

# Graham Ayres Livestock takes home MSA Award

**An early adopter, Western Australian beef producer Graham Ayres has been MSA registered since its inception in 1998, driven by a commitment to quality and to give his business a competitive edge.**

Based at Bornholm, Western Australia, Graham, alongside daughter, Ingrid, run 250 head of Angus-Friesian F1 cross breeders across the 540-hectare property, joined to Charolais bulls.

The Ayres have won the award for Western Australia's Most Outstanding Non-Grainfed Band 1 Producer in the 2023 MSA Excellence in Eating Quality Awards.

The cattle the Ayres consigned for processing over the two-year period of 2021-23 achieved an average MSA Index of 66.33 and MSA compliance of 99%.

Being a MSA registered producer supports Graham's aim of delivering a quality and consistent product to his customers, and to attract premium prices for his cattle.

"Our milk calves are ideally sold between 10.5-11 months, with a minimum carcass weight of 220kg and an ideal target of 250kg," Graham said.

"We maintain a clover rye mix in the pasture, provide supplementary pasture hay, regularly topdress with fertiliser and lime, and invest in reseeding during autumn to ensure a constant supply of high-quality feed.

"We supply our cattle to Woolworths which has remained consistent over the last six to seven years, continually striving to get them the best-we-can-do product.

"MSA has helped us bring our best-quality product to market, setting us apart. And the financial rewards have been good.

"Our motto is clear: only the best of the best makes the cut. We critically evaluate each animal before they get on a truck.

"This focus on quality over time has helped us foster a good reputation and drive strong business relationships with customers over the years, knowing that they're getting not just a quality, but a consistent product."

Graham said the results are really starting to speak for themselves.

"Particularly over recent years, MSA has been a factor that encouraged us to further evolve our cattle management approach," Graham said.

"It helped us look closer and better assess cattle behaviour, emphasising the utmost importance of understanding and respecting our animals.

"This shift in perceptions has impacted our entire herd management strategy.

"So, whether we're in the yards or the paddock, our focus is on creating and maintaining a quiet environment for our livestock through our handling techniques, which has paid dividends.

"We introduced quiet Charolais bulls who are known for their muscling and docility, sourcing them from the same breeder for over two decades now because we know we're getting a consistent animal, with a good temperament.

"When purchasing bulls, we do look at Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs), mainly birth weight, as we like to target smaller framed bulls".

"And our cattle now know their routine well, which has helped eliminate the need for pre-transport preparation for example."

Graham said he has learned valuable lessons over the years.

"We just want to run the best herd and deliver the best product we can," Graham said.

"MSA has been a key factor in helping us bring our best to market, where we're now consistently delivering a quality product that's grading MSA, meeting specifications for customers, and getting a premium price.

"While we might not have a silver bullet to achieving good MSA outcomes, the results are starting to speak for themselves.



Graham Ayres with his daughter, Ingrid, and granddaughter, Caitlyn.