



# Buffalo News

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Official newsletter of the Australian Buffalo Industry Council (ABIC)

## Tasmanian ABIC meeting sets scene for future industry growth



Tasmania hosted its first ABIC Annual General Meeting on 26-27 February - and the honour was topped off by local buffalo producer and state representative Phillip Oates being elected the new president.

Representatives from all states and territories took part in the weekend program and stayed and met at Hobart's Black Buffalo Hotel.

Mainland participants included Athel Smith (Vic), Doug Robertson (NSW), Mitch Humphries and Malcolm and Margaret Thompson (Qld), Bob Cook and Milton Stevens (SA), Andrew Stewart (WA), Michael Swart, Barry Lemcke and Neil Ross (NT), and Peter McInnes (RIRDC).

The Saturday meeting discussed wide-ranging industry issues. Delegates supported Victorian Roger Haldane's proposal to devise a standard for dairy buffalo as a future working guide for buyers and sellers. They also moved that Marg Thompson, Andrew Stewart and Athel Smith research and define the ABIC constitution in respect to issues such as terms of office, state representation, proxies and management board requirements.

State and Territory reports were presented, along with a progress report on the RIRDC AI research project.



**TOP:** ABIC representatives at Oyster Cove Buffalo Farm. L-R: Michael Swart (NT), Mitch Humphries (Qld), Andrew Stewart (WA), Phillip Oates (Tas), Athel Smith (Vic), Neil Ross (NTBIC Executive Officer), Marg Thompson (Qld), Mal Thompson (Qld), Barry Lemcke (NT) & Doug Robertson (NSW). **BOTTOM:** Some of the robust Tassie buffalo at Oyster Cove Buffalo Farm.

### 2006 ABIC Committee

**President**

Phillip Oates (Tasmania)

**Vice-President**

Michael Swart (NT)

**Secretary/Treasurer**

Athel Smith (Victoria)

**State/Territory Representatives**

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ABIC Website - [www.buffaloaustralia.com.au](http://www.buffaloaustralia.com.au)

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# Yambuk buff first off the mark in Victorian AI research



*Buffalo researcher Barry Lemcke reports on the latest AI work*

Buffalo at Roger Haldane's Shaw River dairy operation in Victoria were artificially inseminated in March as part of the ongoing RIRDC research project. The 20 head of mostly-Italian heifers, all of 400-600 kg liveweight, received a single insemination under the same protocol used at Beatrice Hill in the NT.

We engaged a local veterinary officer to give the injections over 10 days, and a highly experienced local dairy inseminator was brought in to do buffalo for the first time. He completed 20 head in an impressive 70 minutes. We used a mixture of new Italian imported semen with some from Bill in the Territory. The reaction to the protocol appeared to be very positive but a pregnancy test at two months will be required to confirm the results.

We've also had another AI attempt at Beatrice Hill during April, using a new operator, Alf Turner who has a good name for this type of work. After the apparent success of the Victorian round, we persisted with a large proportion of the same heifers used in the previous round in November.

The most recent round in April involved 15 heifers and four cows. All the cows responded well but some of the heifers still appeared not to be on heat. The main problem is in getting the pipette through the cervix so it can be deposited into the uterus.

We also trialled a second procedure, using intra-vaginal hormone-releasing devices called Cue-mates, in six cows. The device releases progesterone from a plastic-like compound and makes the cows think they are pregnant. When the device is removed the animals think they are not pregnant and immediately come on heat. They can then be inseminated for a set period after the devices are removed. One problem with this procedure was that two of the six cows spat out the devices, one of them early and the other quite late into the eight days.

All that retained the devices, and the one that kept it till late in the eight day period, showed good signs of being on heat but, again, we'll have to wait for five weeks before we can check them with ultrasound.



*TOP: Some of the Yambuk buffalo used in the first Victorian AI round. ABOVE: Part of the facilities at Roger Haldane's Shaw River Cheese Factory.*

## Buffalo News

We welcome contributions on any issue or activity relating to Australia's buffalo industry. Stories and/or photos can be sent to, or discussed with:

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## For Sale

**Two Riverine Male Buffalo for Sale**

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# Field trip focuses on emerging Tasmanian buffalo industry

As is customary on the Sunday after the ABIC AGM, the council's visiting state and territory representatives went on a field trip to get a taste of what is happening in buffalo production in Tasmania.

Members were invited on a farm tour of Phillip and Denise Oates' Oyster Cove Buffalo Farm - and this year's event was certainly a case of mixing buffalo industry business with pleasure in this delightful part of the country.

ABIC members were accompanied on the tour by Tasmania's ABC Country Hour presenter Babs McCue who has taken a keen interest in industry developments and the outcomes from the AGM.

