

## Hello Members,

I trust the season has been treating you all reasonably well. We've had a couple of cracking days here recently; warm, mild and a definite harbinger of what we hope the Spring months will bring. Of course Spring is usually unpredictable and we take what we are given and hope we have covered all the likely bases!

Later in the newsletter is an article about the Fiji Fantastic breed of sheep and how it came about. I did not even think of Fiji having sheep – how ignorant of me! I have a nephew who is a long term resident of Papua New Guinea and Papua New Guinea firm, BNG Trading Co Ltd are looking at various breeds to set up a dedicated sheep farming operation using Fiji Fantastic ewes as a base. Robin knows I am a passionate sheep person and emailed me a brochure that lays out a strategy for achieving this and comparing the returns with those of running beef cattle. Interesting reading, indeed. If any of you would like to see it, I can email it to you, if you contact me as below.

I have been debating with myself the merits of maternal breeds of sheep and cattle trying to be “all things to all people” and keep “beefing” up their meat/wool producing qualities when the main things one needs in maternal breed females are primarily good conformation, fertility, mothering ability and survivability; which also means the dam has the innate ability to look after herself – eg enough fat cover to keep her and her growing foetus through winter/spring and to enable her to milk well (and to provide flavoursome meat when she, in turn, is slaughtered for food).

Certainly one needs the best return one can achieve from the surplus breeding animals of either sex, but once replacement numbers have been met, terminal sires with the required fast growth, muscling and dressing out percentage give the best return.

New Zealand now has a plethora of terminal breeds which will all fill a niche somewhere in the market depending on the climate and topography of the home farms. Again I doubt that one breed will fill all requirements and perhaps it behoves us to realise that there needs to be enough flexibility for all ram/bull breeders to have a share of the pie rather than one breed getting it all.

*Helen McKenzie*  
**Editor**

☎ (06) 372 7842 or

Email: [rosemarkie@wise.net.nz](mailto:rosemarkie@wise.net.nz)

## ASSOCIATION NEWS & VIEWS

### From The President

Another three months of the year gone. How time flies. While writing these notes I look out the window to constant snow showers and hills white down to sea level after a very mild June and July. It is hoped the weather doesn't pack up in August and September and we get a good spell of weather for lambing.



Scanning in the South Otago area was reported to be down 10% on average after a very dry autumn. Hope results are better elsewhere. Lamb and mutton prices look to be firm until at least to the end of the year. Let's hope this continues throughout the full season.

I'm really concerned about what is happening to our farming sector constantly being bombarded by new rules from the government sector. I'm referring to methane and nitrogen taxes, tax on larger vehicles which farmers, builders, contractors etc need for their businesses; simply getting at rural people again. Then there is the billion tree plan. Are these measures going to have an effect on the world? I would say no unless everyone else does their part. One would wonder why a keen young person would want to take on farming in these circumstances and what effect it is going to have on the future of our sheep industry.

The ewe hogget awards were held in Christchurch on 26<sup>th</sup> June and an interesting night was had by all. The overall winners were Brian and Anna Coogan from Taihape. Congratulations to them. A field day will be held there possibly sometime in November. The speaker for the night was Prof. Jon Hickford from Lincoln University who gave a very interesting speech on carbon credits.

Our council meeting was held on 25<sup>th</sup> July at Christchurch. Quite a number of apologies were received which was disappointing. We welcomed some new members, one being a representative of the Romney breed, which has now joined with the Sheepbreeders' Association. Three other breeds also joined: The Southern Cross, Ile de France, and the Gotland Sheep.

A letter from The Royal Agriculture Society was received regarding unregistered sheep being shown at shows. There were complaints from registered breeders about this. Sheep must be registered with an affiliated member of the Royal Agriculture Society to be eligible to enter. There can be an unregistered section for local classes eligible for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and

3<sup>rd</sup> place. The sheep need to be kept separate from any registered breeds and they do not qualify for championships.

The age for a young breeder starting a stud has been lifted from 18 years to 21 years to qualify for zero fees. This is to try and encourage new young breeders..

It was pleasing our Treasurer, Ian, had a surplus balance this year and our budgets look to be in order. Thanks Ian.

It was decided that the NZ Sheepbreeders' Association will financially back "Sheep 125" to be held at Wanaka in 2021. We also held a Sheep 125 meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> July in Christchurch. Here we discussed progress on Accommodation, Itinerary, 125 Dinner and Pricing.

We have a small amount of Sponsorship at the moment but if you can think of anyone keen to sponsor let us know. We are keen to hear from anyone who might enlighten us on a good speaker for the dinner night, also suggestions on a MC. Our next meeting is probably at Christchurch Show week so if you have any suggestions get them to us before then.

The NZ Sheepbreeders' Association AGM was held after the council meeting. All office bearers remain the same as last year. This will be my 3<sup>rd</sup> and final year as President. Thanks to Helen for editing Sheep NewZ. It is always interesting to read.

As I sign off I wish all breeders a good lambing and a successful season.

*Jim Berney*  
**President NZSBA**



### **From The General Manager**

Jim has probably already covered what went on at our recent Council Meeting, but I need to mention a couple of things; being the Youth Initiative, and admitting Romney New Zealand to the Association commencing April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020. It was also refreshing to see new Councillors in attendance representing their breeds.

**Youth Initiative** – this is a very encouraging decision by Council that youth are now encouraged to establish studs and pay zero fees until they reach the age of 22. As well as this, members should also actively encourage these young breeders, by offering sheep and advice. So to be totally effective it should be zero fees **along with support**.

**Romney New Zealand** – very encouraging to have Hugh Taylor representing the Romneys at the Council meeting. The Romney breed was with us at the commencement of the New Zealand Sheep Breeders' Association in 1895 and have now rejoined us.

**Mr Peter Cosgriff** – It was great seeing Peter Cosgriff at our Council AGM. Peter, a Life Member, was our Treasurer for over 33 years, and his business acumen was very

beneficial to the Association. He continues to be accessible for advice for both myself and our current Treasurer Ian.

