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Welcome to the inaugural newsletter from Zeals Pastoral Co. Our aim is to keep you updated with news and information about the stud's activities and breeding programme.

Even though most of Eastern Australia has had some relief from the prolonged drought that has had a severe grip for years in some places, there are now other factors to test the tenacity of the cattle producer. The high Aussie dollar has seen a slip in the saleyard price of cattle and the re-entry of USA into our premium Asian markets has tightened the export market. The cost of fuel has skyrocketed to record prices and coupled with the increased costs of pesticides and herbicides and diminished production from the drought, has seen the cost of grain rise to being the highest for years. In the instance of wheat, it is the highest in history. This may be great news for the grain farmer but adds more pressure to the cattle producer to turn off quality stock. Feed lots' margins are reduced, forcing them to offer reduced prices for suitable cattle.

Ethanol production from grain in the USA is a contributing factor to higher grain prices and can only continue.

And, of course, the threat of global warming and increase in the frequency and severity of droughts is an ongoing cause of concern.

All is not gloom and doom however, with the huge increase in demand for food on a global basis. China and India, with their huge populations and increase in affluence will mean a solid market for years. Accessing those markets is a challenge.

An interesting offshoot of all this, is the likelihood that the efficient cattle farmer of the future will need to produce cattle that do well on limited pastures. Those bulls and cows that produce the goods without the need of supplementary feeding will provide a solid seedstock for the commercial breeder.

The cows that form the Zeals stud produce such animals. Ease of birth, and good milking animals ensure the calf has a good start in life. Those cows that do not satisfy this criteria, are culled.

Our young bulls are run on natural pasture with some grazing on oats through the winter in preparation for the breeding season.

Zeals bulls have a proven track record, with young stock from the commercial herd, being sold each year into feedlots.