RARE BREEDS TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

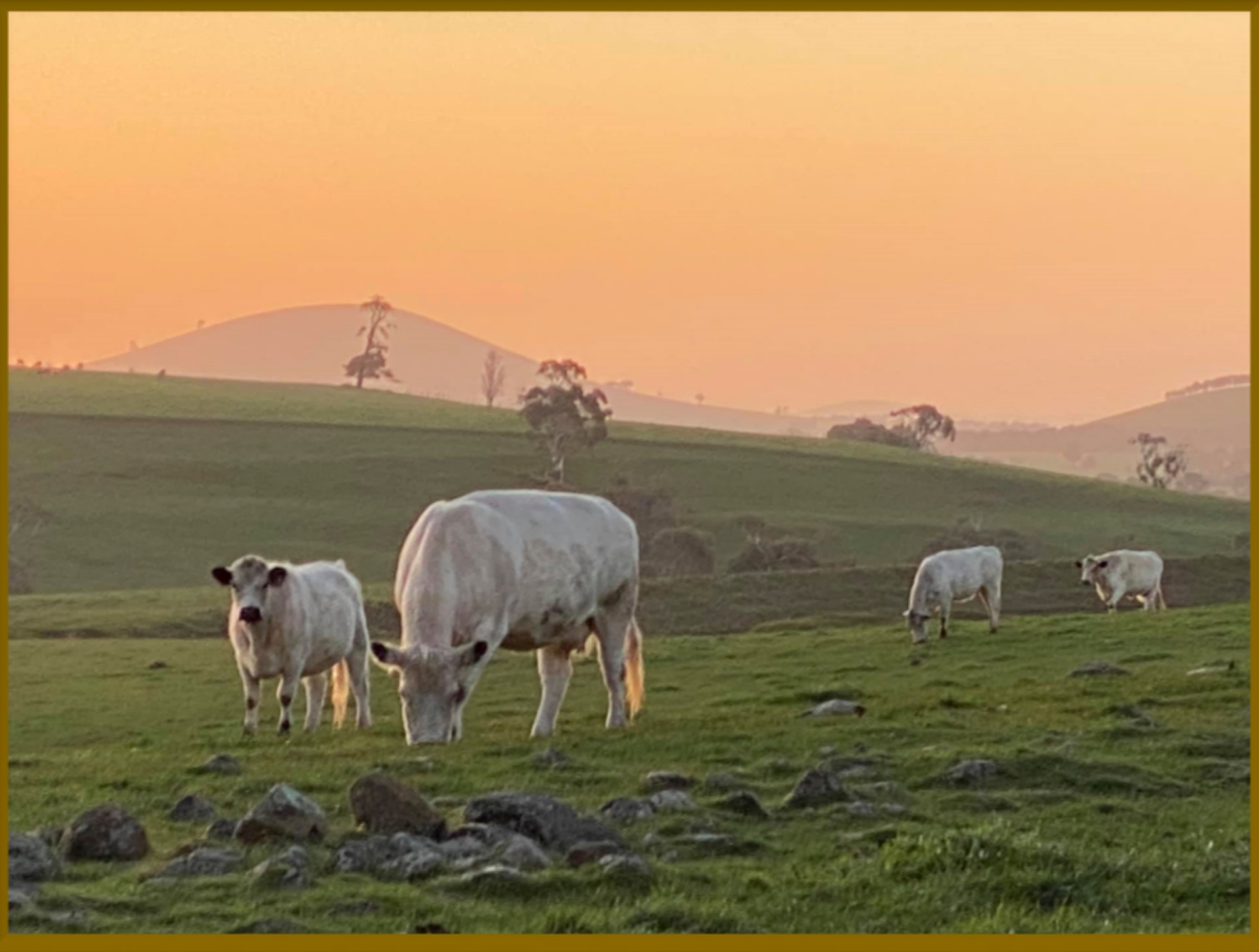
SECURING THE FUTURE
PRESERVING THE PAST

Paddocks and Perches

Official Newsletter of

Rare Breeds Trust of Australia

September 2020



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A Thank You from our Managing Director

I would like to thank the Board for their work during the last year. Katy Brown has stepped down from Secretary but stays on the Board, and Amy Young has stepped up to the role.
We have appointed three new Species Coordinators, Andrew Kennett Cattle, Belle St Clair Goats and Andrew Vernon Sheep. We welcome them and look forward to their contribution.

In the last 12 months, many of you have endured fire, flood, drought and lastly Covid19. 2020 was a year we don't want to be repeated.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and great New Year.

Anne Sim

Managing Director

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Pictured on cover

British White cattle belonging to Natalie Hardy and Jonathon Hurst.

Cattle Importing / quarantine requirements history and current

In 1998, Australia placed a ban on the importation of live cattle and beef from the UK and Ireland after BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy) was detected there. Cattle that had been regularly imported from the UK before the ban were placed under lifetime quarantine. In 1990 Australia began regular surveillance and monitoring for BSE.
In 1991, European countries were also banned from importing live cattle into Australia. Japan was banned in 2001, Canada in 2003 and the U.S was banned from importing cattle into Australia in 2004. None of these live cattle bans have been lifted nor expected to be in the future.
Cattle that had been imported from these countries before the ban were placed under lifetime quarantine where it was illegal to move the cattle without authorisation or sell them for slaughter. Upon death or destruction, the animals where to be examined and have to be disposed of in accordance with quarantine regulations. Obviously as of this date all imported live cattle would have died by now.
Australia does not import live cattle at all anymore and up until March 2010 the ban included the importation of beef and beef products. The new policy that came into effect in 2010, allows all countries including those that have had reported cases of BSE, to apply for export of beef meat into Australia. Under the new policy the ban for live cattle imports still stands as above.

Cattle semen and embryos are able to be imported into Australia from select countries (mainly North America & Europe / UK /Ireland) as long as they meet rigorous health conditions and attain an import permit (BICON) through the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS). There has not been in the last decade specific country bans (like there was in 2001 from UK/Ireland) to those selected countries able to export to Australia, however the requirements and position are reviewed regularly (changes in July 2020).

