

# 2009 SYDNEY ROYAL EASTER SHOW CARCASE COMPETITION JUDGES COMMENTS

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## General Comments

We are honoured to have been invited to act as a judges for the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW. The Pure bred carcase and Trade carcase competitions have an enviable reputation throughout the Australian beef industry and each year attracts cattle which are outstanding examples of their breed and of the exhibitors skills in selection and preparation.

We would like to thank and acknowledge the outstanding assistance provided by Mr Brett Littler, and Mr Richard Plummer of NSW DPI Mudgee. We are also indebted to the management and staff of Cargill – Tamworth, and Primo – Scone who ensured the highest standard in processing and preparation of the carcasses for judging.

In particular our thanks Mr John Stone, Councillor of the RAS who provided invaluable assistance and support throughout the judging of both the trade cattle and pure bred steer classes.

This year's entries were among some of the best carcasses encountered during judging the Royal Easter Show Carcase competitions. The entries scored consistently in the high seventies, and displayed a high degree of desirable traits including yield, optimum pH and marbling. In addition many more cattle satisfied the requirements for fatness and weight, which is a pleasing development.

This years judging system utilised the Australian Beef Carcase Appraisal Method (ABCAM). It allocates 100 points to each carcase. These points are divided over market specifications, saleable meat yield and eating quality. The allocation of points is best shown in Fig 1.

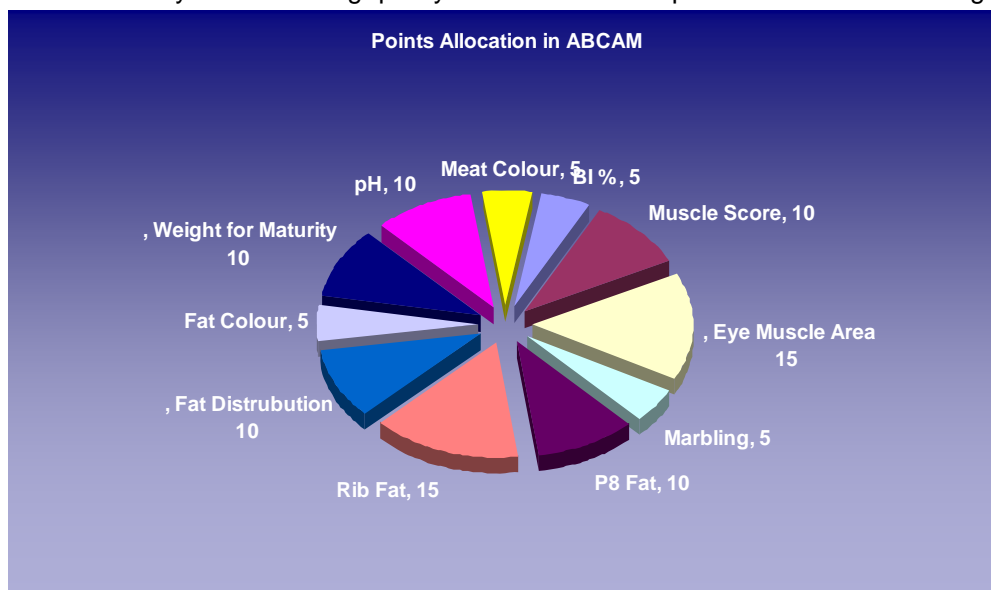


Figure 1: Allocation of Points in ABCAM

It is important for exhibitors to remember that optimum points are awarded to carcasses which meet class specifications for weight and fatness. Excessive weight attracts a one point penalty per kilogram over weight. Excessive or too little fat for specification is penalised on a sliding scale.

Rib eye area points and Weight for Maturity points are correlated against carcase weight. Larger rib eyes for a given weight will attract higher points, as will younger cattle (determined by ossification score) with higher carcase weights.

ABCAM is designed to replicate the demands of the market place, where cattle which meet specifications receive a price reward, while those which fail to meet the requirements receive a penalty.

### Competition Comparisons

This year's results saw an improvement in compliance with fat specifications and a significant increase in the number of cattle meeting pH and meat colour requirements. This was an excellent result and may be reflective of improvements in both pre slaughter handling and improved pre slaughter nutrition.

