

28 Aug 2011 MARREE SIRES CLASSIC 98 Owners / 403 Birds M Shepherdson - SA10 24871 BBH

Michael started racing pigeons in 1999 and in his first year he was lucky enough to become friends with Jack Burgen. He told Michael how he thought pigeons should be raced and trained and Michael followed his advice and with only 26 pigeons he managed 13th SAHPA points that year, when there were over 400 flyers.



His system worked well but was time consuming and expensive, and since then Michael has tried to find an easier way, and although having had some success, it was not as consistent as Jack's formula.

In 2011 year Michael purchased 5 birds at the second Sires sale of which one (bred by Phil Thalbourne) showed that she was a very smart and capable bird. She was trained on a variation of Jack's formula, and success was gained. When she arrived home on race day, she looked so fresh it looked as if she had not tried hard enough, and that she would be out of contention. As it turned out - not so.

SA10 24871 BBH had one race leading up the Sires Classic and that was 3 weeks before the main race. The road training consisted of long tossing on Peter Langer's unit on each Friday and she was short tossed by Michael every other day, with little loft flying.

Feeding at that time of racing was strictly peas and maize - heavy on peas at the beginning of the week, changing to heavy maize by basketing day. This was done for simplicity but many other variations on protein to carbohydrate/fat could work just as well.

Michael medicates usually twice during racing season for worms, canker and respiratory diseases all in the same week. Pigeons are much happier when both the sexes are left together but it creates a problem for loft flying - so lots of roadwork is needed to keep them all at their best. Michael spent 5 weeks in Europe at the early part of the season and did not compete in the early club races.



As the season was cut short he did not race much at all in 2011, and as he raced only the north line the birds were quite fresh at SAHPA level, where 2 additional SAHPA certificates were gained. Wind has a strong influence on the results of races, and as there was considerable west in the wind on the day of the Sires, Michael thought the flyers on the hills face zone (five km to the west) would benefit most, but it goes to show that if the pigeons are fit enough and there are not so many birds in the race, the chances of winning in a not so favorable position are increased. Michael thinks that on the North line prizes would be more evenly shared over a wider area if the per bird limit was lowered, and the transport costs per bird were increased to allow for more satisfaction in the sport.