

Wirruna's final chapter offers a fresh start for Hereford breeders



📷 Diney and Ian Locke will disperse the Wirruna stud herd in October, after more than 70 years of breeding. Picture supplied

Embracing innovation has led to one of the most well-respected and sought-after beef studs in the country, and now other breeders have the chance to secure breed-leading genetics with the herd's dispersal in October.

For more than seven decades, [Wirruna Poll Herefords](#) has been committed to breeding commercially-relevant cattle.

Aubrey and Ruby Locke established the stud in 1948 with females selected by AJ Tanner from Merawah, Milton Park and at

the Midgeon dispersal.

The first Wirruna prefix calves were born and registered in 1949.

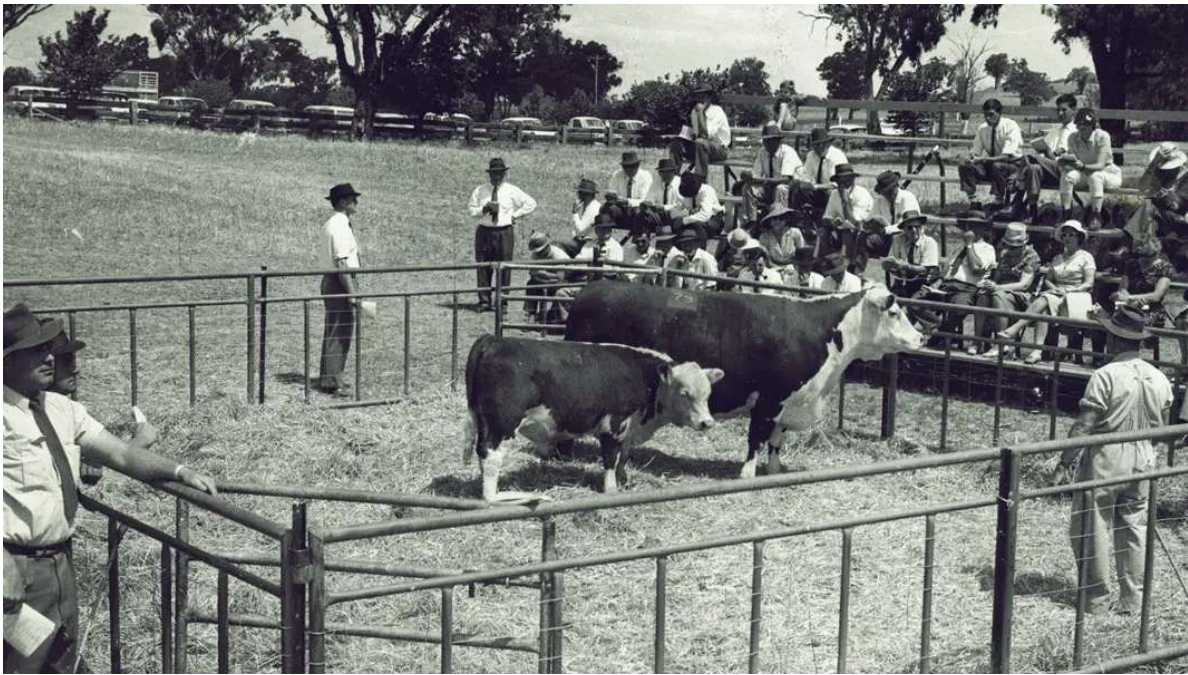
For many years, the stud was known for its show-ring success, and many of the first sires were sourced after royal show wins.



📷 Wirruna stud founders Ruby and Aubrey Locke. Picture supplied

Merawah Tobruk was the first sire of significance, purchased after winning classes at the Sydney Royal Easter Show in 1951. He was by Merawah Battlefield (sired by US sire Alf Battle V 16th), a Brisbane Show champion in 1950.

The use of US genetics continued in the late 1950s with sons and daughters of Trumode Domino 16th from the Milton Park herd, then Milton Archer 2nd was purchased in 1959 and made a significant contribution to the stud, including with the sale of his son Wirruna Nestor, who went to Allendale Poll Herefords.



📷 Wirruna on-property sale at Borambola Park in 1961, run in conjunction with Kildrummie. Picture supplied

Additional females were added in the early 1960s from Kildrummie and Wantabadgery studs.

"This period saw Wirruna experience considerable success in the show ring with Wirruna Attila, by Kildrummie Sinbad, being crowned the supreme all breeds champion at the 1967 Sydney Royal," stud principal Ian Locke said.



