

Early maturity and good meat quality

By Mike Harvey

Peter and Lesley Jolly have country blood deep in their veins and a yearning for rural life. After careers in the army, where they met, in 2005 they purchased a 100 hectare property, High Places, at Toogoolawah in south-east Queensland.

Peter grew up as the son of a soldier settler in the south-east of South Australia on a cattle and sheep grazing property. Lesley grew up in regional Queensland where her carpenter father built houses for soldier settler farmers before the family settled in Brisbane.

A young Lesley pestered the Department of Primary Industry for cattle information as she dreamed of owning one cow and looked forward to holidays on the Jolly farm in South Australia after she married Peter.

The new property at Toogoolawah needed a lot of attention, facilities and capital, to reach its full potential but Lesley wanted her cattle immediately so a mixed herd was purchased and the unending spraying routine for ticks and buffalo fly control took over their rural lives.

'We wanted to limit the spraying routine by selling the mixed herd and introducing a *Bos indicus* cattle breed that fitted our requirements,' Lesley says.

These requirements were tick tolerance, reduced buffalo fly susceptibility, very importantly quiet temperament and small frames and ease of handling, as they had limited facilities.

Peter and Lesley chose the African Boran cattle, a genetic blend of 64 percent *Bos indicus*, 24 percent European *Bos taurus* and 12 percent African *Bos taurus*

bloodlines that have been in existence for 1,300 years, on the advice of retired Queensland breeder Charlie Cox.

Peter says Borans were not fashionable at first but now their size suits the Indonesian live trade market and they also make ideal pets.

'They have an appealing look when you see past the loose skin and hump. They are tropical cattle for tropical conditions, but also thrive in non-tropical conditions,' he says.

Boran cattle offer a placid friendly nature, high fertility, easy calving, tick and heat resistance, good roughage conversion and longevity as well as much reduced tick and buffalo fly control chemical use.

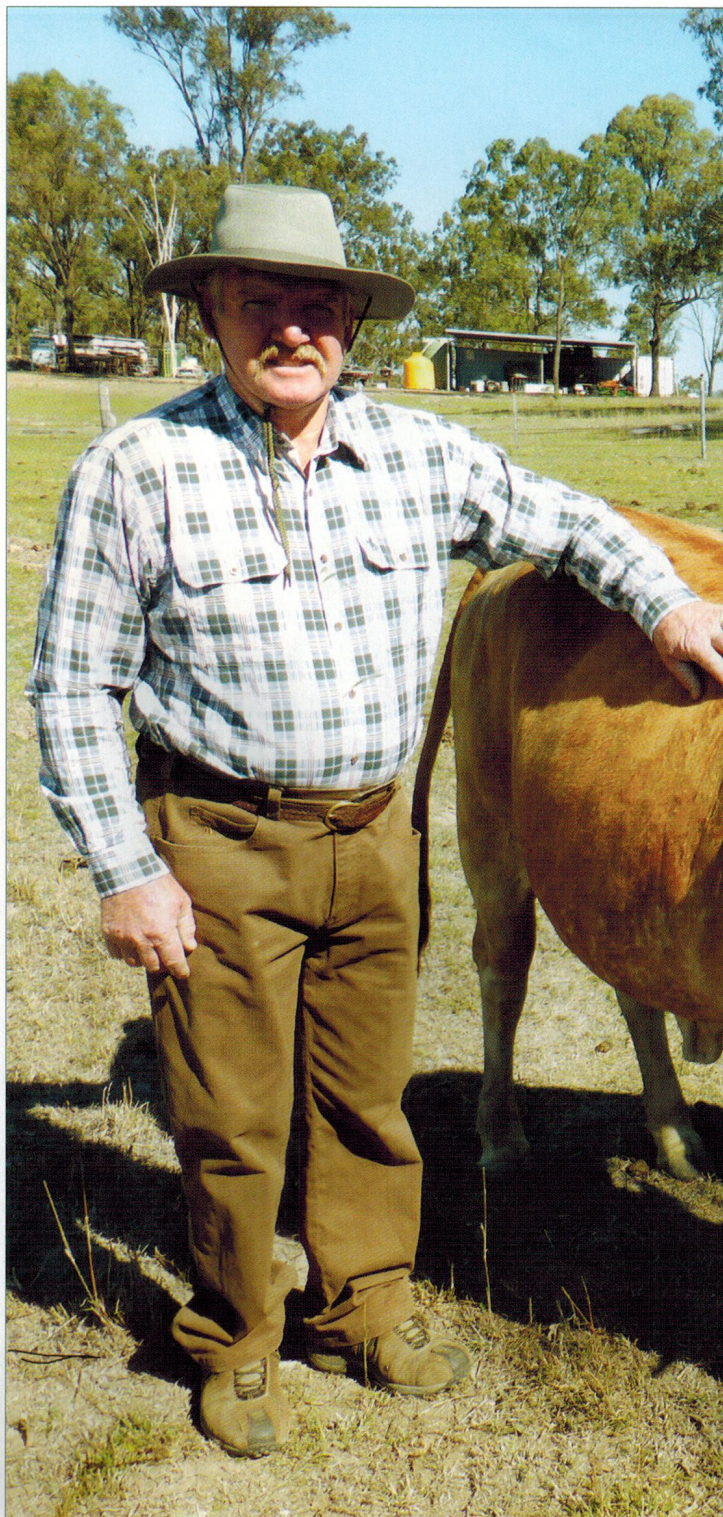
Peter says Boran beef, unlike other *Bos indicus* cattle, is tender and flavoursome and at an unofficial taste test at a popular restaurant, grass fed Boran beef compared favourably with grain fed Angus beef for the desirable marbling (intra muscular fat content).

