

An Australian first

TLG achieved what is believed to be an Australian first recently with the birth of a thoroughbred foal from a frozen embryo transfer. Although the use of frozen embryos in cattle is very common, it is new technology in the equine world.

"TLG has been enjoying success with frozen stallion semen for some time even though up until a few years ago reputable researchers were claiming it was not possible," says managing director Shane Ashworth. "There are still equine practitioners who don't believe it is practical to freeze equine embryos but we have a foal running around at the Camperdown centre which wouldn't agree with them."

"Handling mares and stallions for semen and embryo work is very different from cows and bulls but with good techniques and good equipment we can be successful."

"TLG's expertise is in collecting semen and embryos not in inseminating mares so we work closely with veterinarian Steve Williams from the Camperdown Veterinary Centre who runs very successful programs for inseminating mares."



Mare and her lively foal born from a frozen embryo transplant with Shane Ashworth and Steve Williams

"We thought we should do some embryo transfer work to validate our procedures. We did that last year with fresh embryos and froze two and transferred one. The first frozen embryo we transferred has resulted in a pregnancy and we believe this may be the first time in Australia."

A win/win situation and Shane is lost for words

When TLG office manager Kathryn Cecil entered the company in the Corangamite Shire Powercor Business Awards, Agribusiness section, she didn't expect TLG to win but thought it would be competitive."

Managing director Shane Ashworth, his wife Erin and other TLG staff who attended the presentation night in November were delighted when TLG was announced as the Agribusiness Award winner. When later in the evening TLG was also declared the Business Achiever of the Year as overall winner for all categories, Shane was lost for words. Those who know him well will acknowledge this is an uncommon occurrence.

The awards took into account the growth of TLG in the 15 years since Shane and Erin opened an on-farm semen and embryo collection service for local dairyfarmers in Terang in 1988. Two years later they established the Camperdown bull centre and the business grew rapidly. Four years ago TLG was one of the first companies in Australia to offer invitro fertilisation and

last year saw the introduction of two quality assured, AQIS approved mobile laboratories which travel regularly to many parts of the country. TLG has also been a national leader working at the cutting edge in sheep, dog and horse semen collection and ET. In recent times a strong focus on exports has seen this side of the business grow rapidly to represent about 30 percent of the total business.

When Shane had time to draw breath and recover the power of speech he said the awards recognised the commitment and high quality work of TLG staff at Camperdown and Glenormiston.

"A combination of a proactive and progressive approach to our work and the absolute commitment of our staff to

achieving quality outcomes has been the driving force behind our growth," he said.

"Technology is important, quality assurance is important and getting our product to the market place on time is also important. All three require a willingness to go the extra mile and I am proud to say our staff at TLG have that in abundance."



Enjoying the Corangamite Business Awards are part of the winning TLG team, Rebecca Dickson (left), Matthew Barber, Tony Urek, Shane Ashworth and at the front, Kathryn Cecil, Victoria Butler and Erin Ashworth.

HOLADINO leads the way in exports

The dispatch team at TLG, Rebecca Dickson and Victoria Butler, have been extremely busy for most of this year. With distribution for major semen producers such as ABS Australia, BOS Trading and Livestock Improvement Corporation plus many individual clients, TLG is now the biggest single distributor of genetic material in Australia.

Export market activity has increased rapidly during the same period with the biggest single contributor being 62,000 straws from the Semex Australia Holstein bull Ladino Park Talent (HOLADINO) dispatched to destinations all round the globe. This probably makes HOLADINO the most valuable export bull Australia has produced.

Standing at TLG's Camperdown centre and progeny tested simultaneously in Australia and Canada, HOLADINO is the top bull for type and mammary system in Australia and ranks in the top 40 for APR. He is also equal number two for conformation in Canada and in the top 30 for LPI.

TLG protocol manager Deb Emery says TLG has recently broken new ground with HOLADINO semen exports to Switzerland and other Semex bulls to Thailand plus big shipments to USA and Canada, South Africa, Germany, UK and Italy.

"We believe the level of frozen semen shipments from TLG to export markets during the previous eight months is the

highest ever achieved from Australia," Deb says.

"We also recently achieved our first ever shipment of frozen beef semen and embryos directly from Melbourne to Argentina and are currently collecting sheep embryos for export to Argentina. It's an exciting and busy time at TLG."