Andrew Kennett
Rare Breeds Trust of Australia cattle coordinator

https://bicon.agriculture.gov.au/BiconWeb4.0/ImportConditions/Questions/EvaluateCase

Footnote by the Editor

BSE Explained

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy or known to some of us as ‘Mad Cow Disease” is an unusual ailment in that it is caused by a mis-folded protein known as a ‘prion’ which then goes on to cause normally folding proteins to take on their shape eventually eating away the brain of the cow until the animal dies. The disease is not anything that is alive such as a virus but it is contagious. By eliminating animal products such as ‘meat meal’ in the diet of cattle and in some countries not allowing older cattle to be butchered the disease has been almost eradicated.

This disease can be contracted by humans if meat is ingested from affected cattle. The mis-folded protein (prion) cannot be ‘normalised’ by boiling etc., the prion then goes on to encourage normal proteins to mis-fold. For some unclear reason this process only affects the proteins in the brain causing holes to appear that gradually become larger hence the common name “mad cow disease” as madness is one of the main indicators of the disease.

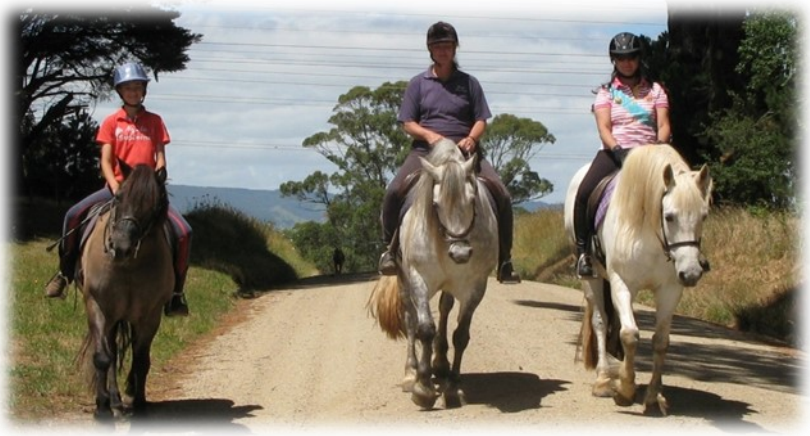
This unusual ailment was also documented in the Fore tribe of New Guinea. Known as Kuru by the natives, it was spread by the now abandoned ritual of honouring the dead by eating their brains at funerals.

"Croftcnoc Celine" – my Accidental Highland Pony

By Kirstie Law

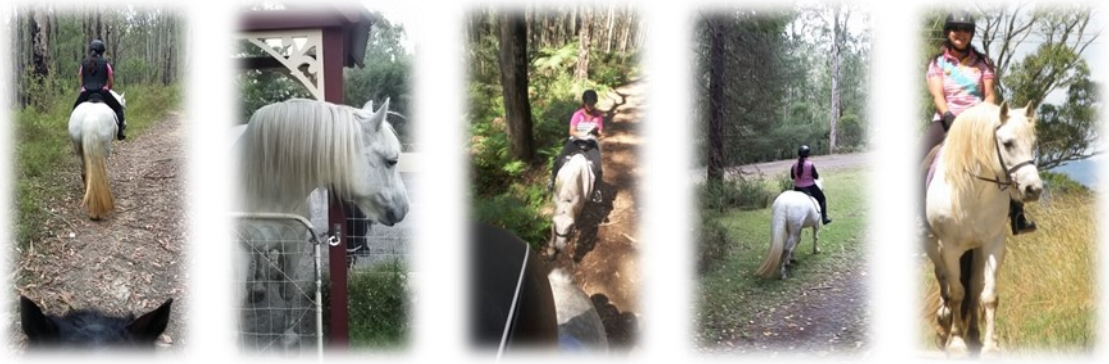
We already had six horses/ponies in the paddock at home and had absolutely no intention of adding to that! Admittedly, of the six one isn't a ridden pony and two of them have gracefully moved into old age and earned their mostly retired status.

So at the end of 2016 when Anna Thirkell asked me if I would take Celine and do *something* with her I said "no, we don't need any more". At the time Celine needed less grass than Crofcnoc Stud had and more work then she was getting. Why? Because like many ponies in Australia Celine is prone to laminitis. This was something new to me, as although I have had many fat ponies during my life, I have been extremely fortunate that none of them have ever had a known laminitic episode.



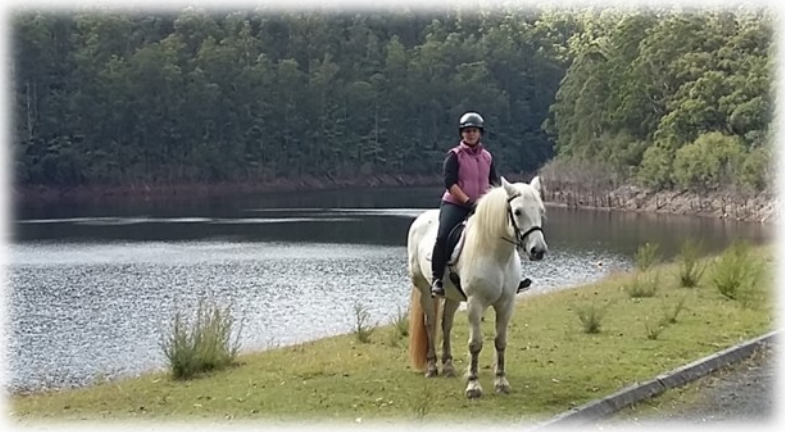
After the initial "no" response there was a number of messages back and forth followed by a visit and test ride at Crofcnoc Stud and then on Christmas Eve 2016 we went and picked up Croftcnoc Celine. My retiree, Storm, had been my faithful trail pony for 17 years and her paddock status had left a hole that was going to be exceedingly difficult to fill. Celine stepped up to the job like a super star!

On day three we had our first trail ride at Kurth Kiln. Not knowing each other very well I did choose to wear my body protector, just in case. Within minutes I was wondering why I bothered! This plucky little pony led off into the bush as if she had been there a thousand times.