**Shearwell and Datamars ( includes Zee Tags and Tru-Test)** - Now offering discounted tags to members. When ordering please state you are a member of NZSBA, and they will send the product to you, but will send your invoice to our office, and we will then invoice you. I am also having discussions with Allflex.

**Breed Reports** – are always interesting, as all breed representatives hear what other breeds are doing. Promotional ideas, challenges they face, conferences, exchanging of ideas, and so on. A group of Border Leicester breeders had only just returned from Bendigo. There is a Merino Congress in Cromwell next year and planning is underway.

**Waimate High School** now has a Corriedale Stud. Members donated mated ewes to the newly formed stud. A tremendous initiative from the Corriedale breeders entering into a partnership with a school.

**NZ Ewe Hogget Competition** – this competition, now in its 23<sup>rd</sup> year, is in a tenuous position as we currently require 2 sponsors in order to continue with it next year. Sponsors are difficult to acquire and then to hold on to. Discussions are pending with various organisations.

**NZSBA Sponsors** - many thanks to our NZSBA sponsors: Shearwell, PGGWrightson Livestock, and AgriHQ, and to Helen for formulating the newsletters. Interesting, through my travels with breeders this year many have indicated they enjoy reading the newsletters, so it is great to hear this feedback.

**Brucellosis Accreditation**- I understand this newsletter will have information on Brucellosis Accreditation. Some breeders have contacted me regarding their vets having no idea as to the procedure. The Vet Association continue to inform their members, and members should advise their vets to contact their Association.

There is also a Brucellosis Advisory Board which meets annually of which we are represented.

**Late Annual Returns** – yes the old perennial. Some members feel completing their Annual Return is just too hard. When I am told this I ask them how many ewes were put to the ram this year, and what ram(s) were used ? Done. Not too hard is it.....

**Lambing** – Good lambing weather should hopefully equate with low numbers of lamb deaths.

*Greg Burgess*  
General  
Manager NZSBA

## Feature Breed



### BELTEX NEW ZEALAND

#### ORIGIN & HISTORY (Thanks to UK Beltex website)

The Beltex breed, or the Belgian Texel, is simply a double muscled Texel, developed initially at the University of Liege. Two Professors, Roger Hanset and Pascal Leroy initially worked with industry sheep breeders from the 1970s and concentrated on selection from the culards (double muscled) animals.

They were imported into the UK in 1989. Breeder Tom Ashton and Dr Mike Tempest formed the Bel-Tex partnership which imported the first Beltex and gave the breed its name. It wasn't long before the first flocks were established in Scotland and Northern Ireland as well. The UK Breed Society was founded in 1991.

#### BELTEX BREED DESCRIPTION (UK)

Medium size, wedge shaped sheep with double muscled hindquarters. Terminal sire, producing superior-muscled lambs. Fine bone is a desirable characteristic.

Bodyweight
<b>Ewes:</b> Up to 60kg <b>Rams:</b> Up to 80 kg
Meat
Superior muscling in carcass, lean. High meat to bone ratio.
Breeding/Lambing
Generally easy lambing. Lambs vigorous.
Numbers
Low numbers as yet in NZ as the breed is establishing with mainly imported embryos.
Wool
Tight, dense, of medium staple length, affording good protective birth coat to lamb. Creamy, 31-34 micron.

#### Beltex New Zealand

(Article provided by Jock Allison, August 2019)

The Beltex importation into New Zealand is a joint venture between Blair & Sara Gallagher, Jock & Hilary Allison and John & Lynley Tavendale. The flock is run at "Rangiatea" near Mt Somers in the Canterbury Foothills.

Now the Belgian Texels or Beltex are all double muscled as are many or most of the Texels in Holland. Interestingly none of the Texels imported from Denmark and Finland to New Zealand in the mid 1980s exhibited this characteristic. The breed was first imported into the UK from Belgium in 1989, and has developed from there to a position where the Beltex crosses are the preferred breed for the British butchers, and now win all or most of the carcass competitions. There is increasing adoption in industry, and Beltex x Texel tups (as they call rams in the UK) are being increasingly used. The pronounced muscling of the purebred Beltex can be seen in the photos below.



*Beltex rams from Neale & Janet McQuistan's Airyolland stud.*



*Beltex Shearling rams (rising 2-tooths) at Carlisle ready for sale, 2018, Airyolland stud.*

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"Fostering the improvement of all sheep breeds and providing a unified body whose collective voice has a beneficial effect on the total New Zealand sheep industry."



Importation from the UK only became possible in 2016. It wasn't possible to import in the period from 1978, after the disastrous end to an importation of several breeds (Texel, Finnish Landrace, East Friesian etc.) from the UK in 1973, which ended with a scrapie outbreak in 1978. All the imported animals and their progeny were destroyed.

Research re whether it was possible for the disease of most concern, scrapie, to be transmitted with embryos or semen had moved on since the importation of East Friesian sheep in 1992 from Sweden. With that importation, only progeny from "washed" embryos from the imported ewes were allowed exit from quarantine after 3 years and a negative bioassay for scrapie. (Previously it had been 5 years for quarantine for the Scandinavian imports in the mid 1980s). The bioassay involved the recovery of lymph node material from mesenteric fat (gut fat) from the imported ewes, making a homogenate of that which was injected directly into the brains of kid goats. If there was scrapie agent in the imported animals, then the kid goats would be expected to show the disease within about 12 months according to the scientific literature.

All was well, and after 3 years still no scrapie had turned up in the kid goats and the animals were released to industry in March 1996.

A detailed Risk Analysis from MAF completed in April 2011, and reviewed world-wide, concluded that it was a minimal and acceptable risk to import sheep embryos and or semen without quarantine, in comparison with the 3 to 5 years quarantine required for importation of sheep previously. This removed the huge expense and time required to import and again made Europe and the UK a possibility for importation.

