

Hello Members,

Thanks to all who have supported this issue of "Sheep NewZ". It would be good to have some more photos/articles each time other than those on the feature breed.

A little story from me, and how through the world of sheep, we get involved in different cultures. Anne from the NZSBA office forwarded an email to me from one Samuel Shropshire, from the USA; coming to NZ for a few days and hoping to meet up with a Shropshire breeder and some real Shropshire sheep.

Well it turns out that Samuel is the founder and president of the Muslim Voice for Peace & Reconciliation (MVPR). He and some others were visiting to NZ in the hopes of making a presentation to the Prime Minister for her empathetic stance on the tragic event that took place in Christchurch. With the surname "Shropshire", Samuel was very keen to come and see our sheep. We invited him and his group to come for lunch and meet some of the rams.

*Samuel Shropshire gets acquainted with Sam the Shropshire ram* ▼



We have a very quiet ram (unbelievably, named Sam) and although never raised as a pet he will stand in the yard beside you in hopes of a scratch behind his ears. Human Sam and his friends arrived later in the morning. They all currently live in Saudi Arabia although they come from the USA, Canada and Palestine. We had a great talk over lunch about life in Arabia and the Muslim world.

Just goes to show how wonderful it is to be a sheep breeder and what a great way to meet people and that you never know who will be coming to lunch!

*Helen McKenzie*  
**Editor**

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## ASSOCIATION NEWS & VIEWS

### From The President

Another three months have gone and we are now into the colder winter weather. How time flies.



Since the last news letter, breed elections have been held and it is always interesting to see if any new members have been elected.

Scanning and recording of last years lambs will mainly be done and it is good to look at the results to see what gains have been made.

Returns are due at the end of the month so please get these into the Sheepbreeders' office by the end of the month.

It is interesting to hear what is happening between cattle farmers and MPI on the bovis issue. There are a lot of unhappy farmers about with how their situations have been handled. I also contacted them by email regarding a concern from other sheep breeders regarding the importation of embryos and semen and after three attempts to get an answer I gave up. I do hope their systems to keep out any diseases we don't have here are working!

I also feel overseas travellers coming to New Zealand with illegal meat and other food products and plants should be sent back to their country of origin. This would surely be a strong deterrent to stop this practise.

The Ewe Hogget competition will have its Presentation Dinner in Christchurch and Breed Winners will be interviewed and the Overall Winner will be announced. This dinner is on Wednesday 26th June 2019 and is a great night out.

For more information contact the Sheepbreeders' office The NZSBA Council meeting is on Thursday 25th July at the Sudima Hotel in Christchurch.

I must thank our Editor, Helen, for all her time and effort she spends putting this Sheep NewZ together. Please support her by sending any information to her about our sheep industry.

*Jim Berney*  
**President NZSBA**



## From The General Manager

**Breed Meetings** – I am still in the middle of attending Breed Committee Meetings throughout New Zealand. Some of the conferences have visited Molesworth, and Mt Cook, and the Border Leicesters are visiting Bendigo in July.

**Audio conferencing** – some breeds are not meeting this year, but are holding an audio conference call. This obviously saves people attending meetings from the cost of travelling.

**Breed Elections** – of all our breeds, there was enough interest to hold 2 Breed Elections as nominations exceeded the number of vacancies. The breeds were the Dorper and the Texel breeds.

Interesting, a disgruntled person from a breed contacted the President, implying the voting procedure is corrupt. Our President dismissed this, but I was annoyed as it casts dispersions onto myself and the Office. I have tried contacting the disaffected person but have received no reply. However for anyone interested.....voting envelopes are received and put in a sealed ballot box, and opened by a staff member and counted when voting closes. Then another staff member counts them, then myself ..... regarding the two elections there was no change to the initial count. I must stress we are not a third world country where ballot boxes go missing .....

I suppose a very small minority don't want to accept the democratic process.

I would like to thank all those unsuccessful candidates and encourage them to put their name forward in 3 years time. With the Breed Committee changing for the next 3 years, I will miss working with a number of the people who have stepped down and wish them well. They really do their best for the breed and their effort usually goes unappreciated.

**Unregistered sheep at shows** – I have received reports from some members throughout the islands that some unregistered sheep have been judged alongside registered sheep. Having contacted the RAS, they have sent out a directive to their A & Ps reminding them of the rules. Remembering all members of breed societies are levied a fee for the privilege of being able to show.

It is imperative that all A & Ps are vigilant with Brucellosis.

**'Sheep 125' – Dates – 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021** – celebrating 125 years of stud breeding with the New Zealand Sheep Breeders' Association. The intention is to have a large marquee to accommodate all our breeds. Each breed will have a couple of pens and signage explaining their breed characteristics.

Accommodation will be at Wanaka, and there will be a one day tour visiting places of interest as well as some historic studs. Hopefully all breeds and members will join us.

I would like to thank our continued sponsors for their support: Farmers Weekly; PGG Wrightson and Shearwell.



**NZ EWE HOGGET COMPETITION – Presentation Dinner – 2019 – Chateau on the Park, Christchurch, Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019, commencing at 6.00pm** – contact the office if you wish to attend, as everyone is most welcome.

## BREED SECTION FINALISTS

### Fine Wools

Andrew & Lynnore Templeton, Middelmarsh  
Iain & Jacelyn Wright, Hawarden

### Coopworth

Claire Garrett, Springston  
Kevin McCallum, Winton

### Composite

Stuart & Jo Fraser, Hawarden  
Trevor & Karen Humphries, Lumsden

### Crossbred

Raymond & Janet Harre, Piopio  
Graeme & Elspeth Gardyne, Gore

### Perendale

Allan & Leeann Woodrow, Gore

### Romney

Brian & Anna Coogan, Taihape  
Owen & Tim Evans, Gore

## Plus 5 Special Awards

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

The logo for AgriHQ, featuring the word 'Agri' in black and 'HQ' in a green, stylized font where the 'H' and 'Q' are connected.

