

Summer 2010/11

Hello All,

I have been busy of late working toward one of my many goals for the Dexter breed and its members.

With the highly successful advertising campaign of the brand Angus now pushing past the fast food market and into just about every conceivable beef product, I feel the time is now for our breed to look at how we too can get a slice of the market share for red meat sales in Australia.

To do this I have contacted and researched markets for Dexter beef in the USA, UK and Canada. Not surprising to me I have found that The UK where Dexter's really made a name for them self and then spread through the colonies, the Beef is available through selected butcher shops and is labelled as Dexter beef, there is as in Australia a private market, with most pre ordered and on a regular client list.

I have recently had contact with a lady in Western Australia who is just out from the UK and looking for Dexter beef to purchase, she found it difficult to source and I got the feeling she could not believe it was not in butchers shops, her want for the product was so great she wanted me to send it from Victoria.

The USA and Canada however and in part due to FDA restrictions a private farmer can only sell beef to customers at the rate of 2000 lb per farmer per year, with usual slaughter [hygiene] restrictions applying, not really viable considering the cost to comply with those rules. The balance finds its way into the open cattle market with many producers facing unsatisfactory prices being paid due lack of knowledge of the product likewise the public of the quality of the produce and the obvious in-ability to differentiate which breed is what when you have thousands of head of cattle at a sale yard at any one time. The same there applies as in Australia in many cases they are passed off as small un-thrifty Angus.

A recent situation here in Australia was relayed to me via a close friend who sent several 18 month old well grown steers off to the sales yards due to lack of rain and the need to free up some capital.

These great little steers were transported from farm to sale yards, a whopping 15kms, yet the price they got was \$40 per head, not even enough to make the trip home economical. Just a side note to this story; the owner in question knows what they are doing with raising of steers as they have won 3 consecutive breed show champion steer classes. However we all know that at 18 months old the beef would have been divine.

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This whole scenario could be cast aside if Dexter cattle Australia as an entity, created a Dexter marketing board run by volunteers whom I would suggest in part be made up of the studs that currently turn off larger numbers of steers, business minded people and industry experienced persons.

The whole venture could be made possible without the need for massive outlays by the association yet has the potential to reap significant increase in returns to the grower and to the association via commission or licence fees paid to the board for each animal sold to the marketing entity.