The Northern Territory cattle industry is on track in meeting its compulsory requirements for the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS).

NT Cattlemen’s Association President John Armstrong reports that the Territory’s NLIS trace-back system is ‘bedded down’.

“As I have stated previously, the Northern Territory jurisdiction is more advanced than any other in the Pacific Rim with its capacity to trace back our product to its herd of origin,” Mr Armstrong said.

“The sheer complexity of individualising the NLIS which most other states have done is testing their capacity to provide integrity in their data base.

“The sheep producers are going with a flock based PIC for their ear tag. They will be able to trace any animal with an Eartag back to its flock as we do with any cow with a permanent brand.

“We do attend meetings of the national NLIS committee on the basis of trying to simplify or at least rationalise other states NLIS procedures.

“This is a difficult process and it is unfortunate that our producers who supply the southern and eastern markets have to grapple with those complexities prior to cattle sales.”

The Primary Industry Ministerial Council ordered the national approach to livestock identification and tracing.

The NTCA and the NT Government support a mandatory herd-based tracing system which includes compulsory use of waybills, property identification codes (PICs) and brands.

The Territory’s trace-back capacity is more advanced than other jurisdictions because of these compulsory elements.

NT cattle being sent interstate will comply with the destination’s ID requirements, in keeping with the NLIS.

$10 million for roads

The NT Government has announced it will spend an extra $10 million on the Territory’s beef roads. The funding will be spent over the next two years to pay for upgrades to roads which have been prioritised with the assistance of the NTCA.

The biggest beneficiaries are the Plenty Highway ($2m), Point Stuart Road ($1.6m), Buntine Highway ($1m), Barkly Stock Route ($800,000), Buchanan Highway ($800,000) and Maryvale Road ($800,000).

The Central Arnhem Road, Ranken Road, Sandover Highway, Finke Road and Roper Highway will each receive $300,000. A further $300,000 will be spent on the Ringwood Road and $200,000 on the Larrimah West Creek Link Road.

The NTCA has welcomed the commitment which comes after intensive lobbying by the association for urgent action on roads that it says have been seriously neglected for decades.
A cool winter for the NT and an even cooler federal election just around the corner. It will be interesting to see whether the prime minister is going to conjure a double dissolution out of the current FTA debate.

Our NTCA work schedule is much more hectic as the season progresses. It is indeed a relief to have Bev organising most of our communications out of the Alice office.

LPA: The executive met with the MLA program manager, Alan Bloxsom, for three hours on this subject. We have decided to endorse the principles of this scheme to our members.

One big plus for it is that those who are cattle care accredited will now have their audit costs taken up by the LPA system of random audits. The main purpose of the scheme is to collate statistically proven details on our freedom from the nasties depicted on the LPA form to suit our Industry against international criticisms and as a marketing initiative.

The NTCA executive responsibility is to carry forward the general lack of NT acceptance of this scheme and even though only a few of our producers are affected by the “AMIC imposed” mandatory compliance, to remind CCA and MLA in Billy Hughes style, that we represent a substantial amount of CTL payments, part of which is spent on something that we disagree with.

Major road works strategic plans: Our lobbying and groundwork here continues unabated. We have formulated a priority plan and are still working on accurate costing of correct maintenance procedures to rectify our roads Territory wide. It certainly was a welcome break for our hard work to receive the extra ten million dollars from the NT budget recently.

The Douglas Daly Community Reference Group should be in the closing stages of finalising its task which was, as per the Chief Minister’s press release of 9/11/03, to advise government on an Integrated Regional Land Use Plan - developed through community consultation - by September 2004. This was supposed to be completed by using “the best scientific knowledge available at the time” and Mr Rick Farley was engaged as he “had extensive experience in formulating Land Use Agreements”.

Recent criticisms of this project by the environment centre were well put down by Minister Burns as is to be expected by a minister responsible for the useful employment of the Territory’s’ land resources and representing the wider community, not just some noisy minority.

State of our industry: The buoyancy of our NT beef industry continues as do strong land sales. These conditions do allow our capacity to engage in the application of many successful procedures some of which were printed in the recent Beef CRC publication.

The reports on the substantial lowering of the mortality rates in the live export industry is notable as is the fact that this year predictions are for only about 600,000 cattle exported.

MLA AGM: The next MLA AGM is just around the corner and I again ask all members to ensure that they have registered for their votes at AGM and then ask someone to attend to your votes as a proxy if you are unable to attend. Every vote is important.

