

Local buying support boost for Munda Reds

By **KANE CHATFIELD**

PROMINENT Droughtmaster breeder Munda Reds recently sold two bulls for \$30,000 to Dick Vincent, De Grey Park stud, Capel.

The package deal negotiated through Kim Goad, Landmark Gascoyne/Pilbara, involved two bulls that were calves at foot as part of Munda Red's purchase of 60 per cent (including prefix) of the Comanche Droughtmaster stud, Canoona, Queensland, in March last year.

Munda Reds is a stud newly established by the Thompson family, which in recent times has invested heavily in Queensland genetics for their 7000 accredited Droughtmaster breeders at the 207,287 hectare Mundabullangana (Munda) station, Port Hedland.

The family had previously sold 12 bulls to Queensland studs and hundreds of herd bulls to WA pastoralists from Munda station, but the De Grey Park purchase marks the first time they have sold genetics to a WA stud.

Munda Reds stud co-principal Mike Thompson said the significant bull purchases by De Grey Park demonstrated that stud and commercial producers didn't have to travel to Queensland to buy quality Bos Indicus bulls.

"I'd never dreamed that I would sell bulls to other studs, but it shows that we must be doing something right," he said.

"Many thanks go to Dick Vincent, previous Queensland buyers and the 24 pastoralists that have supported us since 2011 and believing in a WA product.

"As breeders, it's a way of helping each other ensure WA pastoralists realise that bulls as good as Queensland do exist in WA and without the risk of BJD."

Peter Vincent said the two young bulls he purchased for his father's herd were specifically selected.

"One bull displays excellent maternal EBVs and a phenotype suitable for the production of

top-class females and the other bull has earlier maturity, greater muscularity and higher weights at 200 and 400 days to sire quality herd bulls," Peter said.

He said he was impressed with the phenotype of sires selected for the Munda Reds breeding program which would also present great opportunities for WA seed stock breeders.

"The physical and financial resources the Thompson family has committed to sourcing superior, performance-recorded genetics will result in a significant number of seed stock sires surfacing each year," he said.

"The benefit for smaller WA Droughtmaster herds lies in these sires which could fetch 50 to 100 per cent more at high profile sales in the East."

Munda Reds was established from the purchase of the Comanche Droughtmaster stud involving 288 registered females, 76 calves and 17 pick of the drop poll bulls.

A substantial line of top young females were picked from the herd at Munda station that were classified D1 to D2 and took the stud's numbers to 1200 cows.

Munda Reds is run at the Thompson's 3240ha Glencoe property at Gingin, which is set to undertake an extensive AI program this year involving all stud cows.

Mike and Kim returned to Queensland in September last year and March this year to source the best bulls on the market for the breeding program.

They purchased 18 polled bulls last year for an average of \$19,000 including seven different studs' individual top prices and 35 sires earlier this year paying to a \$30,000 top price.

Munda Reds paid to a top of \$37,500 at the National Droughtmaster sale at Rockhampton for the best bull eligible to be brought home, Wajatrjn Industry.

Other bulls included \$34,000 for Yarrowonga Eye Opener, a lighter coloured, higher-content



□ Wajatrjn Industry (P), purchased by Munda Reds for \$37,500 at the 2015 National Droughtmaster sale in Rockhampton, Queensland, will be one of 40 backup sires for an AI program involving 1200 Munda Reds cows.

Santa Getrudis bull at the Yarrowonga stud's sale at Wallumbilla, purchased for its similar traits to the flat-back Droughtmasters.

Sires Garthowen Velocity 2 (\$30,000) and Hamadra Expert (\$23,000) purchased in partnership with the Glenavon stud, Yaamba, Queensland, remained in Queensland due to state health regulations but semen will be used in Munda's AI program.

The homozygous poll Velocity will take the lead role in the AI program after returning an 87pc active semen morphology result when collected.

Mike said all the bulls purchased were based on a type.

"Poll status, strong masculine heads, tidy underline, looseness in their coats, big eye muscle and high fertility, muscle and bone," he said.

"We stayed away from freakish type bulls and stuck to breeders that produce consistent traits in their herds; the style we are striving for."

Twenty two of these bulls will join the 18 bulls purchased last year to back up the AI program at Glencoe with the balance heading to Munda as herd bulls.

Mike said all 17 Comanche bulls involved in the stud

purchase were sent to Munda in September last year.

"We picked the best 17 poll bulls of the 200 sale draft; Comanche averages \$12,000 to \$14,000 at their sale, that's about \$200,000 worth of sires sent to Munda last year," Mike said.

"These were followed by another 26 bulls that failed the draft for the final 18 very best bulls for Glencoe.

"It's exciting to see what progeny we will get."

In a 10-year bid to have a polled herd with no dehorning, the operation is ramping up its focus on polled genetics and plans to DNA all stud females and sires at Glencoe and 300 bulls and 1000 replacement heifers at Munda station for the poll gene marker to document homozygous genetics.

Mike said Munda Reds and Munda station herds will be working hard to breed the types that can advance its clients pastoral herds in the North at affordable cost.

"Buying the stud, we can breed animals that are reliably polled (homozygous) and free of diseases such as BJD," he said.

"We want to produce a product that's value for money, suits all producers and their budgets."