



Balls and the bush

Say the word 'country' and most shiny-bums think dust, drought and dirt. Maybe three-strand barbed wire, B&S balls and Blunnies, Southern Cross, galvo, utes and ... oh, this is getting so corny my gums are starting to bleed.

City folk never recognise the greatest icon of life in the bush...

Balls. There. I've said it.

Cojones, kahunas or even Cohunas* – whatever you call them, balls are up there among the icons of life beyond the 'burbs.

And I'm not talking tennis.

A big component of farm management is animal fertility but conversely, it's also animal sterility. So it's time to get down and dirty about things that get up and flirty.

Googlies, side orders, whatever you call them ... they've got to go. Every single one of them – or pair of them, if you must be pedantic. Quite simply, ball is a four-letter word when it comes to most four-legged critters.

Stallions are hard to handle; bulls are downright treacherous and rams – well, they're only good for one thing (and it isn't macramé).

Some boys are worth their weight. The Bendigo sheep show last week saw the top-priced ram coining more than \$40K. (Jeez, at that money, you'd be hoping he wasn't gay.) And I'd bet most men, given the option, would opt to reincarnate as thoroughbred stallions – where lust and regular leg-over are KPIs.

So, apart from the blue-bloods of bloodlines, these boys

have to go under the knife (or razor blade, or elastricator). And I've heard tales of how jackaroos do it. I just hope they don't inhale at the same time – that would be hard to explain to nice young nurse on triage at the base hospital.

Meanwhile, here in the civilised south, we've just finished marking lambs. The boys manhandled the elastricators and we woman-handled the animals.

It was a lift-and-jerk for non-Olympians: you know... hoist the young animal onto the cross beam, hold the rear legs apart and, if it's a ram, try to jerk the balls into position.

They wriggled, they struggled, they bleated pathetically. Man, it felt good.

Retribution was sweet. And when the bands went on, they took off – as far as they could go – and then flopped down in the grass to let the moment pass.

Kinda makes you glad to be a gal.

So if you are reading this and you are of the male gender, and if your mind is distracted and you find your hands are wandering southwards... then be afraid: be very afraid.

I know the practice already exists for the two-legged males about the place. The roosters get sterilised from the neck down. Usually served with a round of roast spuds, pumpkin and steamed greens.

And the blokes? Ah... we just send them down the back with a couple of bricks and a warning: "Just don't trap your thumbs because then it will REALLY hurt." ●

* *Apologies to the fine northern Victorian town of Cohuna. We all know you can't help it.*

It's time to get down and dirty about things that get up and flirty



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