



Awards flowing thick and fast for buffalo dairy products



ABOVE: Dairy heifers grazing on Mitch Humphries' Millaa Millaa property - home of the Australian Dairy Buffalo Company.

TenderBuff sales on the rise

NTBIC reports that sales of TenderBuff meat in 2005 are up by a healthy 30 per cent on figures for the previous calendar year. The increased sales of the premium quality buffalo meat are reported to be due to more promotion and a higher level of consumer interest in the health attributes of buffalo.



Roger Haldane's gold medal winning 'Annie Baxter' cheese

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Connoisseurs of specialty cheeses are savouring the superior qualities of varieties now being produced by Australia's burgeoning dairy buffalo sector.

Victorian dairy buffalo farmer Roger Haldane's company, Shaw River Buffalo Cheese, recently won a gold medal at the Sydney 2005 Australian Specialty Cheese Show for its impressive new

'Annie Baxter' variety. And Queensland's Milla Milla-based Australian Dairy Buffalo Company (ADBC), run by Mitch and Bridget Humphries, has also just won gold and silver medals for cheeses at the Dairy Industry Association's Queensland Branch annual awards. These were presented in Toowoomba early this month. ADBC's Buffalo Labna soft cheese won gold and its Ambrose Buffalo Bocconcini won silver. Both were in the category for cheeses made from milk from animals other than cows.

State Branch Treasurer Ken Hansen welcomed the fact that buffalo and other non-cow dairy products were now being promoted through the awards and he hoped more such products would be presented in the future. He said four judges assessed 150 dairy products in 14 classes over two days in DPI's Centre for Food Technology sensory evaluation unit, to come up with the winners.

Tassie to host 2006 AGM

Tasmania will host the 2006 AGM and conference of the Australian Buffalo Industry Council - for the first time in its buffalo farming history.

The program will include formal meetings on Saturday 25 February and a day tour on the Sunday. RIRDC's Annual R&D meeting will be held on Friday 24 February.

ABIC rotates its annual meeting locations so that representatives from around Australia get a chance to observe buffalo industry activities in different regions.

Thompsons build up dairy herd

Queensland buffalo farmers Mal and Marg Thompson have recently added more stock to their ever expanding buffalo herd.

The Thompsons farm buffalo near Maleny in the Sunshine Coast hinterland.

They are using the new buffalo brought from Alan Fisher's Swim Creek Station in the Territory's Top End, to build up a foundation herd for a proposed dairy enterprise.

The new stock comprises four two-year-old pure bred Riverine heifers.

Alan Fisher has also recently sold three mature pure Riverine cows to ABIC's Darwin-based Vice-President Michael Swart.

Michael says he had made the investment because he believes there is a big future in the buffalo dairy industry.

A further recent buffalo transaction saw the NT Buffalo Industry Council sell one of its cows to Top End producer Bill Lane.



Marg Thompson with some of her buffalo herd

NTBIC continues import protocol talks with Indonesia

Talks between Indonesian government officials and the NT Buffalo Industry Council (NTBIC) on a new protocol for importing animals from the Territory are progressing well. NTBIC Executive Officer Neil Ross visited Jakarta from 26 June to 3 July to meet Indonesia's agricultural and quarantine officials to advance the protocol.

"I had successful discussions with relevant officials and departmental people and we are progressing well towards seeing the protocol set up in the near future," Mr Ross said.

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Annie Baxter buffalo cheese a national gold medal winner



Shaw River Buffalo Cheese's newest creation, 'Annie Baxter', won a Gold Award for the best hard cooked cheese at the recent Sydney 2005 Australian Specialty Cheese Show.

The winner was judged against an anonymous line up of hard cheeses from all other dairy animal breeds.

