

FRANK HODGSON

WINGFIELD, STUD NO. 47.

FRANK AND VAL HODGSON had a sugar cane farm outside Innisfail, North Queensland. He was an accomplished horseman and sometimes went with a local butcher to muster cattle in the Daintree. On one of these trips he saw Louis Fischer's and Bill Wallace's early Droughtmaster herds and was impressed by their appearance and ability to thrive where other cattle couldn't.

In 1960, the Hodgson family moved to South East Queensland purchasing the 532ha Wingfield property near Dalby. They brought with them 6 heifers and 2 bulls from Bill Wallace, Woondoo, the progeny of the Louis Fischer's Daintree herd. Over the ensuing years Frank added to these, selected shorthorn cows and a Grampian Brahman bull to increase content. In September 1967, Frank and Val Hodgson's Wingfield Stud was founded with registration of 21 cows and heifers and an Alma bred sire and later included a Kanbrae bull from Charlie Wallace at Mt Molloy and Kanbrae and Woondoo females. After that, no other female was purchased into the herd.

Frank operated under his personal motto, "breed away from faults". Bulls were purchased from other studs or were Wingfield bred. Bulls of note included Alma Sunset, Kanbrae Lucky Brae, Burnside Darcy, Truvalle Colin, Jadma Duke 225, Valley Moses, Sersema Ptolemy, Greenacres Julien and Minlacowie Alberigo, Moses(AI) and Millionaire (AI), with Wingfield bulls Dandy, Pembroke, Nemo and Boris retained in the herd.

Frank began showing his Droughtmasters in 1970 with success on the Darling Downs leading to his first RNA Grand Champion, Wingfield Bettina, sired by Alma Sunset. His passion for showing to promote the Droughtmaster breed and his stud continued through the 1970's and 80's and during this time he notched up 5 other RNA Grand Champion Females, W. Heidi (1972), W. Unique, (1974 and 1975), W. Kate (1980) and W. Renee (1985). It was joked that Frank, father to 4 daughters, could breed females but had no luck with the males but this was soon proved wrong with RNA Grand Champions, W. Dandy (1973),



Frank Hodgson with Wingfield Boris in 1994, just after Boris was awarded the Blue ribbon in his class and before he went on that day to be RNS Grand Champion.

W. Pembroke (1981) and W. Justice (1988). Sprinkled heavily among these winners were numerous RNA Junior and Reserve Champions and Breeders' Group wins and many broad ribbons won on the Darling Downs and at Feature Shows.

The annual trip to Brisbane for the Ekka was a looked-forward-to break from the farm even though it comprised of 2 weeks of little sleep and generally resulted in the 'flu. Success in the show ring provided a good foundation for sale ring success, inspiring buyer confidence. During his time, Wingfield blood lines featured strongly in the pedigree of sale bulls with Frank and Val Hodgson's bulls topping the Rockhampton sale 5 times beginning in 1979 with Kentigern, then Justice, Krypton, Gilligan and Noah, and achieving commendable sale averages. Many other Wingfield bulls went on to make a name for themselves as well, with Wingfield Eric, Babylon, Geronimo, Reverend, Rocket and Prentice coming to mind.

In 1994, Frank was tempted to go back into the show ring with Wingfield Boris (AI Minlacowie

Millionaire) to achieve his final RNA Grand Champion. In 1995, Frank and Val downsized the herd through a reduction sale and moved with W. Boris and 30 breeders to 154 ha at Back Plains on the southern Downs.

Frank was an astute cattle man and was sought after as a judge on the Downs and by other breeds. His purchase of Greenacres Julien at Rockhampton resulted in not only some strong bulls but a line of females that, when mated to Wingfield Boris produced for Frank the type of cattle he had aimed for, cattle with eye appeal, good length, depth and temperament, clean coated, sound breeders and good mothers, cattle that could walk across a lot of country if needed, tolerate adverse conditions and still produce. In 2000, 10 sons of W. Boris sold at Rockhampton to achieve what was then an outstanding average of \$16,625 including sale top price of \$34,000. W. Noah. Frank was quietly very proud of his Droughtmaster herd.

He was a regular supporter of Society sponsored sales both in Queensland and New South Wales. His sold unjoined heifers at Gympie and bulls in Rockhampton as well as Roma and Grafton and this presence helped to contribute to the rapid expansion of the breed in Southern Queensland and Northern New South Wales. Wingfield cattle and bloodlines were also exported to South East Asia, China and New Zealand.

In early 2001, Frank became seriously ill and his Wingfield herd was sold intact to Pam and Derrick Spann of Minlacowie stud. Frank died on 11 November, 2001. He was awarded his Life Membership into the Droughtmaster Society 2 months prior to his death and is remembered as an exceptional but unassuming cattleman, quietly spoken and a true gentleman.

His wife Val, who supported him and worked selflessly by his side, now lives in Coolool Beach with daughter Adele and son-in-law Stephen Jones.

Contributed by Suzanne Stacey (daughter) with information gathered from Droughtmaster Herd Books, Books by John Boydell, Mum and memories.