

# SCOTT AND KATIE LLOYD

## OWNERS, WIEAMBILLA FEEDLOT

Striving to do their very best at every opportunity inspires SCOTT and KATIE LLOYD to keep their family-owned, mid-sized feedlot in southern Queensland moving ever forward.

Simply meeting minimum standards will never be enough to satisfy the dynamic couple behind Wieambilla Feedlot near Chinchilla, Queensland. Rather, the success of this second-generation business is based on its owner-operators exceeding expectations and challenging themselves to continually evolve.

Scott and Katie Lloyd took over Wieambilla from Scott's parents, feedlot founders John and Anne, in 2009. By that time it was already into its third decade of operation.

"It was originally set up in the late 1970s as a drought-feeding tool," Scott says. "My parents were primarily feeding a few bulls, then they started bringing in some steers and things went from there."

Scott was raised on 3500 hectares roughly 30 kilometres south-west of Chinchilla in the Surat Basin.

After completing his tertiary education and working away from the farm for "quite a few years", he returned home in 1997.

Katie, too, had a solid understanding of beef, having grown up slightly further west, at Roma.

"I come from a commercial bull breeding operation so it was a little bit different," she says.

"However, it's been an interesting learning process, an interesting transition: two different spokes in beef production."

Succession planning enabled Scott and Katie to take over Wieambilla Feedlot eight years ago.

"We've certainly grown – from 5000 head up to about 8500," Katie says. "We've increased our capacity and made huge progress along the way."

Wieambilla supplies both the domestic and export markets through a major supermarket chain and several processors.

"Once upon a time we had about a 70:30 per cent ratio between Woolworths and export but now that sits at about 60:40," Katie says. "The balance of our 100-day cattle go off to the abattoirs at Kilcoy and Oakey (between Chinchilla and Brisbane) and we also send a small proportion to Teys and JBS."

"We generally like the softer British breeds for Woolies," Scott says.



“A bit of cross in bullocks for the 100-day jobs is fine, too.”

They choose cattle based on weight rather than age.

“Woolworths’ cattle average, say, 300–370 kilograms, and then the bullocks step up to 400–520 kilograms,” he says. “There’s scope for variability there, allowing for frame scores and breed type.”

The couple works with a team of dedicated livestock buyers throughout the eastern states.

“We have three based in Queensland, one in northern NSW and another covering southern NSW and northern Victoria,” Katie says.

Scott says having plentiful rich farmland at their disposal is a bonus. “We have about 1100 hectares of summer and winter cropping and the balance is grazing country,” he says.

“We give our cattle a vaccination when they first arrive, then they have a couple of weeks in the paddocks for that to take effect and for them to acclimatise before they go into the feedlot.”

“The core of our business is keeping the consistency of the feeder cattle coming through. That enables us to maintain our numbers,” Katie adds.

The Lloyds’ attention to detail and desire to achieve the strongest possible results have been embedded since day one.

“Scott’s parents joined the National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme (NFAS) as soon as it was set up, absolutely,” Katie says.

“NFAS is incredibly important, and I’d say it’s going to keep growing in importance. This scheme really does set the standard for our industry.

“As producers we need to be held accountable, and this certainly gives us the framework to ensure we’re meeting those targets and objectives, which is a good assurance for our customers as well.”

Scott says, “I’d like to think we continually review what we do and make improvements where we can. If a customer asks for X, we try to meet those requirements.”

So satisfied was Woolworths by the family’s methods that in 2013 Lloyd Pastoral Company was honoured as the supermarket’s national Agricultural Supplier of the Year.

“The feedlot sector, obviously, is a really intensive industry, and because of that we need an accreditation scheme that upholds and promotes our activities,” Katie says.

“Consumers are becoming more and more interested in how their food gets to the table. We have to be mindful of that. It’s important for us to put up a consistent and memorable product.

“NFAS, in its latest updates, really shows that as an industry we’re constantly working to achieve greater outcomes.



*Wieambilla Feedlot employee inspects the animals*



“It’s made us go back through our current processes and review them. That’s a good thing, because it’s too easy to become complacent with what we do.

“We’ve certainly strengthened some of our existing protocols and made a few small changes to our system.”

The key focus for lotfeeders must be the welfare of cattle under their stewardship, the Lloyds say.

“Animal welfare is paramount these days,” Scott says. “You just can’t let your guard down one bit, particularly with this being an intensive industry.

“NFAS, I think, is providing a good basis for that through its auditing process to make sure that the pens are clean, the pens aren’t overstocked, the cattle are given adequate water and are fed properly, and if there’s a heat outbreak there’s a process in place to deal with that or with inclement weather.

“The worst thing we could see in a media release would be any sort of bad news about a feedlot. NFAS is at the forefront in combatting that.”

“In our operation, Scott and I personally don’t want to be just meeting the NFAS standards; we want to be exceeding expectations – doing it better than what’s expected,” Katie says.

“We’d like to think that’s how the industry’s going. We’re pretty passionate about what we do.

“As an example, we are *huge* advocates for shade in our hot environment. At the moment it’s not a requirement but all of our pens are shaded anyway. Heat load management is of major importance to us. That’s just one example of something we think should be at the forefront going forwards.”

## **MORE INFORMATION**

To learn more about the National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme, phone AUS-MEAT Limited on 07 3361 9200 or visit <https://www.ausmeat.com.au/services/list/livestock/nfas/>