

MEDIA RELEASE

FIRST VIEWING OF PANDA CATTLE

Visitors to the 2003 Royal Queensland Show will be able to see the newly developed breed of Panda cattle on view for the first time in this country. The breed, developed from a mix of cattle strains, including Belted Galloways, Poll Herefords, Simmentals and Poll Braford's, is a small compact beast with obvious Panda markings.

Seven Panda cattle bred in the Gympie area will be on view at the show.

Breeder, Peter Blankkensee says the breed will be noted for the tenderness of the meat and the adaptability of the animals to thrive in all areas of Australia.

"There are currently about 50 animals of this type, mostly of smaller stature than Poll Herefords," Mr Blankkensee said. However, he added that a further breeding program was in progress to develop more full sized beasts with the same traits.

Despite tough conditions continuing to prevail in many of Queensland's rural areas, the beef industry has set high quality benchmarks in entries for the 2003 Ekka.

Chair of the RNA's beef cattle committee, Allan Warby, said stud beef entries had increased to 1120 head and while there was a small drop in prime beef (580) and led steer (255) numbers, it was pleasing to see the beef industry showing both high quality product and plenty of enthusiasm for this year's show.

Mr Warby said show patrons would be able to see the results of Australian production efforts from "paddock to plate" through the wide scope of exhibition entries.

"Whereas most cattle entries are coming from areas where seasonal conditions are quite good, we feel for those many property owners still experiencing the drought which has hurt rural industries so much during the past two years," Mr Warby said.

"These trying conditions are reflected in our bid to find the right weight cattle to enter our 100-day feed lot trial.

"As it is we have 11 entries to be judged at Jenny and Duncan Sturrock's Laucells property with carcass appraisal scheduled to take place at A.M.H. Abattoirs, Dinmore, at the end of July".

A new award at this year's show will be the Cyclone Industries High Point Achiever for overall points gained in Stud, Hoof and Hook Competitions.

Five cattle companies, AACo, Stanbroke, Colonial Agriculture, Consolidated Meat Group and M.D.H., have contributed funds to help support complimentary hospitality in the Suncorp marquee, as well as raising funds for the Flying Doctor Service.

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