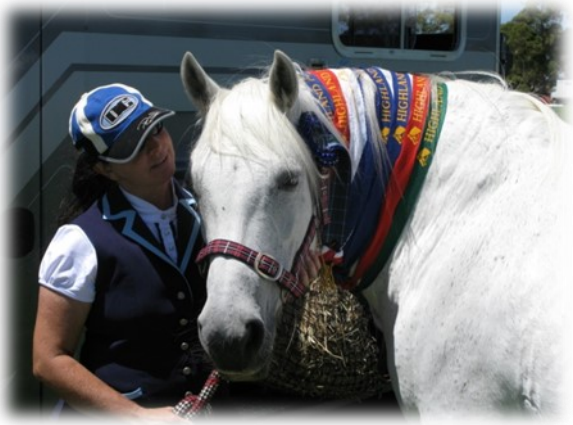
Since that first bush ride we have been on so many adventures! She has helped me explore places I never thought I would go, and we have covered hundreds of kilometres together over the last three and a half years.

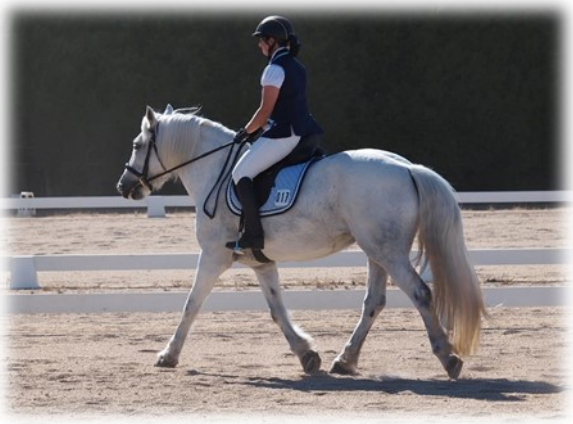
“Croftcnoc Celine” – my Accidental Highland Pony, continued



It is worth noting that Celine, who will turn 18 at the end of this year, was not started under saddle until she was 13. She is testament to the amazing nature of Highland Ponies. Nothing fazes this girl and not once have I felt unsafe with her. We have ridden along highways with trucks careering past and down smaller roads where cars have been so close, I could touch them from my saddle. She has not blinked at any of it. She will walk over or through anything that is in her path out on the trail as if it isn’t there and I can happily ride hands free whilst taking photos without any risk of ending up somewhere that I didn’t plan to be.

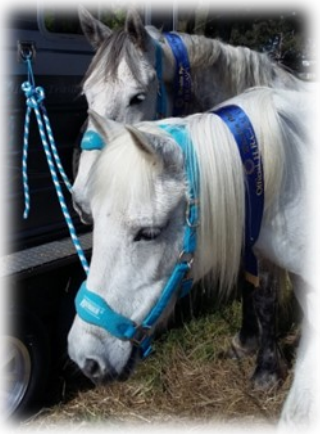
Celine has been to lots of shows during the last three and a half years representing our amazing Highland Pony breed and she has done really well for a middle-aged lady. She has also tried her hand at dressage on several occasions without disgracing herself, although she does seem to find it a bit foreign.



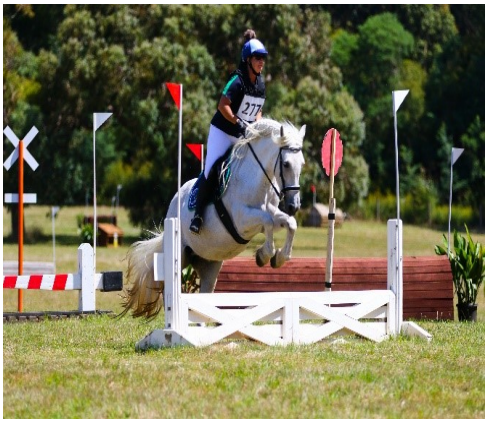


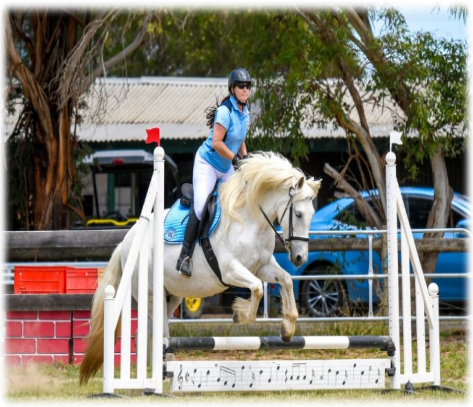
But the disciplines in which her star shines the brightest are more active (read fast) and athletic in her opinion. Celine loves participating in Navigation Rides, Show Jumping and Horse Trials (especially the Cross Country phase). For those who don’t know, Nav Rides are a bit like Orienteering on horseback. You compete in pairs over distances of around 15-25km following a set of navigational instructions, answering cryptic type questions along the way and aiming to keep to a nominated set speed (~6.5kmph – 7.5kmph) for the course. No navigational gadgets are allowed to tell you how far or how fast you are travelling. Celine and I have paired up with Richard and our other accidental “pony” Jamieson* for a number of these rides and our two awesome grey ponies have helped us to a couple of first and second places over the last few years.

“Croftcnoc Celine” – my Accidental Highland Pony, continued



Celine has also carried me to placings in each of our attempts at Show Jumping, Combined Training, Horse Trials and Jump Trials. In fact, she has placed in the top six at each event we have entered! Although she can be obstinate at times, she is also a confident little pony who will give anything a try when she is asked.





As much as it was an ‘accident’ on my part to have her, I am so incredibly thankful to Anna and Rick Thirkell for choosing me to give Celine a job. She is an amazing pony and I am looking forward to having many more adventures with her over the coming years. Although her career as a ridden pony has started later in life than many, she is healthy and sound and most importantly is going to stay that way for a very long time.

Jamieson is the result of an accidental pregnancy for our mare from a 37 year old stallion in the middle of winter. He was diagnosed with arthritis in both front feet at the age of four but with careful management and good quality hoof-boots he is perfectly sound for the trail and Nav Rides.

