

# **Australian Red Dairy Breed Board Report**

**August 2022**

The Australian Red Dairy Breed (ARDB) has had a successful start to 2022. We were finally able to have an in-person AGM at Warrnambool. Everyone who attended really enjoyed the opportunity to catch up face-to-face with friends after our last 2 AGM's have had to be on-line.

We welcomed Kym Harrison (QLD) to the board, who is replacing Brett Davies in the Finance portfolio, after Brett has served 4 years on the board. We would like to thank Brett for all his work that he has put into this role during this period, and wish Brett and Bronwyn all the best as they enjoy a gap year from farming during 2022.

The AGM was followed by two on-farm herd visits; at both the Simpson and Blasche family farms in South-West Victoria. These two days were very successful, and were attended by a number of farmers and service providers. We also had the opportunity to host two international guests from Pakistan who were very interested in using ARDB genetics. A huge thank you to Owen and Kate, Terry and Shannon and their extended families for opening up their farms, and taking time out to enable these farm visits to go ahead.

The Board has decided to suspend the mid-year meeting until we have an events co-ordinator to dedicate the time into organising the mid-year meeting. We have not been able to fulfil this position from within our membership, but have recently been able to contract the services of Deanne Kennedy to be our event co-ordinator. Deanne will assist the board for our January AGM. We are hoping this will be a long-term partnership and that this will relieve the board of these administrative tasks, while allowing our in-person events to continue in a professional manner.

The Board has also been investigating investing \$35,000 of our funds into blue chip shares to improve the return on our capital. We hope to be able to report to our members at the January AGM the final details of this investment.

We have also investigated the possibility of a herd registration package, that also includes genomics and linear trait evaluations. Unfortunately, modelling provided to the board, which included set up costs, and projected uptake by members, did not make this package viable. The board has decided not to pursue this possibility for the current time.

We have also been in discussion with ABS about a Norwegian Red bull that is coded UU even though he is coloured black and white. Unfortunately, all bulls from the Norwegian Red register, regardless of colour, are coded UU in Australia. However, we are grateful to ABS, who have included "BLACK" in his registered name to help ARDB members easily identify his colour. He is not eligible to be registered in the ARDB register.

We are also working on a proposal to change the constitution at the upcoming AGM. Currently we are required to have an annual audit of our accounts, which we are finding very difficult and expensive to engage a professional to audit our accounts. We will be proposing that the accounts will be annually reviewed by an accountant. Members will have sufficient notice of these suggested changes and we will welcome any discussion on this topic prior to, and during the AGM.

We have now had Red Genomic values in Australia for 12 months. It is extremely important to remember that this genomic index is a combination of a genomic dataset on four traits (worth about 60% of the index) and a generated parent average for the remaining traits (worth 40% of the index). The purpose of understanding this is to ensure Australian farmers do not use red genomic information blindly, but as another tool in helping them select future bulls, and future replacements for their herds.

Genetics Australia has included two new young sires to join their Australian Red bull stable. These bulls include ARBTyrell (Onstad x VR Tokyo) and ARBZach (Onstad x Foske).

AUZRED has also included two new young sires to join their Australian Red bull stable. These two bulls include ARRAGNA (AXBBlackwood x Dragomir) and ARFELIPE (Viljar x V Foske).

These young bulls have been selected as outstanding prospects. Additionally, they have high rated Red Genomic indexes, which should give Australian dairy farmers more confidence in using these bulls. I would encourage all our members to include these bulls in their AI team to enable them to receive a reliable daughter proof.

Finally, I would like to draw attention to the Leppin family who have decided to retire in 2022 and disperse their herds. Toby and Lynne, along with their son Nick (Orana ARDB Stud, VIC) have been breeding ARDB bulls for AI and high genetic cows since the inception of the ARDB. They have been actively involved in hosting herd visits and promoting ARDB cattle, particularly through their participation in VIC farm monitor projects and GINFO. They have shown to the wider dairy industry the ability of ARDB cattle to continue to produce profitable results in a predominately grazing system. To this end, the Board would publicly like to thank them for their contribution to the ARDB and wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

Thank you to all our members who have supported the board and our team in various ways over the past 6 months. May you continue to enjoy milking your Australian Red Cows.

Yours Sincerely,

Samuel Graham on behalf of the ARDB Board.