## Feature Breed

# VALAIS BLACKNOSE

(Thanks to Christine Reed for the following article and breed profiles)

### ORIGIN & HISTORY

Often referred to as the “cutest sheep in the world” these exceptional looking sheep with their curly forelocks, black face and ears, spotted knees and hocks originate in the mountains of the Valais French (French) or Wallis (German) area of Switzerland. The Valais is divided into 2 halves - the French-speaking lower part and the upper part where Valais German (a Swiss German dialect) is spoken. It is here in the upper part that this breed originates. The canton of Valais is one of 26 cantons of Switzerland situated in the southwestern part of the country in the valley of the Rhone from its headwaters to Lake Geneva separating the Pennine Alps from the Bernese Alps. The canton is simultaneously one of the driest regions of Switzerland in its central Rhône valley and among the wettest, having large amounts of snow and rain upon the highest peaks found in Switzerland, boasting 50 peaks higher than 4000m.

In addition to their attractive appearance, they have what others have described as “utterly charming” personalities. Unlike most mountain breeds which have a well - developed “fight or flight” response, there are many accounts of hikers in the mountains having engaging encounters with them and they talk of finding it difficult to take their photo as they want to be next to whoever’s around! Meet a Valais it is said, and you have a friend for life!

In the book, “Das Walliser Schwarznasenschaf”, it is mentioned that sheep (with horns) were already common in the region of Valais 5000 years BC. The Valais Blacknose probably derives from a cross between black sheep and the “Coppersheep” which is mentioned in the historical documents from the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Switzerland.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the “black-nosed sheep” from the valley of Visp in Valais was mentioned for the first time. The Valais was a very poor region and the sheep were an important source of food, clothing and money for the farmers, most of whom were farmers on the steep slopes of Valais. So the Valais Blacknose were valued and loved by the Valais people – and still are.

Twice in history, the breed almost died out. First, there were epidemic spreads of tuberculosis in 1930 and 1940, which affected the people and sheep alike in Valais. Then a breeding program from the Swiss authorities in the 1960s tried to convince the Valais breeders to cross the Valais Blacknose with more meat-yielding breeds. The tradition – conscious breeders refused and the experiments were given

up. In 1948, the first Upper Valais Sheep Breeders Association was founded but only in 1962 did the breed become a registered breed and was included in the Swiss Sheep Breeders Association in 1964. There are around 12,000 registered in their native country.

In the “Matterhorn Blog”, Paul Julen, an Upper Valais Blacknose sheep farmer from Zermatt, explains that he starts bringing his flock down from the mountains in October in preparation for winter. They have spent 6 months on the surrounding Alps and some find their way back from the pasture to the farm by themselves. “Blacknose sheep have a memory for places and a sense of time far better than people,” he says.

He enjoys creating specialties in is the family restaurant of 15 different variations on their meat which has a fat content 50% lower than other breeds and is known for being tasty even to those not partial to lamb (probably due to the



different variety of mountain herbs they feed on).

**Photo:** Sally Strathdee; “*The Gather*” in September 2018 as Swiss sheep are gathered off the alps and brought to Mund for grading and then housing indoors for winter

Export of Valais Blacknose from Switzerland was possible for only a short period in 2014 before the borders closed. A number of UK breeders took the opportunity to bring animals across to set up national flocks. There are now around 500 sheep in the UK and their popularity continues to grow. The quality of those animals varied significantly with some exceptional Swiss bloodlines being established but also some poor examples of the breed. That difference in quality can still be seen today in the UK and unfortunately is also being imported to NZ. It is very worthwhile following (or even visiting!) the National “Black beauties” Valais Blacknose show in Carlisle, England held every August to see what top breeders are presenting.

The Swiss border is now closed to exports as part of the national scrapie management plan.

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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.”



The breed has come a long way since its beginnings as you can see from the photo below taken 50 years ago in Switzerland and more recently at the National Blacknose Beauties show in Carlisle 2018.



▲Photo: Taken in Switzerland, approximately 1970



▲Photo: Jenni McAllistair (left) with Highland Eric, Supreme Champion, Carlisle, England August 2018. Tim Dunne (right) Reserve with Westmorland Dilly.

## BREED DESCRIPTION

Valais Blacknose are quiet docile animals that are friendly and inquisitive. In Switzerland, they are a hardy mountain breed, grazing the steepest stoniest slopes of the Alps but as the breed spreads across the world it is proving to be very adaptable to a wide variety of environments.

They are known for easy lambing, with long legged light lambs that rapidly grow. They can lamb year around. In Switzerland they have dual use, both for meat and producing coarse carpet grade wool. The fibre has an average micron of 38 in mature sheep and lambs are around 28 – 30 micron. The wool also has a long staple (growing around 30cm annually) making it historically favoured for spinning by the

Valais farming women. Shearing takes place twice a year in most places. The fleece has a white and fluffy look adding to the “cuddly toy” appeal.

Their characteristic appearance involves black parts of the nose, eyes, ears, front knees, ankles, hocks and feet in an otherwise white coat. Ewes also have black under-tail spots which make for easy sexing at birth! Both sexes have spiral-shaped twisted horns, the males tending to be heavier and spiralling downward while the ewe horns are lighter and generally point outwards. Adding to their striking appearance is the fact that they command a presence in their size. Rams can range from 80 – 130kg with a height of 75 - 83cm and ewes range from 70 – 90kg and 72 – 78 cm in height.

