

# JOHN AND PEG BOWLER

MARUK, STUD NO. 614.



I FIRST BECAME interested in the Bos indicus derived breeds when I was involved with the crossbreeding trial at Grafton Research Station in the 1970's. The improved performance and ease of management convinced me of the need for some Bos indicus content in the Australian beef industry. The increased costs of managing British breed cattle with calving difficulties, eye cancer and bloat were significant problems before the technology was available to reduce their impact.

When I was looking around for the best fit, I visited some of the leading Santa, Brangus and Braford studs, but when I visited Jack and Elaine Swan and walked into a pen of 200 Droughtmasters heifers, I turned to them and said "these are my type of cattle"! The Maruk stud was started with Swan and Booralee bloodlines, and the breeding program has been focused on the Swan type with early maturing, well-muscled animals.

In NSW the breed owes a great debt to the Lloyd family "Heitiki" and Warne family "Cedardale"

studs for their promotion of the breed particularly at Agquip and Primex Field Days. It was pleasing to be involved in the building of a permanent site at Agquip which met all the health and safety requirements and enabled the Far Southern Zone to sell BBQs to generate funds. The ready support and cooperation of some of our NSW members was very much appreciated during my time as Director.

Maruk stud, although limited in size, was involved, particularly with local schools, providing cattle for handling and education programs. We also performed well in steer trials run by the Australian National Field Days at Orange. These trials involved backgrounding on grass and feedlot component prior to full carcass appraisal.

A memorable achievement for the Maruk cattle was a competition at the ANFD where pens of 3 heifers from leading local studs of various breeds were assessed by 3 Royal Show Judges - not one of them placed the Droughtties pen, but when all the points

were combined the Droughtties were the clear winners.

Running Droughtmaster cattle on the Central Tablelands was an interesting experience, in the middle of some of the leading Angus, Hereford and Shorthorn studs, and had some interesting and confronting discussions with breeders and especially stock agents. However, the adaptability, performance, and easy-care attributes of the breed were recognised, although one of the early lessons learnt was in the handling of the Bos indicus cattle compared to the British breeds.

I did enjoy my time on the Board and am grateful for the friendships and breadth of experience freely shared. In some ways, I guess I was a pain to some members, always conscious of the need for improvement in the wider beef industry beyond the stud focus, and for the adaption of technology to assist in developing our breed to perform in a very competitive and market driven broader meat industry.

*Contributed by John Bowler*