📷 Wirruna Atilla the Sydney Royal Easter Show supreme allbreeds champion in 1967. Picture supplied

The introduction of Vern Imperious blood through his daughter, Ardno Daisy 29th, also proved significant.

She produced two successful bulls, Wirruna Imperious, who eventually sold to Allendale, and Wirruna Diamond, by Kildrummie Hussar, whose steer progeny dominated hoof and hook competitions at the Sydney Royal.

Wirruna Constable was the 1969 all breeds champion steer and reserve champion on the hook, Wirruna Hal was champion steer on the hoof and hook, all breeds, in 1972, and Wirruna Hargraves was champion steer, all breeds, in 1973.



📷 Wirruna Hal, the all breeds champion steer at Sydney Royal in 1972. Picture supplied

More recently, influential cow families have been sourced with the purchase of 48 cows out of the South Bukalong dispersal in 2006, 12 cows out of the Pine Hill dispersal in 2010, 12 cows out of the Mount Difficult dispersal in 2015 and 10 cows out of the Chester dispersal in 2017.

The stud has undergone huge changes in its management, with the stud being recognised for its show ribbons in the early years.

But when Richard Locke succeeded his father as principal of the stud in the early 1970s, he was frustrated by the stud industry's concentration on showing cattle rather than being aligned to the needs of commercial cattlemen, Mr Locke said.



📷 Richard Locke. Picture supplied

"The stud therefore made a fundamental change in direction in 1972 to genuine performance testing raised on grass," he said.

"In turning his back on the show ring and its culture, the sacrifice made was the associated publicity and the need to re-educate a client base away from the over-fed, show-orientated bulls to buying grass-fed bulls selected on performance and high fertility under commercial stress conditions.

"Initially, this was a long and lonely road for Richard to stand by the courage of his convictions, however, over time the growth in bull client loyalty and the general move of the industry towards the philosophy was recognition that the Wirruna herd was on the right track."

Richard Locke was awarded the Beef Improvement Association (BIA) fellowship award in 2001 for his pioneering involvement in the seedstock industry.

Ian Locke and his wife Diney took on the stud in 1994, and in 1995, the stud received the BIA national seedstock producer of the year award. In 2002 it received the NSW seedstock producer of the year award.



📷 Richard and Didee Locke and Ian and Diana Locke, when the family won BIA seedstock producer of the year in 1995. Picture supplied

The awards recognised Wirruna's commitment to the needs of the commercial industry, client focus, breeding functionally efficient cattle using technologies such as Breedplan to achieve genetic progress.

The Lockes expanded the stud from 150 breeders to 600, and from 30 bulls to more than 200 bulls offered each year.

By embracing performance recording and Breedplan, genomics, carcase scanning, fertility and structural assessments, using MateSel, being involved in industry research and the use of long-term bull supply contracts, the herd has consistently remained at

the forefront of technologies that are targeted to improve the profitability of commercial beef production for clients.



📷 Wirruna has more than 19,000 performance recorded animals and in the past decade, most animals have been DNA tested to add genomic information. Picture supplied