The Swiss have very high breed standards and classify their animals every year. The Oberwalliser Schwarznasen Schafzuchtverband (Upper Valais Breeding Association) have established a grading system based on age to compare individual sheep against a standard for a perfect sheep. The perfect sheep according to these standards is awarded maximum points. Points are awarded in 3 categories – 1. Markings; 2. Conformation and 3. Fleece, so the sheep receives three scores. An animal 12 months and younger has maximum scores of 4,4,4; one of 12 months to 18 months scores 5,5,5 and older sheep are 6,6,6. The most important scores are the conformation and fleece while markings carry less weight.

Like any sheep, the basic requirements include strong upright legs, well developed hindquarters, a good shoulder and backline. And with the Valais, there is the additional strive for well-marked faces, knees, hocks and feet with wool with even fleece and 36-40 microns in adults. The Swiss have spent many generations improving the conformation and fleece of the Valais Blacknose. Only the very best receive maximum points, approximately 5% of all Valais Blacknose sheep.



Photo: Purebred ram with an exceptional fleece bred and photo by Jamie Woods, Prendwick farm, Northumberland



Bodyweight
<b>Ewes:</b> 70 – 90kg and 72 – 78 cm in height.
<b>Rams:</b> 80 – 130kg with a height of 75 -83cm
Meat
Has a fat content 50% lower than other breeds and is known for being tasty even to those not partial to lamb (probably due to the different variety of mountain herbs they feed on).
Breeding/Lambing
They are known for easy lambing, with long legged light lambs that rapidly grow. They can lamb year around.
Numbers
2018 NZSBA Flock book figures Seven flocks listed; founded on imported embryos
Wool
Coarse carpet grade wool. The fibre has an average micron of 38 in mature sheep and lambs are around 28 – 30 micron. The wool also has a long staple (growing around 30cm annually) making it historically favoured for spinning by the Valais farming women. Shearing takes place twice a year in most places. The fleece has a white and fluffy look adding to the “cuddly toy” appeal.



**Photo:** Hogget wool from a NZ bred Valais Blacknose

## BREED CLASSES AND SHOWS

Every February the Swiss have their own Valais Blacknose “beauty contest” in Visp called “Miss VISP”. Wearing their traditional copper bells, they are presented to admirers in a large school hall. The UK flock has had its own show annually since 2016 in Carlisle, England. Qualified Swiss judges (up to 10 initially!) have been invited to the Carlisle show annually where they grade the animals according to the Swiss system and “maximum points”. Sheep are washed

and groomed in a similar style to preparation for the Swiss shows.



**Photo:** Helping wash sheep for Highland Valais in Scotland 2018



**Photo:** And the end result



**Photo:** Young handler class at Carlisle Show 2018



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## VALAIS BLACKNOSE SHEEP IN NEW ZEALAND

The first embryos brought into New Zealand were implanted in early 2017 with lambs on the ground in late August. This followed a change in import conditions that had been reset after a fresh look at the disease risks. New genetics for sheep milking were brought into the country in 2016.

There are now 4-5 small flocks located in both islands, with another handful of breeders implanting a few embryos each.

The breed have been a huge hit at the Christchurch show in 2018, the Auckland Easter show earlier this year, at Fibre festivals in the Wairarapa and Upper Hutt and local shows in Masterton and the Manawatu. Even the faces of the most traditional sheep farmers light up as they see these animals for the first time.

There is now a Valais Blacknose Breed Society, newly registered under the NZ Sheepbreeders Association. Progeny from imported stock will continue to be registered in the UK system (Grassroots) as well as a register under the breed society. Bred up animals will also be recorded for multiple generations. The NZ Breed Society has developed a Breed Standard based on the Swiss one and some Breeding Up guidelines.



◀ **Photo:** Embryo lamb from a Poll Dorset recipient

### How Much Can You Expect To Pay For A Valais Blacknose?

There is a huge variation in quality of Valais Blacknose on the market at present and unfortunately similar money is being asked for a bad sheep as a good one. You can't beat original Swiss stock although there are also animals now in other parts of Europe as well.

And as much as we all love these very special sheep, the reality is that they are still very expensive to buy, even in the UK where they have now been for 4 years.

In the UK you can still expect to pay £2500 - £7500 for a lamb depending on genetics, sex and markings. Embryos are generally selling for over £1000 each and still climbing, as markets like New Zealand are opening up and the borders

from Switzerland (their native home) remain closed. In the USA where semen has recently been imported for a breeding up programme (given that embryos are not yet able to be imported from the UK), semen straws are selling for USD \$500 (NZD 685).

Most recently at the annual Valais Blacknose auction in Carlisle, England, the top price was 10000 guineas (NZD 20,000) paid by Valais Blacknose NZ for Highland Egbert. In the previous year (2017) there were 15 lots in the sale and they sold for £2562 on average (almost \$5000 NZD). Prendwick Dancer, a gimmer (ewe hogget) from Jamie Wood made 4500 guineas (\$8618 NZD). Highland Duke sold for 4200 guineas (\$8000 NZD), Prendwick Dandelion (7 month old ewe lamb) sold for 3800 guineas (\$7280 NZD) and Westmorland Elsie (5 month ewe lamb) sold for 3600 guineas (\$6900 NZD).

