



THE SHOW WON'T BE GOING ON THIS YEAR

THE class of 2019 (from left to right): Holly Webb, Annette Cavanagh, Zoe Weir, Jordan Hoban, Genevieve Saunders, Grace Calder, Alexander Bain, Catherine Bates, Annabel Grinter, Emma Henne, Lucy Powell, Stephanie Anthony and Meaghan Venables. An important part of the show calendar is awarding the Victorian Agricultural Show Ltd Rural Ambassador state finalists. Championing rural youth the ambassador program entails three levels of progression which are local, group and state. Each show society nominates an ambassador to represent their show society at group level, with some show societies running a local show competition as they have multiple ambassadors wanting to represent the showsociety. Judging is based on the entrant's desire to be involved in the future and improvement of their local show society, as well as their local community. Turn to pages 4 and 5 for an update of Victoria's agricultural shows.



High wine quality expected

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SAMMs a resilient breed

PAGE 17

Dorpers can do it

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Beekeeping it in the family

By EMMA OLIVER

CLEAR eyesight, very steady hands and great concentration are the attributes of beekeepers who diversify into the niche market of queen bee breeding.

"It is an exact science," Jay Hu, founder and owner of Organicsway bee farm at Mount Evelyn, said.

"You need to be able to identify how old the larva is.

"For the first three days, there is an egg and on the fourth day it hatches into the larva.

"It is then that that you carefully pick it up - grafting it's called - and transfer it to a queen cup, where the workers feed the larva an excessive amount of royal jelly to enable the transition.

"As queens and workers both come from the same egg, anything older than the one-day-old larva is already on its way to becoming

a worker bee, and so timing is absolutely crucial.

"An older larva grafted into a queen cup will turn into a queen bee, but will be of poorer quality with a shorter life span, reduced fertility and a likelihood of being defensive.

"And should you not pick the larva up gently - it gets damaged - resulting either in a low quality queen, or not even turning into one in the first place."

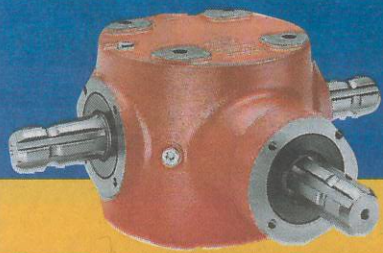
Weather and environment also contribute to the success of the process, and Jay - as an experienced apiarist - adapts his craft year-to-year according to the conditions, with maintenance of the hives constant to ensure the specifications are ideal to create progeny.

As a fourth generation beekeeper, Jay's passion for these amazing insects was nurtured by a childhood watching and learning from his beekeeper grandparents.

When Jay emigrated to Australia with his wife, his intention was never to be a beekeeper.

After obtaining a masters degree in Business Information Systems, Jay entered the professional world joining Accenture Australia and his working days were spent in an office as a senior business analyst, first at Accenture and then at Telstra.

Continued pages 2-3



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The shows must go on

By EMMA OLIVER

BACK bigger and better in 2021 is the caption most agricultural shows are running with, as they tackle the onerous task of cancelling events for the upcoming show season.

With the majority of Victoria's spring season shows postponed, a few of the smaller events have held off making their final decision in the hope that restrictions would ease and the state would have the pandemic under control.

Recent weeks, however, have proven otherwise, and the positivity felt in May and early June as to how the virus was tracking, has unfortunately shown to be premature.

Rather than continue to invest in events that may unfortunately be cancelled organis-



ers are pulling the pin now to ensure future events can and will go ahead.

"Some of these shows are over 150 years old and it would be a huge shame to lose these historical events from the agricultural calendar," Rod Bowles, executive officer of Victorian Agricultural Shows, said.

"They are often an icon of their town, and looked forward to with anticipation as a get-together for the extended agricultural community, and a celebration and affirmation of their achievements.

"And as such, the benefit of shows to mental health

and wellbeing in rural communities cannot be underestimated."

This consideration is at the forefront of committee members' minds when making the devastating decision to cancel events for 2020.

"There is also the fear for those not running their shows, that after annual expenses, they may not have sufficient cash resources to put on a show next year," Mr Bowles said, "and whether the enthusiasm will still exist within a committee to put on a show in this era of uncertainty.

"There is not a huge profit

margin in shows, and often it is harder to get something back in business than maintaining the momentum of an already running event.

"Insurance for shows is a massive outlay, and if anybody was to contract COVID-19 at an event that insurance would be rendered null and void.

"Having drafted a risk management document with required operating procedures, the logistical nightmare of putting on a show during a pandemic has frightened a lot of committees.

"With the extra costs of

employing additional staff, and the massive requirements in relation to cleaning and sanitising, expenses have become prohibitive for most shows.

"And the very real possibility of a huge reduction in crowd numbers, concerned about community transmission, has made many events unviable even if restrictions were lifted and they could go ahead."

