

Hello Members,

Firstly, thanks to all who took the time to send in articles for this newsletter, it certainly makes the job of compiling it more straightforward! Special thanks to Penni Loffhagen & Ian McCall for Canterbury show photos.

Well interesting times indeed following Brexit and the US elections. I believe the best thing we can do here is to buy NZ made. If stuff is dearer because of that we need to think that higher prices enable higher wages to be paid to Kiwis. Cheap, cheap, ever cheaper imports means low wages for the Kiwis whose workplaces sell them – then they can only afford to buy cheap imports, and certainly can't afford to buy their own house/farm – a vicious circle!

NZ farmers need to support other NZ farmers – buy wool carpets/rugs not rhino/synthetics; buy NZ meat - now clearly labelled "Product of NZ" in most supermarkets; buy Harroways NZ grown rolled oats for your winter breakfasts etc, buy butter, not plant based spreads.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to find NZ made products on the supermarket shelves in the cheaper (in fact, any price range) canned lines. The ubiquitous "made in NZ from local and imported ingredients" really irks me – all countries of origin should be clearly marked.

So many of our industries have been bought into by overseas concerns, or simply vanished, and their brands are now made in Asia. It seems to me, that once the burgeoning middle classes of both China and India start buying their own-grown and manufactured goods in a big way, they will not need ours. Meanwhile, having bought into our firms they gain access to all our agricultural research and technological innovations, so any small advantage we may have had will be lost.

To me, trade should be for buying things you need when they are out of season here or you don't produce enough of them to meet demand and for products we are unable to produce here, and vice versa.

I reiterate – buy NZ grown/made and keep all of us in business!

*Helen McKenzie*  
**Editor**

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*[These are the personal opinions of the Editor and do not reflect the views of NZ Sheepbreeders' Association!]*

## ASSOCIATION NEWS & VIEWS

### From The President

A busy time down on the farm at present.

It's good to see many of you are out there supporting your local A & P show and displaying your breed/s.



Although so much is done with figures on breeding/selecting rams these days and showing is not so commercially the 'shop window' you never know who is walking around the pens on show day with money in their pocket for a breed that takes their fancy. It's nice to have a bit of a display about your breed as well to help create that special "Show Day" atmosphere which helps keep the show viable too.

Remember to book the vet for brucellosis testing of stud sires and sale rams if you haven't already done so.

Email or ring me if you have any concerns to do with sheep breeding in New Zealand.

Wishing you all a Prosperous New Year.

*Jim Berney*  
**President NZSBA**



### From The General Manager

**We welcome our third and final sponsor for the Sheep NewZ with Ballance Agri-Nutrients joining us for the next four issues.**

A great article in the NZ Farmer of 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2016 about Immediate Past President of the Association, Ian Stevenson, his wife Trish, and son, Mark & his wife Joanne. Farmers can be successful stud breeders and "real" farmers too. It is very good publicity for our members and their breeds to see them featured in articles such as this one by Heather Chalmers.

**Merino breeders – the next issue in March 2017 will feature your breed so start taking photos now!**

If you've got a sale or dispersal coming up let the Editor know so it can be featured. Next issue will be March, 2017. Please don't leave info gathering til the last minute as there is an **early** March publishing date!

*Greg Burgess*  
**General Manager, NZSBA**

## Feature Breed



## SOUTH SUFFOLK SHEEP

### Brief History (ex NZ Sheepbreeders' Website)

The South Suffolk first appeared in New Zealand during the 1930s in response to an overseas demand for leaner meat. It was developed in Canterbury by a Southdown stud breeder, Mr George Gould, who was also responsible for the introduction of Suffolks to the country. Gould wanted a specialist breed to meet the requirements of a price schedule for prime lamb cuts which carried penalties for too much fat. The quick maturity and carcass shape of the Southdown and high flesh-to-fat ratio of the Suffolk were incorporated.

The South Suffolk became a registered breed in 1955 and is increasingly being used as a terminal sire for prime lamb production. Its high yielding carcass makes it ideal for further processing. The Down wool is used for fine apparels and hand knitting yarns.

### A Few Words by Stuart Sinclair, Breed President

The good result George Gould achieved from crossing the Southdown and the Suffolk is still as relevant today as it was back in the 30s.



South Suffolk breeders have always been proactive in looking to improve the breed and have carried out many progeny testing trials over the years. In today's environment, sheep have been shifted back onto harder country meaning rams have to produce lambs that are tough, have good dress out percentages and can bounce back from adversity. Farmers today are coping with extreme weather conditions and lower schedules on top of more compliance and animal health issues. We have seen many market movements over the years with the light weight lambs, then the WX grade with no fat (no meat) and now we are producing heavier carcasses with extra meat within a shorter time span.

There is always going to be a sheep industry; it is forever changing, and as breeders we have to move forward to keep profit in the industry. The South Suffolk is well suited for producing quality meaty carcasses well into the future. Our growth rates, yield and dress out percentages are very high and in today's environment these are important traits when getting lambs off the mother at lower weights while still retaining carcass weights at the works.

