeing, we are continuing to improve in our ability and confidence to select for certain traits and qualities which enable us to support commercial operators and breed to the requirements of their programs.

Mr Warrenner said the breed was also focusing on sustainability - hoping to leverage off its ability to produce a moderate frame, fast finishing with high MSA quality animal, while retaining a solid carcass to suit the various markets.

## WHEN THE STEAKS ARE HIGH, RESULTS DON'T LIE

Produce greater quantities of better quality beef, sooner

"People often ask us why, after 30 successful years of breeding Droughtmasters, we would introduce Speckle Park into our breeding program.... Well these F1 weaners are the typical example behind our decision. More kilos per beast, more cents per kilo, and the most tender meat we have ever bred. This is the reason we love the Speckle Park / Droughtmaster cross!" - Birchmore Pastoral



speckle  
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