

Guidelines for using ANGUS BULLS In the Northern Territory (NT)

This guide was developed to assist breeders in their decision-making process and to maximise the productivity and longevity of Angus bulls.



Map key:

· Zone A (Red) – Top End region · Zone B (Blue) – Barkley Tablelands & Tanami region · Zone C (Green) – Red Centre region



Considerations 1- Essentials

1. **Bull Selection** - Do your homework and select bulls that have genetics that suit your production system, environment and market end-point. This includes understanding the range of genetic information available on Angus bulls. (see - <https://www.angusaustralia.com.au/education/breeding-and-genetics/selecting-bulls/>)
Direct traits on the bull itself may also be a consideration such as coat type, docility and structural soundness.
2. **Grain ration** - Heavily fed and over prepared bulls will likely struggle to perform in their first season as well as grass fed bulls or bulls that have had optimal supplementation for joining.
3. **Age of bulls** - The optimal age of bulls to move onsite to stations is 12 – 18 months of age to enable better adaptability than older bulls and retain the ability to effectively serve, whilst reducing the negative impact on growth and joining limitations of younger bulls. Bulls outside of this age bracket can still be introduced and used however extra consideration should be given to older bulls fighting and acclimatisation,
4. **Relocation** - The cooler months are the best time to relocate bulls with May – August being the preferable period to allow bulls to better adapt to their new environment,
5. **Transportation** - Off water for no longer than a maximum of 36 hours. At this point, animals can lose over 10% of their own bodyweight due to dehydration mostly through loss of body fluids and rumen contents.
6. **Recovery** - Allow sufficient time to recover from travelling by providing rest, nutrition and water either in the yards or holding paddock.
7. **Nutrition** - A minimum of 14 days is recommended to allow bulls to adapt to pastures in the new environment, with supplementary feeding and/or protein supplements to be offered where necessary. Gradual introduction to urea is recommended,
8. **Herd Introduction** - Ensure the bull is introduced to the herd / mob as soon as practical once located on station to ensure reduced incidence of injury or disease in the cattle yards,
9. **Treatments** - Refer to the following checklist,



Considerations 2 - Behaviour

Angus bulls have strong libidos and this behaviour will generally see them continue to mate until they get the job done, irrespective of environment, weather or feed quality and availability. Angus bull's behaviour can be different to bulls of other breeds such as 'Cooling off' behaviour which sees the Angus bull(s) seeking shade or surface water to cool off. However, Angus bulls will achieve your goal of getting females in calf in the shortest possible time.

Considerations 3 - Joining

To maximise success, you should consider;

1. Regularly observe bulls throughout the joining period,
2. Grouping similar aged bulls,
3. Controlled mating - placing young bulls with a breeder herd for no longer than 12 weeks / 3 months (if practical),
4. Introducing bulls that are 12 – 18 months of age as optimal
5. If bulls less than 12 months of age are joined, they should only be given a lighter load. A minimum joining percentage of 5% is recommended.
6. Minimise impact of feral bulls through culling,

Considerations 4 - Post-joining

As your Angus bulls will work hard for you during the joining period, it is likely they will come out from the cows in reduced body condition, particularly in their first mating season.

To best help your bulls recover and prepare for the next join;

1. Remove bulls from the breeding herd to continue to fully acclimatise and regain body condition,
2. Drench all bulls and provide booster vaccinations,
3. Provide adequate feed and water so they regain their body condition,
4. Undertake bull breeding soundness evaluation with your cattle Veterinarian (prior to the next joining season).

Considerations 5 - Mustering

During periods of extremely hot weather it is recommended to minimise mustering of Angus bulls. If spear traps are in use, then bulls will need to be inducted and trained to use this equipment prior to setting the traps.

ZONES OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY:

Zone A (Red) – Area approximating the Top End region

Area loosely approximating everything north from Newcastle Waters in the south, then heading south west to the Birrindudu area on the NT/WA border and again from Newcastle Waters heading east to an area approximating Mount Drummond area on the NT/QLD border.

In this zone, which includes tick, Three-Day and buffalo fly, combined with heat, humidity and very heavy monsoonal rainfall, there are greater challenges for Angus bulls, however, they can still be used effectively.

Careful management including acclimatization, parasite treatments, seasonal mating and reduced handling during warmer weather is strongly recommended. Allowances for extra mustering time and pushing the mob may also be a consideration for Angus influenced mobs. Almost entirely used in cross-breeding programs and stabilized composites.