Semex Australia sire HOLADINO



Australian Angus cattle in Argentina

When the Millah Murrah Angus sire V59 entered the TLG Camperdown centre for semen collection earlier this year it was the first step in a long term plan by stud principal Ross Thompson to develop a market for Australian Angus cattle in South America.

After an intense process by TLG to gain accreditation for semen and embryo exports to Argentina, 1000 straws of

Millah Murrah V59



V59 semen have already been used in two Argentinean herds and embryos flushed from Millah Murrah cows will soon be implanted in the Argentinean herds.

Ross Thompson says the cattle resulting from the inseminations and embryo transplants will be run alongside the cattle bred in the two Argentinean herds and recorded under the Argentine Group Breedplan.

"We will have cattle in Argentina with Australian Group Breedplan heritage being measured in Argentine Group Breedplan which will begin the process of creating genetic linkages between the two Angus populations," he says.

"It's part of a long term plan which could take ten years to produce reliable results. But if, as anticipated, the Australian cattle outperform those in Argentina it will provide a great opportunity for Australian Angus breeders to supply Argentina with feedstock material."

"In Argentina they are meticulous about fertility (scrotal size), doing ability and easy calving (low birth weight).

However they have potential for significant improvements in growth and carcass performance especially. We chose V59 because he is strong in the traits they already concentrate on and has the potential for improvements in carcass quality and growth rate."

Ross Thompson says TLG protocol manager Deb Emery did an outstanding job in working through the protocols for Argentina.

"Deb did a great job, meeting the deadlines under some very difficult circumstances," he says. "We are very pleased with the outcome and owe a lot of gratitude to Deb and TLG for solving problems and getting the job done on time."

"Our aim is to add value to the products of our clients. To achieve that we must not only produce a good product for them but also enable them to develop new opportunities through our contacts in export markets, our ability to meet export protocols and our efficiency in delivery to those markets."

Shane Ashworth

Staff can take the credit

Managing director Shane Ashworth gives a lot of credit to TLG staff for their effective work in meeting new export market protocols and helping clients break into those markets.

"I believe our investment in people and infrastructure at TLG is our main strength," Shane says.

"An example of this can be seen with Deb Emery's experience in handling export shipments. Deb has done outstanding work liaising with AQIS, international importers and our clients investigating and meeting protocols and establishing contacts to ensure our product reaches its destination on time and without hitches. This side of the business has grown so much we are about to appoint someone to assist Deb in the work."

"Following a visit by two Chilean government veterinarians, we are now one of only two centres in Australia accredited for export of both sheep and cattle genetics to Chile. We are currently collecting ewes for the export of embryos to Argentina."

"With the continuing development of our sheep business we have advertised for a new member of staff to take a hands-on role working with sheep at Glenormiston."

"I believe our investment in people and infrastructure at TLG is our main strength."

Quality semen - quality result

A strong focus on quality at all levels has paid handsome dividends for TLG with frozen semen collected and processed at the Camperdown centre acknowledged as among the best in the world

TLG semen production manager Tony Ureck says the ABS Australia bull Kenron Luckystrike which had semen collected at Camperdown is an outstanding example.

"According to Australian Dairy Herd Improvement Scheme (ADHIS) conception rate data, LUCKYSTRIKE had the highest semen fertility of all domestic and international bulls used in Australia last year," he says. "I expect absGALE, to be the next TLG collected bull to make the top ten list of the most fertile semen available in Australia. The Semex Australia bull HOLADINO, also collected at TLG, is currently above average for semen fertility in Canada."

Other domestically based proven Holstein bulls collected at TLG that rate above average for semen fertility are Tarinka Park Fatal Denton, Glenmar Lindy Peter and Riverview Park Emorys Millionaire.

TLG collected beef semen is also highly regarded. David Plant of Southern Cross Genetics says he has come to rely on the high quality, high fertility semen processed by TLG to generate consistently good conception rates.

Southern Cross Genetics is a Victorian based cattle artificial breeding service



David Plant says he can rely on the quality of TLG processed semen

which specialises in the design and conducting of synchronised AI programs for beef cattle

TLG is a major service provider to Southern Cross Genetics through the provision of semen storage facilities, semen dispatch services and semen analysis. The two companies recently jointly conducted the very successful 2003 NSW Agriculture (Trangie) - Angus Society of Australia Progeny Testing Program.

