

High Country Salers by Peter Rogers, Salco Partners



Salers cross breeder on Amanda and Ben's property near Dargo.

The first Salers bull I sold almost 25 years ago was to a commercial cattleman from Dargo in the Victorian high country. Since then Owen Waller has been a regular repeat buyer of Salers genetics, and remains a strong advocate for the advantages that Salers bring to a commercial cattle breeder.

Owen's family started in the cattle business in the Dargo region in the 1880's, and the tradition looks set to continue with his daughter Amanda Waller and her partner Ben Saxton recently purchasing 700 acres near Dargo where they are running about 150 Salers cross breeders.



Amanda Waller and Ben Saxton with some of their Salers cross breeders

As an experienced cattleman, Owen is matter-of-fact about the advantages he sees in running breeders with 50% Salers genetics. "Salers are good mothers and easy to calve. They return to calf well, and cope with tough conditions better than most other breeds. In the 1997-8 drought, our Salers cross breeders did better than anything else we were running. They have good feet, forage well, and recover rapidly when conditions improve."



Salers cross breeders in the Victorian high country near Dargo



Owen and Amanda Waller.

Amanda, a qualified vet, rates calving ease as the single biggest advantage that Salers have over other breeds. "The calves are born small but grow rapidly. We aim to sell either yearlings

for feed-lotting or run them through as bullocks. There has to be good growth to get to Jap Ox while only milk- or 2-tooth.”

Both Owen and Amanda have a clear vision on what they want from Salers breeders. Bulls need to throw quiet, moderate-framed, meaty and early maturing calves. An ability to fatten on grass is a big advantage. If these goals can be met, then the natural advantages that Salers have over other breeds with calving ease and growth rates will ensure a long-term place for the Salers breed in the Australian cattle industry.