

Caught in the web

Wowan stud website draws 45,000 'hits' in just first two months

By KASUN UBAYASIRI

A CENTRAL Queensland father-and-daughter team has gone from paddock to cyberspace in the past few weeks, embracing the Internet to promote their Wowan-based Brahman stud.

Fenech Brahman stud owner Tony Fenech told *Rural Weekly* he had always been a sceptic and somewhat "phobic" of the Internet. He had never imagined a website of the family-owned business proving a favourite among cyber-surfers.

"I always treated the computer like a taipan — or thought it would blow up in my face, or something," Mr Fenech said.

But, despite his initial reservation, the recently-converted computer user confesses he is astounded by the website's success, having recorded more than 45,000 hits in just two months.

"Since the web page, I have had inquiries from all over the world," he said, adding that US, Argentinian, Thai, South African and Canadian buyers had been among them. "It (the website) has opened a whole new forum for our business and it is something I should have done a long time ago."

Mr Fenech's daughter, Bronwyn — whose company designed the website — said she too had been "blown away" by the page's popularity.

"I would have been happy with 100 individual users during the past two months, but I never expected 750 individual users and 45,000 hits," she said.

Ms Fenech said by using computer software, the company was also able to monitor the web page's progress beyond the number of hits, and in the first month alone, visitors spent an average of 15 minutes browsing the site.

"I have been telling dad for a long time he should get a website, and I finally went ahead and did it for him," she said.

"I think he is really happy with it — for a man who rarely used the computer, now he spends most nights looking up the website and answering emails."

Ms Fenech, who owns and operates FMStudios, an award-winning computer graphics firm in Rockhampton, said she believed the Internet was the way of the future for the bush.

"I sometimes think people in the bush use the Internet even more than people in the city," she said.



"The web has helped bridge the communications' gap between the town and bush."

Ms Fenech said she had grown up on the land and, despite moving away, still understood the way of life in the property.

"When I was a kid, I always wanted to come to the city and go shopping with my friends, but I guess deep down I am still a bushie," she said.

Added to her farming background and training in marketing, Ms Fenech said she had an overall understanding of using the web's reach in bringing the bush to the city.

Mr Fenech is not quite as optimistic as his daughter when it comes to the reach and role of the web, but concedes the Internet may be the future — if not, a significant contributor to the future — of communications.

Whatever their differences, both father and daughter agree that developing a website for their family-run stud was one of the best things they ever did.

The Fenechs say they are now focusing on Rockhampton Brahman Week and have already posted their sale teams online.