Zone B (Blue) – Area approximating the Barkley Tablelands & Tanami region,

Area loosely approximating from Newcastle Waters in the north, heading east to an area approximating Mount Drummond on the QLD/NT border, down to the Georgina Downs and Lake Nash areas, before heading west to the NT/WA border, back up to approximately Birrindudu and then north east back to Newcastle Waters.

Characterised through very warm to hot conditions with rising humidity. Includes known buffalo fly and three-day sickness zones. Angus bulls and females under reasonable management regimes exhibit productivity and longevity. Cross breeding using Angus genetics is also common within this zone.

Zone C (Green) – Area approximating the Central Desert region

Area loosely approximating from the Georgina Downs and Lake Nash area on the QLD/NT border down to Tobermorey area, whilst skirting the Simpson desert from approximately Indiana heading a south-south west direction until the NT/SA border. From here, head west to an area approximating Mulga Park, before heading north north east to an area just north of Papunya and then heading north west to an area just west of Chilla Well and then due west until the NT/WA border.

Typically, hot and dry with low annual rainfall. Angus bulls and females can perform well when managed appropriately through allowances with nutrition and breeder herd management and perform equally as well in cross breeding programs.



GENERAL CHECKLIST:

PRE-JOINING (AND PRE-PURCHASE) – CONSIDERATIONS

1. Treatments:

- ☐ 3 Day sickness (Bovine Ephemeral fever) vaccinated?
- ☐ 7 in 1 (Protection against the clostridium diseases & Lepto) vaccinated?
- ☐ Botulism vaccinated?
- ☐ Vibrosis vaccinated?
- ☐ Pestivirus vaccinated?
- ☐ Tick fever vaccinated (if applicable)?
- ☐ Buffalo fly treatment (if applicable)?

2. Relocation period:

- ☐ Optimal relocation onsite between May –August. Relocation outside this period, may warrant further consideration including more time for acclimatisation
- ☐ 14 days minimum provided for bulls to adapt to new pastures
- ☐ Do I have an available herd or paddock in which the bull can be relocated as soon as practical?

3. Optimal age:

- ☐ Angus bulls are aged between 12 – 18 months of age for their first joining for acclimatisation and longevity.

4. Transport:

- ☐ Travel time more than 36 hours – is there water stops built into the trip?
- ☐ Have I arranged insurance for the bull?

5. Recovery:

- ☐ Have I allowed sufficient time for the bull(s) to recover from transport?
- ☐ Is there sufficient feed and water available?

JOINING:

- ☐ Bulls to be similar ages in multi sire herds,
- ☐ Young bulls – maximum 12 weeks / 3 months joining period,
- ☐ Keep an eye on bulls during the joining period,

POST JOINING:

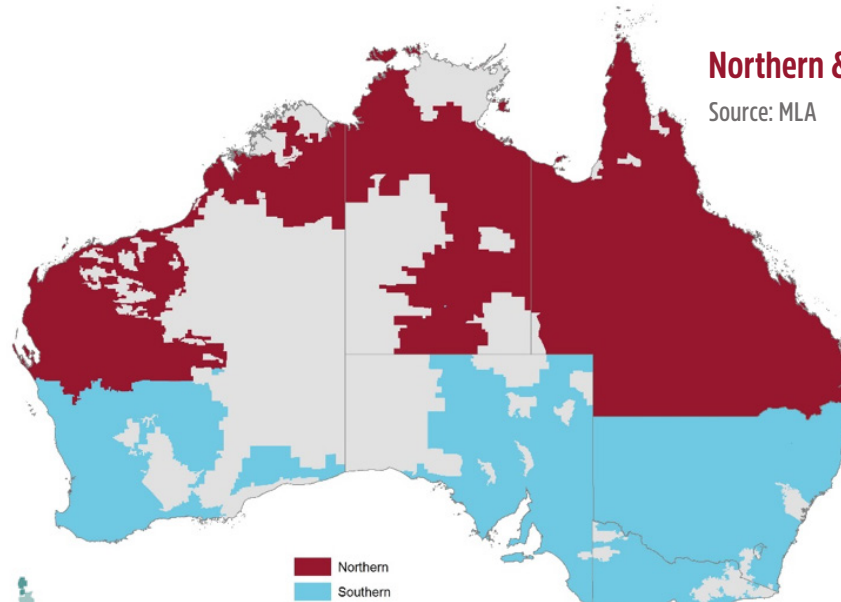
- ☐ Remove bulls from the breeders if practical for more effective disease prevention, continued acclimatisation and to regain body condition,
- ☐ Drench and booster vaccinations to all bulls,
- ☐ Adequate feed and water post joining,
- ☐ Bull breeding soundness evaluation through your preferred veterinarian, prior to next joining



RESOURCES:

