

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Some positive signs are emerging in the sheep farming business model.

The first one I wish to highlight is the positive and enthusiastic attitudes of the finalists and many other entrants in this year's National Ewe Hogget Competition.

The breed winners were predominately young sheep breeders who are excelling themselves in their businesses achieving some outstanding production and performance in their flocks thus achieving good income and profit on the balance sheet at year end.

I believe the NZ Sheepbreeders involvement in this competition is giving the Association exposure and a profile in the rural media.

The climate has been kind to most sheep farming areas in the past twelve months. Some regions experienced dry periods and some unusually wet periods. However these glitches occurred in only some areas which meant there was still good values for store stock being paid by finishers in the other areas which in some cases experienced one of the best growth seasons for many years.

Income streams for sheep products are on the rise. Mutton prices have maintained their high level as the demand from quickly developing countries for meat for a hot pot type meal continues.

Lamb demand is sound with the new and emerging markets helping to slowly increase returns.

I believe the prices will continue to improve which will lift producers' returns and help generate increased profit and income levels to make sheep farming more financially rewarding.

The wool market I would describe as dull in both fine wool and the crossbred sector. The financial situation in Europe and the USA has not helped with the spending dollars of consumers in these parts of the World having serious consequences in regard to demand. However, this situation is now showing signs of improvement which I believe will increase demand and hence prices received.

As sheep numbers have decreased in all areas of New Zealand at quite a rapid rate over the last twenty years, I think that Breeds and breeders need to be analysing constantly who is purchasing their rams, where they farm their flocks, and what genetics these rams need to have to maintain soundness for a good number of years and leave progeny which will generate good profits for the commercial sheep farmer in his particular environment and management system.

Some Breeds and their breeders within the Association have recommended that the minimum price for rams to be transferred be reduced. While I can understand your reasons, I do not believe this concept has any merit and does nothing to keep the values of commercial flock rams at levels where they need to be for sheep stud breeding to be a viable option. The best and most progressive sheep farmers are purchasing sires at dollar values in excess of what you want to buy your stud sires for!!

If you are a serious and progressive stud breeder and wish to improve your genetics and your breed's performance I am sorry but you need to pay for your stud rams at a realistic level.

To smaller hobby type breeders why not form a syndicate with other small breeders and purchase a quality ram. Breeds which make the most progress and gain the most market share are those who breed the highest percentage of high quality rams, market them well and use the best genetics as widely as possible.

The Executive held a meeting in February and progress on the initiatives in action will be reported on and discussed at the full Council Meeting prior to the Annual General Meeting.

A big thanks to Greg, Anne and Lyndsay for attending to all Breeds' requests and affairs in an efficient and professional manner. Thank you Peter for the astute management of the financial and investment portfolios of the Association.

Ian Stevenson

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Christchurch is still in the demolition stage with landmark buildings being removed, new buildings arising, and road works everywhere. However we are fortunate our office by the airport has been untouched. That was until after a week of heavy rain water found its way into my office. I am pleased to report I have a new woollen carpet.

Obituaries. I extend the Associations sympathy to all families of members who have passed away in the last 12 months.

With the changing land use we have continued to suffer with a drop in membership, but the outlook is positive for lamb. This is a result of demand versus a diminishing supply as I am not aware there has been the much needed restructuring of the meat industry.

As agreed the Executive met twice since the Council meeting last year. One of the items discussed was the Stock Assessment DVD that is progressing with costings now being prepared.

Regarding the financial outlook for the Association, we continue to be in a tenuous state, but have surprised ourselves with a good result this year. Obviously every year is a fiscal challenge for the Association, and a massive thanks to the staff who have been very prudent.

The Sales page on our website continues to be underutilized and those members who do use it continue to benefit.

Last year's NZ Ewe Hogget Competition culminated with a Field Day on the winners' Robert & Jean Forrester's Amberley property. Attended by well over 180 persons the day was organized by Beef + LambNZ and proved very interesting.

This year's competition has now been judged and the breed winners announced with the overall winners being Simon & Kirstin Engelbrecht. The Presentation Dinner took place in

Queenstown with an attendance of over 100 persons, with the NZSBA being well represented. It was a tremendous occasion being assembled in one room with like-minded positive people which was reflected in their outlook for the sheep industry.

This competition now in its 18th year continues to put immense pressure on the office for a few months, as it also coincides with Breed Conferences & Meetings. This continues to be a special event and we as an organization receive national profile as the object of the competition is acknowledging and rewarding excellence in sheep farming. Huge thanks to the many volunteers throughout the country who organize and judge their local areas.

We have just completed another Scanning Workshop for all eye muscle scanners at Lincoln University. It has been 4 years since the previous scanning workshop, and the Executive has agreed that scanners are required to attend workshops every 4 years to become re-accredited. This year a new scanner to the industry attended the workshop.

Last year's Canterbury A & P Youth Stock Judging Competition was won by Mr Ross McCulloch who competed in Sydney. The NZSBA sponsor his return trip to Australia.

The RAS have failed to organize a Royal Show this year and this will have to be addressed by the NZSBA delegates when they meet later this month.

Kim, our data input operator is has now left, but stayed on last year to help Mandy. Thanks Kim for all your effort. Mandy is now our Performance Recording data operator . Thanks to Charlie Ensor for his continued support of our bureau.

Breed Conferences and Meetings held and to be held this year include –

English Leicester	Annual Field Day – Rangiora
Border Leicester	Breed Committee Meeting – Christchurch
Shropshire	Annual Conference – Carterton
Merino	Breed Committee Meeting – Christchurch
Suffolk	Breed Committee Meeting & Conference – Napier
Poll Dorset	Breed Committee Meeting - Christchurch
South Suffolk	Breed Committee Meeting - Christchurch
Dorset Down	Annual Conference – Christchurch
Hampshire	Annual Conference – Gore
Corriedale	Annual General Meeting – Oamaru
Polwarth	Meet during the Canterbury A & P Show
Texel	Annual Conference - Invercargill
Oxford	To be determined
East Friesian	To be determined
Dorper	Annual Conference – Christchurch
Charollais	Annual Conference -Lawrence

Next year two breeds have very special celebrations. The Shropshire Breed is celebrating 150 years of Shropshires in New Zealand, and the Texel Breed is celebrating 25 years of Texels in New Zealand.

Thanks again my staff, Anne, Lyndsay, and Mandy, for your effort.

To our President Ian thank you for your support and for always looking at opportunities to raise the profile of the NZSBA, and as usual a big thank you to Peter, our long serving Treasurer and Life Member.

Greg Burgess