Blair Gallagher had contacted me 10 years previously and asked what were the requirements to import Beltex from the UK, and I informed him that firstly it wasn't possible from the UK, and secondly if it was, that he could expect to spend about \$2 million (the cost of the East Friesian importation) by the time he got them out of quarantine. This was enough for him to lose interest.

Strangely MPI archived the 2011 Risk Analysis, but eventually after repeated questioning, dug it out and developed a generic Import Health Standard (IHS) for sheep from any country. With the demand for new sheep milking genetics (Both East Friesian from the UK and the Lacaune from France) the specific country import protocols were developed, and immediately when these came available Blair Gallagher and Jock and Hilary left for the UK in July 2016, to scope the possibility for imports.

Our first visit was to a slaughter plant, the Scott Beef plant at Annan in Southern Scotland, which specialised in Beltex cross lambs to meet the specifications of the demanding ethnic market in Belgium and other European countries

(Belgium has a 43% Muslim population). Confronted by a whole chiller full of carcasses we were blown away at the muscling and carcass conformation of these ½ Beltex carcasses as seen in the picture below ....



*Beltex cross carcasses at the "Scott Beef: Abattoir, Annan, Scotland*



*Purebred Beltex Carcasses at Silver Fern's Pareora Plant, 2017, very pronounce muscling.*

Animal Breeding Europe's UK CEO, Geraint Thomas, then took us down to the Buckle's Beltex stud at Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria, and we discussed whether we could lease some ewes for embryo recovery later in the season. It was very late in the year and we had to make up our minds whether to proceed or not.

Blair returned to New Zealand and Hilary and I continued on to the Carlisle Beltex sale where some 1,200 Beltex were sold over two days. Carlisle is the venue for the premier Beltex sale, also for many other breeds. The UK sheep industry is very "show orientated", with little adoption of the use of production records for breed improvement; a bit like New Zealand back in the 1950s. Having said that, sheep are produced in magnificent condition, probably too fat, for the shows and auctions. Prices however were very strong and

we saw a ram lamb bred by the Buckles (our initial source flock) sell for 25,000 guineas.



*In the UK Sheep Breeding is dominated by Showing, and Auctions. The muscling of these Beltex animals is clear.*

The next day a 2-tooth ram sold for 60,000 guineas (guinea = 21 shillings or NZ\$2.00). Breeder averages for ram lambs



were in the 1,000 to 6,000 guineas range.  
*Jack Buckle with Broxyty Boxer, sold at Carlisle for 25,000 guineas, August 2017.*

#### 2017 CT Scanning of Ram Lambs, Breed Averages, Scottish Agricultural College (SAC), Edinburgh, Scotland.

Breed	Flocks	Lambs	kg	Fat (%)	Muscle (%)	Bone (%)	Total kg	KO%	EMA / cm <sup>2</sup>	EMA Ratio *
Charollais	15	93	63.0	7.1 (23)	18.4 (60)	5.3 (17)	30.8	48.9	30.4	0.48
Hampshire	13	77	56.5	7.5 (27)	14.6 (56)	4.5 (17)	26.6	46.8	27.4	0.48
Suffolk	10	81	60.3	6.2 (21)	16.4 (60)	5.0 (18)	27.6	45.5	28.1	0.47
Texel	35	286	56.4	4.9 (18)	17.9 (66)	4.6 (17)	27.4	48.5	28.8	0.51
Beltex 2017	2	16	46.6	3.0 (11)	18.7 (71)	4.7 (18)	26.4	56.6	28.8	0.62
Beltex 2016	4	33	45.7	2.7 (10)	18.6 (73)	4.3 (17)	25.6	55.8	28.6	0.63
Beltex 2015	4	34	47.9	3.6 (13)	19.2 (71)	4.5 (16)	27.3	56.8	28.1	0.59

\*cm<sup>2</sup> / kg live weight

Note : Beltex ram lambs a) **8%+** higher killing out percentage, b) **5 to 17%** higher meat yield in the carcass, c) **12 to 30%** higher EMA / kg of live weight.



▲ *Beltex lambs 3 months at Gallagher's "Rangiatea" stud, November 2017.*



▲ *7 week old Beltex lambs on Perendale surrogate ewes, October 2017.*

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In November and December of 2016, two rounds of embryo recovery from gave us some 210 embryos, but with some ewes failing their health tests post collection this was whittled down to 160. This was in spite of our testing all ewes prior to embryo collections starting. Some of our lambs were by a full brother to Broxty Boxer.

Thus we had about 60 lambs born in August 2017 and immediately we were impressed with the muscle development in the lambs. They were born small, but after about 10 days the muscle development was becoming obvious.

We were convinced that the Beltex had a great deal to offer the industry, and whole body scanning undertaken by the Scottish Agricultural College on various pure terminal sire breeds suggested that we were really on the right track.

For all intents and purposes the table shows information for breed samples selected for “show” characteristics and minimally or not at all for productive criteria, the latter being the usual situation in New Zealand. The carcass advantages for the Beltex are pretty obvious, and the results thus far here in NZ are as expected with increased killing out % ages and increased meat yields in the carcass.

A further 120 embryos were imported from three studs in early 2018. These were from Andrew Baillie’s Callacrag stud, at Carstairs, Mike and Beckie Davis’ Rathbone stud at Austwick, and David Thornley’s Dooley stud at Swadlincote. Together with some embryo recovery from the 2017 ewe lambs we had a further 120 lambs in 2018.

#### **Auction Sales:**

Our sales have been mostly by on farm auction, and in March 2017 we were a bit disappointed by the prices for pure Beltex ram lambs which averaged about \$5,000. However the Beltex crosses sold particularly well, averaging almost \$4,000 for the Suffolk crosses and \$2,200 for the Poll Dorset crosses. Later we found that there was considerable doubt in industry (Stock Agents and Farmers) whether the shorter stature Beltex could mate with bigger NZ ewes, and also there was some expectation that there would be birth difficulties with the Beltex crosses.