We have been through many testing years in the sheep industry, but South Suffolk breeders are ready to face the future knowing they have a very good product to sell.

## BREED CLASSIFICATION

A large, comparatively heavy, meat breed. Rams are used as terminal sires for cross-breeding for early prime lamb production.

**Location:** On all types of country throughout New Zealand in stud and commercial flocks.

Bodyweight
Ewes 65-90kg
Meat
High yielding carcass, ideal for further processing
Breeding/Lambing
130-160%
Numbers
94,000
Wool
Short, fine, down type <b>Fibre diameter:</b> 27-33microns <b>Staple length:</b> 75-100mm <b>Fleece weight:</b> Range 3-4kg. Average 3.5kg <b>Uses:</b> Apparel and knitting yarns



In 1991, the South Suffolk breed was one of six sheep breeds developed in NZ which featured on a set of NZ stamps put out by New Zealand Post. The others were all wool breeds; the Corriedale, Coopworth, Drysdale, Perendale and the Romney (the latter adapted, not developed, here).



**PGG Wrightson Livestock**



*Simon & Fiona Prouting receiving the Trophy for **Supreme Sheep** at the Royal Show, Hastings, 2016*

## **South Suffolks at the Hawkes Bay Royal Show Hastings – October 19,20,21 2016**

Judge A Evans, Masterton (Photo below)

South Suffolks featured strongly at the show, with a number of highlights, the culmination of which was Simon & Fiona Prouting's ram, High Plains 139/13 taking out the Supreme Champion sheep of the show. This sheep swept his way through the various classes, impressing the different judges as he went, a sure sign of his quality. He is a very correct sheep, a great example of the breed and with a lovely calm temperament. The other star performer was Doug Croy's ewe hogget, which won the Interbreed ewe hogget class and impressed a lot of good judges.

Also Doug's ewe with lamb at foot was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the interbreed class & his entrant in the "Miss Hawkes Bay" class for ewe hoggets was 3<sup>rd</sup>.



### **Results:**

Ram over 18 months shorn: S & F Prouting

Ram under 18 months shorn: S & F Prouting

Champion Ram: S & F Prouting

Ewe over 18 months, lamb/s at foot shorn: D Croy

Ewe under 18 months shorn: D Croy

Champion Ewe: D Croy (ewe with lamb)

Champion South Suffolk: S & F Prouting

## **STUD PROFILE #1**

### **"Glengyle" Flock #592, Dannevirke Owned by Finn McKenzie**

My name is Finn McKenzie. I am 14 years old and shifted to Dannevirke in May 2015 from Tolaga Bay. I am a born and bred east coast boy and really enjoy hunting. I am a year 9 student at Rathkeale College in Masterton.

Last year I attended Hereworth School as I was lucky enough to win the Old Boys scholarship. While there I became passionate about showing sheep, as a friend was showing his Poll Dorset sheep. We contacted Simon Prouting and he generously agreed to allow me to purchase some stud ewe lambs, they came from his parents Joe and Christene Prouting's stud, *Rocklea*, near Christchurch.

The ewe lambs came up to Simon and Fiona's property in January and I was able to choose 10 beautiful ewe lambs for my stud. They kindly allowed me to bring them back to his top rams to breed. This allows me to learn from someone who has so much experience and expertise in breeding such wonderful South Suffolk Sheep.

In February this year I chose 2 of my best ewe lambs to exhibit in our local Dannevirke A&P Show, this was my first show exhibiting sheep and I was very proud of No 123 as she won First prize, Champion and Supreme Champion in the Ewe Lamb Shorn Category.

In March I was part of the Wairarapa & Southern Hawkes Bay 'South Suffolk' Tour. This included 6 studs between Masterton and Dannevirke. I was able to present my ewe hogget's at Simon and Fiona's 'High Plains South Suffolk & Poll Dorset Stud'.


I have some lovely lambs at foot, but I am especially proud of No 22 as she has had triplets, 2 ewe lambs and one ram lamb, despite being attacked by a young huntaway and having to have her neck stitched up and receive antibiotic's.

For the future of my stud, I want to continue to learn more about South Suffolk Sheep; selecting and culling, characteristic's I want to build on, while slowly building up my flock and getting to as many shows as I can.



*#22 with her triplets*





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## STUD PROFILE: #2

### “Glendonald” Flock # 573

#### Glendonald Station Ltd, Bideford, Masterton

Glendonald Station is owned by Colin & Craig Oldfield and has been managed by Alan and Raewyn Evans since 1997. The property consists of 979ha of which approximately 860ha are effective.

Glendonald is located in the Bideford district, North-east of Masterton, it is a long (6.95km), narrow property, with three different roads bisecting it, and a further two roads on end boundaries. Helpful for stock movement but a lot of extra fences to maintain! Glendonald rises to 320m above sea level at it's highest and averages around 1100mm rainfall annually.

The property has a range of land classes from river flats, to terraces, rolling hill and medium/steep hill country, around 150ha would be cultivatable. Soil types are silt loams, mudstone and sandstone.

