

# Grays' impressive competition debut

NOT many producers have a carcass competition debut like Jindera's David and Judy Gray.

In what was their first time entering the Beef Spectacular Feedback Trial and any feedlot type competition, the couple were awarded champion carcass for their Charolais/Angus cross steers.

The Grays operate the 440 hectare property, Granite Hill, running 130 stud Charolais breeders alongside a herd of Angus/Murray Grey cows, which are crossed with Charolais bulls.

They usually turn their cattle off to the vealer market and sell their calves straight off cows at nine to 10 months weighing about 440 kilograms. Mr Gray credited their crossbreeding program for the high weight gains of their cattle.

"You get an extra 20 to 30 kilograms for no extra work," he said.

"If you keep the feed up to the crossbreds, they put on weight, not fat. This year we have the calves on a creep feeder to get extra silage, and



Jindera's David and Judy Gray with Cooper's Animal Health John Bull at the presentation dinner in Wagga Wagga.

boy are they growing"

Their herd is mainly based on Palgrove bloodlines along with Rangan genetics but it was one of their own bulls that sired the winning steers.

While they lost points with their crossbred team due to a steer going over the allowable entry weight of 460 kilograms, the champion carcass had a dressing percentage of 57.2 per cent, daily weight gain of 2.57 kilograms/day, eye muscle area of 109cm sq and P8 fat of 18mm.

Mr Gray almost fell off his seat when the winners were announced, especially after a dominant performance by Angus bred cattle in the

competition.

"A lot of our Charolais calves, they finish off early and go straight to the market, and the two that went well overweight, in a commercial condition they would have been sent to the abattoir at about 80 days instead of 112 days," he said.

The win was extra special for the Grays who have struggled with water supplies.

"Dams have gone dry for the first time in 50 or 60 years," Mr Gray said.

"Our hay shed and silage pits are very low so we are banking on having a good autumn."

— LUCY KINBACHER