

ALISON ATKINSON

DURACK, STUD NO. 575.

I GREW UP ON Werrington Station in far north Queensland with my father and mother King and Isabel Lethbridge and six beautiful siblings.

As a small child I spent my time with the milkers which were in a paddock beside the homestead, they were bred to provide milk and butter for our family. I used to pretend to be a calf, with two stick legs for my front legs, the cows were so accepting of me, even remember having a tiny suck from one dear old cow called Lucy, when she was lying down!!

My mother Isabel, was given a few Registered Droughtmaster cows and a Registered bull by my sister and her husband, Rob and Reg Atkinson who lived at Glen Ruth Station in the Mt Garnet district of North Queensland. I loved these cows of my mother's. I do have a photo of one of the cows who was called Best Girl, standing on her hind legs to grab hold of the Mulberry Tree leaves during a bad drought.

I went to work at Glen Ruth and in 1965 I was given the opportunity to work with their Show Team of three head of Droughtmasters, two heifers and a bull. Glen Ruth Jewel, Gem and Major. My brother Bob helped me at several of the northern Shows, Cairns was the last, then I took the team by Goods Train to the Brisbane Exhibition which took three long days, this was quite an experience, getting

them watered along the way, had to talk to the train driver about stopping close to a water outlet, he was very co-operative.

They did really well at all the Shows and at the Brisbane Exhibition, receiving ribbons and Major was judged Grand Champion Droughtmaster bull. They all sold for record prices at the Stud Cattle Sale which was also held on the Grounds. In 1967 I took another team comprising both Glen Ruth and Mungalla cattle to the Shows, about eight head and a calf.

Alan Atkinson and I married in November 1967 and lived at Valley of Lagoons west of Ingham on the beautiful Burdekin River. The Valley Droughtmaster Stud was the trademark there. Our four daughters, Kylie, Sherri, Gayle and Robyn, grew up at the Valley where there was so much wildlife with all the water about so close to the homestead.

During 1988 I moved on my own to a property called Durack near Gogango west of Rockhampton in Central Queensland, and began my own Droughtmaster Stud based on Valley bloodlines, with the Prefix "Durack". Three years later I sold Durack and bought Orana on the Dawson River outside Duaranga also west of Rockhampton. I really regret that I changed my Stud Prefix to "Orana", however in 1999 I managed to top the National Droughtmaster Sale at Gracemere

with a bull I really loved, Orana Issac, his progeny still shows up in pedigrees in Southern Queensland. I later changed my Stud Prefix back to "Durack".

I was invited to join the selling panel at the Capricorn Sale at Gracemere where I had lots of success over several years.

My family invited me to join their Sale, MAGS in Charters Towers where I manage to top the Sale several years ago with Durack Uranus.

I will never forget the wonderful announcement which was a massive surprise for me at the National Droughtmaster Sale at Gracemere in 2017 when I was presented with my Life Membership of the Droughtmaster Society. I am very honoured to have been nominated.

It was with great regret that I sold my property Orana in 2008, after an accident in the paddock on my quad bike, my daughter and her husband Mac and Gayle Shann offered to take my Stud cows to their property Cantaur Park, north of Moranbah. It was about four years ago that I decided to transfer the few remaining cows over to Mac and Gayle and I sold my last bull at MAGS Sale in 2020. I do miss my Droughtmaster cattle SO much, but love to help my daughters and their families whenever they are doing cattle work.



Alison Atkinson and daughters Sherri Philp, Gayle Shann and Kylie Graham, receiving her Life Membership at the National Droughtmaster Sale in 2017.