British White Cattle

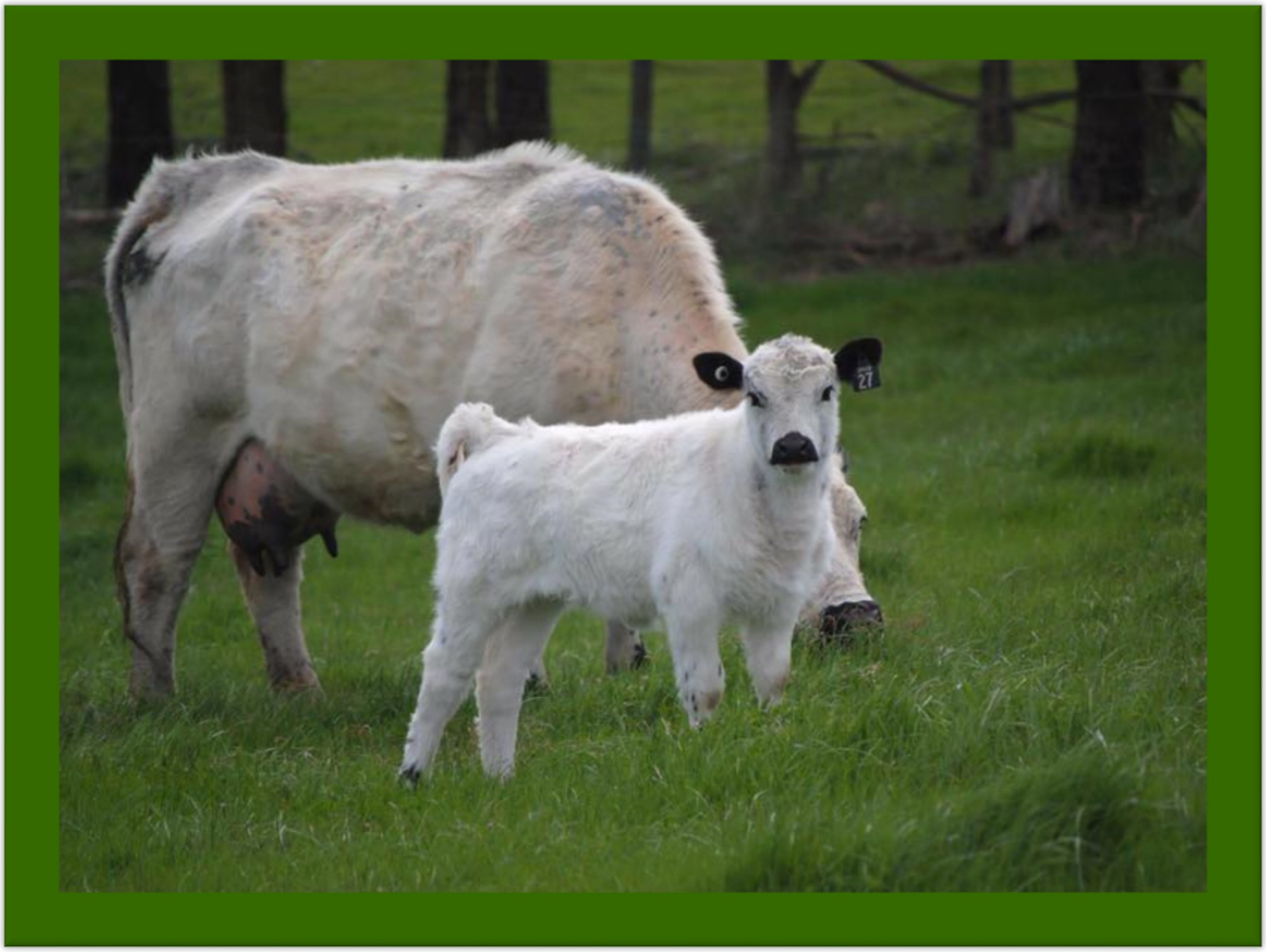
at Brooklands Free Range Farms

Natalie Hardy & Jonathan Hurst

As we head into our fifth Spring Calving of British Whites we are so pleased we chose this rare breed for our regenerative "paddock to plate" farm. Their gentle calm nature fits in really well with our grazing system making a regular move an absolute breeze. Their ease of calving and the amazing inherit instincts that haven't left this old heritage breed makes them the best mothers with so much milk that the calves grow out really fast and we can keep them on for longer. No matter what the seasons throw at us their ability to adapt has been truly amazing.

We have a breeding herd of 20 purebreds which we are slowly increasing. Currently we raise them for our "paddock to plate" beef business, 100% Grass Fed British White Beef (that's right all they have is grass without any further supplementation) and in 2019 their beef won us the delicious Magazine Gold Medal in the National Category "From The Paddock" judged by Australia's top Chefs. Our customers now know the secret of the flavour and tenderness making British White Beef in high demand.

A few more breeders are now selling this beef in NSW, VIC & WA so keep your eyes peeled.



The Complexities of being a Dexter Cow

Compiled by Jill Weaver

Dexter cattle originated from the southern parts of Ireland where they roamed the unprotected mountainous areas dating back into the 1400's.

Dexter cattle are described as the 'perfect' homestead family cow. Pound for pound they cost less to get to the table and economically turn forage into rich milk and lean meat. A milking Dexter can produce more milk for its weight than any other breed. They come in three colours, red, black and dun. Also they can be polled or horned, but were originally horned. The Dexter has three recognised purposes, milk, beef and were also used as oxen.

The Dexter is having a come-back in popularity in both the UK and the US. There were over 4000 registered cows in the UK in 2007. Described by one family in the UK as being able to look after themselves, good lawn mowers, very popular with the children and a very economical breed to keep for one's own meat. Known for their hardiness and ability to thrive on poor land.

The cows are well-known for being exceptionally good mothers and their ease of calving. Some breeders run Dexter bulls with first-time heifers in the larger beef breeds to eliminate calving problems. They will also produce enough milk to rear up to three calves and readily take on calves other than their own.

An adult male should weigh less than 1000 lbs and stand 38" – 44" at the shoulder with a cow weighing less than 750 lbs and standing 36" – 42" at the shoulder.

As mentioned in the previous newsletter some Dexter cattle carry the 'creeper' gene along with chooks, ducks, a breed of sheep and a few other breeds of cattle, and also humans. Known as *hereditary achondroplasia* it was widely studied in the creeper fowl. The same death ratios apply for this gene in cattle as in other animals carrying the faulty gene.

To have a better understanding of the recessive gene one must first understand the meaning of heterozygote and homozygous. *Heterozygote* is an individual having two different alleles of a particular gene/s and so giving rise to varying offspring. *Homozygous* is an individual having two identical alleles of a particular gene. The need to understand this is to be able to understand why some Dexter cattle have no ill effects although obviously dwarfed and some give birth to 'bulldog'' calves.