MLA appears to be being attacked more than ever before by its detractors as are indeed much of our red meat representative structures. It is a great pity as these structures act as the messengers of our industry and right now all systems should be humming and pursuing with vigour overseas market opportunity never before witnessed.

Cheers

John Armstrong

A word from the President

HAVE YOUR SAY on new INRM Plan

The Northern Territory Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) Planning process is currently under way. This process is being driven and coordinated by the NT Landcare Council and DIPE. The resulting plan will provide the basis for funding through Australian and NT Government Natural Resource Management funding programs, such as the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) and National Landcare Program (NLP).

Everyone should be aware of this process and have received the “Having Your Say” brochure, the Community Feedback Form and been invited to provide their input at NTCA meetings, Landcare Group meetings or at Public Forums.

The INRM planning process requires genuine consultation with community, industry and government stakeholders to develop a plan that will adequately represent the NT’s priority NRM issues. The Pastoral Industry is a key natural resource manager and a major stakeholder in this plan. The industry manages approximately 48% of the land area of the NT and makes a major contribution to the economy of the NT through export income, jobs and support of regional service providers and businesses. It is vital that the priority NRM issues of the industry are adequately represented in the plan.

Please contact Matt Bolam, NLP State Landcare Coordinator NT at the NTCA office in Darwin of you have any questions on the INRM Plan.
NTCA disappointed at pastoral land valuations and percentage decision

The Australian Valuation Office (AVO) has released the results of its July 2003 UCV reassessment, which will mean increased valuations of between 10% and 30% for pastoral land across the Northern Territory.

The NTCA is bitterly disappointed with the outcome of both the AVO’s reassessment and the NT Government’s refusal to reduce the land repayment interest percentage from 2% to 1.6%, despite strong lobbying from the association.

“This means that pastoralists will now be facing higher repayments for their land, in light of the new valuations,” NTCA Executive Director Stuart Kenny said.

On the one hand, the Territory Government provides $10 million for our beef roads and talks about its commitment to the pastoral industry, then on the other hand, makes a decision like this which is going to have quite an unfavourable impact on our members.”

The AVO’s reassessment was based on the results from 21 of the 36 Territory pastoral lease sales which have occurred since the last revaluation on 1 July 2000, and on events and circumstances that have impacted on prices.

Alice Springs Region: A 10% UCV increase has generally been applied to land in the lower to middle ranges (ie between $40 and $70 per beast area) and 10%-20% for middle to upper level land (ie between $71-$120 per beast area).

Tennant Creek Region: A general 10%-20% increase will be applied across the region, with the lower rate for the more remote, poorly accessed blocks and the higher rate for well accessed blocks.

Barkly Sub Region: A 30% increase in UCV has been applied generally across the region.

Katherine Region: Increases have been applied at a rate of 30% for small leases in the Roper River / Sturt Plateau area, 20% for the larger leases in the Elsey / Gulf Sub Regions, and between 20%-30% to leases in the VRD Sub Region.

Darwin Region: Increases have been applied at rates of 20% to smaller and/or lower valued Top End properties and 10% to more highly valued Top End stations.

History made at Alice Springs cattle sale

More than 300 head went under the hammer in Alice Springs in July, during the first Territory sale of cattle fitted with individual Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFIDs).

The sale brought one of the best recent results Australia-wide with cattle prices peaking at $2.10/kg.

The use of RFIDs is now mandatory in some states as part of the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS). The NT cattle industry is not compelled to use the devices and the decision whether to use them or not is driven by market forces.

Within the NT, cattle are traced by the mandatory use of waybills, property identification codes and brands. The Bohning Yards have recently had an RFID reader installed to allow the cattle to be tracked electronically, and the sale was the first time the reader has been used under real sale conditions.

The sale included cattle from Mt Riddock, The Garden Stations and other Central Australian properties and demonstrated that the NT’s NLIS implementation plan is fully compatible with the market demands of the other states. Cattle from sales in Central Australia can travel to South Australia or the Eastern States for finishing.

See Page 8 for annual bull sale wrap-up

NT LIVE EXPORTS UP
BY 6125 ON LAST YEAR

A total 25, 236 head of cattle were shipped live through the Port of Darwin to overseas destinations in July. This was 5091 less than for June but 5209 more than for July last year. The July exports went mainly to Indonesia (20,809), Philippines (2673), Brunei (1415) and Sabah (304).