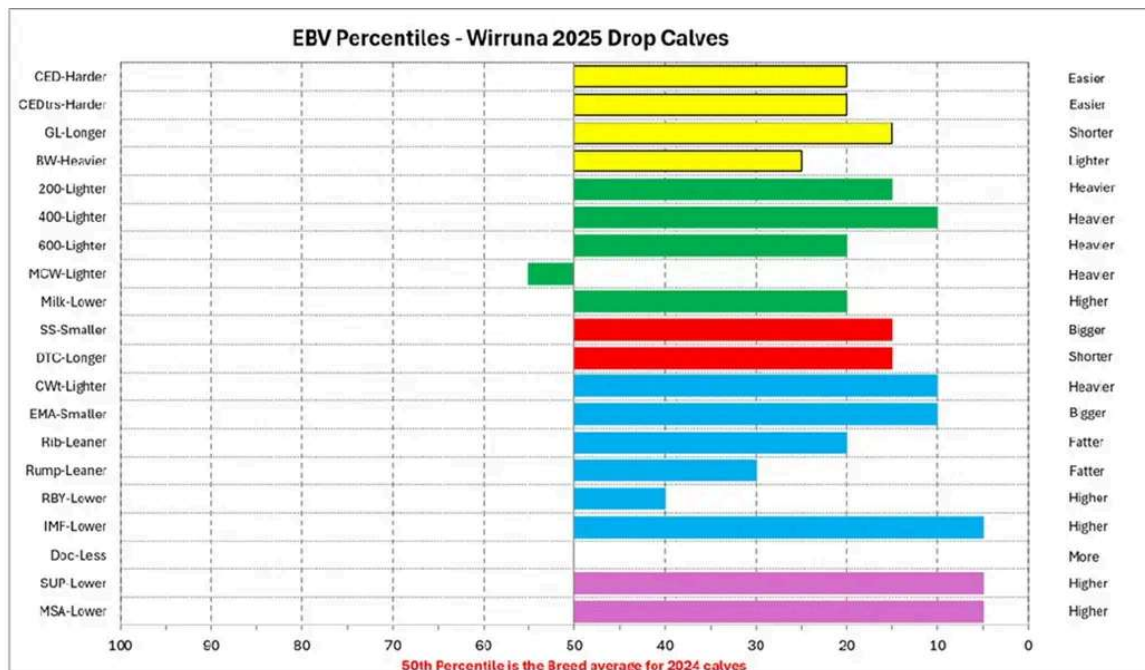
The Wirruna herd is renowned for its clear breeding objectives, disciplined breeding principles, large management groups, and unwavering attention to detail to performance recording in all economically-relevant traits.

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"Every animal that currently exists in the Wirruna herd is fully performance recorded with genomics, including full parent verification and with known poll/horn DNA status," Mr Locke said.

"This has also meant that with a mass of phenotypic records, accompanied by genomics, Wirruna animals make up a large portion of the Hereford reference population, especially for many hard-to-measure traits, like mature cow weight, days to calving and body condition traits."

That dedication to making genetic progress has led to Wirruna being a breed leader in many traits.



📷 Wirruna is a breed leader in many traits. Picture supplied

For the 600 2025-born calves, the herd averages in the top 25pc for calving ease, top 15pc for early growth, top 15pc for fertility, top 10pc for eye muscle area, and top 10pc for marbling.

Wirruna currently ranks as the highest Hereford herd in Australia for marbling genetics.

The average SUP and MSA index values of the 2025-drop ranks in the top 5pc of the breed.

The genetics offered in the stud dispersal represent a culmination of more than seven decades of disciplined breeding decisions.

"While technologies have evolved, the fundamental objective has remained unchanged – fertile, functional cattle that calve easily, thrive under commercial conditions and produce profitable, high-quality beef," Mr Locke said.



📷 Wirruna has the highest marbling herd in the country. Picture supplied

The two-day dispersal is on October 14 and 15, with the auction beginning at 9am each day.

The 695 lots include 260 aged cows with calves at foot, 186 'V' heifers with calves at foot, 37 recipient cows with embryo calves at foot, 199 'W' unjoined yearling heifers, and 13 stud sires which have been used at Wirruna.

"It's an opportunity for Poll Hereford breeders to access proven female lines that have been a foundation to Wirruna's high

genetic merit herd.

"These genetics are not normally available, except at a herd dispersal.

"There are also new young genetics available, from outcross genetics, not common in the Australian Hereford population."

Among those genetics are calves by new US sire Birdwell New Standard which stood out during the stud's carcass scanning of 500 'W' yearling calves.

"His progeny shone through, and we think they're living up to his outstanding carcass EBVs of +13.2 for EMA and +3.3 for IMF," Mr Locke said.

"In the 'W' Bulls, four of the top five marbling scans and three of the top five ribeye scans were sired by Birdwell New Standard."



📷 The stud dispersal is an opportunity for seedstock and commercial producers to secure sought-after genetics. Picture supplied

Other sirelines to look out for in the sale include New Zealand sires Orari Gorge Tarzan, Colraine Washington, Ardo Ajax 1015 Ardo Trust 2003 and Limehills Starter 160062; and US sires Birdwell New Standard, SHF Houston, NJW 202C 173D Steadfast 156J and Churchill Red Thunder 133J ET.

Australian sires that are well-represented in the dispersal are Wirruna Steakout S457, Wirruna Titus T167, Tarcombe Sandman S088, Wirruna Quambone Q135, Tobruk Southern Cross and Tobruk TopGun T17.

The sale is on October 14 and 15, with bidding available in person or online via AuctionsPlus.

[This is branded content for Wirruna Poll Herefords.](#)



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