Bulldog calves are a monstrosity caused by the 'creeper gene'. These calves are severely deformed and are usually miscarried by the eighth month of gestation. Should they be born alive they will die shortly afterwards. The manifestation of the defect is very uniform and is due to homozygosity for a gene which has a marked effect also in the heterozygotes. The 'creeper gene' gives the Dexter characteristics, being a short and broad head and short legs between the knee and the hock. When Dexter cattle that are homozygous are mated *inter se* (between or among themselves) they produce 'bulldog' calves.

There are six distinct types of achondroplasia. In three of the cases the responsible gene is completely recessive (one lethal, one sub-lethal and one relatively harmless). In another type the gene reduces the head and the legs in the heterozygotes but does not reduce their viability, but is completely lethal in the homozygotes, this type being the Dexter cattle.

Dexter cattle carrying the semi-lethal gene results in the cattle being six to eight inches shorter in height than unaffected cattle.

The Dexter Cow, continued

To round up, there are two types of Dexter cattle both types having been given varying names.

Type 1. SHORT LEG, Classic Dexter; Dwarf; Achondroplastic Dwarf; Beef type; Heterozygote; Carrier; Affected.

Type 2. LONG LEG, Normal; Kerry type; Dairy type; Proportionate; Homozygous Normal.

Most of these names are either inaccurate or offending. For instance the Dexter breed as a whole is a short-legged breed to begin with, when compared to other cattle breeds.

The difference is mainly in the cannon bone giving rise to the classic choppy gait of the 'short leg'.

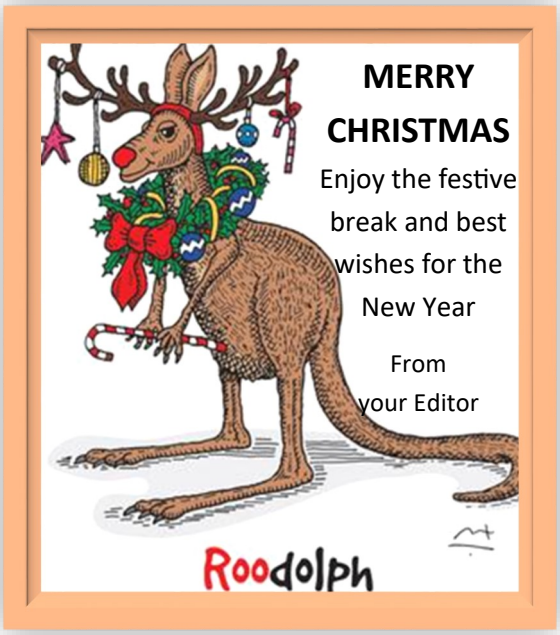
So an animal with one 'dose' of the bulldog allele will be affected and have a slightly disproportionate build and a choppy gait. An animal with two affected allele will be a bulldog calf and not reach full term.

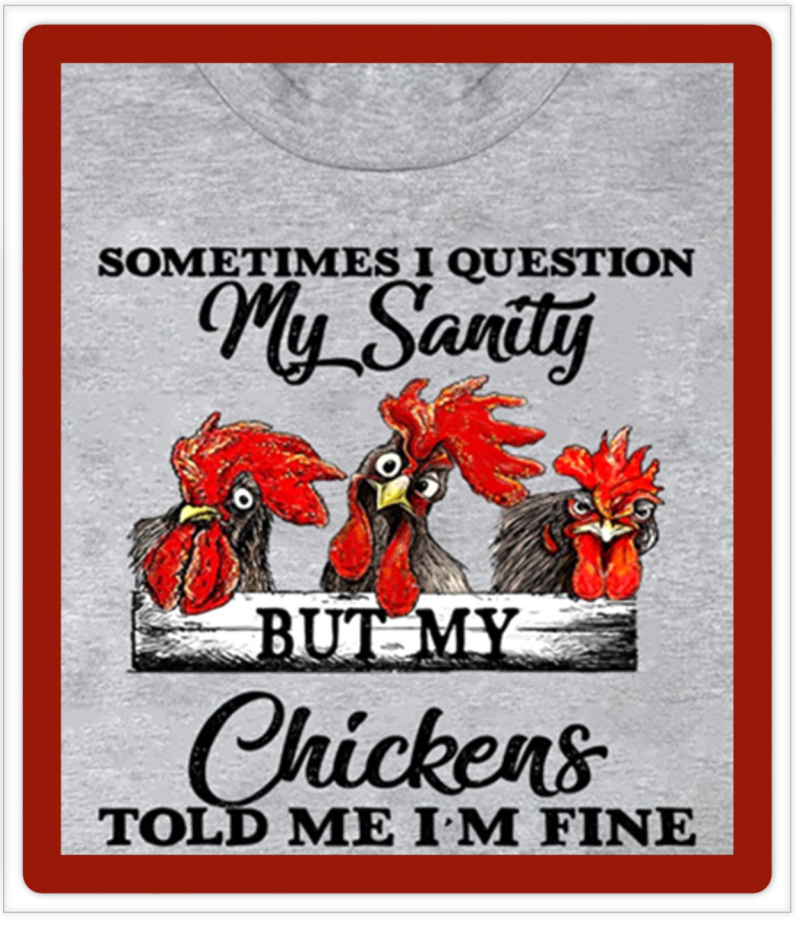
The word 'Dexter' meant 'small' to the Irish so it may have been that anything small could pass as a Dexter. The show ring has promoted the short leg Dexter as they are highly regarded by cattle judges.

As a matter of interest the Hereford breed in parts of America also had a problem with the 'creeper gene'. A huge concerted effort was put forward by breeders and the faulty gene was irradiated within five generations.

It is the belief of Roy T. Berg that this problem was never caused by God or disease but by the actions of breeders. Constantly breeding to a compact form to please the cattle judges.

I looked at the images of bulldog calves with the intention of putting one at the bottom of the article but they are so gross I decided to put a little skit in its place!