Shaded areas show three-day sickness distribution

Source: <https://nt.gov.au/industry/agriculture/livestock/cattle/cattle-land-management-practices>



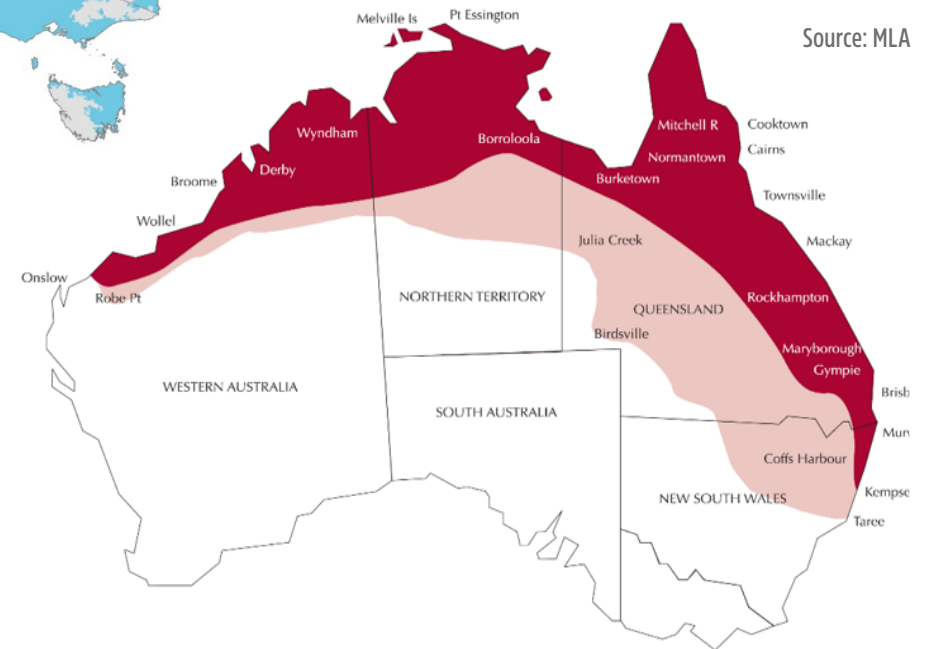
Northern & Southern Beef Production

Source: MLA

Distribution of buffalo flies in Australia

Permanent Colonisation ■
Seasonal Incursions ■

Source: MLA

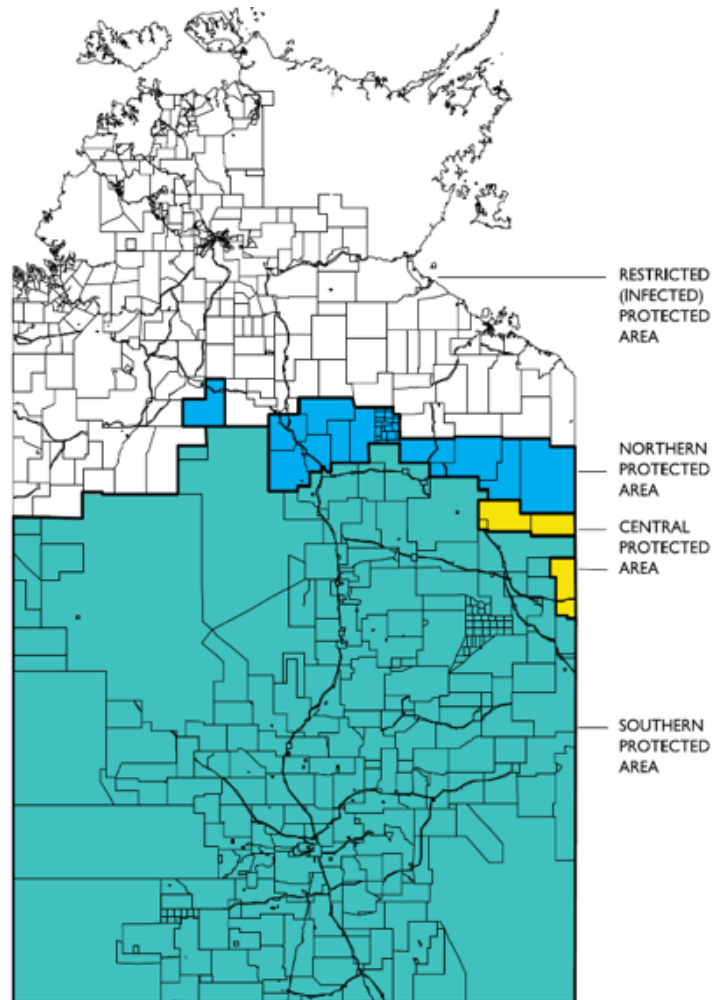


RESOURCES:

