

Sheep NewZ

#30 Autumn 2023



CONTENTS

- 2 Association News & Views – President
- 3 Association News & Views – Manager
- 4 Suffolk Breed Feature
- 7/8 SuffolkNZ life memberships awarded
- 9 Bit of History – Stud sheep to South America
- 10 Wool and How It Grows #7
- 12 Shear4U Event – Wools of New Zealand report
- 13 Shock Tactics – bale contamination
- 14 NZ Woolclassers' Assn. – Richard Gavigan on reasons to uphold crossbred wool preparation
- 18 NZSBA – 125-year jersey order form

Hello Members,

A moan from me – please note the deadline for items for the NewZ is the 20th of the month prior to issue date. I am heavily involved with Women's Institute and edit 2 other newsletters at about the same time. I do need to have any items on time please!!!! I am happy to use articles etc from your breed newsletters but please send them to me rather than me having to cut and paste (if the pdf's will let me).

I have heard from two breeders who lost some of their sheep in the Cyclone Gabrielle floods: one from Hawkes Bay (Hampshires) and one from Gisborne (Shropshires). I'm sure all of us feel for them (and no doubt others who lost livestock) and are very grateful if we were not affected.

I have had some good news, Downunder Honey Ltd (Feilding) run by my fellow Shropshire breeders, Jason and Amanda Prior sent me a note: "We had the Balance Farm Environmental awards last night, they liked the idea of using Shropshires in the orchard, not something they had heard of". They took home the NZ Farm Environment Trust Innovation Award.

I trust those of you who live nearby have entered the Royal Sheep Event at the MacKenzie Show being held on 10th April - Easter Monday? Those who may not have sheep entered at the show can always support it by attending. Remember to take photos!

Helen McKenzie

Editor

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Front cover photo

Taken at the Canterbury Ram Fair 2022. The ram pictured, broke the NZ record price for a Suffolk ram, fetching \$17,000. The ram was sold by Eric Ross and Wade Newlands of Collie Hills stud. It was purchased in syndicate by Bede McCloy of Karendale Stud, Will and Anton Gibson of Dry Creek Stud and the Hampton Family of Waterton Studs.

ASSOCIATION NEWS & VIEWS

From The President

Welcome all members, to the Autumn Edition of Sheep NewZ.

At the time of writing, it is nearly a month since cyclone Gabrielle cut its devastating swath through the upper half of the North Island. Watching all this devastation on social media was unbelievable, the carnage that this storm created seems surreal. The clean-up that is going to have to be made to not only get people's lives back to some sort of normality, but the response from Government needs to be swift and concise. I am sure that the thoughts of all fellow members of the Sheep Breeders fraternity go out to all members affected by this tragedy.

The blip in the return on sheep seems to be slowly lifting and it needed to; lambs that were selling in the \$180.00-\$200.00 range last year dropped approx. \$50.00/head as did old ewes. A further strengthening of these prices would certainly be welcome! Now all we need is for wool to continue its upward direction.

Suffolk's are the feature breed for this issue. Suffolk's first arrived in New Zealand in the early part of last century and have arguably risen to the number one terminal sire of choice in New Zealand. The Suffolk's ability to produce heavy carcassed prime lambs makes them very popular as the leading terminal sire used by commercial prime lamb producers. It is no coincidence that the Suffolk breed has topped the last two Canterbury Ram fairs.

The weather in our region since the last newsletter has been made to order, plenty of rain - good grass growth - and some good hot days for hay making and harvesting. Ewes around the countryside are in fantastic condition which should set up for a good mating.

I attended the Amuri Show on Saturday last and while the sheep numbers were back a bit, the quality was good. The show had in excess of 80 gift lambs which is a credit to the organisers and volunteers – these classes are a big part of a lot of shows and while the pedigree sheep part of the show is not as strong as it could be, the numbers of these gift lambs is a credit to the commercial breeders of the area. The supreme sheep of the show was fought out between two very good ewes, a Corriedale and a Southdown, both breeds being an icon of the Amuri area, with the Corriedale ewe belonging to the Hoban family getting the judges final nod of approval.

It was a bit of a surprise that our beloved leader jumped ship, now we really are in the hands of fools and idiots - it's a bit like the clowns gathering at the tent door waiting for the final act!

All the best for the autumn, and the all-important mating of your stud ewes.



Tom Burrows
President NZSBA

“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.”

From The General Manager

Cyclone Gabrielle - this severe tropical cyclone that hit the North Island and parts is the costliest tropical cyclone on record in the Southern Hemisphere, with damages estimated to be at least NZ\$13 billion (US\$8.12 billion). It was the deadliest system to hit New Zealand since Cyclone Giselle in 1968, surpassing Cyclone Bola in 1988.



The devastation and aftermath have been unimaginable and the clean-up in some parts will take years. Hopefully to any of our members affected you are receiving the necessary support.

Breed Conferences – 2023 – Breed Conferences are happening this year after a hiatus brought about by the pandemic. Conferences are scattered throughout the islands. The North Island host the Ryeland, Poll Dorset and the South Suffolks, whilst the South Island host the Dorset Down, Suffolks, Valais Blacknose, and Texels. The East Friesians are having a special day at the Fairlie Show.

NEW: Sheep for Sale – Please utilise this site on www.nzsheep.co.nz - you can now go to our website and sell sheep online. Once on our site, go to sheep sales, then create add. Very simple directions.
Jobs/Grazing – also all online now.