Orego-Stim®

Kylie Foxall, Operations Manager

Orego-Stim® manufactured by Anpario is a product classed as a Phytogenic. Phytogenics are plant -based feed additives that have been suggested as natural alternatives to help reduce the need for antibiotics (Lillehoj et al. 2018). Another term used is Eubiotics. This refers to the Greek term 'Eubiosis' referring to an optimal balance of microflora in the gastrointestinal tract. These terms fir with Anpario's 4R approach – Review, Reduce and Replace antimicrobials Responsibly.

Oregano oil contains over 90 different compounds, all of which have flavouring and aromatic properties as well as benefits to health. The main components, carvacrol and thymol, are established to have strong anti-microbial effects. Other components, such as cymene, pinene and caryophyllene have anti-inflammatory effects, whilst terpinene has strong antioxidant properties. All these compounds work together to bring about a synergistic effect. Some products on the market are synthetic, with nature identical forms of carvacrol and thymol. These are efficacious, however not as beneficial as natural oil due to the synergies within natural oil. Orego-Stim® is unique as only natural oregano oil is used.

As with all natural products raw materials are key. Orego-Stim® uses oil derived from cultivars of *Oreganum vulgare ssp hirtum* that are specific to Anpario. Grown in Central Europe, the oregano is grown using organic, pesticide-free principles. The climate produces high levels of oil consistently, variability is removed by standardising the composition of the oil.

The fundamental role of Orego-Stim® is to promote and enhance a healthy gut, in multiple species including poultry – laying hens, meat birds, turkeys and ducks, pigs, cattle, goats, pigeons and horses. A healthy gut is the basis for all bodily functions to operate effectively and efficiently. A damaged or unhealthy gut leads to poor animal performance, including poor feed conversion ratio, slower growth and can result in higher mortality.

Key benefits for all species:

Appetite and Digestive Health

- Aromatic smell and taste of Oregano Essential Oil can improve palatability of feed and help encourage voluntary feed and water intakes.
- Supports gut motility and aids nutrient absorption.
- Helps maintain drier excrement.
  Helps sustain body weight and support weight gain.

Health and Wellbeing

- Assists natural defence mechanisms and supports natural immunity.
- Rich in antioxidants, which are known to help neutralize free radicals.
- Provides support when under stress and through environmental challenges.
  Can be used to support programmes to reduce antimicrobial use.

Species key benefits:

Issues that have supporting data through Anpario's work with Orego-Stim®. Further information on each topic is available, however will simply not fit into this article.

Poultry
Laying hens (egg production)
Improved persistence of lay with a greater peak production, which resulted in 13 more eggs/hen
Production – more eggs - Trial summary shows Layers fed Orego-Stim had a 5.8% increase in saleable eggs (up to 72 weeks of lay) compared with the control.
Orego-Stim can help to support gut health and subsequently reduce mortality in commercial laying flocks.

Alternative coccidiosis treatment
Spotty Liver – shown to be effective as supporting prevention of outbreaks
Blackhead – birds return to lay quicker after an outbreak
Maintains egg quality – including shell and egg mass

Broilers
Supports gut health in the absence of Anticoccidials
Can be used in conjunction with cocci vaccine
Reduction in mortality due to heat stress
Improved fertility

Turkeys
Blackhead – anti-protozoan properties

Pigs
Reduction in transport stress - Support pigs through periods of stress, e.g. weaning, mixing, transportation etc.
Sow lactation
Improved number of piglets weaned through maternal feeding
Piglet weaning weights
Natural alternative to antibiotics post weaning
Provides an effective alternative to zinc oxide in piglets post weaning
Help supports early piglet weight gain when provided to sows

Calves
Increased feed intake
Trials have shown that Orego-Stim Liquid has supported weight gain in calves from birth up to and beyond weaning.
In trials, it was found that calves fed Orego-Stim Liquid had lower shedding of oocysts in their faeces that are associated with scour.

Lambs
Meat quality benefit – increased activity of antioxidant enzymes

Pigeons Observational results from many pigeon fanciers and flyers:
Improves feathering
Supports muscle maintenance which is helpful during flight and aids post-race recovery.
Helps pigeon during periods of stress. During moulting, transportation, post-race recovery and show-out.
Supports squabs during weaning from environmental challenges.

The benefits of Orego-Stim® through the naturally occurring compounds contained within the oregano oil used are many. Anparo is constantly looking at new studies to discover additional applications, other animals that show improvement in a historically stressful or poor gut health situation. The benefits are seen across both monogastric and ruminant gastrointestinal systems proving clearly that a healthy gut equals a healthy and happy animal.

Orego-Stim® is available in both powder and liquid form.

For more information on products, trial results and company information, visit www.anparioaustralia.com.au

