

There is a definite market niche for beef produced by growers meeting these specifications. Lynda was a willing starter because in 2002 she'd done a Meat Marketing and Customer Needs Course run by the Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment and learnt "the value of meeting the specific parameters of each market category rather than delivering randomly."

"Selling our beef through a producer group suits us as it leaves us free to spend our time happily breeding our cattle - both stud and commercial - and we are amply rewarded for what we produce. We also have time to walk amongst our cows and give them a pat - something I have loved doing since I was a child."



Being part of a producers' group lets Lynda Senger-Whitehead get premium prices for her commercial stock while still indulging her love of cattle.

Gary Turnham

Gary sells succulent T-bones to Melbourne restaurant Florintinos but also markets Barregowa Lowline Beef to the public through his website and customer list. It's grass raised, grain finished, with quality the keynote. "When our supply dwindles we buy back steers from our live sales clients. We control quality and advise our customers when we have something ready," Gary says.

"They know they are buying Barregowa Lowline Beef because that is how our order form is set up. I think customers see it as a wholesome country thing and like to have a link with the producer. They probably also believe that it works out cheaper. But after the initial sale, the repeat business comes because it is a premium product."

Tim Franzmann

"Tim is very much a hand-on man," said his partner, Michelle Molloy. "He likes to control the whole process, using his abattoir of choice and ensuring the quality of the product."

There is no shortage of buyers but Tim's determination to keep the quality high can limit sales. Before Christmas, they bought in a number of steers in an attempt to meet the demand, but their abattoir was booked out and they weren't prepared to go elsewhere.

Advance planning, consistency and quality are the answer, says Michelle. "The market is there."

SALPG marketing group

Done in South Australia, where the drought lives on and the horizon stretches for ever, they're selling branded beef into a supermarket. The vehicle is the local Lowline promotion group and the driving force is president Klaus Emmerich. It's early days yet and they admit their original target of two beasts a week isn't easy to meet. Foster's Foodland, where they sell it, is in Millicent in the south-east of the state. It's part of a South Australian franchised supermarket chain.

The cattle are mostly Lowline X Angus or Lowline X Hereford but some are pure bred Lowlines. At present SALPG supplies two beasts a month planning for an increase to two a week shortly.

The cattle are slaughtered locally at Millicent, cut and packed by Foodland's butchers, and labelled as Lowline X. Brian Foster, the supermarket owner, encouraged labelling to provide a marketing edge. Currently four studs are participating in the project but all promotion group members are welcome to join, the only stipulation being that animals must be either pure bred Lowline or sired by a registered Lowline Bull.

Not everyone wishes to join because some SALPG members are certified Organic Breeders and have private markets for all of their beef.

South Australia is a vast area, so exact numbers are sketchy, but at least four members have sold bulls to other beef breeders including Angus (both Black & Red), South Devon and commercials, so the availability of stock is constantly increasing. Most of the purchasers have been older farmers sick of pulling large calves. (The average price of commercial bulls is \$1500.)

SALPG president Klaus Emmerich and his wife Joanne have only been in Lowlines for three years. They have a refreshing attitude to marketing, considering networking of primary importance because "Lowlines sell themselves."

Says Klaus: "You must not treat a cattle sale as you would a used car sale, meaning, don't sell an animal whether its full bred, X bred or commercial, as a one off. Treat every sale as if it will lead to repeats."