A lifeline offered by the Federal Government in the form of the Supporting Agricultural Shows program, with a one-off payment to alleviate cash flow pressure,

EXCELLENCE IN AGRICULTURE: State final competitors who won their way through from competing at country shows at the 2019 Royal Melbourne Show.

ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR: Side Show Alley always draws a crowd, and is fun for young and all.

has been met with appreciation and relief by agricultural committees nationwide.

"The Supporting Agricultural Shows program was drafted in consultation with overseeing bodies like Victorian Agricultural Shows who provided research and case analyses as to running costs for events based on crowd numbers," Mr Bowles said.

"It's a much needed cash injection to assist committees to recoup some of the annual costs and fees that they have and will incur - like rates, water and power.

"Our hope is that it will keep these events solvable and viable going into next year."

Acknowledging the role shows, both big and small, play in unifying not only the agricultural community, but connecting regional to metropolitan Australia, is heartening and a positive step towards ensuring these events can continue after the pandemic.

Following on from the Federal Government's recognition, Mr Bowles and Victorian Agricultural Shows are currently in the process of securing a commitment from the State Government to guarantee bodies like Victorian Agricultural Shows can continue in the same capacity.

"Effectively our income is

derived from affiliation fees from all the societies who put on events, and with the majority of our spring season cancelled, our revenue has effectively dried up.

"We're all still working hard supporting our community, fielding questions and providing practical advice and essentially becoming a helpline to committees in relation to compliance, and we need the State Government to help us to help others."

With Victorian Agricultural Shows heavily involved in championing youth in rural communities, encouraging youth leadership and rural ambassadors, as well as recognising and awarding country kids involved in agricultural pursuits, the organisation plays a huge role in supporting the future of the industry.

"We are still running com-

petitions, but they are online now, just to keep the momentum going," Mr Bowles said.

"Lots of shows are moving to an online presence with historical presentations and flashbacks talking about the origins of these events just to maintain public visibility and celebrate the communities involved.

"The national bull sales had online shows this year, judged on a two minute presentation video filmed by crews sent out to the farms.

"The Hereford National Sale was one online event that was really successful with a top of over \$50,000, and though numbers were down, clearance and average was up on the previous year.

"It will be interesting to see going into the future whether some of these selling techniques will continue or even take-off, as animals won't have to leave their properties, and owners won't have to cover the big expenses of taking the animals to show.

"That said, all these events bring the community together, and taking your show-worthy animals to show is hugely enjoyable.

"It's some people's sport and driving passion, and show time is a time to look forward to.

"It's going to be a bit flat this year.

"But then the hunger and desire for the shows to go on might freshen people up a bit, and we'll all be chomping at the bit to get back to it in 2021."



Riddellvue Angus leads the way with new US genetics

BRINGING a long-held dream to reality, Ian Bates, principal of Riddellvue Angus, is opening the gates for the stud's very first & inaugural Spring Bull Sale.

Located in the rolling valleys of Alexandra, Victoria, Mr Bates is offering 30 HBR/ABR 18 mth bulls at the stud's on-property sale, Wednesday 9th September.

Following a rewarding eight years as stud manager for Anvil Angus, and a family history steeped in breeding Angus cattle at the original Riddellvue family farm in Buxton, Mr Bates sees the next incarnation of the Riddellvue Angus stud culminate with this year's spring sale.

Featuring bulls sired by renowned USA sire, AAR Frontman, the first progeny in Australia to go under the hammer is a sale highlight.

Mr Bates discovered this leading USA sire when visiting the Arntzen Angus Ranch, Hilger, Montana back in 2017.

"He was in the pasture walking cows so it didn't take long to realise we needed this bull in Australia," said Mr Bates.

"AAR Frontman is one those bulls that you like everything about.

"Great feet, unbelievable temperament, and a great top line.

"I feel this sire will produce amazing daughters and am really looking forward to seeing them maturing".

Producing phenotypically correct Angus cattle with bred-in predictability and animals who stand up well in the harshest conditions is the mainstay of Riddellvue Angus' breeding goals and philosophies.

A foundation herd of Anvil Angus blood and influences of Strathewen, Coolana and Witherswood genetic pools, along with leading US and Australian sires ensures genetic depth and substance in the Riddellvue sale bull breeding programs.

Fulfilling those goals sees other USA based sires' prog-

eny feature highly in the sale catalogue.

Sires include JD Paydirt, HA Cowboy Up and Quaker Hill Mile High.

"As a seedstock producer it's also a real buzz when your own progeny is putting bulls into the top line up of your sale", added Mr Bates.

Five sons of the Riddellvue bred stud sire, Riddellvue Justice (VRB J297) will be on offer along with nine sons of the renowned Anvil M035 (HBU M035).

Both bulls dam are flush sisters by the Great VTM Y147.

"We look forward to welcoming visitors and prospective buyers to our stud, both at our Open for Inspection Day and on Sale Day", said Mr Bates.

Inspections welcome by prior appointment, or the Riddellvue Angus Open Day on Friday 28th August.

For Sale details and latest news, visit the Riddellvue Angus Facebook Page.