Introducing Our New Goat Co-Ordinator

Bella St Clair

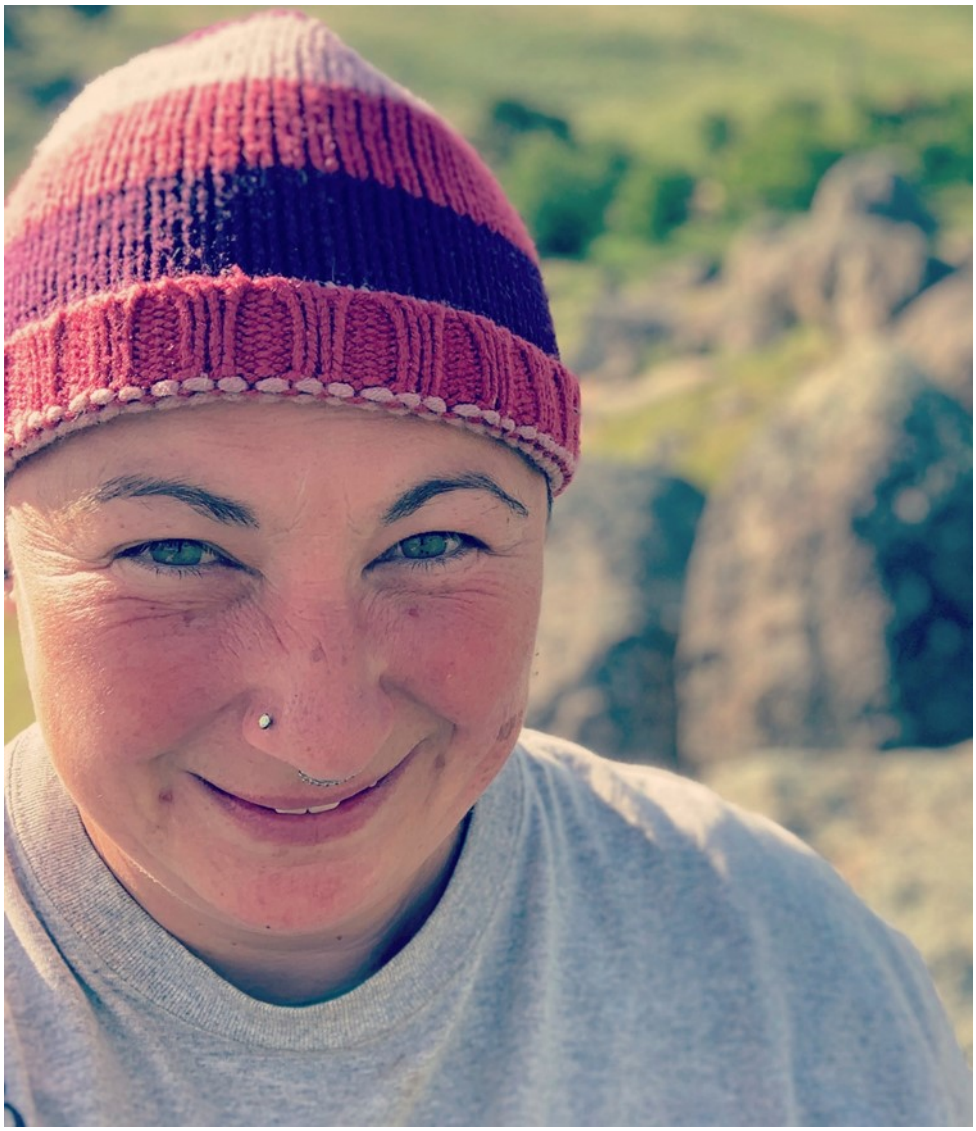
After spending the first part of my career involved in clinical genetics, pathology, health care governance and accreditation, I decided to follow my heart and buy a farm in the NSW Southern Tablelands surrounded by goats, chickens, horses and cattle.

These days I spend my time maintaining one of the few remaining flocks of Australian Heritage Angora Goats and working towards preserving these beautiful goats through the development of a national breeding strategy to maintain the genetic diversity of the Australian Heritage Angora goat.

My interest and goats began through my great-grandparents whose goat farm I visited on many occasions as a child and thus began a love of all things caprine.

I am passionate about preserving biodiversity and rare breeds and undertake research on Australian Heritage Angora goats. In 2017 I was fortunate enough to be able to highlight Australian Heritage Angora goats to an international audience at the World Goat Day in Iran.

I hope to be able to bring my passion for rare and traditional breeds through education and research to ensure that these animals remain part of the rich tapestry of the biodiversity of our world.



Introducing Our New Cattle Co-Ordinator

Andrew Kennett

I am excited to join the RBTA as cattle coordinator and bring some experience in the beef industry at all levels from grazier (commercial and stud breeder) stock agent and to member industry orgs and animal science and further the great work Janet has done.

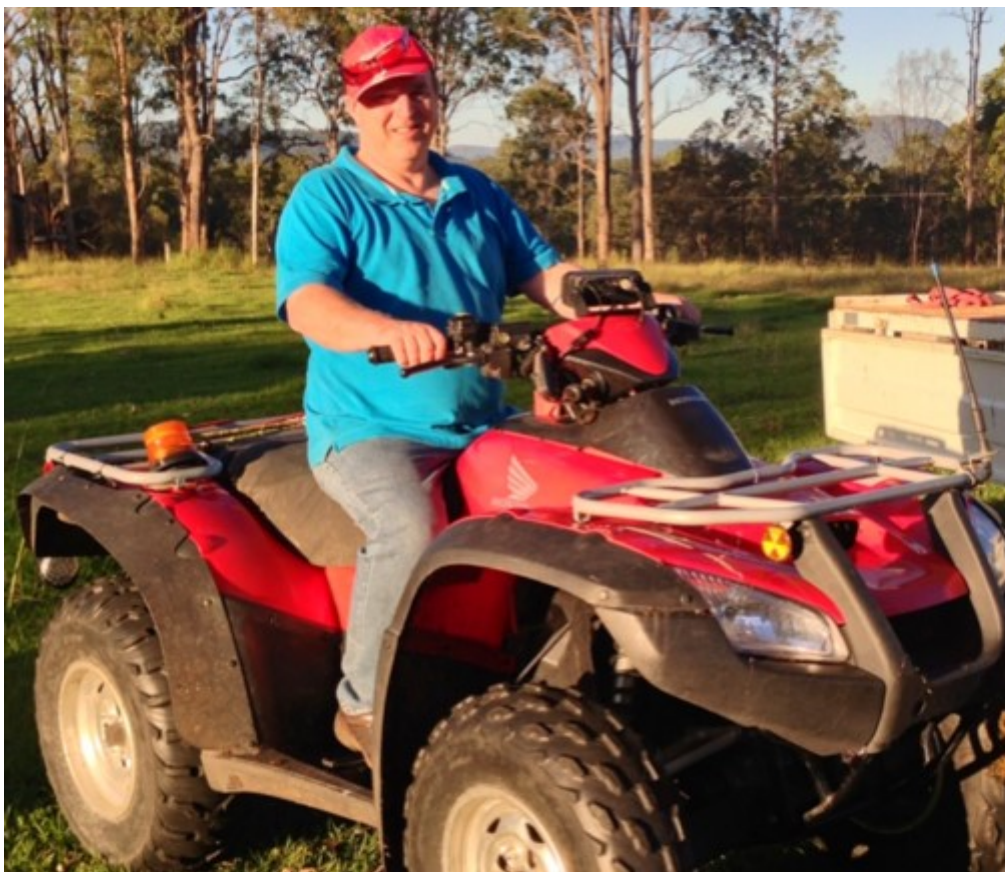
My journey in the cattle industry started at 13 when in school holidays I worked on my uncles dairy farm and then King Ranch's Brunnette Downs as cattle ringer and horse breaker. Then after a decade with a stock agent I went to University for Ag Sci then worked for a AgVet coy. Then as a grazier and cattle advisor I travelled Europe and North America with interest to develop new useful breeds and brought in Gelbvieh (live) when you could in 1980's where I also worked with on farm embryo sexing and splitting for implanting in vivo

I then took up opportunity to work in Agvet chemical regulation in DPIE for number years. Which lead into product development locally and internationally where amongst other things I developed Waterbac for organic cleaning of dirty farm water.