Young rams in New Zealand have just started to become available for sale, reaching between \$5000-7000 plus GST each. As ewe lambs are still very expensive to get on the ground (up to 10-20,000 for a well marked ewe) and flocks are building up, it is unlikely that they will become available for some time.

If you are considering embryos then there are several things to watch. If they are easy to import from the UK then chances are the quality is not high. Successful breeders are busy breeders so they can be much more of a challenge to source from.

There are several grades of embryo and they can vary in their likelihood of successful implant. Grade 1 is the best and grade 2 are also frozen for export. There can be as much as 25% difference in survivability between these two grades so you don't want to be paying £1000 for one that has a lower chance of success. Grade 2 also have more likelihood of not surviving the defrosting procedure and the odd one cannot be implanted. Having said that though, there has been good success with implanting grade 2s. Grade 3 embryos are not suitable for freezing and are usually implanted fresh into recipient animals.

### The Breeding Up Programme

As there will be limited purebred ewes (if any) available for purchase for some time in New Zealand and they are likely to be expensive, some breeders are crossing the Valais Blacknose rams with NZ breeds. A popular choice for the foundation ewe is the English Leicester which is similar in size and wool to the Valais. Others have crossed with Romney, Suffolk, Coopworth, Poll Dorset, Drysdale and even Jacob Cross and Arapawa. Very few of these breeds are horned unfortunately so the offspring tend to be without horns from polled breeds. The subsequent generations should begin to show this trait as crosses continue. The first cross lambs are generally strongly marked like the Valais already and have the same quiet temperaments.





▲Photo: F1 lamb from a Drysdale ewe



▲Photo: F1 lambs from an English Leicester



▲ Photo: Poll Dorset F1 lambs

## Exports to North America

Semen was allowed for import into the USA from the UK in 2017 and the first F2 lambs have now just hit the ground there, showing great quality already from Scottish blackface foundation ewes with their similar size and horns. Unfortunately we don't have Scottish Blackface in New Zealand (yet!). The first semen from New Zealand entered Canada late last year and into the USA early this year. There are some lovely F1 lambs already on the ground in Canada. There are at least two registries in North America for the breed – the Valais Blacknose sheep Association of North America and the Valais Blacknose Sheep Society USA.



## STUD PROFILE # 1

### **Valais Blacknose New Zealand (VBNZ), Flocks #1 Heartland & #2 Stratheden Established 2017 & 2018**

VBNZ is a partnership set up in 2016 between Sally & Lindsay Strathdee and farmer/biosecurity expert Christine Reed. The business trades as Valais Blacknose Breeders NZ Inc.

[www.valaisblacknose.co.nz](http://www.valaisblacknose.co.nz)

[www.facebook.com/valaisblacknosenz](https://www.facebook.com/valaisblacknosenz)



▲ Sally and Lindsay Strathdee are fulltime farmers near Motueka (250 acres: 106ha including 12ha QE2 covenanted bush) 50km north-west of Nelson. With around 150 beef cattle, the primary business is beef-fattening, and Sally and Lindsay also run a busy farm homestay cottage with their daughter Jess, where visitors “breakfast with the Valais”. The flock is registered as “Stratheden”.

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▲Christine Reed farms a variety of interesting sheep breeds in South Wairarapa on 20 acres (8 ha), including the Valais, English Leicester, Poll Dorset, Drysdales and Jacob pattern sheep, while also working off-farm in a full-time role managing the science & risk assessment team in MPI Biosecurity. Christine's flock are registered as "Heartland".



▲Photo: Twin ewe lambs from 2017. This photo went viral on social media and has led to immense interest in the breed

Valais Blacknose New Zealand are proud to be working with top UK breeders to bring the best Valais Blacknose to New Zealand. Many of our first embryos in 2017 were from top breeder Jamie Woods from Prendwick farm in Northumberland.

In 2014 Prendwick Farm was one of the first to purchase Valais Blacknose Sheep in the UK and later brought in 10 ewes and a ram from Switzerland before the borders closed.

Jamie was the top points breeder at the second Blacknose Beauties show in Carlisle in 2017 and in the top two breeders in 2016 and 2018 - the other being Raymond Irvine and Jenni McAllistair of Highland Valais in Scotland who have taken out the National Supreme Champion title at Carlisle three years in a row.

We implanted in June 2017 and later in October had the most gorgeous 16 lambs on the ground – 9 girls and 7 boys. Miraculously, one of the embryos implanted in Sally and Lindsay's flock resulted in twin girls! A very unusual event but very welcome.

The focus of Valais Blacknose NZ is the import and breeding of top-quality animals for the enjoyment of New Zealanders (primarily on small land holdings) and export of genetics into international markets. We were the first to export semen into Canada where our rams Stratheden Alexander and Heartland Aragorn now have F1 lambs on the ground. We also now have semen from both of these rams in the USA while embryos are not yet approved for import.

Valais Blacknose NZ has gone from strength to strength since then. Our Facebook page now has over 15,000 followers and we are receiving daily emails from all over the world for imports and a substantial interest in New Zealand as well. At the 2018 National UK show in Carlisle, England, Valais Blacknose NZ was extremely lucky to outbid other interest to purchase Highland Egbert from Raymond Irvine for a record 10,000 guineas and two other Highland ewes – Diamond and Deedee to begin our own embryo collection programme. Highland Egbert offers a very unique bloodline to us in NZ that is not yet available in the UK either. His offspring will be born in Spring 2019.

Our first New Zealand bred lambs were born last December with some stunning lambs from crossing the best of the two top breeders' genetics in the UK.

We have a market advantage in NZ for export into the huge demand in North America in having a favorable biosecurity status here that allows us to be pioneering in the export of our NZ-generated semen.

