



# Cow confirmation for productivity and longevity

In early May, the Subtropical Dairy Young Dairy Network hosted Karen Yarnold from Semex Australia and Phil Hentschke from Holstein Australia, to run a series of one day workshops across five regions in Queensland and northern NSW. Over 60 people attended these days. We also had the pleasure of having Doug Polson, Karen's dad along for the week. Doug is a dairy farmer from Oxley Island in NSW and has years of experience working with Holstein Australia and judging at a variety of shows.

The workshops were all about cow confirmation and skeletal development and how this related to cow performance and longevity in commercial herds, not just the show ring. The days were very comprehensive with Phil leading the day and sharing some of his knowledge and experience as a classifier. Phil and Karen covered the structure and functionality of a cow including head size, head to body ratio, udder shapes, ligaments, skin look and feel, legs and feet structure and overall cow capacity. We also covered the skeletal structure of a cow, how each part works, the impact of joint angles, hip to pin angles, joint placements and impacts on skeletal development. Phil and Karen even had some cow bones for everyone to see and feel to get a greater understanding of how things work on the inside of a cow particularly for getting cows in calf and during calving.

Along with our YDN members, we also had a number of high school students from Casino and Beaudesert come along to join in the learning as well. A big thank you goes out to our host farms – Julie and Mick Moore in Dorrigo, Ken Bryant in Bexhill, Rodney Teese in Veresdale, Chris and Andrew Mullins in Allora and Christine, Frank, Robert and Lanore Burgess in Upper Pinelands. All our hosts were very welcoming and provided a great range of animals for the participants to look at and learn from. A big thank you to Karen, Phil and their employers Semex Australia and Holstein Australia for their support. If you want to join the Young Dairy Network or have an idea or request for an event, please contact your local YDN Co-ordinator or Subtropical Dairy Extension Co-ordinator. ■■



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