

## Lowline History

The Angus breed has its origins in eastern Scotland, in the counties of Aberdeen and Angus, where it was developed from the native black hornless cattle. Australian Lowline Cattle were developed from the Angus herd which was established at the Trangie Research Centre in 1929 to provide quality breeding stock for the New South Wales cattle industry.

Trangie's foundation stock was purchased first from Canada during the 1920's. The Trangie herd was reinforced with further imports from Canada, the United States of America and Scotland between 1930 and 1950. The last imported bull was brought from Scotland in 1956. Bulls were bought from leading New South Wales studs between 1961 and 1964, and the herd was then closed to outside animals.

The emphasis at Trangie switched to research, and in 1963 the Australian Meat Research Committee asked the Trangie Research Centre to conduct a project aimed at establishing the role of performance recording in the breeding program of a herd. Equal emphasis was given to weight gain and to visual conformation score in the selection of replacement bulls and heifers. The project continued until 1970, pioneering performance testing in Australia, and demonstrating successfully the usefulness of measuring performance in a stud herd.

From 1971 and 1973 trials were conducted using objective measurement and appraisal by experienced stud breeders in the selection of replacement bulls and heifers. The herd was divided into two, with the results indicating that performance testing compared with the assessment of experienced stud breeders assessing growth potential.

The trials which produced the Lowline breed began in 1974, with funding from the Meat Research Corporation, to evaluate selection for growth rate on herd profitability. The aim was to establish whether large or small animals were more efficient converters of grass into meat. This trial continued for 19 years. The program involved a detailed evaluation of weight gain, feed intake, reproductive performance, milk production, carcass yield and quality and structural soundness. The original Low Line herd comprised 85 cows, which were joined to yearling bulls also selected for low growth from birth to yearling age. From 1974, the Low Line herd remained closed, with all the replacement bulls and heifers selected from within the line.

After 15 years of selective breeding, the Low Line herd had stabilized at about 30 percent smaller. The bulls were maturing at about 43 inches, and the cows at about 39 inches or less, against 59 inches for standard Angus bulls, and close to the same height for standard Angus cows.

The NSW Agricultural Department was proposing to terminate the experiment, sending the cattle from the trial to abattoirs for slaughter. After some hesitation, and after strong representation, auction sales were held at Glen Innes and at Trangie. At the Trangie sale on August 8, 1992, nine bulls, 23 heifers and seven cows were sold for a total of \$19,475. Seven purchasers - Ian Pullar, David Barnett, Des Owens, Don Burke, Carolyn Tebbutt, Kevin Everson

and Bob Pringle - then met beneath a gum tree at the Trangie Centre auction site to form the Australian Lowline Cattle Association, adopting the name LOWLINE. Those names appear in the Herd Book as foundation members. The complete dispersal sale occurred on October 30 at Trangie in 1993, when 20 bulls were sold, together with 44 cows and 51 heifers, for a total of \$228,200., on lively bidding.

The American Lowline Registry was established in the late 1990's, with membership growing rapidly. Lowline cattle are exhibited at major fairs and shows around the nation, including the National Western Stock Show in Denver, the North American International Livestock Exposition, the American Royal Stock Show, and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo..