

# Brahman studs on a high after Thailand trip

BY ELLOUISE BAILEY

A GROUP of Brahman stud owners have returned from a trip to Thailand where they reconnected with breeders post-COVID.

Prior to the pandemic, the relationship was blossoming, with Australian breeders making the trip yearly to Thailand to network and attend events, and vice versa.

The 10-day tour in December was organised by Liam MacFarlane, who works for Austrex, one of the largest livestock export businesses in the world.

"The trip really managed to achieve that re-connection and communication with Thailand, they're already asking about when we're coming back," he said.

"If we can get them out to Beef week and get a few of the key breeders out here that have a strong following on social media, because a lot of what happens in Thailand is popularity driven, I think that connection will be strengthened."

The stud owners who joined the trip were Ashley and Kate Kirk, Rockley Brahmans, Moura, Allan

and Leonie Trail from Elmore Brahmans, Baralaba, Liam and Jessica MacFarlane from Flinders Brahmans, Harrisville, and Reade and Jill Radel from Kandoona red Brahmans, Taroom.

The group was hosted by breeder Salin Watcharathai from Loong Chow Farm and Feedlot in Supanburi.

A highlight for was attending the KU Beef Expo.

Reade Radel was invited to judge; with around 600 head over three days, mostly Brahmans and Beefmasters, but also a local composite.

"There was variation in

the quality and preparation of the local breed, but the Brahmans and Beefmasters were good. The quality of the heifers in particular was very strong. The lead of the heifers would match with our females," Mr Radel said.

"There was a much bigger emphasis of the heifers for showing, there was probably two or three times as many heifers in the show ring as there was bulls, which is a bit like the sates," he said.

Another difference in the cattle showing was the way wins were celebrated.

"Often when you pick your

champion or even sometimes your class winner, the crowd would be really animated, some of the handlers got quite animated as well, so there was a lot more crowd involvement than what we're used to in Australia," he said.

The group also toured properties, seeing operations with limited space and high land values.

Ashley Kirk said ag land was worth approximately \$20,000 an acre.

"I think the land is quite expensive and so they're making the most of what they've got," he said.

"We didn't see big paddocks full of cattle like in Australia, so it was fed a lot more intensively, in-between a feedlot and pasture kind of environment."

Mr Radel said a number of the properties were relying on mixed incomes streams, often with intensive feedlots or piggeries on property.

Mr Kirk said the trip was a great networking opportunity and he hoped to return the favour as host.

"Beef will be another chance for us to show them our cattle and better form that relationship," he said.