



Brian and Jake Smith

TENTERFIELD, NSW

“We never realised pestivirus was something we needed to manage in our area”.

We operate a 300 cow self-replacing Brangus/Angus cross, and a trading operation supplying feeder steers to northern NSW and South East Queensland feedlots.

We had been questioning our stock's fertility performance for well over a decade but over the last three or four years the issue really hit with our breeders and heifers.

We thought it was a bull issue and barren cattle we inherited with a property purchase. We looked at our nutrition and did a semen check on our bulls but it wasn't

until we were advised to run some fertility tests that we identified the problem.

We screened our cattle for virbrio and pestivirus and discovered pestivirus was rampant.

It works out we'd been missing out 140 calves each year. In current terms that's about \$1400 a head. This means the direct cost of our business over the years we were hit with fertility issues was \$196,000 each year - or more than \$650 per cow. If we included the persistent losses we were having as well as the other health issue we experienced from sick

calves it would be much larger. It's hard to put a figure on it.

Since learning this we've implemented a Pestigard vaccination program with an annual booster on the whole herd as well as any purchased cattle including trades. We just vaccinate everything.

This has been an easy way to resolve the fertility issues and achieve a positive result every year.

We recently completed preg testing to calving where across the herd we achieved 94% which is a big improvement from 42% the previous year.

Looking back, we never realised pestivirus was something we needed to manage in our area. Through experience we now know if we treat annually with Pestigard the return is 100 fold, perhaps even more.

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Always on guard

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