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## Conscious decision yields better beef

WHEN it comes to a favourite cut of beef, Carroona graziers Derek and Kirrily Blomfield, have a few.

But it’s not necessarily the premium cuts that get their tastebuds going.

Instead the pair, who launched their branded beef business The Conscious Farmer earlier this year, said it was the cuts destined for hours of slow cooking that were their top pick.

“It is really important to treat each cut appropriately for its purpose,” Mr Blomfield said. “Let the beef come to room temperature before cooking and then let it rest once its been cooked.”

He said a family favourite was to use chuck or osso bucco, and slowly cook for a long time.

“This allows the meat to break down and release all the wonderful health benefits of beef.”

Mr Blomfield said during slow cooking, collagen (gelatine) was released, which had a wealth of digestive and anti-inflammatory properties.

“Slow cooking a quality grass-fed meat is so good for you.”

He said the ratio of essential fatty acids, Omega 6 and Omega 3, were much better balanced in a grass-fed product.

“In a grass-fed piece of beef, the ratio of omega 6 to omega 3 is around two to one, a healthy balance.

“In grain-fed beef this can be as high as 14 to one. It becomes completely out of balance.”

During the past decade, the 980-hectare family-run farm “Colorado”, which is home to The Conscious Farmer brand, has been transformed from a traditional Liverpool Plains mixed grain and livestock operation to one focused on sustainable and regenerative agriculture.

“Thirteen years ago, I did a holistic management course with my father Sandy, and then seven years ago Kirrily and I revisited that,” Mr Blomfield said.

“We made the decision to move out of grain and into regenerative grazing.

“We wanted to add value to the business while providing beautiful, grass-fed beef direct to customers.”

They began work on improving their pastures, which includes a mix of sub-tropical and temperate pastures and native grasses.

They were recognised for their work with a win in the 2013 Namoi CMA Landcare Awards for Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices and were highly commended in the same category in the Landcare Australia awards.

They also took out the award for Most Sustainable Producer at this year’s Moree on a Plate food festival.

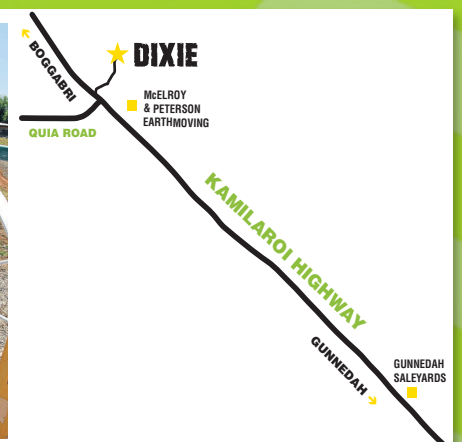
Diversity within pastures is important according to the Blomfields, who plan to plant a mix of different species into

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dormant pastures to keep a range of feed growing throughout the year.

"The key to great tasting meat is low stress stock handling and an even plane of nutrition. We want cattle to always be going forward, even in winter," Mr Blomfield said.

They said the response from customers, who stretch from Brisbane to Canberra, had been extremely positive.

"The taste is no big surprise to us and we've been eating it for years, but we are constantly surprised by the reaction from customers – they are amazed by it and love the beef," Mr Blomfield said. "Even nearby farmers have said they prefer our grass-fed beef to their own."

They said the interaction with customers had been a rewarding experience.

"We've realised that there is a level of trust consumers have about their food," Mr Blomfield said. "They have the right to consciously choose food produced to a high standard."

In the future, the Blomfields hope to bring other animals into the mix, including chooks (and their eggs) and pigs.

"We want diversity in the paddocks and that includes the animals in it," Mr Blomfield said.

They would also like to grow the business to a point where they can mentor young people in regenerative agricultural practices.



DEREK and Kirrily Blomfield, pictured with chef Alistair McLeod, win the award for Most Sustainable Producer at this year's Moree on a Plate food festival.



THE Conscious Farmer grass-fed beef is highly regarded for its taste and health benefits.

**Local Land Services brings together agricultural production advice, biosecurity, natural resource management and emergency management into a single organisation.**

**We would like to congratulate Derek and Kirrily Blomfield for their achievement in Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices**



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