*Sterl Roadley’s two Beltex ram lambs have a welcome drink after their long trip from “Rangiatea” to Northland.*

All this has proved to be no issue at all. There have been no instances of unusually difficult births; in fact the Beltex is often used as a small sire over ewe lambs in the UK. At our March 2019 sale, purebred ram lambs averaged \$8,000, and Suffolk cross ram lambs \$2,200. Two ram lambs made in excess of \$20,000. Obviously the experience in the farming community during 2017 was encouraging and weaning weights and carcass quality of the Beltex crosses has been clear even from the use of the Beltex cross rams, where increases in killing out % from 1.5 to 2.0% higher than from other terminals have been common, together with an increase in meat yield of about 2%.

*Jock Allison, John Tavendale and Blair Gallagher with Sterl Roadley with the top priced Beltex ram lamb, at \$22,000, March 1, 2019. ▼*



**The Future:** The proof will be in the pudding, and we have been getting encouraging reports from clients who have been using both the purebred and crossbred rams. A good measure of breeder satisfaction was that virtually all of the buyers who purchased rams at our 2018 sale returned in 2019, and caused the competition to be strong.

The Beltex provides a real opportunity to increase killing out percentages and increasing meat yield in carcasses. This can bestow a considerable increase in value for farmers. In the UK, butchers pay from 8 to 20 UK pounds / carcass (\$NZ 15-35 premium) for the Beltex, and the Beltex double muscled influence is required for carcasses to meet the stringent quality and carcass conformation criteria for the valuable ethnic markets in Europe. Many of these superior carcasses are transported whole to those markets in Europe.

There will be a need for many pure Beltex flocks to produce rams for generation of sires for the production of both crossbred rams for use in industry as well sufficient numbers to produce the more valuable half Beltex lambs for slaughter. We think that there will be the development of Suffolk x Beltex and Texel x Beltex ram breeding flocks and

the fixing of those crosses. We note that in the UK Beltex x Texel tups generally command premiums over Texels.

Notably since the importation from Belgium into the UK in 1989, there are now some 700 breeders who are members of the Beltex Sheep Society. While this figure doesn't mean that all are involved in breeding purebred sheep, it does indicate a huge multiplication of interest since the importation of only a few sheep in 199.

Whatever the results in the future, the increased carcass value will be sought by sheep breeders, and the quality of the Beltex as a more robust breed for New Zealand conditions is developed by breeders. Certainly the availability of genetic material to be directly imported from the UK has allowed this possibility to become a reality. Imports from Belgium and or Holland will still require the development by MPI of country specific Import Health Standards.



## A BIT OF HISTORY

### ROMNEY MARSH SHEEP

**Manawatu Times, 19 May, 1925**

(National Library, *Papers Past*)

The balance of Mr L. T. McLean's flock of stud Romney marsh sheep are to be offered this morning at the sheep pavilion on the Feilding A. and P. Association's grounds, commencing at 11a.m. The lines to be offered include 11 Stud Romney rams, 6 single Stud Romney ewes, 450 4-th to aged Stud Romney ewes, and 270 Stud Romney ewe lambs. Included in the offering will be all Mr McLean's prize-winning sheep at the last Royal Show and the last Feilding show. The farming community will have an excellent opportunity of building up its flocks by patronizing to-day's sale.



## Shearwell New Zealand Ltd - Advertorial

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.



## ANIMAL BREEDING SERVICES BUSY WITH NEW GENETICS

ABS has been very involved in the importation and transfer of embryos from sheep from UK and Canada in particular and AI of sheep with semen from UK and France, since the introduction of Import Health Standards over the past 3 years. The breeds have included new breeds such as the Swiss Valais Black Nose, Beltex and Lacaune breeds as well as the introduction of new genetics from breeds already present in NZ such as Hampshire, Texel and East Friesian. ABS has in some cases implanted embryos into our own recipient ewes for on-sale to breeders or implanted into ewes in breeders own flocks. There are a number of reasons why breeders are seeking genetics from these countries but the emergence of the sheep milking industry in NZ does feature.

ABS has an affiliated company based in UK, AB Europe, who is able to collect embryos from donor ewes and semen from rams which meet the strict Import Health Conditions.

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## MINT LAMB COMPETITION

This year, our Mint Lamb Competition welcomes a new format and a new sponsor in the form of South Pacific Meats.

The Mint Lamb Competition aims to promote the quality and variety of lamb available in the South Island, increasing consumption while providing an opportunity for individual farmers to be recognised for the superior product they produce.

**Entries close on Wednesday 23rd October.**

For further information, contact [bindy@theshow.co.nz](mailto:bindy@theshow.co.nz).

*[To get more info online, Google NZ Agricultural Show Mint Lamb Competition , 2019 – Editor]*

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“Fostering the improvement of all sheep breeds and providing a unified body whose collective voice has a beneficial effect on the total New Zealand sheep industry.”





## **SOUTH SUFFOLK** **NEWSLETTER 2019**

Welcome to our South Suffolk newsletter, apologies for not having been in touch earlier. I do hope all have been experiencing a good season with good feed reserves as we head into the winter months.

Recently I attended our South Suffolk Breed Tour, this year based in Invercargill and hosted by The Southern Breeders Club. We were lucky enough to enjoy fine weather and some great Southern hospitality for the duration of the tour. On day one our first stop, only a short distance from Invercargill, was to view Murihiku Stud, owned by Graham and Ellen Calder. The stud was started in 2010 and Graham and Ellen have recently purchased Logan Stud from John and Ngaire Brown. Breeding for only nine years, great progress has been made in this stud and good big framed stock is evident.



▲ *Murihiku Ewes stud ewes*



▲ *Curio Bay, Caitlins*

We then travelled the Southern Scenic route towards Owaka, with Jim Berney giving an informative commentary while also displaying his humorous side along the way!

The bus stopped for a welcome refreshment break before we arrived at Berney's.



