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All good stuff at Better Beef

There was a shipload of excellent information at last week's Better Beef forum at the The Vines Resort.

And believe me, none of it was Taurus excretus.

It was all good stuff from the speakers in the Barrett-Lennard room, chockers with beef industry people at the WA Lot Feeders Association's annual event.

Meat and Livestock Australia director **Polly Trefort**, of Hillside Meats, Narrogin, was on fire about beef promotion.

"Never stop telling everyone about the value of beef," he said, adding that WA beef was the best in Australia.

This had been proved by the MSA program.

But he felt it was time for some name changes rather than the old porterhouse and rump tags.

"Sitting down to a bit of rump has some funny connotations," he said amid laughter.

Other changes were needed in the beef industry, Polly said, for example, producing calves all year.

"The MLA needs direction from producers but farm blokes often say 'granddad did it this way' and so it continues.

"Yeah, but granddad also rode a horse and used kerosene lamps. We have to change."

A great example of promotion was evident at an MLA Meat for Profit Day last year.

"After some Middle East visitors had a lamb meal, lamb exports to the region jumped from 200 a week to 1000 lambs a day," he said.

He praised the **Sam Neill** beef ads on TV, saying they had been of great promotional assistance.

"I want Polly to replace Sam Neill!" said Harvey Beef CEO **Mike Rapattoni** after hearing Polly's passionate address on beef promotion.

ALL BUT THE SQUEAL

In his address, Craig Mostyn Group CEO **David Lock** showed overheads of workers on the pork kill production line at Linley Valley.

"They're on a day release from the local gaol - but they do have good knife skills," he joked as the boning section video progressed.

With pork, everything but the squeal is sold - heart valves go to the US.

"If anyone needs a new heart valve, we can do you a deal," he told the attendees, comprising lot feeders, vets,



At the lunch break on day one of the Better Beef forum at The Vines last week were beef industry luminaries Ned Borello, of the Borello Group-Midwest Platinum. and new Harvey Beef chief executive Michael Rapattoni. With them is forum co-ordinator Esther Price, of Esther Price Promotions.

livestock transporters, feed suppliers and retailers.

The group is planning a \$30 million sheep and cattle abattoir next to its Woorooloo pork processing plant.

The aim is to process 3000 sheep and up to 500 cattle daily at the plant, the first abattoir to be built in WA for 30 years.

WOOLIES BEEF NOSH-UP

Woolworths put on the lunch at the

forum after national business manager **Brett Thompson** said that of the \$5.8 million raised in the chain's Drought Day appeal, \$581,000 had come back to WA. More than 90 per cent of meat products sold in WA by Woolworths were purchased from WA farmers with between 1100-1200 cattle processed weekly.

WHY GO TO THE MINES?

Talking at morning smoko with Ned

Borello and *Countryman's* **Sheldon Mumby** (who has an impressive beef background), the subject of apprentice butchers came up.

Apparently butchers are desperately short of these young blokes and that's for sure.

Out the front of my local Coles is a billboard asking for apprentices, immediate start.

The going rate is said to be up to \$1500 a week, a pretty good wage for

someone not long out of school.

Being a red meat aficionado, Ned said that Koreans used the raw neck of beef, sliced it paper-thin, dipped it in hot water, then a sauce, and ate it. Reminds me of beef tartare.

CALL MITCHELL'S

John Mitchell, of Mitchell's Transport talked about dark cutters.

"A high-energy animal is a huge risk as a darkie and if I was a feedlotter I wouldn't draft cattle on the day of trucking," he said. "Also I'd take the lollies - high-energy food - away from the cattle the day before trucking." Also, if he was a lot feeder, he wouldn't own a truck. "I'd call Mitchell's Transport," he said amid laughter.

PGA WINNERS

It was great to catch up with Pastoralists and Graziers Association's new president **Rob Gillam** after he drew the PGA raffle winner last week.

The MLA needs direction from producers but farm blokes often say 'granddad did it this way' and so it continues.

First out of the barrel was ticket number 557, bought by **Gerald and Liz Heavey**, of Ballidu, so they're the happy new owners of the Toyota Landcruiser Prado, first prize in the popular raffle.

Other prizes went to **Robyn and Tony Richardson**, of Mt Florence station in the Pilbara, **Murray McQuie**, of Bulga Downs, via Sandstone, and **Neil Walker**, of Brookton.

HARD SLOG AT ESPERANCE

If you live in the Esperance area, bring your boots, hats and gloves on Sunday, April 27, and learn how to build your own veggie patch.

The local Small Land Owners Group (SLOG) is holding a demo for people who want to grow vegetables on their own block. It's from 2pm to 4pm at **Barry and Carmel Hall's** on their Barook Drive property (off Pink Lake Road). BYO drinks and nibbles.

Call **Rachel** on 9072 1853

Your stars



Aries: Some of us see problems at every turn in the road. Thankfully, most Ariens don't fall into this category. This week, you gently cruise through a stint that would have others gasping for breath. And this is what superheroes are made of.



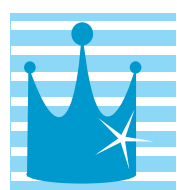
Taurus: This week sends a tremble through your sector of secrets, signalling hidden romance. But what starts as a private affair could soon go public. Not only do you benefit emotionally, but there's a mad flutter through your diary.



Gemini: These next few days present an array of possibilities - just the kind of week you like. There's the chance of increased cash flow, which shouldn't go wasted. Romance isn't off the cosmic list of possibilities. And there's only one way to cure the travel bug. Start packing.



Cancer: Just when you were about to let go of some long-held dreams, along comes a guardian angel to remind you why you had such high hopes in the first place. So what to do? Give up or go on? Trust the voice within.



Leo: Being different sometimes involves taking risks. And the planets now double-dare you. This week, romance may be formed. And if you feel inclined to mix business with pleasure, the merger should prove mutually pleasing.



Virgo: It can become very easy to fall into a rut. So here's a time when a strong need for intrigue takes priority over emotional safety. You're feeling frisky. If you can't resist the thrill of illicit intimacy, weigh the odds of discovery.



Libra: This is a time for guarded progress. While your love life's definitely on the up, there are loose ends that still need tidying. Areas for caution include relationships - where you can expect the effect of a partner's stress.



Scorpio: In order to be able to fully relax, it's essential to leave work out of sight and mind. Fortunately, you've been given permission to concentrate on rejuvenating body and soul. Even if it's just a few days away, see to your own wish list. Pamper, and enjoy.



Sagittarius: Not a bad spell for money. If earning's the name of the game, now's the time to give it your best shot. It's especially important that you're not dissuaded by the odd unpleasant incident. This week, make tenacity your strongest ally.



Capricorn: Don't be shy about overturning recent decisions if you're worried about the direction in which you're headed. Trust your instincts. If hoping for a loan approval, it's a great time. Ditto for most financial matters.



Aquarius: There could be a fair bit of conversation happening right now, but most likely the happy kind. For the best part, you're sharing hopes and dreams. Throw in some romance, and the week holds the promise of contentment.



Pisces: You've pretty much got your hands full with family affairs right now. Siblings, parents, children - they all make their presence felt. Be helpful, but skip the martyrdom. The best lesson you can teach right now is independence.