



P O Box 20094
CHRISTCHURCH 8543
Ph/Fax 03 3589 412
Email greg@nzsheep.co.nz
Website www.nzromney.co.nz

Dear Members

At the AGM in Christchurch I was elected as your new President.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Malcolm Wyeth who has served as President of Romney NZ for five years during which time he has tried extremely hard to modernise the organisation to better reflect breeding initiatives of 2018. Malcolm never lacks enthusiasm for the breed and gives back willingly. He drove the forum which was held earlier in the year to consult with members on how they see the organisation with relevance to their own breeding operations. I think it's fair to say that despite his efforts, he felt some frustration with the slow progress that was made.

With a falling membership, decreasing ewe numbers and lower sheep returns, it is essential that we adjust and move with the times. We need to utilise the modern technology which is now available and take advantage of the rapidly changing and improved breeding and recording systems that are accessible. To plod along lethargically in our past footsteps will ensure our slow but certain demise.

Your Committee is proposing to amalgamate with NZ Sheepbreeders which will reduce some costs with little change in service. This proposal will need to go to the AGM next year for a vote. I envisage a huge reduction in the number of meaningless rules under which we operate and which contribute absolutely nothing to the genetic improvement of the Romney breed. I would like to see a streamlining of flock returns which for those on SIL would mean no more tedious filling out of forms as has been the case in the past. I see our focus being more in sync with the scientists and geneticists working to improve the production of our flocks. In other words Romney NZ would lobby on your behalf for funds and initiatives to improve our genetics and move away from just being book keepers for the breed.

I am pleased to say that Boehringer Ingelheim (previously MerialAncare) has through,

David Dodge , agreed to continue their sponsorship which has previously helped with the meat yield trial. He would like to see another project to which they could contribute ie facial eczema and perhaps skin thickness. David has been a very strong supporter of our organisation, but we need to come up with a proposal in a month so I would welcome feedback. If there is none I can only presume there is little interest in taking this further.

I hope your lambing went better than some in the east of the North Island especially as prices for sheep meats are looking bullish. We even see a slowing on the national sheep flock and dare I suggest some conversions of dairy to sheep.....it has happened before!

All the best for the season ahead and get those project ideas rolling in.

Yours faithfully

David Tennent

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