▲ *Refreshment stop on the road to Owaka*

▼ *Jeanette McIntyre & Annabelle Hampton enjoy the break*



We arrived at Craig Annat, the stud owned by Jim and Anne Berney. Jim commented that they had endured a very dry season but the stock was looking well grown with some great prospects going forward. The view from the sheep yards looking over the estuary was fantastic. I did wonder how Jim and Anne managed to get work done at times!!



▲ *Ewes at Craig Annat stud of Jim & Anne Berney*

Lunch was enjoyed at Owaka's The Lumberjack Café, followed by some retail therapy for those who needed it.



Russell and Martin Powley's Crookburn Stud at Clinton was the next stop. All stock were very well presented, the stand out group for me was the ewe lambs, these lambs would be as good as you could see anywhere in the country, well done Russell and Martin.



▲ Crookburn Stud's ewe lambs

After a coffee break we headed to Gore and the Myola Stud of Trevor and Doris McCall. We viewed yet another line of top stock, breeders were impressed with Trevor and Doris's old ram and although we only saw the top 6-8 ram lambs, they also showed real quality.



▲ Ewes & a ram at Trevor & Doris McCall's Moyola Stud

After a lovely meal and some socialising at Gore Raceway we headed back to Invercargill.



Day two started with a visit to the Templeton Flax Mill, situated at Otaitai Bush. I personally found this a very interesting place. Firstly we were shown an informative video on the history of this family owned mill followed by a working demonstration of how flax was treated and made into twine.



▲ Texel ewes at Peter & Marion Black's Blackdale stud

Blackdale Stud owned by Peter Black was next. Peter and his wife Marion run Coopworth, Texel and Suftex Studs selling over 600 rams annually to 400 clients. A very intensive sheep breeding operation for a man in his eighty's!! I was particularly impressed with how professional the operation was and Peter's attention to detail where he is still trying to improve his sheep breeds by trialing new breed genetics from overseas in his Texel Stud and the recent introduction of the Beltex as a trial to see how this compares with his other breeds.

We then visited Dellwyn and Sheree Malcolm who are in the third breeding season of share-farming Lyn Berry's South Suffolk Stud. It is very pleasing to have young enthusiastic couple starting in stud breeding, not only with South Suffolks but also with Border Leicesters. Starting with such good meaty ewes is exactly what the today markets needs are. It was pleasing to see that there was already a market for their ram lambs. I wish Dellwyn and Sheree the very best with stud breeding and I hope all breeders will be there to help in any way possible.



▲ Dellwyn and Sheree Malcolm's ewes

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"Fostering the improvement of all sheep breeds and providing a unified body whose collective voice has a beneficial effect on the total New Zealand sheep industry."

Our final visit for the tour was to Shard Farm, this is owned by Debbie and Mark Smith. Shard Farm has topped the South Island Yearling Sales twice, 2015, at \$200,000 and in 2019 at \$170,000. We viewed foals which had just been weaned in a barn and then broodmares in their paddocks. Debbie talked about the history of their stud and the horses on show, another very interesting stop. From here it was a short drive back into Invercargill and the end of another very interesting tour.

My personal thanks must go to Tracey Powley and Elliot King who did a wonderful job of coordinating everything for our enjoyment. Thanks also to breeders who put forward their stock for viewing, they were a credit to all. The Stud Tours are always a good get together for both past and present breeders and something I recommend everyone try to be part of in the future.

I hope all breeders have a favourable winter and lambing goes well.



▲ L-R Chris Hampton & Stuart Sinclair

Stuart Sinclair  
Breed Chairman

# FARMERSWEEKLY

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“Fostering the improvement of all sheep breeds and providing a unified body whose collective voice has a beneficial effect on the total New Zealand sheep industry.”



## BRUCELLOSIS ACCREDITATION

The NZSBA Council has been concerned at the lack of standardisation by veterinarians throughout New Zealand in their testing procedures for *Brucella Ovis* and of their issuing the **correct** Accreditation form. This has resulted in confusion amongst some of our members.

After discussions with Professor Dave West (Brucellosis Accreditation Committee) and the United Breeds Society the action plan is –

- veterinarians will receive a newsletter outlining our concerns
- the Veterinary Association has been notified
- all veterinarians will receive an updated information pack on Brucellosis Ovis guidelines
- if there is still uncertainty between the member and their veterinarian, please contact the office

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### Renewal of Accreditation

To maintain accredited status, retesting of ram flocks must be carried out annually.

### Testing will be as follows –

- a) Stud Ram and Teasers over the age of 15 months and stud rams less than 15 months of age which have been used for mating: scrotal contents are to be palpated and blood samples to be taken from all rams.
- b) Commercial Rams and Teasers over the age of 15 months: scrotal contents of all rams are to be palpated and blood samples must be taken from the **whole flock** or **20** commercial rams, whichever is the least.

**Note** – Any rams with lesions of epididymitis are to be included in the sample for blood sampling together with any rams which are considered to have been at greater risk of becoming infected with *Brucella Ovis*.

### Rams under 15 months to be sold

- c) Rams 6 to 15 months of age which are intended for sale for breeding purposes: scrotal contents must be

palpated and those with epididymal lesions must have a blood sample taken.

This would be carried out at the time of the sale.

If no reactors are found in any of these tests, the flock may maintain its accredited status.

The veterinarian issues a **Certificate of Accreditation** (nothing else eg letters is acceptable).

The member then sends a copy of the Certificate of Accreditation to the NZSBA office.

### For a Flock to be Initially Accredited.

- a) All rams and teasers 15 months of age and over, and any younger than 15 months, which have been mated require **one** negative test.
- b) Rams 6 to 15 months of age which are intended for sale for breeding purposes have been palpated for epididymal lesions and any with lesions produce a negative test.

### Accreditation of Known Infected Flocks

The flock may be accredited when:

- a) All rams and teasers 15 months of age and over, and any younger than 15 months which have been mated have had two consecutive negative tests not less than 60 days and not more than 180 days apart.
- b) Rams 6 to 15 months of age which are intended for sale for breeding purposes have been palpated for epididymal lesions and any with lesions are negative when tested.

