

SIRES ON ICE

One bull, 223 calves, 12 months

By BRETT TINDAL

DUBBO-based agent Colin Hood and his wife Robyn, "Hillview", could never have predicted what would happen when they stepped up two years ago to buy a Speckle Park bull at the first annual Six Star Speckle Park sale at Meadow Flat.

A bull they paid \$6500 for on AuctionsPlus, because they could not make it to the sale, turned out to be the investment of a lifetime for the couple.

The bull they nicknamed Jacko – after the Michael Jackson song "Black or White" – has sired 223 calves out of Charolais-infused females in a staggering 12-month feat.

Mr Hood, a renowned local stock and station agent, said his wife had researched the Speckle Park breed on the internet and was keen to try it out, but he was quite sceptical at the time.

"I bought 228 Charolais-infused females with a fair bit of frame about them to join to the bull on our Yeoval

property, but was quickly told the bull was to stay at the home base in Dubbo, so the cows came to us instead," he said.

Mr Hood said the idea was to retain the heifers and grow the steer calves out for sale.

"It was only a few weeks ago I sold five cows that had not got in calf, leaving the 223 females with calves on the ground by Jacko himself, which included seven sets of twins," he said.

"If you break it down, in the first year the bull has cost me \$29 a calf and I expect to keep him for a few more years yet."

Mr Hood said he had only grain-fed two of the calves, with both going to Brisbane Royal with Wellington High School, and one taking home the champion lightweight carcass award.

He said this had changed the goal posts for him and he was now looking into getting John Knaggs, Mirambie Feedlot, Dubbo, to feed the remainder of the calves, including heifers, to contract to Speckle Park Supreme.

"The 50 cents a kilogram premium



This steer, sired by a Six Star Speckle Park bull, was shown by Wellington High School at this year's Ekka and took out the champion lightweight carcass.

they are offering us makes it worthwhile to feed them, as half the 50c is feed costs and the other pure profit," he said.

Mr Hood said he will take them to 300kg at weaning and possibly feed them all to chase the premium offered.

He said their top heifer calves looked very promising and they have

already had offers for the heifer portion.

"But we are keen to join them to a Speckle Park bull again to see if we can get a larger frame with the Charolais infusion and hopefully keep all the meat quality and square shape of the Speckle Park," he said.

"This might change now with the premium being offered.

"We have been working on the theory that the Speckle Park meat quality in both flavour, tenderness and marbling, was a great attribute for all meat consumers and the value of the hide must return a premium as the true Speckle Park colouring was eye-catching.

"This is why we have decided to give the Speckle Parks our best."

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Champion lightweight carcass EKKA - 2012, sired by Six Star "Jacko" Congratulations to Colin & Robyn Hood, Dubbo & Wellington High School

Speckle Park in finest restaurants

By BRETT TINDAL

THE Speckle Park breed has already proven a winner in the show ring and now also in feedlots and on restaurant plates in some of Australia's most exclusive restaurants.

The new branded product, Speckle Park Supreme, has its cogs well and truly turning with the first steers processed after a 58-day feed program at the Warwick-based Maydan Feedlot, Queensland.

The first run of steers for the Speckle Park Supreme brand was processed at one of Australia's most exclusive branded product processing plants in John Dee Abattoirs, Warwick, Qld.

Speckle Park Supreme director Greg

58 days, with a finishing weight average of 297 kilograms carcass weight.

The steers were fed by Maydan Feedlot owner Geoff Willett who said they were the best trade cattle he had seen leave Maydan in 27 years.

Mr Willett was full of admiration for the Speckle-cross steers.

"They left here after only 58 days, still as babies with their milk teeth, averaging 297kg dressed, with an average 14.6 millimetres of fat across the group and 71.4 per cent went marble score one or two," he said.

Mr Willett said the top steer had a 361.4kg carcass weight, yielding 63.4pc, while the top heifer in the group weighed 362.4kg carcass weight, with a 61.12pc yield.

Mr Willett said as feedlot cattle you couldn't ask for better, with great temperament, good conversion and



Geoff Willett, Maydan Feedlot, Warwick, Queensland, with the first consignment of Speckle Park-cross steers and heifers to be fed for the Speckle Park Supreme branded beef product.

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– Maydan Feedlot owner Geoff Willett

Ebbeck said they were very fortunate to have their product processed at the "bee's knee's" in processing at John Dee.

"They are in a league of their own in the market," he said.

The consignment was 12 heifers and 16 steers from Maydan Feedlot that had been on a short-fed program of

very little health issues that he had to deal with.

"This was just the first installment, as I have another 220 on feed at present and another truckload coming next week," he said.

Mr Ebbeck said they had secured menu space with some of the leading restaurants in Australia like Char

Char, Brisbane, Neil Perry's Rockpool, Sydney, and the Apple Bar at Bilpin.

"This is just the start of it, as we have approximately 700 heifers about to calve in September which will get us online for the projective 8000 to

10,000 first-cross bodies to come out of Minnamurra Pastoral Company's Te Mania-blood Angus herd," he said.

Mr Ebbeck said this was the first lot processed in a big commercial run, but large numbers will be processed regularly now to fill orders at the

growing list of exclusive restaurants across Australia.

He said it was a great validation for the product and breed to be on such menus as Char Char Char and that of arguably one of Australia's greatest chefs in Neil Perry.



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