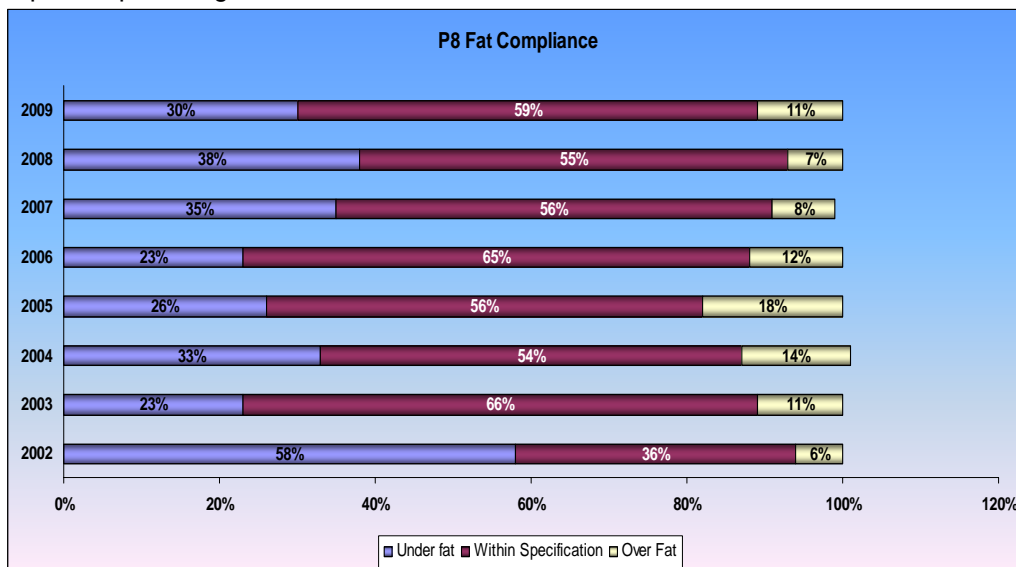


Figure 2: P8 Fat Compliance

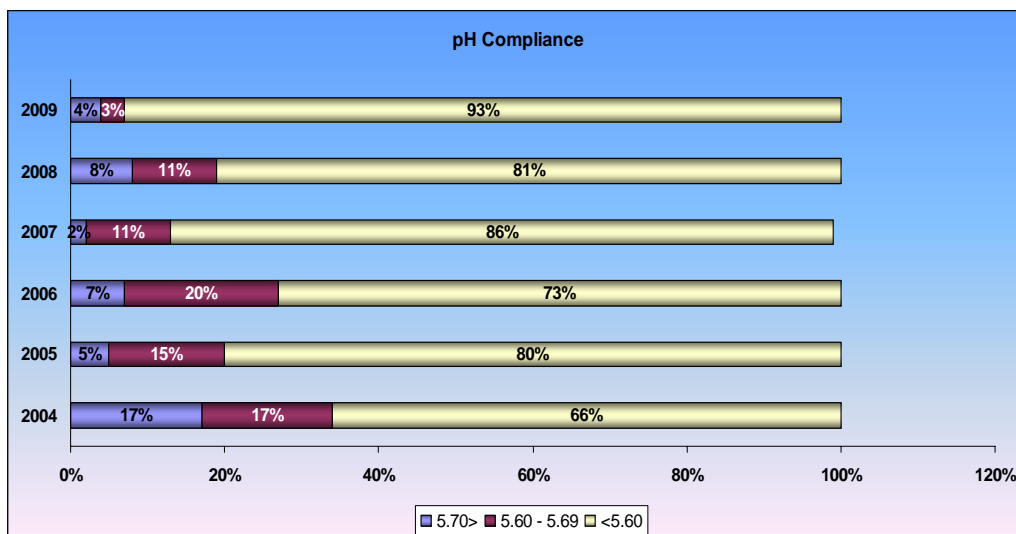
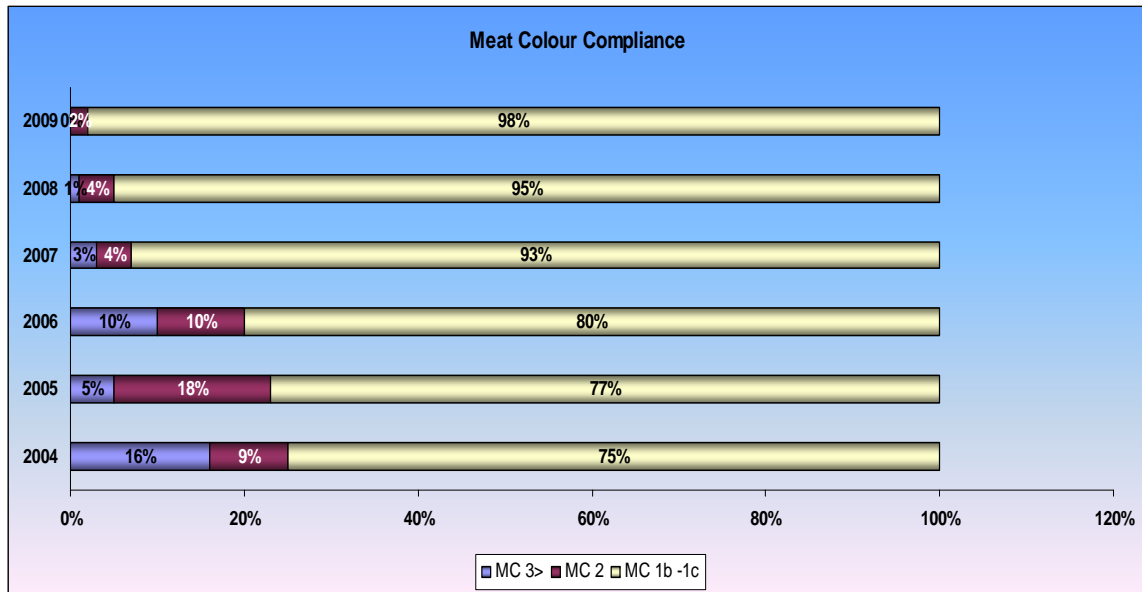