In addition to the South Suffolks, Glendonald normally carries 4500 Romney/Coopworth ewes, 1400 ewe hoggets (around 6-700 in lamb), 150 Angus & Angus/Hereford cows + 35 I.C. heifers, also 60-100 R2 trade cattle and 160 R1 cattle. We finish an increasing proportion of our lambs and cattle. Glendonald has a reputation for producing quality stock, which we are proud of, and strive to uphold.

Over recent years we have changed our pasture renovation policy, in common with many others, from growing summer greenfeed crops followed by new grass, to plantain/clover or pure clover on the better country. Our aim is to eventually increase this area, allowing us to finish the majority of our sheep and cattle progeny.

In an effort to diversify from basic sheep and beef farming, the South Suffolk stud was founded in 2004. We were using South Suffolks as a terminal sire already and were impressed with them, so decided to look at breeding them.

The original stud purchased belonged to Ronnie Thompson of Norsewood, and consisted of 93 M.A. ewes, 45 ewe hoggets and 71 ram hoggets. Further additions of ewes included 102 from the *Capethorne* stud at Methven (2006), then 143 ewes and 65 ewe hoggets from Sam Twigg at Waipukurau (2009). Last winter (2014) we purchased the local flocks of Mark McKenzie (*Maungahina*) and Rod Cranswick. In 2015 we purchased a further 58 ewes and 26 ewe lambs from Te Whanga Station. In 2016 we have mated 383 ewes, and will winter 120 ewe hoggets and 120 ram hoggets.

We aim to breed a consistent line of rams with strong, dark brown heads, displaying the wedge shaped body i.e. width in the hindquarters but with the shoulders well set in and not too far forward or prominent. A decent barrel or “spring of rib” is also important for constitution and capacity to harvest and convert feed. I tend to steer away from overly tall or long sheep as while they may have fantastic growth rates when everything is going their way, they are invariably slower to finish and tend to lack constitution. South Suffolks are all about early maturation, as any terminal sire should be, to allow feed to be directed back into the capital stock as soon as possible. For this reason I concentrate on rapid growth from birth to weaning to maximise weaning drafts and/or liveweight of stores. The cost of production of these lambs are low, once you start drenching, dipping, dagging/shearing lambs your margins are eroding and your workload increasing!

Legs and feet. To me these are the most important part of the sheep bar none, and always the first thing I look at. The best pedigree and performance data are no use at all if the sheep has structural problems. The sheep must walk squarely on all four feet, without “rolling” over sideways. If this happens feet will wear properly – the edges of the hooves will not grow excessively and will be self maintaining. The pasterns must be correct without too much or too little angle or flexibility. The claws of each foot need to be correctly shaped with a reasonable air space between them, to allow air to circulate and prevent dirt etc lodging there. This is important to reduce susceptibility to foot scald, which often leads to footrot. Any sheep which show an inclination to persistent scald are culled. We do not footbath breeding stock, and only put ram hoggets through the trough as a last resort, sometimes a wet humid spring will require this, but I struggle to recall the last time we needed to do it.

We do make use of the gene marker testing for susceptibility to footrot, this is helpful, but obviously is only relevant when the sheep is structurally sound as well.

During the early days of the stud I purchased sires from various sources, some had positive impacts, others did not. As the stud has progressed I have become more confident in the quality of our sheep, and am now comfortable in using homebred sires (two 2ths & 3 ram lambs 2016). This helps with the consistency of type and predictability of offspring. Outside sires are still used if they have traits we are looking for. I try to attend the major ram fairs in the North & South islands to keep up with what is available, plus making other scouting trips.

Due to persistent enquiries I relented in 2014 and purchased a Texel ram to use over a number of South Suffolk ewes. My main reservation is that the rams may not be dark enough to sufficiently colour mark their progeny, apart from that I think the cross should be a good one, and I know it has been successful before elsewhere.

Rams are sold on farm, generally in the later part of January/early February. This suits our workload with the commercial sheep. We do have stud quality rams available. We don't sell at ram fairs as I feel I can't justify the preparation required for this. Our main focus is top quality commercial rams.



*Simon Prouting, Alan Evans and Doug Croy in the South Suffolk Area at the Royal Show in October*



## STUD PROFILE: #3

### “Craig-Annat” Flock # 273

**Owned by Anne & Jim Berney**

*Craig-Annat* was founded in 1973 by Anne & Jim Berney with the purchase of thirty annual draft ewes from the proven stud of the late Jim Croy of Oxford Canterbury and that was followed by another twenty ewes the following year.

South Suffolks were chosen for their ability to handle the conditions in our area and produce a good quality carcase for the export market.

The stud runs one hundred and thirty south suffolk ewes along side two other smaller studs. Lambing averages 160%.

*Craig-Annat* runs from sea level with sandy flats to approximately 200 metres on the hill block that looks over the south eastern Pacific Ocean and is subject to cold south to south east weather, which is a test to lamb survival. The farm is four hundred hectares in size of which three hundred and thirty five hectares are leased to our son Michael and we farm sixty five hectares, although Michael grazes some of the undeveloped flats with cattle. The stud ewe hoggets run with Michael's romney ewe hoggets, which test their ability to handle tougher conditions.

