

Gary Mitchell

Wagga Wagga – NSW

Loft report by
Barry Trewin



Gary is one of the characters of the sport. He is always easy going and keen to have a chat. Gary has been around racing pigeons since the late 1960's and started racing in 1970. He had the interest since he was a kid. His lofts are a very neat set-up with grid floors with trays under each, which can be pulled out and cleaned. He has just modified the front of the loft aviary's which can be adjusted to keep the birds out to stop them getting wet on the day of basketing.

He has had his old mealy line of birds for a very long time and they provided him with 50% of his wins. He has also some Harrisons and Harkhoms, which are going all right, and he is now just introduced some Jurion's and Ince blood.

He has 43 pairs of stock birds and usually starts the season with 150 young birds and 15 – 20 old birds. With his breeding he keeps his family lines fairly straight, as he has

not had much success when crossing the families. His stock birds are fed mainly peas in the breeding season and mainly wheat in the off-season to stop them getting too fat. He uses a basic mix for his race birds, which consists of 8 measures of peas, 5 measures of wheat, 2 of maize and a small portion of canola. He feeds his birds until a couple of birds go for a drink and then he stops. He feeds the birds twice a day 1/3 mix in the morning and the other 2/3 in the evening. He works his birds twice a day as well and finds by his systems the birds are easier to work and trap.

He weans his birds at 5 weeks of age and breaks them to the loft in 4 days. The rounds are all kept separate when introduced initially to the race loft. Once broken to the loft he likes to seem in the air after two weeks. He likes also to see his birds running across the sky for ½ an hour. He breaks his birds into 2 teams and begins his training from ½ klm. He works them up a klm at a time to 10 klms and then jumps them by 5 klms steps out to 40 klms every three or four days. Once the races get longer he starts to toss further and will take the birds out to 70m klms. Due to work commitments he tosses his birds between 3 – 3.30 in the afternoon. He prefers to race old birds, but most of the money is mainly in the young bird racing each year. He had his best success by training the birds together and stopped the young birds at either 300 - 400 mile mark and used them for his old birds the following year. He prefers cock birds up to the 300 mils mark and then hens for the distance racing. He doesn't use any motivation system and fly's both sexes together. He likes to see good colouring under neigh the body and a bird performing well in tossing for the weekend races. He believes his best achievement to date is winning the Tasmanian races. One hen has won it twice and was the only bird on the day in one of the races.

He treats for cocci and worms on a regular basis, he try's to avoid the canker medication preferring the birds to build their own immunity, and he will treat an individual bird in need. He makes up a tonic of garlic, tea and brown sugar and uses this once a week.

His advice for the novice is not to get too many stock birds, try to keep your numbers down and put more effort into what you have got. Gary also stated (we need to get a positive viewpoint into the general public and be proud to say that you are a pigeon flyer; this would be for the betterment for the sport as a whole).