Figure 3: pH Compliance



**Figure 4: Meat Colour**

The points for all carcasses, class winners and champions have increased slightly compared to previous years results. This suggests many exhibitors are maintaining their focus on the requirements for the competition.

	All Carcasses	Class Winners	Champion Points
2001	80.7	91.3	
2002	76.1	88.3	
2003	79.1	89.5	
2004	78.2	88.9	90.1
2005	79.4	88.9	89.6
2006	76.5	86.5	88.1
2007	75.6	88.6	89.9
2008	71.9	86.6	87.02
2009	78.2	89	91.5

**Table 1: Carcase scores and Average Scores for Class Winners**

*NOTE: The scores listed for 2006, 2007 & 2008 were awarded under the ABCAS carcase judging system.*

## SUGGESTIONS FOR EXHIBITORS

Carcase judging results can be used by exhibitors to improve the standard of their entires in the future. More importantly, carcase competition feedback reflects industry expectations. The messages from these competitions should be used to improve cattle bred, prepared and sold commercially.

The major area which can impact upon the suitability of cattle for both carcase competitions as well as for commercial sales is compliance with specifications. Meeting the specifications for fatness and weight should be the major goal for all producers. In a carcase competition such as this, cattle within specification will maximise the points they receive.



Carcase yield should also be a high priority for exhibitors and producers. In competitions, carcass yield points are allocated on the basis of rib fat measurements and for the size of the rib eye area (measured in square centimetres and analysed against carcass weight). For example two animals may have a similar rib eye area when measured. The lighter carcass will often receive a higher score as its size is bigger for its weight compared to the other carcass. The simple method for producers to improve carcass yield is to select for heavier muscling. Ideally animals should be better than an average or C muscle score.

pH can be managed to some extent. Reducing stress should be a priority for producers. Methods include minimising transport, preventing pre slaughter mixing and avoiding unnecessary handling. Unfortunately this does occur at carcass competitions when animals do get mixed or moved as a group.

In recognising this, exhibitors should concentrate on educating their animals to the stresses associated with a show, such as noise, people or novel experiences. They should also focus on ensuring nutrition is not compromised. Therefore cattle should be fed familiar feeds, educated to eat from feed buckets and used to drinking water from buckets as well. If this can occur cattle may be less stressed and the drain of muscle glycogen may be minimised in the crucial pre slaughter period.

### **Final Comments**

Producers and competitors who focus on producing a well muscled, well grown animal which meets the market or class specifications are likely to earn the greater rewards for their cattle. Well grown cattle which have not suffered growth setbacks and have had stress minimised are more likely to earn a higher level of meat quality points. The combination of meeting specification, high yield and meat quality will ensure cattle remain very competitive in any competition and more importantly are a commercially valuable product.