Stud rams are sold at Gore Stud Fair in January. Commercial rams are sold on farm in January - February to South Otago clients and as far north as Dunedin. The topography where our rams go ranges from rolling downs to steep tussock hill country and bush burns where they have to preform and last. Stud rams are chosen with good strong heads, good bone, sound feet, and a good deep body, and full hind quarters. Many clients report results of lambs killing 18kgs plus lambs early in the season and also grading very well.

Some clients have been with us from our first ram selling season in 1974.

Below: *Craig Annat* Stud rams





## STUD PROFILE: #4



**“High Plains Flock #582**

**“Rocklea” Flock # 235**

**Owned by Simon & Fiona Prouting**

The *High Plains* Stud was established in 2008, after moving to Dannevirke from South Canterbury where we farmed in partnership with my parents. We are based in Weber, 43 km east of Dannevirke. We own 291ha and also lease 330ha, 15mins away, where we run our commercial operation. I have been involved with the South Suffolks since I was a child with my father with the *Rocklea* stud. Our *High Plains* stud was started off with *Rocklea* genetics.

We mated over 550 ewes this year; our hoggets are also mated. In 2016 we purchased the last of the *Rocklea* ewes due to Dad's retirement and have changed our *High Plains* prefix to *Rocklea*.

We have our own on farm Ram sale, which is held on the first Friday of December every year. We sell 130 ram hoggets at auction. All of our sheep are SIL recorded. Lambs are all recorded with a weaning weight and an autumn weight. The ram lambs are eye muscle scanned in March, so we can identify our early maturing sheep. All sires are DNA tested for footscores. All of our ram hoggets are run in one mob until a week before sale day. We try to produce moderate sized meaty sheep that will suit the North Island hill country. The stud is run in challenging conditions.

Our commercial clients come from Pahiatua, Hawkes Bay, Tairāhiti and Wanganui.

We are very passionate about the South Suffolks as a terminal sire - for their ease of lambing, easy identification, great carcass and high growth rate. We have so many of our clients comment on how their lambs weigh like lead and have had an increased weight in their kill sheet carcass

weight and very good yields, also the clients who use the store option have increased their store weights. We think this makes the South Suffolk the optimum terminal sire.



## RARE BREEDS SURVIVAL TRUST (UK)

(2016 Watchlist)

*Adult breeding females of rare sheep & current status in UK*

+ more than 5% increase; = Less than 5% down;  
- More than 5% down;

- 1) **Critical** – Nil
- 2) **Endangered** (300-500)  
+ Boreray
- 3) **Vulnerable** (500-900)  
= Devon & Cornwall Longwool  
- Leicester Longwool  
+ North Ronaldsay  
= Whitefaced Woodland
- 4) **At Risk** (900-1500)  
- Border Leicester  
+ Castlemilk Moorit  
- Cotswold  
+ Hill Radnor  
- Lincoln Longwool  
= Manx Laughtan  
= Portland  
= Soay  
+ Teeswater  
= Wensleydale
- 5) **Minority** (1500-3000)  
+ Balwen  
= Devon Closewool  
+ Dorset Down  
- Dorset Horn  
+ Greyfaced Dartmoor  
- Llanwenog  
+ Norfolk Horn  
= Oxford Down  
+ Whitefaced Dartmoor

In **New Zealand** the following breeds (of long standing, not recent imports) would fit these categories (2015 figures).

Note - there were some flocks with 'no return' listed

- 1) **Critical** (Below 300)  
Dorset Horn 150 ewes plus female young stock  
Ryeland 162 ewes plus female youngstock
- 2) **Endangered** (300-500)  
Hampshire 574 ewes plus female youngstock  
Lincoln 415 ewes plus female youngstock  
Shropshire 332 ewes plus female youngstock
- 3) **Vulnerable** (500-900)  
English Leicester 589 ewes plus female youngstock
- 4) **At Risk** (900-1500) Nil
- 5) **Minority** (1500-3000)  
Border Leicester 2424 ewes plus female youngstock

**Note that some of these breeds have varying numbers of unregistered purebreds in flocks throughout NZ.**

The figures demonstrate the need for assistance to maintain viable genetic stocks of the various breeds within NZ. Perhaps we should be lobbying the Government to turn over a Landcorp Farm for that purpose?

All these breeds are more than capable of supplying good works lambs, they are just not the most heavily advertised or commercialised breeds at present.

These breeds all have worthwhile traits. Some have been surpassed by crossbred progeny which have been used to form new breeds – eg Dorset Horn - Poll Dorset, however the original traits may have other uses not yet discovered.



## Microphthalmia in Texel Sheep

**Recently there was an article in the “Rural News” on the incidence of Microphthalmia in the Texel Sheep breed. I contacted Alistair McLeod, an NZSBA member mentioned in the article, and asked him to put together the following information so commercial sheep farmers can be made aware of the steps taken by the members of Texel New Zealand, as responsible breeders, to ensure that no sheep that may carry the gene are sold.**

The more that people are aware of the Microphthalmia issue and aware also that Texel Breeders have a responsible plan in place, the better.