If the veterinarian considers that this latter group of rams has been at risk of becoming infected with *B. ovis*, then it is recommended that they are all blood sampled before the flock is accredited.

**G E Burgess**  
**GENERAL MANAGER**

New Zealand Sheepbreeders' Association



## HAMPSHIRE BREEDERS, KEVIN & CHRISTINE MAWSON, REPORT ON THE 2019 GREAT YORKSHIRE SHOW

After getting hooked on the Hampshire sheep last year, I said to my wife, "I would like to see what the breed is like in the UK".

I have been looking on the Hampshire site following the results from their shows last year and there was one breeder whose sheep caught my eye. After sorting out show dates that would correspond with a tour of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales we had planned to do, we chose the Great Yorkshire Show as this is the biggest in the U K.

When our tour ended back in London we took a train to Leeds and then to Harrogate where the show is held. What a show it is; it covers an area about half the size again as our Feildays in Hamilton.

The first thing I did when I arrived at the show was head to the sheep pens to see the Hampshire. This was great as they were judging the sheep and I could talk to the breeders after their sheep had been judged. I then walked around the other breeds, Beltex and Texels were in big numbers as was Suffolk and various other breeds we don't see here. There

were a lot of cattle and horses and in other sheds there were rabbits, pigeons and poultry.

➤ *Texel tup*



➤ *Suffolk tup*



Doug Croy has been involved in the Stud Industry for over 50 years. Doug has vast experience, from running his own successful "Spring Creek" stud and is prepared to pass on his knowledge to you, the stud breeder.

### STUD MENTORING SERVICES CAN:



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▲ *Pen of Hampshires at the Great Yorkshire Show*

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ON-FARM

# RAM SALE

Wednesday 11th December 2019  
1.00pm Auction  
2409 Christchurch Akaroa Road, Kaituna

## OFFERING 80 RAMS



Camla South Suffolks  
D M Butterick



La-Mac Hampshires  
B J & P E Butterick



Maclaka Southdowns  
B C Macaulay

## CONTACT

Ben Butterick 03 3290 030  
Brent Macaulay 021 220 0850  
Dave Butterick 021 478 298



CATALOGUE AVAILABLE EARLY NOVEMBER

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“Fostering the improvement of all sheep breeds and providing a unified body whose collective voice has a beneficial effect on the total New Zealand sheep industry.”



## A SLOW TRAIN COMING?

*By Jon Hickford, Lincoln University*

In the world of sheep breeding, we all accept that there needs to be lots of females. They are the reproductive unit, and the ewe flock is at the heart of the breeding enterprise. The rams we sell are the product of those ewes, and poor mothers most certainly never produce good rams.

It is somewhat different when we get to sheep breeders. Looking through the more than twenty breed societies that are part of the NZ Sheep Breeders Association, there is a dominance of men in sheep breeding. I don't want to offend too many people, but they are mostly older men. Some would argue that being older is not a bad thing when it comes to livestock breeding, and not least because I have heard it said that it takes two lifetimes to be a good breeder. In the first lifetime you work out what you are meant to do, and in the second you actually do it!

Things are changing though, and there is a slow train coming that many of you won't have seen. It isn't fancy genetic technology, or any kind of perfect sheep, but instead the rise of the female. Not ewes mind you, but young women. This is nothing to be feared.

I would argue that one of the major changes that has occurred over the last few decades in NZ farming is in gender-balance. Historically perceived as male-dominated, and not least because it was often a very physical job, farming has almost silently shifted to being an industry where women can do, and do-do everything. And why not too? We haven't typically seen the glass-ceilings that we see elsewhere, and when a job needs to be done on farm, both men and women are needed, even if it is a husband and wife team.

This is not to say that there isn't still a lot to be done in addressing gender or other diversity issues in agriculture.

For example, the board rooms and management entities of the big companies still appear to be male-dominated. To illustrate this, if you look at the Alliance Group Limited, then one out of the nine members of the executive is a woman (Heather Stacy - General Manager Livestock and Shareholder Services) and two out of the nine directors are women (Sarah Brown and Dawn Sangster). Their main competition (Silver Fern Farms) is little better, with three out of ten board members being female (Ru He, Jane Taylor and Aidi Tang), but it is notable that two out of the five Shanghai-Maling directors in the 50:50 Chinese-owned SFF, are women. Moving beyond sheep and beef, Fonterra has eleven directors, with two women (Leonie Guiney and Donna Smit), although a quick trawl through their web-pages suggests they think they have a gender-balance issue, because there seems to be a disproportionate number of images of girls and women.

Now I am not going to fall into the trap of saying that the 'best man for a job is a woman', or that women are more 'nurturing', or natural 'food-preparers' (hence they should be at the helm of food companies), because those statements all pander to our prejudices. While I like the 'girls can do anything statement', so too can boys. In effect, I want a world where anyone can be what they want to be, and without prejudice, sexism, racism or any other misguided belief curtailing their achievements. That is how Kim and I have brought up our four children.

Do we need to make change in farming and agriculture to achieve a better gender-balance? I think the correct answer is both 'yes' and 'no'. Those big companies that we sell our products through need to realise that the world has moved on. People are looking for far greater transparency and accountability in how we produce food and fibre. Part of the transparency argument is that the companies need to be seen to be ethical in the way they operate. This will include far greater attention to whether the company has good policies with respect to issues like gender-balance. High value markets; these being markets where the price of food is of less importance than provenance, could well be adversely affected if governance and management structures are not gender-balanced. This stated, I still think the business of business is business, so in that context, the best people for the job also need to be at the top.

Now if it sounds like a juggling act to achieving gender-balance, then there is another part to that slow train coming. When I went through Lincoln, there were very few young women. That has most certainly changed and the consequences of that change will be far-reaching. Let's start with our hallmark Bachelor of Agricultural Science. If we take the Meat and Wool Production class from last year as an example, then 45% of the students in that class were female. Lower down the system in the first year class, the balance is closer to 50:50.

