

Simmental Field Days feature Marty Ropp from USA

A series of Simmental Field Days were conducted around Australia in November to provide information on the performance of Simmental in the USA and how Simmentals can be utilised in crossbreeding programs in Australia.

Field days were held in Moss Vale (NSW), Wagga Wagga (NSW), Keith (SA) and Toowoomba (Qld). Many members and commercial producers attended.

Landmark hosted and Jeremy Cooper, Coop Simmentals assisted in organising the NSW Field Days and ABS (Bill Cornell) assisted in Field day organisation throughout. Harry Waddington (Cargills Wagga) was an informative guest speaker at Moss Vale and Wagga Wagga.

Tim Cartledge, Menalbyn Simmentals, Meningie, SA assisted in arranging the Keith Field Day, while Anton Volker, Goomaburra Simmentals, Felton East, hosted the field day in Queensland. Also speaking at this Field Day were Jason Strong (Genetic Solutions), Jim Bruce (Semex Australia) and Gary Rahley (Aussie Park Simmentals).

Keynote speaker was Marty Ropp, Director, Field Services with American Simmental Association (ASA). He provided valuable insight into cattle breeding trends in the USA and the breed development programs the ASA has been conducting. The success of these programs can be measured in the increasing popularity of Simmental and Simmental composites, with both Simmental and SimAngus registrations growing strongly.

This article highlights some of Marty's presentations.



Marty Ropp, Jeremy Cooper, Bill Cornell and Peter Speers at the Wagga Wagga Simmental Field Day, hosted by Landmark.



Anton Volker and Gary Rahley had Simmental and Red Simmentals on display at the Queensland Field Day.

Cattle Breeding Trends in North America

The North American cattle herd is becoming dominated by black cattle, mainly Angus or Angus crosses, largely due to higher prices being paid for Certified Angus Beef and other Angus influenced meat brands.

For other black coloured cattle to compete on price, they need to meet the same quality grade, (eg Choice). This means similar marbling levels and preferably at a younger age.

Increasingly, price is also being influenced by Yield Grade (1 to 5). A low grade means more boneless retail cuts being harvested from the carcass. Better muscled, leaner cattle produce better (lower) yield grades.

Maximising Herd Productivity

The major cattle breed comparison research work in the USA has for many years been conducted by the USDA's Clay Centre Research Station, Nebraska.

Repeatedly, their research has recommended producers to exploit the advantages of hybrid vigour to boost fertility, weight for age and carcass performance. Their recommendation is to produce a crossbred with 50% European and 50% British Breed content.

Their research has ranked the Simmental as the highest performing European breed and the Angus as the highest performing British breed. These rankings are for all the commercially significant traits.

TRAIT	ANGUS	SIMMENTAL
	RANK within British Breeds	RANK within European Breeds
<u>Carcass Traits</u>		
% Choice Quality Grade	2 nd	1 st
Carcass Weight	1 st	1 st
# Retail Product (Yield)	1 st	2 nd
Shear Force (Tenderness)	1 st	1 st
<u>Weight Performance</u>		
Weaning Weight	1 st	1 st
Post Weaning Gain	1 st	1 st
Maternal Weaning Wt	1 st	1 st
<u>Fertility & Calving</u>		
Calving Ease	1 st	1 st
Maternal Calving Ease	1 st	1 st
% Puberty	1 st	1 st
% Pregnancy	3 rd	2 nd
<u>Feed Efficiency</u>		
Efficiency of Weight Gain	2 nd	1 st
Efficiency of Marbling	1 st	1 st
Efficiency of Retail Product	2 nd	1 st

Data from USDA MARC Report 22

**It therefore makes sense to put:
the best European breed (Simmental)
with the best British breed (Angus)
to produce the desired 50:50 crossbred.**

USDA Grading System

Quality Grades

**Percent of Intramuscular Fat
& Marbling For USDA Quality Grades**

USDA Quality Grade	Percentage Intramuscular Fat	Degree of Marbling
Prime	8% - 11%	Abundant
Choice	4% - 8%	Small to Moderate
Select	3% - 4%	Slight
Standard	3% and Below	Traces to devoid

Quality Grades are based on Maturity (prefer younger age) and Marbling

Yield Grades

Yield Grade	% Boneless Retail Cuts
1	52.6 – 54.6
2	50.3 – 52.3
3	48.0 – 50.0
4	45.7 – 47.7
5	43.3 – 45.4

A Low Yield Grade results in a higher yield of boneless retail cuts.

American Simmental Association Carcase Research

The ASA has for some years been conducting its carcase evaluation research through progeny testing in commercial herds, with feedlot finishing and subsequent carcase assessment.

Various breeds have been compared, including Simmental, Angus and SimAngus.

The project has now evaluated about 5,000 carcasses, with both Simmental and SimAngus demonstrating excellent performance compared with Angus.

The 50:50 SimAngus have been proven to:

- produce heavier carcasses at the same age
- trim some of the excess fat cover
- be better muscled
- have better yield grades.