A morning tea stop allowed the visitors to check



*ABIC delegates tuck into a sumptuous roast buffalo lunch at Peppermint Bay*

out Oyster Cove Buffalo Farm's produce and to inspect local buffalo including several Riverine Swamp crosses. These crosses are being trialled to assess whether it will adapt better to southern climates.



*Cradoc Hill Abattoir and facilities*



On the trip along the Huon Highway to Oyster Cove, the visitors got a first hand look at Tasmania's famous Cascade Brewery and were driven through the lush Huon Valley.

The trip also included a visit to Cradoc Abattoirs where the local buffalo are slaughtered and their meat processed. ABIC thanks abattoir manager David Stephens and his staff for showing the visitors over the facilities.

A delicious luncheon at Peppermint Bay followed the farm visit, and featured roast water buffalo and roast vegetables. Thanks are also extended to Chef Steve and staff for their superb culinary efforts..

Later in the afternoon the guests visited Rich-

mond's ZooDoo where they took a safari wagon excursion and got up close and personal with a veritable menagerie of native and introduced species - Tasmanian Devils, Deer, Kangaroos, Camels, Ostriches, Emus and Water Buffalo.

ABIC also sincerely thanks ZooDoo's Trevor Cuttriss for this most enjoyable interlude.

During their stay, mainland representatives experienced atypical Tassie weather with both warm and cold days and humid evenings.

Phillip Oates says he and his family, and other players involved in Tasmania's buffalo industry were honoured to host the 2006 ABIC meeting and hope all visitors enjoyed the state's warm hospitality.

# Buffalo News & Views ...

*from around the country*

## NEW SOUTH WALES

In his AGM report, NSW representative Doug Robinson said the state's buffalo industry had seen no developments over the past 12 months in terms of meat production. Among limited activities, Greg Giblett had sold stock to Tamworth's Graham Manville, and John Lloyd continued to produce buffalo products on the state's north coast.

## VICTORIA

VicBIC staged a buffalo display at the Seymour Alternative Farm Expo in February as part of ongoing promotions. Eddy's Gourmet Buffalo and Alloway Gourmet Buffalo remain as the industry stronghold in Victoria, with the two enterprises achieving almost all state buff meat sales. Neroli Eddy has opened a shop near Numurkah to sell buffalo products and local fare. Athel Smith has re-opened his cafe and wine centre where he features buffalo pies,

lasagne and spaghetti bolognese for lunch, and buffalo rump and scotch fillet on the dinner menu. All products are selling well and creating an awareness of the qualities and versatility of buff meat. Victorian producers continue their battle to find abattoirs that will kill buffalo, and sufficient sale outlets. .

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Roger Haldane has sold 160 buffalo from his Port Lincoln operation, to South East Asia via Peterborough. He retains a Port Lincoln base herd of 130 hybrid animals, 100 heifers, 70-80 young steers and six pure riverine bulls.

## QUEENSLAND

Buffalo farming activities are on the rise in Queensland with two dairies now operating and stock numbers increasing. The state's buffalo products are being distributed to Brisbane and interstate, and work is underway to further develop meat products for sale in local areas. Local producers have approached Queensland DPI about establishing links with the buffalo industry.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Andrew Stewart became WA's second ABIC representative last year and attended his first annual general meeting in Tasmania in February to present the needs and views of state buffalo producers. Esperance-based John Starr, who has attended all previous meetings, retains his position as the second state representative for Western Australia.

## NORTHERN TERRITORY

Award-winning Northern Territory photojournalist David Hancock continues to do his bit to promote the buffalo industry, with a major feature in the most recent edition of Australian Geographic. This is on top of several buffalo industry magazine features in Australia and overseas, and a photographic exhibition in Darwin.

## TASMANIA

Oyster Cove Buffalo reported an 'interesting' 2005 with weather ranging from sunshine to the area's first comparatively thick snow in 12-15 years. The buffalo were inquisitive enough to venture out into the snow but soon returned to the warmth of their shed. The Oates attribute the loss of two breeding animals to the severe weather fluctuations - but also report the arrival of three heifer calves, giving them their first consistent number of heifers. In previous years, they have seen a greater ratio of bull calves.

## Australian Buffalo Industry Council

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## MAKING BUFF MILK MOZZARELLA

Top End buffalo researcher Barry Lemcke took the opportunity, while in Victoria to coordinate the state's first AI round under the current RIRDC program, to watch buffalo mozzarella being made at Roger Haldane's Shaw River Cheese Factory. Batches of the popular cheese are made every second day using two days of milk. ● *See the next issue for an overview of the Shaw River Dairy venture.*