

Devon Steers Competitive in Wingham Carcase Competition Chris Pogonoski

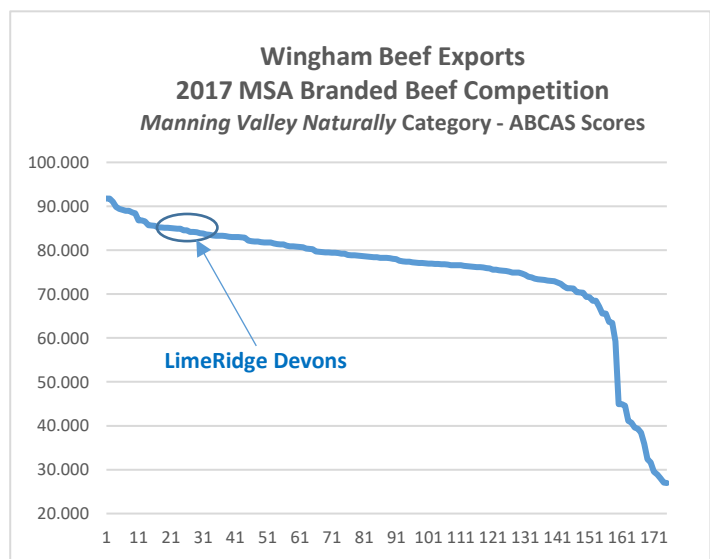
Beef processor Wingham Beef Exports, near Taree NSW, held their 2017 Wingham Beef Week in May this year.

As part of Beef Week they organised an MSA Branded Beef Challenge carcase competition, inviting producers to enter a pen(s) of 5 animals. Carcasses were judged using the Australian Beef Carcase Appraisal System (ABCAS), incorporating Market Specification, Saleable Meat Yield and MSA Eating Quality carcase measurement criteria. Awards, including highest individual carcase ABCAS score, highest individual MSA index and highest combined average (pen) MSA Index, were presented in two Wingham Beef Exports beef brand categories – Wingham Blue MSA and Manning Valley Naturally MSA.

LimeRidge Devons, Glen Martin, NSW entered a pen of five 17-20 mth. Devon steers. The steers were the end of the 2015 drop, grazed on pasture and finished on a barley based feed mix. They were part of a routine supply of steers to Wingham Beef Exports and were not raised or specially selected and fed for the competition.

The competition attracted 17 producers, submitting 35 pens of 5 animals; 175 carcasses in total. ABCAS scores ranged from 26.955 to 91.762 out of a maximum score of 100.

LimeRidge Devons ABCAS scores ranged 83.221 to 85.619; the pen was in the top 22% of carcasses, with the best carcase in the top 10%. Encouragingly, the combined average carcase (pen) ABCAS score for the LimeRidge Devons pen of steers was 84.463. Individual MSA indexes ranged 59.66 to 62.26 and the highest combined average (pen) MSA Index was 61.31.



LimeRidge Devons - 10 mth. weaner steers on rye, clover

Interestingly, when you look at the various components that make up the ABCAS score, there is little variation in the results of the top exhibitors in regard to Market Specifications and Saleable Meat Yield. The MSA Eating Quality scores do vary a little more, specifically in relation to marbling. Most of the top results had quite high marbling scores, particularly the MSA marbling score – top 950; LimeRidge Devons ranged 270 to 310. The message for Devon breeders and producers – improve meat marbling!