Even though many Texel Breeders have been testing for a number of years, about five years ago Lincoln University and Texel NZ decided to adopt an accreditation programme to further encourage the eradication of microphthalmia from within the breed.

The problem with this disease, apart from the obvious blindness for the animals, is that it is caused by a recessive gene and can lie dormant in a flock for generations, especially down the dam line.

Microphthalmia, which means animals are born with little or no eyes, is not only found in Texel and Texel-cross sheep, but other species including dogs, cats and humans.

With sheep, a breeder may be completely unaware that they have a carrier animal in their flock before testing, until eventually they are mated across another carrier. When a pair of carrier animals breed, there is a 25% chance of the two recessive genes lining up in their progeny and producing blind lambs. There is also the 50% chance that their progeny will also be carriers and carry the gene on into future generations.

The risk of using un-tested animals in either a Texel stud or cross breeding operation means microphthalmia can remain in the background for many generations before finally showing itself, hence the need to have animals tested and eradicate the disease from flocks now.

The NZ Texel Society stipulates that any sires or genetic material used within a Texel Stud, will be microphthalmia tested. This is mandatory. This gives peace of mind that the sire will not be spreading the disease.

Further to this, Lincoln has offered the DNA test to breeders within the accreditation scheme at a reduced cost, encouraging them to test their dams as well. Using ‘clear’ rams is only half the solution and a guess is not good enough. A stud that returns microphthalmia free tests for all animals may then be accredited ‘Microphthalmia Free’ and be advertised as such in the NZ Sheepbreeders Flock Book.



Anyone thinking about buying Texel or Texel-cross sires should ask their ram breeder what their flock’s microphthalmia status is; do they test all their sires; is their entire flock accredited microphthalmia free?

*Alistair McLeod*

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### ROYAL SHOW, HASTINGS (Supreme listed elsewhere)

While at the show the Editor watched some of the Dorper judging and later spoke to their Judge (pictured right), Mr Wicus Cronje He came from South Africa but now lives in Australia.

His family’s flock in S.A. is the oldest flock internationally, established in 1956.

*Below: Dorper rams in for judging at the Royal Show*



*Below: Bryce Stevenson judging Dorset Downs at Royal*







**Canterbury Show Supreme Wool Breed & Supreme Meat Breed**

Photo: Penni Loffhagen

L-R: Rom Small, *Erewhon* Merino stud; Warrick James, Canterbury Show President; BNZ rep; Dave Clouston; Stuart & Nic Sinclair, *Little River* Suffolk stud

## Canterbury Show Champions



**Supreme and Grand Champion Dorper**

Exhibited by Charles Miller-Brown & Emma Simpson



Lucy Burrows & her **Supreme Champion Shropshire**



Keith & Ruth Berry, **Supreme Texel**

Dorper & Shropshire photos: Penni Loffhagen

Texel photo: IW McCall

**A BIG THANK YOU** to these two  
for their photos - Editor



## SOUTH SUFFOLKS IN AUSTRALIA

Ian Turner, editor of "The Muster", the magazine of the Australian Breeders of Stud Sheep, kindly supplied me with the following recent photos.

### 2016 CANBERRA ROYAL SHOW



#### Champion South Suffolk ram

Pictured with students Blake Lee-McKie, Ned Compton and Coby Jackson, Billabong school  
(Photo courtesy Wayne Jenkins)

### 2016 PERTH ROYAL SHOW



With the Supreme British Breed exhibit and Grand Champion British Breed ram, a South Suffolk, from the Iveston stud, Williams, is Iveston's Stacey Bingham.  
(Photo courtesy of Jodie Rintoul, Farm Weekly Newspaper)

## 2016 ROYAL A&P SHOW – SHEEP SUPREME CHAMPIONS

**Dorper Supreme Champion**  
Kilmarnock Dorpers

**Shropshire Supreme Champion**  
N McDonald & S Kingsford

**Southdown Supreme Champion**  
Jocelyn Charleston

**Cheviot Supreme Champion**  
JR Spellman

**Perendale Supreme Champion**  
JR Spellman

**Poll Dorset Supreme Champion**  
AA & DJ Clements

**Ryeland Supreme Champion**  
HPC McKenzie & W Potts

**Dorset Down Supreme Champion**  
AA & HN Hallgarth

**Supreme English Leicester**  
Gavin Henrickson & Co



#### Royal Show Supreme Champion Shropshire Ram. Rangitukia H41/14

Bred & exhibited by Nan McDonald and Sue Kingsford, Carterton, Flock #301



# **MAINTENANCE OF SEMEN COLLECTION CENTRE (SCC) ABILITY TO EXPORT RAM SEMEN TO AUSTRALIA.**

The introduction of semen and embryo from UK (2016) has complicated the ability to collect semen from rams for export to Australia. Semen collection centres must, therefore, restrict ram entry onto centres to maintain ability to qualify semen collections. These measures are a short term procedure for the 2017 autumn season.