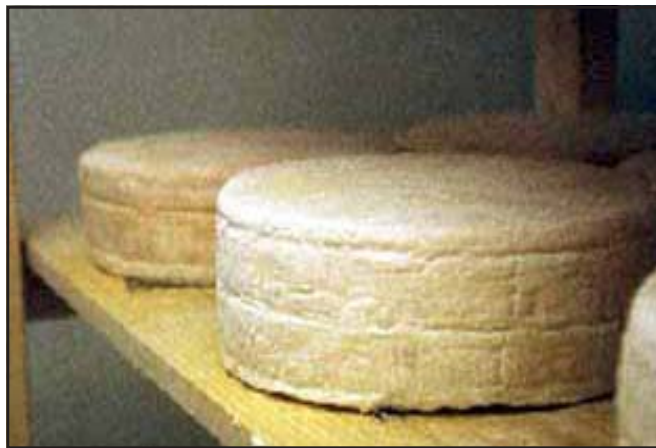
Winning this award has confirmed our belief that the production of buffalo dairy products must diversify beyond the common perception relating to what can and can't be made from buffalo milk.

When we first started making buffalo cheese we were told by the experts that buffalo milk was no good for making hard cheese. So much for the ex-

Victoria's Roger Haldane reports on a significant industry achievement

pert's advice! From the very start of our cheese manufacturing business we have been exploring the

rella. By developing and naming our own unique cheese varieties we are creating both personal and re-



'Annie Baxter' maturing in the cheese cellar

market potential for other buffalo milk products. We now have a range of eight products other than mozza-

regional ownership of the products, which is not possible in the case of mozzarella.

We developed the Australian Buffalo Mozzarella market from a zero base. In the early years we were barely able to sell product, as it was an unknown cheese in Australia. This has of course changed in the nine years we have been operating. Buffalo Mozzarella is now well known and appreciated by Australian consumers. Ironically, this has made it possible for Italian imports to come into the market, taking some of our market share, especially in Sydney.

This takes me back to the development of our own cheese varieties, which will find their own market and consumer loyalty, whether it be regional, national or international.

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NT export abattoir study underway

A three-month government study is underway to assess the economic viability of setting up a new multi-species abattoir in the Northern Territory.

NT Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mining (DPIFM) Commercial Analyst Lorraine Corowa has been handed the task of evaluating whether a multi-species abattoir would work in the Territory and under what conditions it would work. Lorraine is also looking at suitable location options for what she says would most likely be a medium-sized abattoir with 'definite potential for processing buffalo'.

She will present her study outcomes in a report to the NT Government in September.

BUFFALO News

Contributions on any matter of interest to Australia's buffalo industry are most welcome and can be sent to, or discussed with:

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Buffalo news from around the nation

VICTORIA

John Montgomery, a VicBic committee member, recently travelled to Port Pirie in South Australia to purchase a seven-eighth Riverine bull and five-eighth cow from ABIC President Bob Cook. The buffalo are now back on John's Glenthompson property where he is in the process of upgrading his Swamp buffalo herd. Both John and Robin Richmond now have high grade Riverine bulls available to VicBIC members who want to upgrade their herds with the infusion of Riverine blood. **To access this service, call Athel Smith on phone (03) 5965 2368.**

TASMANIA

Bob Cook has also sold buffalo to Tasmania recently, with local farmer Phillip Oates picking up two of his seven-sixteenth Riverine heifers.



The NTBIC show stall crew - happy to be promoting buff products

NORTHERN TERRITORY

NTBIC attracted the usual excellent roll-up to its popular burger stall at the annual Royal Darwin Show held in late July. Hundreds of tasty burgers, steak sandwiches and sausages were cooked up over the three days - and many of the customers were regulars who'd got the taste for buffalo at previous Darwin shows.

SHAW RIVER CHEESE A NATIONAL WINNER

Continuing Roger Haldane's report from Page 3

Our award-winning 'Annie Baxter' cheese has been named after a gun slinging pioneer woman whose homestead graced the banks of the Shaw River where our cheese factory now stands. You can read more about Annie in a book based on her journals. It is called *The Face In The Glass* by Lucy Frost. We hope that our cheese preserves her memory and imparts some aspects of her fiery personality.

Our cheese maker Andrew Royal has been experimenting with a hard cheese for about six years. After many trials and a few errors it has now come of age.

Andrew says that for him, winning the award with his new creation is comparable to a wine maker winning the Jimmy Watson trophy or a footballer winning the Brownlow Medal.

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