"The success of any artificial breeding program is dependent on controlling a number of variables and semen quality is one of them," David Plant says.

"Knowing I can rely on the quality of frozen semen collected by TLG means there is one less factor I have to be concerned about when setting up an AI program for a client."

These are exciting times for TLG. We are continuing to develop our Glenormiston property, we have achieved



a major technology success with what we believe is the first ever foal resulting from a frozen embryo transfer in Australia, we are now the biggest distributor of animal genetics in Australia and we have achieved rapid growth in semen and embryo exports.

On top of all that we were recently named the Corangamite Shire's leading agribusiness and went on to be declared the shire's overall business achiever. (See Page 1)

The most significant development this year has been the rapid growth in our export business for semen and embryos. If you threw a dart at the map of the world you would be pretty sure to hit one of our destinations.

Dispatch has also been extremely busy. With distribution for major semen suppliers plus many individual clients, we are now the biggest single distributor of genetic material in Australia.

It is really pleasing to see the focus on quality at TLG at all levels is starting to pay dividends. With the growth of business we now have a need to expand our staff.

We look forward to catching up with our many clients at Dairy Week in January. Call at our stand and enjoy some refreshments with us and be sure to enter our Lucky Dip – the winner will be entitled to a free flush for one of their cows.

Shane Ashworth
Managing Director

Getting to know the bulls - they are all individuals

At any one time there are 50 plus bulls standing for semen collection at TLG's Camperdown centre and they are all individuals. They require different feed rations and have different likes and dislikes and respond differently to handling and semen collection. It's the job of livestock manager Matthew Barber to figure out what each requires and how to get the best quality semen from them.

Matthew has day to day responsibility for running the farm at Camperdown and for feeding, health testing, halter training the bulls and semen collection.

"The bulls on centre are our bread and butter so I guess it's a pretty important job that has to be done properly," Matthew says. "It's always interesting to figure out how each bull will respond."

"Every day throws up new challenges. They are all individuals and respond differently to handling and collection procedures. My job is to suss them out - work out what they like and don't

like so they are comfortable with the collection procedure."

"We weigh them every week and watch the weight charts closely to determine their daily ration. It's a fine line between good growth rates and obtaining the best semen quality. If the bulls are too fat their semen quality will drop off so we are always aiming to maintain good growth without putting on fat."

"When it comes to semen collection, some bulls need a lot of work before they are ready for collection while others prefer very little handling. A bull that doesn't like to be handled can very quickly get cranky if we spend too much time with him and that will also have an effect on semen quality."

"Even though every day is a challenge - I always feel as though I have achieved something worthwhile at the end of the day."



Matthew Barber

"It is also a good feeling to know I am contributing to a real team effort which is aiming to achieve the best possible results. The staff at TLG are a great bunch with a good boss and a terrific team spirit."

ET customers service ALERT!

Web enabled 24/7 access to embryo inventory

TLG clients can obtain up to date information on embryos held in storage on their behalf at any time simply by logging into the TLG website. This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Dispatch manager Rebecca Dickson says all ET clients need to do to use the service is to contact her with their details and choose a password which will enable them to access their information.

Web enabled access is available to all TLG clients who can obtain information of semen and embryo inventories and the progress of their bulls currently on centre. The information is updated daily.

"The data for individual clients is totally secure and can only be accessed to individual clients through the use of the password," Rebecca says.

"Any client not yet using the service can arrange to do so by contacting me at TLG."

ET service to northern NSW

The TLG mobile labs regularly travel to northern NSW for ET work.

TLG ET technician Gary Sivesind says the next visit is scheduled for January 2004.

"We are very pleased with the way the business is developing in the northern NSW region," Gary says.

"The mobile labs are ideal for embryo collection, freezing and transfer in the field. They enable us to get a lot of work done while maintaining very high standards.

"We travel extensively throughout Victoria and southern NSW and make regular visits to South Australia and Tasmania."

"We are very keen to hear from northern NSW dairy or beef breeders interested in ET."

"TLG will attend the Mudgee Field Days in July 2004 and we are looking forward to meeting old and new clients."

Late News!!!!

See you at Dairy Week

We are looking forward to catching up with old clients and new at International Dairy Week.

Look for our mobile lab and we will be close by.

Stop, have a chat, enjoy some refreshments and be sure to enter the Lucky Dip for a free flush.

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