Following my passion in cattle breeding I moved to Queensland and with my family have been breeding Droughtmaster and European beef breeds. Where I started the process of introducing the Parthenaise breed as crossbreds then genetic material.

Qualified in AI, pregnancy testing, cattle behaviour and cattle nutrition. I also do part time work in my other passion of sustainable soil health and plant nutrition and agronomy as a Chart. Ag. which includes work in SE Asia and on our family farm there.

With over 1000 cattle breeds including many composites I look forward to expanding and presenting them in an update and easy read style.
Please feel free to share your experiences with rare cattle breeds.



RBTA Future Farm Genes

By Anne Sim

When the Rare Breeds Trust was formed one of the goals was to establish a gene bank of rare breeds. This has taken a long time but we are now nearing our goal.

While commercial genetics companies in Australia have good stocks of commercial breeds, they rarely have rare breeds and then only for a particular person or stud; and without a financial return have no incentive to retain them when fees for storage end - when people die or are unable to pay them or simply don't bother. There is nowhere at present where they can send rare breed genetic material.

Owners of rare breeds have collected and stored material too, from their own livestock, and at times ask us if we could take it, for example when they are very old, as a legacy, again we have had to turn them down. There are times they have no choice but to throw it out. They collect and store at their own costs, some to sell straws but most simply to try and preserve the breed, an altruistic gesture that should be lauded and helped, not ignored. This material is irreplaceable.

When the only Suffolk Punch stallion in Australia unexpectedly died for example, about 4 years ago, his line would have been lost if the owner had not stored some straws. This is the second most rare horse breed in the world, at grave risk of extinction.

Many countries have good government supported gene banks for livestock but invariably it is the commercial breeds that have the bulk, rare breeds still remain an afterthought, and each country preserves its own rare breeds - not those of other countries. We have lost Australian breeds – extinct – because no genetic material was stored - which we are aware of. These include the Adaptaur and the Australian Milking Zebu – the latter is in India and Brazil but extinct here. Other rare breeds here that are threatened globally, have no material stored anywhere.

We are now very fortunate to have a Federal Agricultural Minister, Hon David Littleproud MP, who sees the need for this. Early this month a conference 'Does Australia Need a Livestock Gene Bank to Preserve and Safeguard our Genetic Resources?' was held. The aim was to discuss the option of Australia developing a livestock gene bank (or alternative) to preserve and safeguard the value and diversity of our genetic resources. The round table was to explore a potential gene bank role in enhanced disaster preparedness and recovery, and industry adaptability/resilience, and in better aligning Australia with international practice.

From information I have received is that there was a general agreement that a National Gene Bank to be established. There were no binding agreements or concrete plans drawn up. But the idea is there. Hopefully it will not be sidelined by the next political disaster or an election.

But RBTA has been moving ahead on this. We currently have semen stored in two centres, one has some Belmont Red cattle semen, the other has some Timor Pony semen. This is a very small start but as always everything starts with one small step. These storages are going to start costing us money.

From now on we are looking for two things. Money, lots of $$$$. Hopefully in the New Year we will be able to let you know of a simple method of making donations on line. Until then you can forward your donation by mail. We would like to make a special thanks to Tas Doornbusch from WA who sent $100 donation.

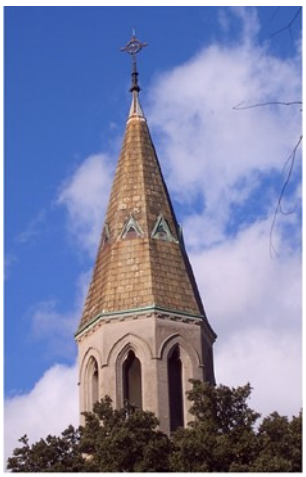
The second thing is that we now need donations of semen from your rare breeds animals. If you have a good example of one (or more) of our listed rare breeds we would love to hear that you are in a position to collect some semen for us. To discuss this further and to make arrangements for collection and transport to our storage please call me on 0408 324 346.

Help from Collingwood Children's Farm

By Anne Sim

RBTA is very grateful for the assistance being offered by the Farm. For over 10 years we have had our mail box and for the first time we have no one available to collect our mail on a regular basis. Now the Farm has stepped in and is assisting us by making that regular collection.

For those who don't know, the Farm is adjacent to, and considered part of the larger Abbotsford Convent Complex. Collingwood Children's Farm is unique in being the oldest continually farmed land in the state of Victoria. European farming commenced in early 1836, with formal land sales occurring in 1838. It is also the oldest Children's Farm in Australia being established in 1979.



It is nestled on the bend of the Yarra River and only four kilometres from Melbourne's CBD, it was founded to support and engage local children experiencing adversity. A non-profit organisation, the Farm's reason for existing remains true to its roots: Community Engagement, Education and Connection with Nature, Green Space and Animals.

Spire on the Abbotsford Convent

Collingwood Children's Farm is a haven for children and adults alike, with daily activities and acres of paddocks and gardens to explore. Cuddle a goat, watch a cow being milked or sit back with a coffee – there's something for everyone!

The Farm encourages the participation of children and their families in broader community life and encourages a connection to nature. School, work experience and volunteer programs provide educational opportunities around urban agriculture for students and community and offer pathways to further employment in the industry.

Shropshire sheep (photo taken from their website)

The Farm has had a long association with RBTA and they have always kept some rare breed animals. Here are some Shropshire sheep (photo from their web site). They have a wide range of poultry, including Faverolles. The sale of fresh eggs has made a significant contribution to the Farm's income in the past years.

In 2000 RBTA was successful in obtaining a Federation Grant which helped to build some beautiful livestock facilities. This new gesture has now completed the cycle.

Pen of Faverolles hens at the Farm. Photo taken in 2006 when it was very hard to find any of the breed.

Collingwood School Farm

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