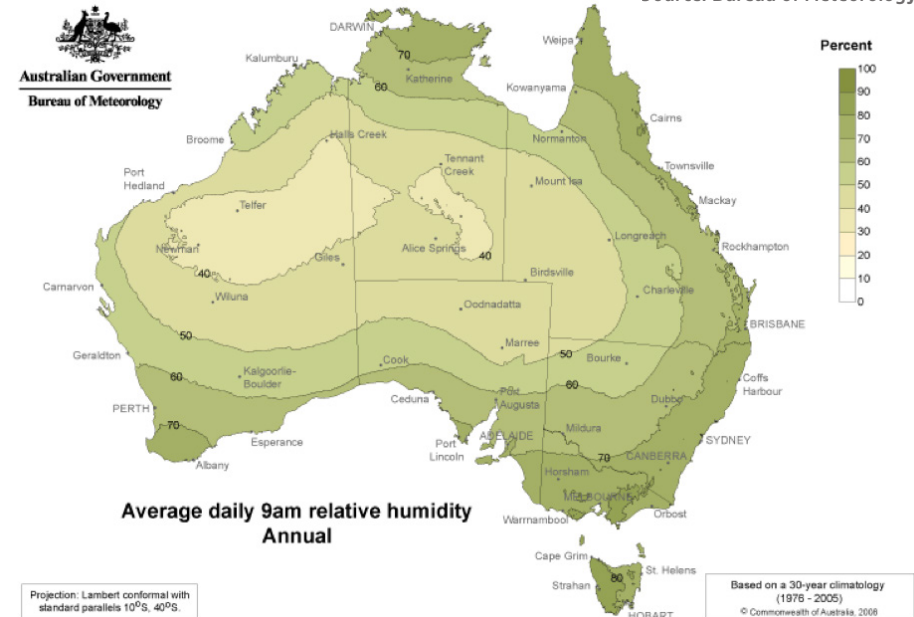
- Southern Protected Area
- Central Protected Area
- Northern Protected Area
- Restricted (Infected) Area

Northern Territory cattle tick zones

Source: <https://nt.gov.au/industry/agriculture/livestock/cattle/cattle-land-management-practices>



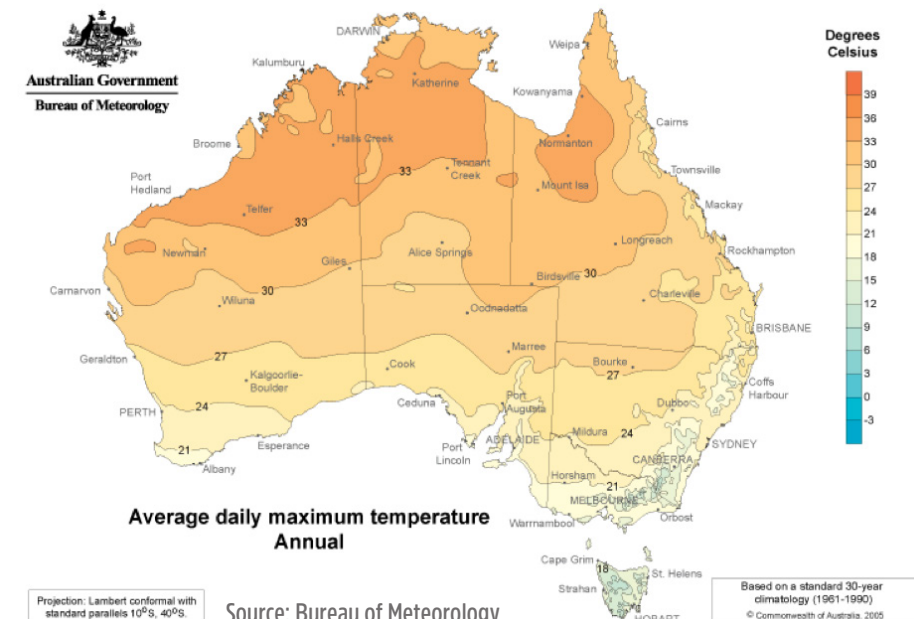
Source: Bureau of Meteorology



Average daily 9am relative humidity
Annual

Projection: Lambert conformal with standard parallels 10°S, 40°S.

Based on a 30-year climatology (1976 - 2005)
© Commonwealth of Australia, 2008



Average daily maximum temperature
Annual

Projection: Lambert conformal with standard parallels 10°S, 40°S.

Source: Bureau of Meteorology

Based on a standard 30-year climatology (1961-1990)
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