We are also exploring the potential use of our NZ-bred rams as terminal sires with a phenomenal growth rate of these lambs that are such a strikingly attractive animal in the paddock.

Our profile internationally as lead importers and exporters was recently highlighted through our sponsorship of the national Valais Blacknose sheep classes in the UK, and our purchase at record prices of ewes and rams at the 2018 National UK Valais auction. Our animals will remain in Scotland and be bred from, since the

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import of live animals into NZ remains prohibited for the foreseeable future .

We are extremely privileged to be working with a top NZ felter, Sabin Imhasly to promote the wool. Sabin is herself from the Valais region in Switzerland, now resident in Upper Hutt, and delighted to be working with the Valais wool that originated from her home region.

Valais Blacknose wool is being marketed as a high value crafters' wool, as it has unique felting and dyeing properties.

<https://www.facebook.com/twinfelt>

Our first import of embryos have been from two rams and three ewes from [Valais Blacknose Sheep Scotland](#)

And another two rams and four ewes from [Valais Blacknose Sheep Northumberland](#)

We have also used Gemstones Bernard (courtesy of [Whitehall Valais Blacknose Sheep Scotland](#))



▲Photo:

*An unusual "Spitti" ewe born with reverse colouring from purebred parents. The Swiss consider these animals very lucky*

## STUD PROFILE # 2

### Parkdale Valais Blacknose Sheep, Flock #8

**Established 2018**

**Owned by Hayden and Melissa Cowan, North Canterbury**

Melissa and I, along with Emma (6 years) and Ben (5 years), own and operate an 850-acre mixed cropping and grazing property in picturesque Motunau Beach in North Canterbury.

After having quietly followed the breed for about a year, Melissa showed me a picture of a Valais one night and told me a bit about them. It didn't take long for Melissa to convince me we needed to look into the breed a bit more. I did some research and made a few phone calls and our first shipment of embryos arrived from the UK in 2018. These embryos came from one of the top UK breeders, Jamie Woods, with all embryos coming from sires (namely Prendwick Basil and Prendwick Eros) and dams having scored maximum points based on the Swiss grading, the best genetics available.

In August 2018 our first 18 Valais Blacknose lambs were born and we've never looked back! We are also lucky to have the first (and only) "spitti" Valais born in NZ. A "spitti" is a Valais that has the reverse colouring, being predominately black, and they are considered good luck in Switzerland.

We have recently implanted more embryos (sourced from several different UK breeders) into our surrogate ewes for our 2019 breeding season. Our aim is to build our breeding flock to 50 Valais ewes, whilst retaining our best rams every year for breeding and selling the surplus ram lambs and wethers. We also intend to sell semen and embryos both within NZ and into the booming USA market.

We are also excited to be part of the Valais breed-up programme and have had two of our rams out with our Romney ewes this autumn. We chose to use Romney's due to them having similar conformation to the Valais Blacknose. We are expecting our first F1 (50% Valais 50% Romney) lambs in October and can't wait to see what Valais traits they exhibit. We will be offering some for sale.

The Valais Blacknose Sheep have an incredible temperament, addictive personalities and super cute looks and of course they have a story behind them that everyone loves, coming from the Swiss Alps. Emma and Ben love spending time out in the paddock with them and having such great personalities means they can give them cuddles and Emma can 'do their hair' and dress them up for picnics together!



Our family have been involved in the Hereford Stud industry for many years and I have made life-long friends from all over the world as a result. Melissa and I hope that we will have the same experience with the Valais Blacknose Stud industry and look forward to working with other breeders both within NZ and wider afield.



▲Photo: *Emma Cowan plays with her friends*



▲Photo: *Melissa and Hayden Cowan*



Photo: *Parkdale Basil*

## **STUD PROFILE # 3**

### **Parekawa Valais Blacknose, Flock #7**

**Established 2018**

**Owned by Mark and Jane Foster, Helensville**

My husband Mark and I, along with our three children live on our 140 acre ex-dairy farm on the Kaipara Harbour in the Helensville area of Auckland. The farm is predominantly used for dairy grazing and calf rearing. I saw a picture of a Valais Blacknose lamb on Facebook and was instantly smitten. I contacted Valais Blacknose NZ and joined the breeding up programme which involved buying 7 English Leicester ewes, scanned in lamb and sired by the purebred UK registered ram, Heartland Aristotle. I now have 5 F1 ewes who will go to an unrelated ram soon to produce the next generation of F2's.

Meanwhile I have become a member of the newly formed the Valais Blacknose Breed committee and recently imported 6 embryos from a top breeder in the UK to implant into recipients. The implantation process went well and we are very hopeful to have full VBN lambs on the ground towards the end of the year.



▲ Photo: *Mark and Jane Foster with their English Leicester F1 lambs in the background*



▲Photo: *F1 Valais Blacknose/English Leicester cross lambs*

**PGG Wrightson Livestock**

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## ***Shropshire's grazing in an olive grove*** ▼

Photo: Juno's

Where: Juno Olives, Wairarapa [Editor's note – big wethers in mob sold recently for \$180 each at local sale!]

Our small number of Shropshire's like olive prunings. They gather around at pruning time to select the sweetest roughage and then wander off to sit under an olive tree or drink from the water race. This year, we found the wethers particularly destructive. They grind their teeth into the tree trunks trying to get at new shoots; so we sold them and kept the ewes to breed with a Rosemarkie lease ram. In spring, we'll have new lambs and the cycle of olives and Shropshire's will start again.