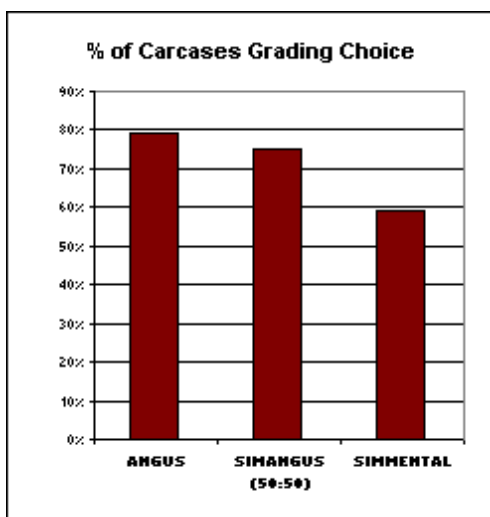
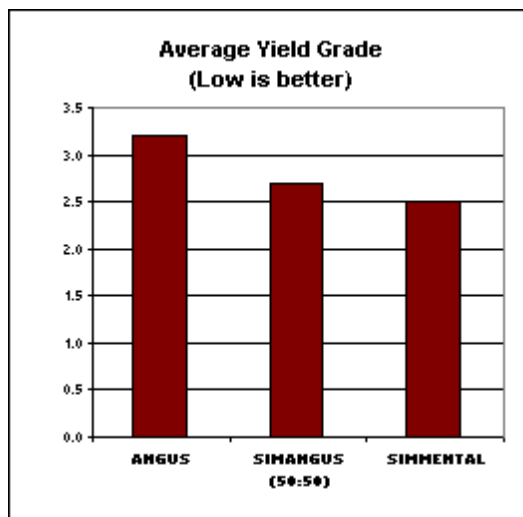
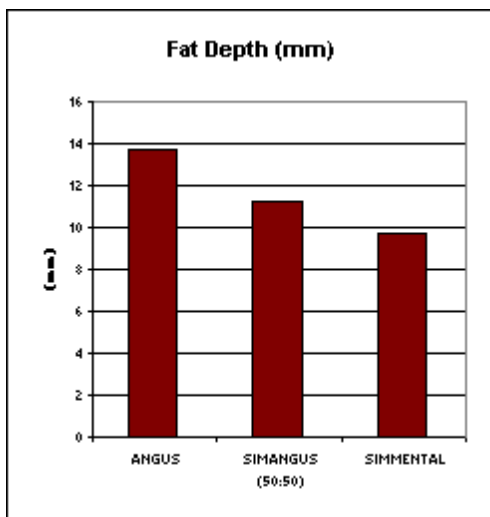
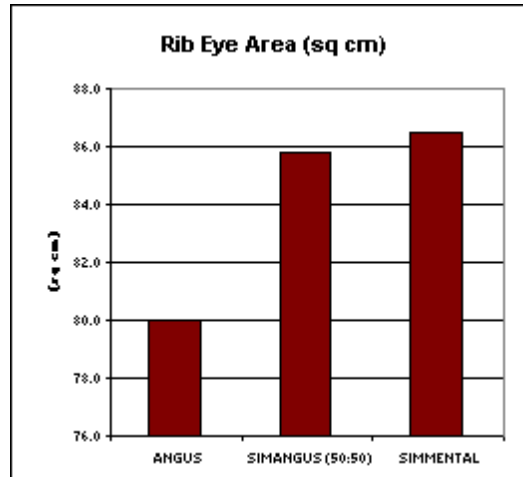
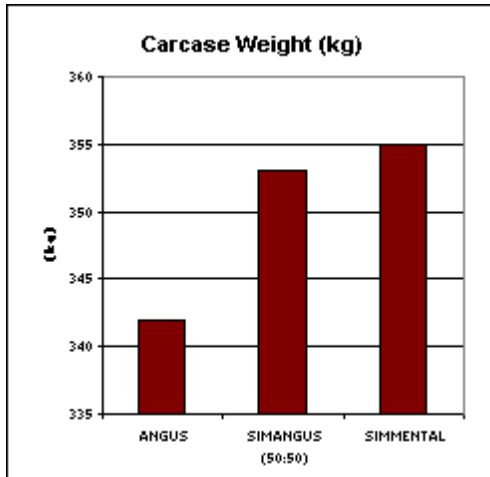
Importantly, SimAngus carcasses retain good marbling, so a similar high percentage of carcasses achieve Choice Quality Grade.

AMERICAN SIMMENTAL ASSOCIATION - CARCASE PROJECT (To 2004)

Breeding	No Carcasses Measured	Carcase Weight (kg)	Fat Depth (mm)	RibEye Area (sq cm)	% Choice Grade	Average Yield Grade (Low is best)
ANGUS	1,077	342	13.7	80.0	79%	3.2
SIMANGUS (50:50)	2,077	353	11.2	85.8	75%	2.7
SIMMENTAL	1,253	355	9.7	86.5	59%	2.5

Summary of SimAngus Advantages

- Carcase Weight 11 kg heavier and close to Pure Simmental
- Fat Depth about midway between Angus and Simmental. Leaner than Angus.
- Rib Eye Area (Muscling) close to Simmental and better than Angus
- % of carcasses grading choice quality (degree of marbling), close to Angus
- Average Yield Grade much better than Angus and close to Simmental
 - Equates to an extra 11 kg of retail product, valued at about \$7 per kg.





Marty Ropp took time to check out the Menalbyn Simmental and SimAngus breeding program with principals, Henry, Tim and Lise Cartledge.



Anton Volker, Marty Ropp and Jim Bruce at the Queensland Field Day.