If we then come back to my (and your) pet area of interest (i.e. breeding and genetics), then last year's advanced-level breeding and genetics class, was 72% young women! They weren't all interested in sheep, but they are typically the better students from the agriculture degree classes, this in no small part reflecting the technical challenge in livestock breeding and genetics. Some of those girls from last year were very talented and they will without a doubt progress into sheep breeding. Some of their predecessors already have, but I won't mention names.

Regardless, in the context of a Slow Train Coming; the 19th studio album by Bob Dylan, which was panned in no small part because of its evangelical religious content, one has to accept that 'the times they are a-changin'!

**NEW ZEALAND EWE HOGGET COMPETITION  
PRESS RELEASE  
OVERALL WINNER ANNOUNCED**



**BRIAN AND ANNA COOGAN FROM TAIHAPE**

The Chateau on the Park (Double Tree) was once again the venue for this year's Presentation Dinner for the 2019 NZ Ewe Hogget Competition, which was attended by 140 passionate persons.

This iconic competition has now been running continuously for 23 years throughout New Zealand, and remains the only commercial sheep competition in New Zealand.

Our rural competition identifies the top operators and rewards excellence. The competition's objective is to select flock replacements that are likely to be more productive and profitable over their lifetime.

We annually receive over 300 entries over all of New Zealand and judge 151000 ewe hoggets, and have a Presentation Dinner where the winners including the overall winner is announced and a Field Day later in the year is held on the Winners property.

Throughout the evening all Finalists of the different categories, Perendale, Romney, Composite, Crossbred, Fine Wools and Coopworth spoke on their ewe hoggets accompanied by a slide show of their property and sheep that were displayed on a large screen behind them.

Our speaker this year was Prof. Jon Hickford who is a professor in animal science and genetics at Lincoln

University. Jon spoke on Carbon and how it relates to farmers and cities.

A real thought provoking address which is very relevant.

At the culmination of the night the Coogans were awarded the NZ Ewe Hogget Alliance Cup, \$8000.00 prize money and a RAS medal. They thanked all sponsors and the many volunteers who continue to make this competition meaningful.

**OVERALL WINNER - BRIAN & ANNA COOGAN**

**BREED SECTION WINNERS**

**Fine Wools**

Andrew & Lynnore Templeton, Middelmarsh

**Coopworth**

Kevin McCallum, Winton not coming

**Composite**

Stuart & Jo Fraser, Hawarden

**Crossbred**

Raymond & Janet Harre, Piopio

**Perendale**

Allan & Leeann Woodrow, Gore

**Romney**

Brian & Anna Coogan, Taihape

**Special Awards**

**FLOCK PERFORMANCE – BRIAN & ANNA COOGAN**

**LARGE FLOCK AWARD – STUART & JO FRASER**

**PHENOTYPE AWARD – ALLAN & LEEANN WOODROW**

**OVERALL BEST QUALITY WOOL AWARD – IAIN & JACELYN WRIGHT**

**YOUNG ACHIEVERS AWARD – STUART & JO FRASER**

**AgriHQ**

## ROMNEYS JOIN OUR FLOCK

As President of Romney New Zealand, I thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the NZSBA Newsletter. Our breed has just been accepted by the Council to join the Association; to take effect on April 1, 2020.

Our group of breeders are all working to improve the genetics of the Romney breed. Good Romneys are selling well in a competitive environment, but we must not become complacent and rest on our laurels, as there are other breeds chasing at our heels. We must continue to embrace technology and use it to stay at the front.

The 2018/2019 year has seen a stabilising of sheep meat returns and as a result very good prices for well bred and grown breeding ewes. The Romney breed has been at the forefront of this and quite rightly so. There has been some excellent work done to improve the genetics of the breed both by breeders and scientists. However the main attribute of Romney in the past, being wool, has languished at very low values and in most cases it costs considerably more to produce than the returns of harvest. Without trying to be a pessimist we need to appreciate that alternative fibres can be produced more efficiently and of a more consistent quality as opposed to the labour intensive and inefficient production procedures of wool harvest.

We are continually looking for projects to improve the breed especially with the challenges of climate and competition. This year saw the start of a facial eczema program which involved dosing progeny of certain sires to ascertain their resistance/tolerance to FE. The effect of FE has spread to the South Island so it will not be going away and in fact our district of Hawkes Bay has experienced an outbreak this year in areas not prone to FE in the past. I must acknowledge the work of Neville Aymes in helping with this project.

As you may be aware B&L Genetics is now being absorbed by BeefandLamb. I have spoken to Chris Kelly, Chair of B&L Genetics regarding how the changes will impact on breeders using SIL. The conversation was very positive and the future of the genetics role B&L plays in our industry. The changes are as follows:

- Funding of \$2.5 million from levies will continue but without Govt contribution. Genetics will be a separate business within B&L
- A SIL client group will be set up
- Roadshows will continue
- The biennial conference will continue

- Progeny test/linkage groups will not continue as set up in the last year or two
- There will be funding available for breeding projects which have good linkages and benefits for the wider sheep industry.

I wish you all the best for the lambing season.

*David Tennent*

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## A BIT MORE HISTORY

### Stud Sheep Importation

**Ashburton Guardian, 16 December, 1904**

(National Library *Papers Past*)

During his recent trip to England Mr John Withell, Ealing, purchased five ewes and one ram, Oxford Down stud sheep bred by Mr Barling, Ross Castle, Herefordshire; and eight ewes and two rams, Ryeland stud sheep, bred by Mr Davies, on his Easton and Livers farms, Herefordshire.

The sheep passed through Ashburton on the early train this morning, and were delivered in good condition at Ealing and taken to Mr Withell's estate. The Oxford Downs breed was originally a cross between the Hampshire and Cotswold breeds, and at first the type was not fined. That defect has now been removed, and the Oxford Down breed is rapidly coming into favour in Britain. The mutton is leaner, and better flavoured than is the case in the other Downs breeds, while the fleece is heavier and the quality of the wool is coarser and much resembles that of halfbred sheep. The sheep are also more free from footrot, than any other Downs breed.