In an official GeneStar trial of 13 beef breeds, Borans were ranked first for feed efficiency (converting feed into meat) and second for marbling.

In another official eight breed reproduction and maternal traits trial Boran firstst cross females joined to a Red Poll bull were first for calving percentage, first for weaning percentage and first for 200 day weight per cow exposed, as well as second for 200 weight gain for calves born.

'We aim to produce smaller Borans to give smaller farm owners access to easy care, very manageable cattle where experience may be limited and retirement a factor,' Peter says.

The Jollys have sent/sold



Peter and Lesley Jolly and Hope – the Jollys reckon Boran cattle take the stress out of a tough day at the office.

their versatile cattle as far as Cairns in the far north to Tasmania in the far south, as the breed with their loose skin and oil secretion can handle stress and climatic

ranges from hot and dry to cold and wet.

This durability prompted the ABC science program 'Catalyst' to rate the breed as 'survivors'.

LIVESTOCK - Boran cattle offer a friendly placid nature



Kenyan cattlemen recognised Borans as the best indigenous beef animal in East Africa, and they have since spread to South Africa and many other regions, as people recognised their many wonderful attributes.

The Boran temperament and durability evolved with

the Masai tribe in East Africa who run their cattle with primitive yards, no boundary fences, exposure to disease and large predator carnivores, little veterinary service and very limited resources.

The Toogoolawah farm has limited facilities but with the



This Boran bull being fed hand to mouth by Peter Jolly measures 110 centimetres high behind his hump and with his short legs and long body has the build the Jollys are striving to breed.



A red Boran cow showing the solid, deep body of the breed.

wonderful Boran nature the Jollys have progressed their breeding program without too much fuss.

The cattle are easy to handle, are led rather than driven and are held safely and securely in paddocks with simple four barbed wire fences.

'We had a cow cycling on one side and a capable bull the other side with a four barbed fence between them

and there was no unintended joining,' Lesley says.

'Our Boran cattle seek out and are happy with human company,' Lesley says. 'Borans are an ideal cross with other breeds to achieve desirable hybrid vigour and she recommends going to a second-cross that will highlight the positive Boran without losing the original crossing breed characteristics.'

The Jollys exhibited their

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A Boran female demonstrates their renowned easy temperament with Peter Jolly at feeding time.

Borans at the Small Breeds Expo at Laidley in Queensland in October, Farm Expos in south-east Queensland and at local country and city shows.

Lesley says their best cattle promotion exercise is to have people visit their High Places property and see the Boran friendly, calm temperament in a paddock environment.

The Australian Small Boran Association is a group of converted cattle breeders who have quickly come to appreciate the appeal of this special breed of cattle.

'Ask anyone with Borans about their cattle and you'll receive amazing stories of enjoyment and satisfaction,' Lesley says.

The Boran is a medium-sized grey, fawn or red beef animal recognised for their

high fertility, good mothering ability, excellent temperament and great survivability under harsh conditions.

Their early maturity and good meat quality offer a unique crossbreeding option to improve the productivity of Australian beef herds.

A team from CSIRO in Rockhampton, led by Dr John Frisch, recognised the value of introducing a tropically adapted breed into Australia that was unrelated to the Brahman.

Years of worldwide research by the CSIRO identified a breed capable of improving beef production by combining high genetic potential for growth, reproduction and carcase quality with high resistance to nutritional and climatic stresses, parasites

and disease.

From their research they identified the Boran breed as having the required characteristics.

The first Borans were imported into Australia by a consortium of CSIRO and Australian cattle breeders in 1990, after extensive quarantine testing.

'It's their wonderful temperament and meat quality that separate them from other tropical breeds,' Peter claims.

Boran females are known as 'the mothering cow of Africa' with small average 28 kilogram bull calves and 25 kilogram heifer calves taking advantage of mum's good udders and well-formed teats and sufficient milk to weigh more than 50 percent of their mother's weight at weaning.

Other female attributes are a strong maternal instinct to

ward off predators and an excellent calf survival rate.

Longevity is a breed trait with healthy and fertile 15 year old cows and a 16 year old bull producing high quality semen for artificial insemination.

Breeding cows can produce calves at 25 years old so the herd replacement rate is low.

Cows weigh 400-550 kilograms, measure 115-127 centimetres at the wither while mature bulls weigh 550-850 kilograms with a medium size 125-135 centimetre wither measurement.

Borans are known as the 'dogs of the cattle world' as they come to you while other breeds are the 'cats of the cattle world' where you go to them, according to Peter. ■

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