By the way, Shropshire lamb tastes delicious served with a drizzle of Juno Rosemary olive oil, minted new spuds and peas.



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## SONG AND DANCE OF BEEF AND LAMB GENETICS

Contributed by *HUGH GARDYNE - ESSELMONT TEXELS*

“Has anybody here seen our old friends from Beef and Lamb Genetics?  
Can someone tell me where they’ve gone?  
They were at Woodlands and Maraetotara,  
They use to do good but now they’ve gone!!”

Another year passes and another progeny test, has anyone seen the results? No. Yes. Don’t know.  
Not surprising, because Beef and Lamb don’t release any, not publicly. Well sheep ones anyway.

But to my surprise, the other day up popped an email with a heading – “Please find attached Invermay CPT 2018 Ewe Autumn Weight Reports and Traits Used for Flock 4640”. What a strange way to send out the National Sire Progeny Test Results, if that was what they are? I digress because there was an old mate of mine on the top line.

2835	401/13	2835	141/10	.121221	2835	GM651/15	2293	1
2553	51/11	2835	195/11	.212.2	2835	401/13	2265	2

And that is his old man on the second line. Good genetics? Great genetics.

The Ram, GM651/15 was bred by Roger Weber but now he is in our front paddock tugging our ewes. In fact the job should be done. The 2293 number refers to the CPT Terminal Sire index and if I’ve read it right, the ram is top of the class. You might think Beef and Lamb might show some courtesy and drop me or Roger a note recording the fact but this email was forwarded by Julia, at Genetic Gains. Bless her. Thank goodness someone does B and L Genetics work for them.

If Beef and Lamb expect breeders to participate in the CPT in future, it is my humble opinion they need to up their game, communicate with those entering rams more frequently, acknowledge the successes and respect those who outlay quite an investment to have rams agisted, trained and tested.

I cannot be sure if the Invermay results are national rankings or just regional ones. For our significant levies to Beef and Lamb some clarity would be great.

NZ SHEEP BREEDERS ASSN should ask to be on board and sort the progeny test out and see that the results are made public. This is promotion after all.



***Top indexed ram, Grassmere 651/15  
bred by Roger Weber***

# AgriHQ





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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HELP BREEDERS WITH RAM MATING SELECTIONS FOR EWES.



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## ANOTHER BIT OF HISTORY

### Importation of Stud Sheep

Wanganui Herald, 24 November 1908

(National Library *Papers Past*)

CHRISTCHURCH, November 24

The Ruapehu bought a number of stud sheep from England. They have been placed in quarantine. The consignment includes two Leicester ewes, one ram for A. Archibald, from the Barrelwell flock, a Romney ram from C files' flock for w. Grant, two Romney rams from the same flock for Sir Joseph Ward.



Farmer and Stockbreeder photograph  
22. KENT OR ROMNEY MARSH SHEARLING EWES

Photo from UK book "Sheep" by JFH Thomas *et al* published MCMXLV [My best guess is 1945! Editor]

"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."

## CORRIEDALE FIELD DAY REPORT

*By NZ Corriedale Society President, James Hoban*

In early May Corriedale breeders opened to the public in Waipara. The stay started at the Hoban family's farm Glenafric. After viewing their Parham Hill ewes and several rams around 70 people enjoyed a 4WD farm tour. It was a clear sunny day with barely a breeze so both speaking stops were on hills with good views of the farm and sea.

Dan Shand from Island Hills Station spoke briefly on an app he has developed (with a group of developers in America and Europe) called Stock Manager. This is a new system for recording animal performance, animal health and farm information. The Hobans are one of Dan's trial farms.

Ben Allott from North Canterbury Vets gave two talks. The first was an update on a Massey University study around ewe udder health. He also outlined a project currently underway which he is leading showing promising results reducing bearings through use of Vitamin D. Later Ben addressed the topic of breeding sheep for resistance and resilience to internal parasites. A summary of key points from Ben and some further information on the Massey study has been sent to attendees – if anyone has not received this and would like to please contact James Hoban (314 8293 or [james.hoban@outlook.co.nz](mailto:james.hoban@outlook.co.nz))

Local farmer Ian Knowles facilitated a short discussion on some farm topics the Hobans had asked for feedback on.

On the drive attendees viewed the Hoban's South Suffolk stud ewe hoggets and the Whiterock Mains Corriedale ewes (Flock 11) – which the family had recently purchased from Duncan and Tina Mackintosh.

After lunch the group visited the property of Mark and Jayne Sidey on the Glenmark Drive. Mobs of Lockerbie ewes were viewed with a quick introduction to Sidey's low input farming system.

Peter McCusker from PGG Wrightson Wool presented an update on the current state of the mid-micron wool market and its positive future.

Tom and Christine Beaton of Amberfield Stud had six ram hoggets on display and Christine gave a quick introduction to their flock.

A BBQ with refreshments generously sponsored by North Canterbury Vets followed. Alan McDermott from AgriFood strategy gave an informed presentation on how New Zealand farming will have to adapt to cope with global issues at the farm level.

We finished the day with Doc Sidey presenting Life Membership buttons to four long serving Corriedale breeders – Geoff Millar, Jack Taylor (absent), Murray Sidey and Pat Hoban.

The field day was held 35 years to the day after a North Canterbury Corriedale tour which also included the Lockerbie and Parham Hill flocks.



*Honorary Life members of the NZ Corriedale Sheep Society- left to right - Pat Hoban, Murray Sidey, Geoff Millar. Jack Taylor was also awarded an Honorary Life membership*

*Photo: James Hoban*

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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.”*



# ARE YOUR SHEEP HAPPY SHEEP?

By Hamish Rennie

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Dr Hamish Rennie is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Environment, Society and Design at Lincoln University – He and his partner have the Eel Bend Ryeland Stud.

