

Making News

Live export deaths: The RSPCA is calling for further details on the reported deaths of 263 cattle on board The Ocean Shearer, a live export ship owned by Wellard Rural Exports, that was bound for Egypt.

It's reported this was the first consignment of Australian animals since the trade with Egypt was banned in 2006.

"The RSPCA urges the Government to release the details of what happened as soon as possible," said RSPCA Australia chief executive, Heather Neil.

"This one shipment has claimed the lives of more than a quarter of the number of cattle that died at sea throughout the whole of last year."

Riverina locust warning:

A swarm of locusts 20 kilometres long and 12km wide that laid eggs in the NSW Riverina is expected to create a mass of the pests early next month.

The huge swarm was seen a few weeks ago and hatchlings are expected to begin eating lush green pasture within two to four weeks.

As of this week the Australian Plague Locust Commission had sprayed 19,500 litres of pesticide across far western NSW from White Cliffs to Tibooburra, using seven aircraft.

The NSW Government is battling the locusts in the south-west Riverina area.

Pollie financing ruled out:

Chief executive of the NSW Farmers Association, Shaughn Morgan, has ruled out financially backing political parties in the lead-up to the coming year's federal and State elections.

Instead, the NSW Farmers Association plans to wage a campaign that might include snap protests to seek changes to the constitution to protect the property rights of farmers.

Dreaming up a \$45,000 record

ANGUS breeders chasing a drop of Champagne, the odd Blackbird, but especially a Dream helped set a new Australian breed record at the dispersal of the Vermont Angus stud near Penshurst, in western Victoria, this week.

The mammoth two-day auction by agents, Elders and Landmark, grossed \$2.26 million for 709 live lots plus embryos and semen to be what is believed to be one of the highest grossing beef dispersals in Australia.

The sale was the first offering for several years of females from the well-known Dream cow family, but leading breeders also took the rare opportunity to stock up on the sought-after Champagne, Blackbird and Wilcoola bloodlines.

But it was Taralga breeder, Keith Kerridge, Bannaby Angus, with manager, Glynn Langford, and Elders Goulburn's Steve Ridley who dug deepest on the first day to make a knockout bid of \$45,000 for 3½-year-old Vermont Dream B227, outbidding Aberdeen Estate Angus stud, Fitzroy Falls.

Mr Kerridge's surprise final bid set a new Australian record for an Angus cow and ended a tense battle between Aberdeen Estate (last bid \$44,000) – owned by Rex Airlines founder, Michael Jones, and wife, Michelle – and a Granite Ridge-Pathfinder partnership (last bid \$43,000).



Landmark auctioneer, Peter Godbolt, said it felt "brilliant" to help set the record.

"The adrenalin hits you and you just fly with it."

The previous record of \$42,000 was paid by Aberdeen Estate for Ardrossan Princess W38 in October last year.

The stud has been paying top dollar for elite females to build

its recently-established herd.

Stud part-owner and manager, Graham Winnell, said cows like B227 gave a stud entry to the breed's top level.

In other highlights, bulls sold to \$40,000 – among the top prices for Angus bulls sold at auction in Australia – while an 11-month-old heifer made \$37,000.

Both were knocked down to Landmark Albury on behalf of a mystery NSW client.

Mr Langford, Mr Godbolt, Mr Ridley, and Mr Kerridge are pictured with Vermont Dream B227.

■ Full report in *The Land* next week.

– TERRY SIM