



Dion Porter

WESTMAR, QLD

We manage 5,700 breeders on our property at Westmar in south west QLD, they are a mix of Angus & pure-bred Wagyu. We sell the progeny into the feeder market to Grassdale and other local feedlots at 400kg. In total we manage 38,000Ha, approximately 10,000Ha of which is used for fodder and cereal crops. The fodder crop is grown for silage for use in our beef production system.

We use an extensive animal health program in our breeders to ensure they have every opportunity to perform at their best and protect against controllable disease risks. The non-negotiables in our program include:

- Dectomax Pour On & Injectable for parasite control,
- Ultravac 7-in-1, Pestigard and Vibrovax, for reproductive and clostridial disease management
- Bovi-Shield MH-One to insure against Bovine Respiratory Disease and
- Ultravac BEF to protect against 3-day sickness in our bulls.

I implemented this program because of the risks I saw when buying cattle across the eastern side of the country. I wanted to safeguard myself from having an outbreak of disease and protect my bottom line. I don't want to leave kilograms in the paddock and my animal health program is in place to protect my investment.

The animal health program costs me \$23 per cow annually. I consider this a small investment when that cow is returning me \$2,000 to \$3,000 per year. It is 1% or less of her market and replacement value.

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We give a full vaccination program to our females against pestivirus. We initiated our Pestigard program as we identified this disease as substantial risk due to us trading a large number of cattle through our enterprise as well as breeding our own cattle. We felt it was much better to get in front of a potential problem rather than chasing it once it had occurred.

We start with the required two dose program of Pestigard in our maiden heifers, and then follow up with boosters. I don't want to risk a pesti crash, and I can control this risk simply and easily with Pestigard.

We aim to get every kilogram out of the paddock we can. I can't afford any freeloaders in my system and look to actively cull cattle that don't meet our performance expectations. As part of this, I want

to give our cattle every opportunity to perform. By giving a full Pestigard vaccination program I feel I'm controlling the controllables and giving them the best chance to perform to their genetic potential.

Our vaccination program has resulted in strong results, compared to our historical averages. I suspect we had active virus circulating in our herd undermining reproductive performance. Our preg testing

results are in the low to mid 90's on both breeds across a 12 week joining. Our Pestigard program has lifted our pregnancy rates and allowed us to achieve tight calving patterns.

Pestigard allows us to confidently maintain our breeding and trading activities side by side and in turn helps us optimise our returns from our country.



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