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I think we all like to think our sheep are reasonably happy with the way we look after them, even if most are destined for the freezer. But how do we know they are happy, and does it matter?

Lincoln University PhD student Bilal Kayani is working on the first half of that question. Under the supervision of simulation modelling expert Prof. Sandhya Samarasinghe, Bilal is recording the baas and bleats of sheep and working on developing a means for a computer to use these to recognise their state of wellbeing. While the doctoral level research is really in training the computer algorithms to recognise the meanings of different sheep sound and respond accordingly, getting a sufficiently large database of sheep sounds has proven unexpectedly challenging. For a start, sheep tend not to bleat when they are happy or contented.

Bilal, from Pakistan and with no previous sheep experience, has also needed to develop contacts with people prepared to spend time recording sheep sounds. That's how we met. He offered to provide labour in return for recording some of our sheep's bleats. That might still happen, but out of interest I decided to try recording some bleats myself – using my cell phone. This was surprisingly successful, but you needed to be on a reasonably good footing with our sheep to get close enough to record them, without making them really unhappy. He now has a small collection of ryeland sheep and lamb bleats.

But if they are happy when silent, then they must be unhappy if making noise, right? That approach is not very helpful for the research, so a 'degrees of unhappiness' scale was developed.

Now the problem is to get sufficient data in each of the categories to enable the hard part of teaching a computer to understand the sounds it hears.

## Does it matter?

Possibly, yes. My initial thoughts were that this might be used to enable better welfare or even robotic feeding of sheep – for instance, when you are away from home or when sheep are being transported from one place to another. However, in our increasingly customer oriented industry, one can imagine a selling point as being able to demonstrate that sheep have had a happy life before ending up on the supermarket shelf (and in fact this was what initiated the research). This might become part of a wellbeing certification scheme. It might also be used to further explore the connections between happiness/stress and the taste of meat, the growth of wool, or the flavour of sheep milk. Who knows? This is the nature of true research, driven by the desire to see if something can be done or to find an answer to unknown questions.

Personally, I would be curious as to whether there is a difference in the vocabulary of domesticated sheep and those recently captured from the wild, or between different breeds, or between different studs or sheep in different parts of the country. These were questions I never thought of until Bilal started this research. Do ryelands from Southland have a rolled 'r' and do those from the north, end each bleat with a rising vowel equivalent, like the famous 'Auckland, A'?

But before we can explore such esoteric research, the more applied and practical possibilities from Bilal's research warrant our support. So, if there are any sheep owners out there prepared to let Bilal record their sheep, please contact his supervisor [Sandhya.samarasinghe@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:Sandhya.samarasinghe@lincoln.ac.nz)

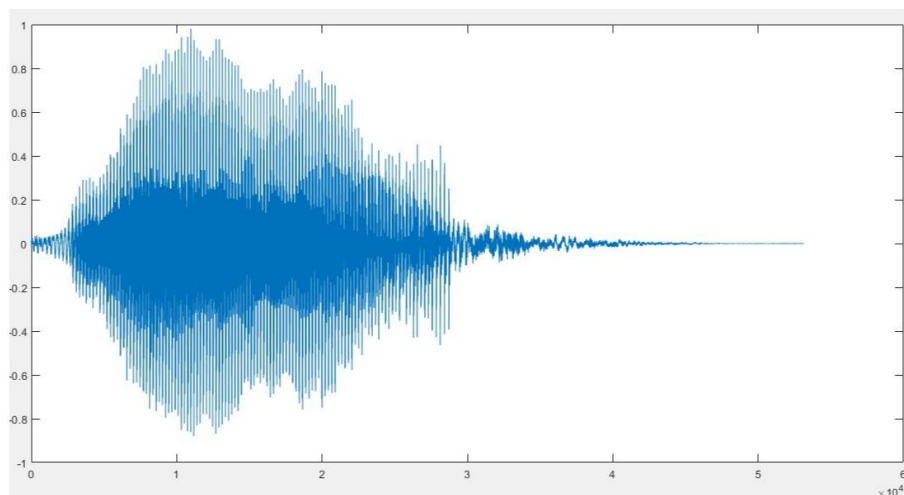


Figure: The sound of a sheep

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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.”

These two pages of “Why Wool” reprinted with permission from Campaign For Wool. Could make good posters for shows etc but you would need to remove the “footer” at the bottom of the pages!



THE CAMPAIGN FOR WOOL  
Patron: HRH The Prince of Wales

## WHY WOOL?

### NATURAL

Wool is a protein fibre formed in the skin of sheep, and is thus one hundred percent natural, not man-made. Since the Stone Age, it has been appreciated as one of the most effective forms of all-weather protection known to man, and science is yet to produce a fibre which matches its unique properties.

### RENEWABLE

As long as there is grass to graze on, every year sheep will produce a new fleece; making wool a renewable fibre source. Woolgrowers actively work to safeguard the environment and improve efficiency, endeavouring to make the wool industry sustainable for future generations.

### BIODEGRADABLE

At the end of its useful life, wool can be returned to the soil, or the marine environment where it decomposes, releasing valuable nutrients into the ground/ocean. When a natural wool fibre is disposed of in soil or water, it takes a very short time to break down, whereas most synthetics and plastics are extremely slow to degrade, if at all.