All the sheep have the metal clip on one ear, with the particulars required by the British Flock Owners' Association for stud sheep. the sheep stand well on their legs, are very symmetrical, well developed all round, and being the first importation of this breed of sheep into New Zealand, ought to be of much interest to sheepbreeders.

The breeding of the sheep is of the highest order. The two tooth Ryeland ram took a prize this year at the Royal Show in England, while five of the ewes were awarded first prize in the class for the best pen of five at the Herefordshire show.

The Ryelands are short legged, the body square, and they carry good fleeces of wool resembling halfbred. The mutton is good, and resembles that of Romney's. They are proof against footrot, the percentage of lambs is high, and the sheep make good mothers. Both these importation ought to be of much interest to farmers and sheepbreeders, and especially the Oxford Downs, which are likely to be of much benefit for the purpose of sheepbreeding for frozen meat for export. Mr Withell will be pleased to show the sheep to any breeders or others interested in the subject.



## FIJI FANTASTIC SHEEP

*By Robin Yarrow, Fiji*

Our Fiji Fantastic was developed out of a need to produce sheep meat to meet an ever-growing demand. Although wool breeds of sheep had been in Fiji since the 1860s, the numbers never exceeded about 10,000 and in fact progressively fell in the following century to just a few hundred. Some wool was actually exported but it soon became clear that Fiji's warm all year-round conditions and very high rainfall, at least for 6 or so months each year, were not conducive to the temperate breeds of sheep that we had.

Our objective throughout the 1960s and 70s was to import a hardy tropicalized and hair-type breed such as the Barbados Black Belly which we knew is well-adapted to Caribbean conditions fairly similar to our own. However, disease risks inherent in undertaking such an exercise ruled this out – until we became aware of a small research flock of BBBs housed on a university of California farm, which was about to be disbanded and sold off. We clearly needed to act quickly, or the opportunity may have been 'lost' – fortunately, at the time in 1980, I was the Permanent Secretary for Agriculture and we made a very rapid decision [over just a few days] to import a nucleus flock of 37 animals. These were flown in to Fiji a few weeks later in insect-proof crates [to minimize the risk of Blue Tongue introduction as this is an insect-borne virus present in parts of the US] and immediately transferred to the island of Makogai in the center of the Fiji archipelago, a past Leper facility, where a 10 year quarantine period was undergone. Concurrently a cross breeding program was undertaken, using Wiltshire Horns (from NZ) and Polled Dorsets (from Australia), to produce our now well-known Fiji Fantastic. At present it is estimated that we have around 20,000 FFs, spread across our 2 largest islands and another medium-sized island.

The flock build-up is slower than hoped, partly because of demand for sheep meat and for other reasons including theft, disease and dog attacks.

A very helpful paper by past Fiji Department of Agriculture Livestock Production Officer, Peter Manueli, who was closely involved with the cross-breeding program, was presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Sheep Veterinarians in 1997 in Australia, titled 'Sheep in the Humid Tropics – Evolution of the Fiji Sheep.' If you google Fiji Fantastic Sheep, the link will come up with a reference to SPC Land Resources Division and this will then take you to his PDF.

The possibility of incorporating some other "tropical" sheep blood is now under active consideration – the Dorper is a front runner.



*Barbados Blackbelly rams (USA)* Photo: courtesy of Barbados Blackbelly Sheep International



*BB ewe with twin lambs*

Photo: Pam Hand, USA



*Mixed age group of Fiji Fantastic ewes with lambs at foot belonging to Tiko & Maureen Eastgate*



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This year's Royal show will again be hosted by the Hawke's Bay A & P society at the Hastings Show Grounds.

Entries for Sheep are open now with the site for online entries being [www.equestrianentries.co.nz](http://www.equestrianentries.co.nz)

The schedule and entry forms are also available on the Show website, [www.showgroundshb.co.nz/hawkes-bay-show](http://www.showgroundshb.co.nz/hawkes-bay-show)

For those unable/not wanting to enter online, you are still able to enter manually.

If you need a paper copy you can ring the Showgrounds manager on **06 878 3123** and ask her to mail you a copy of the entry forms and details from the Sheep Schedule for your own sheep breed classes.



**Entries Close on 30<sup>th</sup> September. Late entries will attract a surcharge.**

**NB:** I took sheep last year (and for several preceding years). Last year's layout was a great improvement and the show as a whole was very good with

something of interest for everyone to enjoy.  
[Editor]

**FOR SALE**      **Shropshire ewes and ewe hoggets for sale.** Capital stock. Registered flock #301, established 2005, based in Carterton, Wairarapa. Hoggets at \$200 each + GST

Ewes, price depending on age.

Discount for five or more to same purchaser.

Viewings welcome.

Please contact Sue on 021 442 998

or Nan on 021 717 454

# AgriHQ

## Note: CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

*Free advertisements are available for member breeders with surplus stud ewes/rams for sale.*

*Let others know that you have spare ewes. Maybe enable a new flock or two to start.*

*Remember the "Sheep NewZ" goes up on the website, available to be read by anyone with an interest in sheep!!!*

*Email adverts to the Editor or [greg@nzsheep.co.nz](mailto:greg@nzsheep.co.nz)*

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

**Sheep Breeds posters are available at the Office.**

Contact: [greg@nzsheep.co.nz](mailto:greg@nzsheep.co.nz)

The **Closing Date** for next issue of the newsletter will be **November 20<sup>th</sup> for the December 2019** newsletter.

**Please get items in before the deadline!!!**

Next **"FEATURE BREED"** will be the **East Friesian.**

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

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

**Published by NZ Sheepbreeders' Association**

Email: [greg@nzsheep.co.nz](mailto:greg@nzsheep.co.nz)

Phone: (03) 358 9412

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