

Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association



Media release

***Cows, Cooks and Casseroles* – remote cattle women share their kitchen secrets**

March 24, 2010

Women's contribution to the opening up of the Northern Territory frontier has long been the stuff of legends. Part of their role was ordering the rations and working out how to make them last through the long periods of isolation that are still a reality today.

As a result, station women have developed a flair for innovation in their cooking and for the first time, their favourite recipes have been collected for a special publication, ***Cows, Cooks and Casseroles – A collection of recipes from bush women of the Northern Territory.***

The book features sections including “spectacular smokos”, “give beef the day off” and “sublime salads and soups”.

It is filled with recipes gathered by station women over the years – many that have been handed down from mother to daughter – and each comes with its own “connoisseur comment” from the contributor:

Lemonade Scones: *“A quick and easy recipe for when unexpected visitors stop by ... yes, they even surprise us 730kms from town!”* – Sarah Cook, Suplejack Downs (NT's remotest cattle station.)

Moroccan beef salad with couscous: *“Good for broadening the palate of a recalcitrant stock camp.”* – Georgia Underwood, Riverin Station.

Economical chocolate cake: *“This came my way in 1976 from Karen Brown, the wife of resident bull catcher at Victoria River Downs Station. She was equivalent to the modern day priestess of cookery Nigella Lawson and just as vivacious.”* – Royelene Hill, Katherine.

The forward for the book was written by food and wine commentator Lyndey Milan, who praised the charm of the “tried and true” recipes.

“I can imagine them being transcribed by hand on to scraps of paper and kept together in treasured folders, to be pulled out and shared and passed down from generation to generation,” she wrote.



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Cows, Cooks and Casseroles was put together by cattle women Sarah-Jane McBean and Marie Muldoon.

"Bush women cook daily for family, staff members, truck drivers, stock agents and unexpected visitors," Marie said.

"We prepare four meals a day for our hungry diners ... I'm always amazed at how creative bush women can be at producing delicious, nourishing and impressive meals with the simplest ingredients.

"I'm also in awe of the ability bush women have to create fine dining standards for a special occasion. I've lived in Singapore and Sydney amongst other cosmopolitan places and I'm proud to say that the most impressive dinner parties I've attended have been in the bush!

"Bush women know how to cook.

"We don't have the luxury of a patisserie around the corner or a posh deli down the street so everything is made from scratch. A neighbour of mine can produce homemade chocolates that would make Mr Lindt blush and another other friend turns out soufflés and gourmet canapés that would stand up in any restaurant.

"Through our recipe book, the wonderful bush cooks of the Northern Territory share some of those secrets."

Cows, Cooks and Casseroles is being launched tomorrow (Thursday, March 25) at a special ladies lunch organised to coincide with the NTCattlemen's Association annual conference in Darwin.

The book can be purchased through the NTCA office in Alice Springs, phone (08) 8952 5122 or email office.alice@ntca.org.au , at a cost of \$25 plus postage and handling.

All profits will go to the McGrath Foundation to support breast cancer research.

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