## **Proposal**

1. No sheep be introduced unless it has property confirmed freedom from contact with imported germplasm or progeny derived from that germplasm.
2. If rams enter Centre by end November then breeders will have an easier task to authenticate their freedom from exposure to UK germplasm or progeny derived from it.
3. All donors for collections to Australia to be given priority. They will enter SCC, fulfil any production target requested before any other ram arrives.

**Once donors arrive without necessary paperwork verifying their freedom from Scrapie contact (be it direct or indirect contact) the Centre will effectively have no ability to offer the service of semen collection to Australia.**

In the interests of encouraging any semen production for export to Australia breeding centres should seriously consider taking delivery of rams NOW. There will be grazing costs till production but the ease of compliance to the breeder will be significant. This approach will only be for the 2017 autumn season.

## **Post 2017**

With the passage of time there will be several interactions which, collectively or individually will change the current situation with Australia –

1. Australian sheep breeders will want the milking sheep (and other) genetics so there will be pressure on DAWR (Australian Department of Agriculture and Water Resources equivalent to our NZ MPI) to moderate their stance.

2. MPI will be continuing to liaise with DAWR over things like What is an accepted sterilising routine for equipment? What about personnel and footwear cleaning disinfection routines? All such contacts will keep the topic in the forefront of DAWR thoughts and maintain our dialogue with them.

3. Our ongoing surveillance for scrapie in sheep brains submitted by veterinarians will afford our MPI with the continuous freedom statement for this disease in NZ. MPI have indicated they are NOT pursuing a path where descendants of UK germplasm are targeted eg after 5yo.

4. The DAWR stance is not considered to be a fair one based on current research and observations. However, it is not thought that it reaches a threshold which demands political interference at eg OIE level.

5. It will be impossible for SCC's to maintain exports of germplasm to Australia without compromising production for other countries such as South America. The only way for ongoing ovine semen exports to continue would be if individual breeders either collaboratively or individually established their own on farm SCC's. In other words, commercially the only option for commercial SCC's is to forget any semen production for Australia until DAWR changes its requirements to accommodate our position.

6. My observation is that unlike "On farm SCC's for Production of Cervine Semen" there may not be enough income from ovine semen sales to justify on farm SCC's for Ovine Semen.

7. Options that could possibly be pursued are either –

- a. A SCC be able to be divided to allow for ram semen production for Australia to be isolated from production from rams for other countries.

## **OR**

- b. A SCC sets itself up to allow for Australian production at the expense of not having the option for production to other countries

8. Current MPI thinking is that, under the present DAWR ruling we will be unable to certify any sheep germplasm shipments to Australia beyond this forthcoming season. Their belief is that the indirect contact requirement is impossible to certify once the progeny from the initial shipments are dispersed into the wider sheep population. I have no argument with this as it seems realistic but it does point to the only other



option of “Closed Flock Policy and on farm SCC’s” by individual breeders.

The small window of opportunity to collect semen for export to Australia from currently registered Semen Collection Centres is rapidly diminishing. Any sheep breeder considering semen collections for export to Australia will need to act now to have any chance at all of doing so. The options are:

1. Make arrangements to move onto a SCC now and so avoid the certification difficulties associated with “indirect contact” with UK sheep imports.
2. Either individually or collectively set up an “On Farm” semen collection centre where selected donors can be run under strict quarantine. Such facilities are under MPI control with associated compliance procedures and costs.

The alternative scenario is to wait 5 years during which time any possible scrapie introduction will have been verified or, conversely, its non existence in sheep in NZ will have been confirmed by our national surveillance scheme. By then it would be hoped that there will be a revised approach by Australian DAWR to allow germplasm imports once more from New Zealand.

Meanwhile ovine semen collected and in officially recognised storage prior to the UK imports 2016 will be eligible for export to Australia.

**J F McPhee BVSc**

Centre Veterinarian

Xcell Breeding Services Ltd

021 453 406

29Nov2016

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## A BIT OF HISTORY

**Marlborough Express, 24 June, 1902**  
(*National Library, Papers Past*)

**MERINO CUP COMPETITION.**  
Mr C. Goulter’s Sheep

In the New Zealand Farmer for March appears an article reviewing the details of the merino sheep competition of the Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Association. “The several fleeces exhibited at the rooms of the Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Association,” says the Farmer, “are composed for the most part of well-grown, dense wool of good colour. Very considerable difference of opinion

exists as to whether the better test for the purposes of this competition would be the determining of the money value of a single fleece as at present, or to determine the average money value of the fleeces in the pen of each breeder who enters for the competition under the same conditions and tests as now exist. The results of the competition just decided show that very different results would probably follow by adopting the latter plan.” The Farmer goes on to give the tabulated results showing the eight highest awards under the single fleece test, and compares these with a table showing what would have been the order of merit had the test been for the highest average value of the scoured fleeces in each competing pen. “It thus appears that under the single fleece test only one of the three sheep belonging to the New Zealand and Australian Land Company was among the best eight, and that while the Company own the animal that produced the most valuable fleece, yet the pen which contained the best animal ranks only as fourth in the competition, while the owner of the most valuable pen – Mr Charles Goulter – came only fifth in order of merit with his best sheep under the single fleece test. In sheep-breeding uniformity in producing the best type of animal is an important matter. The closer all animals approach to the highest type the better for the flock. In this competition the end in view is the production of the most valuable wool only, and for this purpose taking the eight pens the difference in value between the most valuable and the least valuable fleece in the order of merit of each pen is: - (the table following places Mr C. Goulter’s exhibit in the first place). For this competition the Canterbury A. and P. Association gives a subscription cup value not less than £50, and a gold medal valued at £5. Under the single fleece test Mr Charles Goulter’s sheep are not eligible for either prize, yet in this competition his pen of sheep were not only the most valuable of all the pens, but the animals in the pen were of the most uniform quality.”