This year to date, 133,811 head have been shipped through Darwin, compared with 165,153 for same time last year. Of the exports out of Darwin this year, 130,087 head have come from Territory cattle stations.

The July NT Pastoral Report states: “There were good numbers again in July with NT cattle exports 6125 up on this time last year and total exports narrowing the gap to 31,342.”
Unlike most of his pastoral peers, Ross Peatling comes from a long line of ‘non-bush’ people – but that hasn’t stopped this son of an urban accountant reaching the pinnacle as far as jobs in the cattle industry go.

For the past 14 years, Ross has managed Australia’s second largest pastoral property, 16,116 sq km Alexandria Station on the Barkly Tablelands.

His employer, the North Australian Pastoral Company (NAPCo), is also one of the country’s biggest and one of the longest serving in the game.

NAPCo was established 126 years ago, has owned Alexandria Station since day one, and has expanded rapidly over the past 19 years to boost its pastoral holdings from five to 15.

Ross Peatling was raised in the small Queensland coastal town of Childers near Bundaberg, but the bush pulled at his heartstrings from an early age and after completing Year 10 he became a foundation student at the Longreach Pastoral College in 1967.

Armed with his newfound agricultural knowledge and skills, he became a jackaroo on stations throughout central Queensland and northern NSW before landing a job with the huge Stanbroke Pastoral Company in 1972.

He started as a jackaroo at Stanbroke Station at Dajara and after twelve months was promoted to a head stockman’s position. He also worked on Stanbroke’s Fort Constantine at Cloncurry and Havilah at Collinsville before leaving the company in 1980 to take up his first manager’s job at the 960 sq mile Wondoola Station near Normanton in the Queensland gulf country.

A taste of the Territory followed with management postings at Mount Bundy, Elsey and Hodgson Downs Stations before he headed back across the border to Delungra in NSW to become the Twynam Pastoral Company’s Livestock Coordinator at Gunnee Feedlot.

In 1991, NAPCo offered Ross his biggest break yet, the Manager’s job on its sprawling Barkly ‘calf factory’, Alexandria Station.

“We run 55,000 to 60,000 head and concentrate on our own composite breed, a mix of Brahman, Shorthorn, Afrikander, Charolais and Hereford,” Ross says. “Our cattle traditionally are sent south through the Queensland channel country grower properties and then into the company feedlot, Wainui, on the Darling Downs.

“Our major outlets are the domestic market, where our beef is bought for the Woolies supermarket trade; the 100 day grain-fed Japanese market and with cows going to the US hamburger market.”

Ross, a former NTCA President and Tennant Creek Branch Chairman, and the association’s current CCA representative, believes retaining good, well-trained staff is the greatest challenge facing the cattle industry today.

“It’s not hard to get good people. We fill our requirements every year,” he says. “But a lot come just for 12 months then head off again to go to university or agricultural colleges. Keeping them is the real problem. It’s getting more and more difficult to retain good staff.

“As an industry, we have to look at a whole range of aspects that will make station jobs more attractive as long-term options. We need to look at things like better accommodation, better conditions, more attractive pay structures, EBAs and incentive payment systems. We have to sell a life on the land as a career.”

He sees other industry challenges as maintaining product integrity through environmental management, quality assurance, food health and other schemes, and keeping up with scientific advances while, at the same time, ‘maintaining a practical touch’.

Ross has the support of a strong and valuable partner in wife Robyn, who grew up in the Territory and who comes from a cattle station background, with Warwick, 25, has an Applied Science Degree and brother Richard, 23, an Agricultural Economics Degree. Both are currently working with cattle and, like their father, are most likely to pursue a career in the rural industry.

With the boys out on their own, Robyn now channels much of her energy into providing optimum living and working conditions for Alexandria’s 58 valued employees.

The Peatlings have lived through dramatic changes in how things work on cattle stations, particularly in the area of communications.

“When I first got into the cattle game, we only had HF radios and they were pretty wild and erratic,” Ross says. “Phones and faxes later provided much better communication lines through the 80s but the internet and broadband facilities we have access to these days have made a remarkable difference and opened up a whole new world in respect to the way we can communicate and do business.”

And what about plans for the future? “We want to keep breeding good cattle and train more young people to stay in the industry,” Ross says. “And then we’ll head to the Darling Downs and retire to a quieter life!”

Story - Kerry Sharp
Cattleman Mick laid to rest on his beloved Ucharonidge

Close friend Roger Steele penned ‘The Last 100 Metres’ in tribute to Mick Beebe who passed away in July.