### NATURAL INSULATOR

Wool is a hygroscopic fibre. As the humidity of the surrounding air rises and falls, the fibre absorbs and releases water vapour. Heat is generated and retained during the absorption phase, which makes wool a natural insulator. Used in the home, wool insulation helps to reduce energy costs and prevents the loss of heat energy to the external environment, thus reducing carbon emissions.

### BREATHABLE

Wool fibres are crimped, and when tightly packed together, form millions of tiny pockets of air. This unique structure allows it to absorb and release moisture vapour - either into the atmosphere or via perspiration from the wearer - without compromising its thermal efficiency. Wool has a large capacity to absorb moisture vapour (up to 30 per cent of its own weight) next to the skin, making it extremely breathable, and comfortable to wear in extremes and changes of temperature.



### MULTI-CLIMATIC/ TRANSEASONAL

Thanks to its hygroscopic abilities, wool constantly reacts to changes in body temperature, maintaining its wearer's thermophysical comfort in both cold and warm weather.

### RESILIENT & ELASTIC

Wool fibres resist tearing and are able to be bent back on themselves over 20,000 times without breaking. Due to its crimped structure, wool is also naturally elastic, and so wool garments have the ability to stretch comfortably with the wearer, but are then able to return to their natural shape, making them resistant to wrinkling and sagging. Wool maintains its appearance in the longer term, adding value to the product, reduces the requirement for excessive laundering and its lifespan.

### MULTI-CLIMATIC/ TRANSEASONAL

Thanks to its hygroscopic abilities, wool constantly reacts to changes in body temperature, maintaining its wearer's thermophysical comfort in both cold and warm weather.

### EASY CARE

The protective waxy coating on the wool fibres makes wool products resistant to staining and they also pick up less dust as wool is naturally anti-static. Recent innovations, in white goods and wool treatments, mean wool items are no longer hand-wash only. Many wool products can now be machine-washed and tumble dried.

### ODOUR RESISTANT

Wool is far more efficient than other textiles at absorbing sweat and releasing it into the air, before bacteria has a chance to develop and produce unpleasant body odour.

### A SAFE SOLUTION

Wool is naturally safe. It is not known to cause allergies and does not promote the growth of bacteria. It can even reduce floating dust in the atmosphere, as the fibre's microscopic scales are able to trap and hold dust in the top layers until vacuumed away. Thanks to its high water and nitrogen content, wool is naturally flame-retardant, and has a far higher ignition threshold than many other fibres, will not melt and stick to the skin causing burns, and produces less noxious fumes that cause death in fire situations. Finally, wool also has a naturally high level of UV protection, which is much higher than most synthetics and cotton.

@campaignforwool #ChooseWool  
[www.campaignforwool.org](http://www.campaignforwool.org)

## 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.



## A BIT OF HISTORY

### A Profitable Breed

Poverty Bay Herald 27 March 1934

(National Library Papers Past)

The Corriedale has recently justified its reputation as one of the leading breeds of sheep in Canterbury. It was mentioned by the chairman of the Corriedale sheep Society, Mr Owen T. Evans, when speaking at the annual meeting of the society, that Corriedale wool had secured top prices at most of the recent sales; Corriedales had topped the market at the ewqe fairs, while at the ram fair at addington the breed had again gained the highest price.

## NZ SHEEPBREEDERS' ASSOCIATION

### COUNCIL MEETING

### PRELIMINARY NOTICE

**DATE:** THURSDAY, 25 JULY 2019

**VENUE:** SUDIMA HOTEL, CHRISTCHURCH

**MEETING TIME:** 2:00 PM

**AGM:** 3:30 PM

Greg Burgess – [greg@nzsheep.co.nz](mailto:greg@nzsheep.co.nz)





### DORPER BREEDERS AGM 10 - 12<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2019

I am sure anyone who has run any event will know the anxiety which occurs prior to the event with what has or has not been done, will there be a good attendance etc etc... Conversely, the relief when all goes well and one even gets texts back, saying how appreciative someone is about the program.

The Dorper group held its AGM in a very crowded back room at the Sheepbreeders' office in Christchurch. There was good discussion and resolution of areas of concern which augers well for our group in the future. We then had three stud visits with each breeder offering a different perspective rather than just looking at sheep.



▲ John Roux on conformation

John Roux, with a flock of Dorpers, was encouraged to offer advice on colour, with the requirements for stud vs non stud, and showing standards based on the African selection system.

(Photo: Cristine Drummond)

My turn was next with the emphasis on ram selection in my White Dorper flock. However, my equilibrium was a bit affected by another breeder's comment that he "wouldn't use that ram!" I must confess I had agonized at some length on the ram lamb's selection and thought I had covered all bases. However, the comment was backed up with some (privately offered) observations on conformation which on reflection, were of some value to me. Would I have selected a different ram lamb (as back up to my AI with semen from a well proven ram). No, because he was still the best ram lamb on offer. Will I use him again? Well, his progeny will need to be very good but more importantly, I have some new knowledge to apply to future selections as my appreciation of conformation has been strengthened.

Finally it was Don Edgecombe's turn. He had gone to a lot of trouble penning his ewes up into dam lines. He was able to demonstrate the importance of breeding from those good females which we all try to find within our own breeding programmes. My wife always reckons the ewe is the most important and while I do concede she has a point I (secretly) know that by using proven rams I will breed those good ewes (eventually!)

**Jim McPhee**

### Note: CLASSIFIED DVVERTISEMENTS

*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)*

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### 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 **August 20<sup>th</sup> for the September 2019 newsletter.**

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

Next **"FEATURE BREED"** will be the **Beltex**.

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.

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**Published by NZ Sheepbreeders' Association**

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