Photo: J Berney

**Supreme South Suffolk at the 150<sup>th</sup> Show, Balclutha; owned and exhibited by Trevor and Doris McCall, Myola Stud**

# How To make More Profit From Your Lambs - How On Farm Factors

Influence Saleable Meat Yield [Abridged]

[www.beeflambnz.com](http://www.beeflambnz.com)

*For complete article with graphs/charts google "Beef+LambNZ saleable meat yield". (That's how I got there! Editor)*

How on-farm factors influence saleable meat yield  
**FITT FINAL REPORT 13FT05 Year of trial: 2012/13** Group that proposed the trial: Progressive Meats HB Farmers 1st XV Region: Hawke's Bay Trial initiator: Stuart Ellingham.

## KEY 'TAKE HOME' MESSAGES

- Using meat processing plant feedback, variations in slaughter characteristics resulting from on-farm operations across the lamb supply season should be assessed in order to further maximise returns
- Further use of factors such as birth-rank and sex could potentially add dollars to the bottom line. For instance, castration of male lambs under a certain weight at tailing could offer better yields during the March and April period of supply
- Breed and feed type play a key role in optimising carcass weight, level of fatness in the carcass (GR) and saleable meat yield; however it would require a more structured trial design to quantify the effects of these factors
- Close liaison with both ram breeders and seed companies can ensure the optimal breeding programme and finishing system is in place for individual environments. Ultimately, a more integrated approach which considers breeding, feeding and management could remove some of the detrimental seasonal variations experienced in parts of the supply curve consistent across years.

## INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

A collective group of dynamic farmers who supply lambs to Progressive Meats Ltd come together on a regular basis, together with representatives from both the processor and the market. The primary objective of the group is to provide a forum where all aspects of lamb supply can be discussed openly to assist improvement and innovation through the entire supply chain. Progressive Meats Ltd in Hastings has an objective measuring system in place to measure saleable meat yield from both individual animals and lines of animals. For the second consecutive year the group has collected carcass records to create a lamb (or carcass) resource between them of about 50,000 lambs (across two supply seasons). To date there has been very little objective data made available to the general farming public as to how on-farm factors can influence or alter saleable meat yield.

## KEY AIMS – WHAT WAS THE PROJECT TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

The aims of this FITT project were to; • Further investigate the feed, breed, birth rank and sex influences on carcass weight, level of actual carcass fatness (GR) and saleable meat yield using two seasons of lamb supply records • Analyse two separate lamb supply seasons to identify any significant variations between the two years in carcass weight, level of actual carcass fatness (GR) and saleable meat yield (October to September).

## METHODOLOGY – WHAT WAS DONE IN THE TRIAL?

Lambs were committed to slaughter from 15 different farming environments over two consecutive lamb supply seasons. Information was recorded on farm prior to slaughter. Postslaughter lambs were measured for carcass weight, actual level of fatness in the carcass and saleable meat yield. 50,000 individual records were collated. Records without six primal measurements included in the saleable meat yield calculation were omitted from the dataset so only 42,000 records were used in the actual analysis. Variance was analysed for all data although the statistical models fitted varied for the different traits.

## KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The results from the second year of this FITT trial have been very consistent with the previous year. The key findings and recommendations from the two years are:

- Ewe lambs were fatter, on average, at the same age than males (see figure 3), and no significant difference between carcass weight and saleable meat yield between the two sexes. Current literature would suggest most differences between sexes in dressing out % would be explained by the level of carcass fatness. Female lambs need to be slaughtered earlier than their male counterparts if a conservative range of acceptable fat cover is in place within the processing specification.
- Identifying different sexes (particularly of terminal sired lambs) and treating them differently by altering feed types and timing of sales over the season can have a measured effect on the bottom line. For example, ewe lambs should be separated at weaning, condition score monitored closely, and these lambs killed earlier and at lower live weights than the males to avoid lower SMY.
- Castrating small male lambs at docking and leaving the bigger male lambs entire to be killed before the autumn avoids a drop off in saleable meat yield during the autumn period.
- Single-born lambs were heavier, fatter and had lower saleable meat yields than twins. This is consistent with other literature. Single born lambs should be slaughtered earlier to achieve better saleable meat yields. To do this a method of identifying lamb birth rank in the farming system is needed



and further investigations to determine the optimal age at slaughter for single-born lambs.

- Overall breed differences for carcass weight, level of fatness and saleable meat yields were recorded. These results are consistent with other literature but caution is needed 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 Kilograms and Millimetres SMY Grass Fed SMY Lucerne when interpreting them as there would be different management systems implemented within and across all suppliers in both seasons.