It was the 24 July 2004 and I expected a cold windy reception at Ucharonidge Station. The Barkly Tableland was well known for the lazy winds that cut right through the warmest of coats.

We boarded the 1900c Beechcroft at 7.30am and it was cool but pleasant. The undertaker and his assistant were waiting. The casket carrying Mick was already on the plane. I was amazed at the amount of space just for four of us on a 19 seat aircraft with two pilots. As we took off, leaving Darwin’s coastal haze behind, I settled down for a rest.

I awoke on descent and Ucharonidge looked a picture. We could see the Brahman cattle wending their way along the cattle pads, in for a mid morning drink. There was plenty of feed.

My mind turned back 56 years to the days when patriarch Paul Beebe and his family had settled this property. What a family of battlers they were. It was a long hard haul.

Over the years, Roy and his younger brother Mick became the proprietors - a formidable team, seven days a week, contracting away from the property with an earthmoving plant to raise funds to improve and develop Ucharonidge, to buy cattle and to sink bores. All this flashed through my mind as we circled the homestead to land.

A string of Toyotas came to meet the plane – to greet Mick on his last journey home. Mick’s sons Mark, Phillip and Daniel carefully transferred his casket to his old Toyota ready for the journey to his historical final location.

Mick had been in pain with terminal cancer. He fought hard and at 69 was far too young to go, but his fight finally came to an end in the Darwin Private Hospital.

Coral, Mark, Phillip. Daniel and daughter Paula greeted us off the plane and Coral thanked us for escorting Mick home. Jenny Heath was also there to lend support as we loaded onto the vehicles and moved together from the airstrip to land. There was plenty of feed.

The Toyotas and planes were arriving and the Ucharonidge stockmen were moving around in their Thomas Cook royal blue double pocket shirts. The Beebe sons were dressed similarly, all proudly representing Ucharonidge and their pastoral tradition.

The boys were nervous. It seemed almost like they wanted the day to end to get back to more familiar surroundings but knowing that they were responsible for farewelling their father in a way that would make him proud.

The crowd of well-wishers had now grown to around 80 people. Some families had driven from Alice Springs and Darwin. At around 11.20am, after a cuppa with many outback people, the entourage moved towards the burial ground.

Many people walked and the funeral procession of family and pallbearers drove in Toyotas and other vehicles. The Ucharonidge stockmen on horseback, in their striking royal blue shirts, formed a moving guard of honour to escort Mick to his burial. Mick’s sons drove Mick’s Toyota with his coffin in the back.

The Toyotas stopped and the pallbearers took up their positions alongside the caskets. Phillip and Daniel Beebe and David Heath were on the left and Bronte Evans, Mark Beebe and myself on the right. I could now feel the warm sun on my back.

The gravel of the new road crunched under our feet as we slowly marched towards the graveside, mourners with cameras recording the event as we passed. As we neared the grave the magnitude of the preparations became more obvious. On the windy side were 32 large round bales of hay with another 32 positioned on top of them – creating an almost impenetrable wind break on the eastern side. Opposite this huge wall of hay, like some great monument, was parked the station road train, a huge emblem of pastoral capacity and efficiency.

The Salvation Army pastor led the prayers, then Brigadier Vic Pedersen told of his adventures with two faulty magnetos in his Auster aircraft some 40 years before, and how Mick and Roy rescued him and provided station hospitality.

Mick Beebe photographed with his family recently

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Continued Page 6
The role of supplementary feeding

Supplementary feeding aims to correct nutrient imbalances in available pasture, without replacing the animal’s intake of fodder from the pasture.

With any livestock enterprise the entire property management strategy revolves around great seasonal variations in pasture production which, depending on location and time of year, can be low in both protein and digestibility. In Northern Australia, dry season pastures are barely able to maintain bodyweight let alone support increased production, so supplementation is an easy and effective method of improving animal productivity.

Types of Supplements

Supplements can be used for a variety of different purposes. The following represent three of the main uses:
1. Maintenance of stock live weight
2. Enhanced productivity of live stock
3. Mineral supplementation to correct deficiencies.

Maintenance Supplements

Cattle grazing low protein pastures respond very well to protein supplementation. Part of the protein in the supplement may be provided by urea. Urea is rich in nitrogen and is converted to microbial protein in the rumen.

In the presence of an abundant supply of dry standing feed, urea activates the rumen microbes and stimulates the animal’s appetite leading to increased intake of poor quality feed. Cattle consuming approximately 30 grams of urea per day will maintain bodyweight on a low quality roughage diet.