- There were significant differences in carcass weight, GR and saleable meat yield across groups of lambs fed different feed types. There was only data available for some time points across the supply season for different finishing systems which made analysis difficult. At some time points lambs fed Lucerne had better saleable meat yields in comparison to lambs finished in a grass-based system but this was not consistent over the entire season. To quantify the differences across the entire season a more structured investigation to evaluate the effect of finishing system or forage type on all traits would need to be carried out.

- Across the entire supply season (October to September) there are some considerable variations (decreases) in saleable meat yield particularly through the months of March and April consistent across both years (see figure 2). These variations are probably due to a combination of declining feed quality and lambs reaching sexual maturity.

Evaluating what can be done in your own farming system to minimise a decrease in yield could result in a worthwhile addition to the bottom line.

## HOW WILL THE GROUP APPLY THE PROJECT RESULTS TO THEIR BUSINESSES?

More work needs to be done to fully understand breed and feed variations and the correlation between dressing out % and SMY before changes on farm can be recommended. This is hoped to be the next area of investigation before applying the existing results fully on farm.

**MORE INFORMATION** Aimee Charteris 021 903 199  
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To find out more about other FITT projects, freephone Beef + Lamb New Zealand on 0800 BEEFLAMB or visit <http://beeflambnz.com/fitt>

*This publication is made possible by sheep and beef farmer investment in the industry. It should be noted FITT projects are not necessarily the result of standard scientific practice. They are examples of small-scale research investigating a new idea to solve a problem or develop an opportunity on farm. Many FITT projects are the precursor to further Research & Development investment. Beef + Lamb New Zealand is not liable for any damage suffered as a result of reliance on the information contained in this document. Any reproduction is welcome with Beef + Lamb New Zealand acknowledged as the source.*

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### Shearwell New Zealand Ltd

The best-selling RFID sheep tag in Britain and Canada, known as the SET tag, is now available in New Zealand.

Shearwell New Zealand supplies direct to farmers and offers livestock tags, EID readers, software, weigh crates and drafters.

The one-piece sheep tag has a wrap-around design that's light enough to be inserted into new-born lambs and strong enough to last for life. It was designed to give the best possible retention. The latest trial work in Canada shows 99% retention in 50,000 tags over a 3-year period. With these exceptional retention rates, SET tags are gaining popularity in Australia, Brazil, USA, Canada and now New Zealand.

Shearwell's revolutionary tag design allows this lifetime tag to be used as both a visual identification tag and a low-cost method of electronically identifying sheep. The tags can be applied to sheep at any age, and are also suitable for identification of other species. They are available in 11 colours (yellow, green, white, orange, grey, blue, purple, pink, black, red and brown).

Another useful tool is the Shearwell Stick Reader which has been developed for speed of use and accuracy. One of its helpful features are the green and red lights, green to show the animal is being read for the first time and red if it has already been scanned which is a real plus when pen reading.

This is the ultimate farmer-friendly tool – simple to use, rugged and versatile. It reads all types of EID ear tags and boluses, and can hold up to 16,000 records! It links by Bluetooth to mobile printers and weigh-heads. Another unique feature is the ability to interface with both android and iOS apps, which means it will greatly assist farmers to meet their NAIT requirements.

The Shearwell Weigh Crate or Automatic Drafter takes the pain out of handling large groups of sheep. The race reader and digital weigh-head are linked to a handheld stock recorder so data collection is easy, fast and accurate.

Knowing the pressures on costs, Shearwell is committed to bringing value for money to the marketplace. Talk to us about the best solution for your farm.

For more information go to [www.shearwell.co.nz](http://www.shearwell.co.nz) or call 0800 79 99 89.

## A Bit More History

Evening Post, 17 Jan., 2014 [National Library Papers Past]

### AMERICAN WOOL

#### COMPETITION OF FOREIGNERS

#### REMARKS CRITICISED

(By Telegraph. – Press Association. – Copyright.)

Received January 17, 11a.m.)

SALT LAKE CITY, 15<sup>TH</sup> Jan.

The national Woolgrowers' Convention adversely criticised the President's attitude in connection with free wool. The secretary declared that only by the adoption of the most scientific methods could America hope to compete with foreign imports.

The conference criticised the action of the government in placing wool on the free list. Mr Hagenbarth, president, declared that the American flockmaster would be reduced to compete on unequal terms with the half-clad savage of South Africa, the peon of South America, or the skilled producer of New Zealand and Australia. American breeders should pay a higher price for purebred animals, and improve the breed, as was done in Australia and New Zealand; where Americans paid £20 for an individual ram, Australians and New Zealanders paid from £200 to £1,000.

### **THE NEXT "FEATURE BREED" WILL BE MERINOS**

If you would like to be part of this section, **photos, advertisements and stud histories are accepted at any time.**

Email or post to the Editor – see front page for address details.

**The closing date for next issue of the newsletter will be 20<sup>th</sup> February for the March 2017 Newsletter.**

**Published by NZ Sheepbreeders' Association**

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