Production Supplements

For increased productivity such as for growth in younger animals e.g. weaners, lactation or in the case of first calf heifers both growth and lactation, urea will need to be combined with a source of by-pass protein to optimize the effectiveness of the supplement.

The addition of Rumensin® in production and weaner blocks helps to improve feed efficiency, improve growth rates, improve reproductive performance and prevent coccidiosis. For growth and production, supplements are formulated with a high content of good quality by-pass protein, such as copra meal, lupins and cottonseed meal.

By-pass protein boosts productivity as it is immediately available to the animal for growth or milk production.

Mineral Supplements

Once animals’ requirements for protein and energy are met the next most important nutrients are minerals.

Cattle require phosphorus for growth, lactation and reproduction. Sulphur is important for rumen microbes particularly when feeding urea supplements, while the trace elements e.g. copper and cobalt are essential for growth and production. Sodium is important for lactating cows that excrete large amounts in milk.

Mick Beebe farewelled

From Page 5

John Hagan, Pastoral General Manager, told of his relationship spanning 40-50 years and how he left his droving plant at Ucharonidge over the wet. He made the claim that Ucharonidge was a wonderfully developed private pastoral property, with better facilities and resources than many company owned properties. His statement struck a chord in my mind as I remembered the opposite conclusion in the 1950s - that the Vestys properties had standards which were not achieved by private owners. However, all who were present knew that Ucharonidge was in a class of its own.

After the coffin had been lowered into the ground, the mourners were invited to throw fresh wildflowers top before Mick was finally laid to rest.

I could not help but think of what this great family had achieved through sacrifice and endeavour; through ambition and courage. Coral’s enormous contribution with over 30 years of marriage to Mick and the wonderful family left behind to meet the challenges of the future.

As I walked slowly towards the main road, I wondered how many men would be honoured with a new road made especially for their last resting place. I could feel the gravel of the new road crunching under my feet - the last 100 metres.
CLMA expands

Staff numbers at the Central Land Management Association (CLMA) office in Alice Springs have more than doubled recently as new projects get started. Andrea Johnson, CLMA Local Facilitator coordinator and Dionne Walsh, EMS Pilot Project coordinator have been joined by Joanne Rodney, Peter Barker and Michael Wood.

Funded through the National Landcare Program (NLP), Jo is developing a Grazing Land Management (GLM) Workshop for the Central Australian region. The GLM workshop is one of Meat and Livestock Australia’s (MLA) Northern EDGEnetwork suite of workshops that address the needs of beef producers in northern Australia.

Peter and Michael are working on a Native Heritage Trust (NHT) funded project to facilitate the control of Parkinsonia (Parkinsonia aculeata) and Rubber Bush (Calotropis procera) in the Sandover River catchment.

For more information contact CLMA on phone 8953 4230

Barkly Riparian Restoration Field Day

The Barkly Landcare and Conservation Association (BLCA) and Consolidated Pastoral Company, with support from the NHT, have been working together to control weeds, (mainly Parkinsonia) and promote native species re-vegetation along the banks of Newcastle Creek and Longreach Waterhole. Longreach Waterhole is a conservation reserve on Newcastle Waters Station that connects with Lake Woods, a wetland of national significance.

A team of 16 men from Newcastle Waters Station recently sprayed 700 ha (approx 1700 acres) of Parki over 5 days. This is a large contribution of resources by the station and credit should go to management for their commitment, and staff for their effort. A field day was held recently at Newcastle Waters Station and 25 people came to see the weed management work.

For more information contact the BLCA on phone 8962 4494

Weed Control down the Roper River

The Roper River Landcare Group (RRLG) and the Jilkminggan Council have got together with the support of Gary Hillen, Weeds branch DIPE to develop a team that will potentially deliver weed control services to the region in the future.

Five local Jilkminggan men, led by Stanley Smiler, have been spraying weeds along the Roper River on Elsey Station during July and will participate in further weed control training later in the year. Whilst spraying the group found a previously unidentified patch of Belly Ache Bush (Jatropha gossypifoila) that they now have under control.

The National Landcare Program is supporting this project that has potential benefits to the environment as well as in developing capacity and opportunity for local communities.

For more information contact the RRLG on phone 8971 1775

VRDCA Natural Resource Management Plan

The Victoria River District Conservation Association (VRDCA) has reached a major milestone in producing a Natural Resource Management (NRM) Plan for the region.

Since the introduction of the Native Title Act, Cridlands has acted in a number of the major native title claims determined by the courts to date. Cridlands’ role in representing the NTCA and its members has involved significant effort from VRDCA members with the vital support of the out-going VRDCA Local Facilitator/coordinator, Mr Royce Sample. The plan contains specific actions to implement in the next 5 years and sets goals reaching out 20 years.

The VRDCA has appointed Chrissy Joll as the new facilitator/coordinator for their group.

For more information contact the VRDCA on phone 8962 4494

For more information on Landcare in the NT rangelands please contact Matt Bolam, National Landcare Program State Landcare Coordinator NT, Phone 0428 330 131.

Major law firm joins veteran consultant in Native Title claim proceedings

The NTCA has appointed the Territory’s largest law firm, Cridlands, to provide legal services relating to native title claims affecting its members’ pastoral interests.

The NTCA has been successful in obtaining funding to cover its legal expenses from the Commonwealth Attorney General’s Department for a majority of the claims affecting members. The association will also retain the services of John MacKenzie as a consultant, to assist it and Cridlands with native title matters. John has more than 20 years experience representing NTCA members and will work closely with Cridlands in managing native title matters for the NTCA and members.

Cridlands, founded by George Cridland in 1959, has recently established offices in Sydney and Adelaide. Pastoral business has been a significant part in the firm’s work since it is inception. For more than three decades the firm has been actively involved in Aboriginal and indigenous issues. Since the commencement of the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976, Cridlands has participated in land claims for a range of industries including, pastoral, mining, tourism and fishing.

The plan is the culmination of a long held desire amongst members for a more strategic outlook for producers in the region. Completion of the NRM Plan has involved significant effort from VRDCA members with the vital support of the out-going VRDCA Local Facilitator/coordinator, Mr Royce Sample. The plan contains specific actions to implement in the next 5 years and sets goals reaching out 20 years.

The VRDCA has appointed Chrissy Joll as the new facilitator/coordinator for their group.

For more information contact the VRDCA on phone 8962 4494

For more information on Landcare in the NT rangelands please contact Matt Bolam, National Landcare Program State Landcare Coordinator NT, Phone 0428 330 131.
The third annual Santa Gertrudis Bull Sale hosted by DBIRD at the Arid Zone Research Institute (AZRI) on 1 July drew a large turnout of local pastoralists, industry representatives and interstate bull breeders, including General Manager of the Santa Gertrudis Breeder’s Association, Russell Reid.

The sale was well supported by vendors and buyers and most lots averaged around $2,800.

While this was AZRI’s third annual Santa Gertrudis Bull Sale, the precedent was actually set 50 years ago.

On 23 April 1954, the NT’s first ever herd bull sale was staged by Goldsborough Mort & Co Ltd of Sydney at the Alice Springs’ Animal Industry Research Institute. Entries came by rail from NSW, Victorian and South Australia studs and arrived in excellent condition. After strong bidding, the top price - and an Australasian record - of 775 guineas was paid for a two-year-old stud Red Poll sire by Webb Bros of Mt Riddock Station. This is equivalent to 813 pounds and 15 shillings, which, at that time, was enough to purchase a Ferguson tractor complete with accessories.

Bill Prior, who cut an anniversary cake with Minister Kon Vatskalis at this year’s milestone sale, remembers the first sale well. Bill, who managed Hamilton Downs Station from 1957 to 1992, featured in a photographic display of the historic 1954 event, staged at this year’s sale. Also depicted in the photos were the then Minister for Territories, Paul Hasluck and the OIC of the NT’s former Alice Springs-based Animal Industry Branch, Lionel Rose.

The annual bull sales are seen as important in ensuring good genetics are maintained in the Central Australian herds. While traditionally pastoralists in Central Australia have favoured British breeds, other breeds are now becoming more common in the region. DBIRD works with all breeds and anything which assists the viability of the industry.

The Santa Gertrudis, a composite of British breeds and the hardy Brahman, ensures local pastoralists can export to traditional slaughter markets in southern states and also take advantage of live export opportunities in South East Asia.

Minister Vatskalis told sale goers it was pleasing to see AZRI facilities being utilised for the bull sale. He said it was important for DBIRD to interact with such practical activities and that this working association could only help to strengthen the pastoral industry.

Tennant Creek also staged another of the region’s successful annual Drought Master bull sales during show week.