Annual Returns – Now on-line but members will still receive their Annual Returns via email or post if no email address.

NZSBA Promotion – Country-Wide – ads appeared in last year's Country-Wide in November and December, and I hope they were noted. Always difficult having an ad that grabs the attention of the reader flicking through the pages.

Outstanding Debt Owed to the Association – As we coming to end of our financial year, please eliminate any outstanding debt you may have. Remember if you resign no resignation can take effect unless all debt has been repaid to the Association.

NZSBA Flock Book – 2022 – the flock book has been published and circulated to those members who require a hard copy and is also online. Should you wish to purchase a copy, please contact the office.

Scanners' Eye Muscle Workshop – With new eye muscle scanners together with the established scanners there is a massive need for another Eye Muscle Scanners Accreditation Workshop to give members certainty.

We have been looking for the funding of our workshop, but nothing to report, and now could be pursuing a different pathway. There will have to be a decision from the Council in July.

Youth Initiative – The Texel breed has decided to increase the age to 30 years for new breeders. So new Texel breeders now pay zero fees up to the age of 30 years subject to having up to 50 ewes. The NZSBA Council will review their stance also.

Commemorative Jerseys - for sale –

Cost of Jerseys – Men's - \$170.00 – Ladies - \$135.00 and these can be posted anywhere in New Zealand. Check out our website for more details.

Tag Discounts - Shearwell, Allflex, 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.

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Greg Burgess
General Manager,
NZSBA

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Feature Breed



SUFFOLKS



Brief History

The original Suffolks were the result of crossing Southdown rams on Norfolk Horned ewes. Apparently, the product of this cross was a great improvement over either one of the parents. Although the Suffolk was a recognised breed as early as 1810, the flock book was not closed until much later.

In 1930, Southdowns were described as large sheep without horns, dark faces and legs, fine bones and long small necks. They were low set in front with high shoulders and light forequarters; however, their sides were good, rather broad in the loin, and were full in the thigh and twist. Today's Suffolk derives its meatiness and quality of wool from the old original British Southdown.

The Norfolk Horned sheep, now rare, were a wild and hardy breed. They were black faced, light, fleeced sheep. Both sexes were horned. The upland regions of Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridge on the south-eastern coast of England are very rugged and forage is sparse. It was this dry, cold and windy area in which the Norfolk breed adapted itself to travelling great distances for food, thereby developing a superbly muscular body.



Norfolk Horn ewe and Southdown x lamb. David Low – the Breeds of Domestic Animals of the British Isles. 1842

It was said at that time of the Norfolk Horned, 'their limbs are long and muscular, their bodies are long and their general form betokens activity and strength.' This breed and its crosses were valued highly both by farmers and butchers. However, sheepmen of that day did not like the long legs, flat sides, nor wild nature of the Norfolk Horned. They noted that Southdowns crossed with Norfolk produced a progeny that reduced most of the criticisms of both breeds.

South Down sheep. David Low – the Breeds of Domestic Animals of the British Isles. 1842



Fertility, hardiness and activity were inherited from the Norfolk, and the excellent conformation came from the Southdown. Although originally known as 'Blackfaces', in 1859 the new breed was recognised by the Royal Agricultural Society of England and called 'Suffolk'.

In 1913 one ram and six ewes were imported into Canterbury by Mr George Gould to meet specialist requirements in the meat trade of fast growth and high flesh to fat ratio. Steady growth in popularity has seen a rapid progression in flock numbers from 176 ewes in 9 registered flocks in 1940 to 360 registered flocks and 17,168 ewes in 1983, and in 2000 now there are 240 registered flocks comprising 19,000 ewes. Suffolks are now the most dominant sheep meat breed throughout the world. Suffolk cross lambs are ideally suited to today's trade requirements. They have an excellent lean meat ratio, large eye muscle, well-muscled legs, and succulent, well-textured meat.

Description

The Suffolk sheep is active and noble in appearance showing character with:

- absence of coarseness
- head black and long with good muzzle
- ears of fine texture
- eyes bright and full
- neck of reasonable length well set blending into fine shoulders with a moderate chest
- belly covered in wool
- legs straight and black
- bone of good quality well-muscled and woolled to knees and hocks
- straight top line
- skin fine, soft and pink in colour.

“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 Suffolk sheep should be an alert, free moving and well-muscled animal with stamina and good balance and is noted for long and active life.

Bodyweight
Suffolks are one of the heaviest sheep breeds. Rams are frequently 100 kgs and more, and ewes up to 100 kgs or so.
Meat
Fine grained, low fat.
Breeding/Lambing
Suffolks are inherently fertile and virile producing excellent percentages.
Numbers
Registered ewes Approximately 6,500
Wool
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short fine Down type ▪ 25 - 33 microns ▪ 48 to 58 spinning count ▪ Staple length 5 to 8.75 cm <p>Their wool has more bulk than most breeds and has excellent properties for thermal fillings in garments and bedding.</p>

A Bit of History

National Library, *Papers Past*

Hawera & Normanby Star, 11 December 1913

Suffolk Sheep for New Zealand, Wellington, Dec. 10

The Ruahine brought in a consignment of Suffolk sheep, a ram and six ewes for Messrs. Gould, Beaumont and Co., of Christchurch



National Library. *Papers Past*. Press, 29 September 1934

The above snap taken on Thursday shows a few members of Mr George Gould's stud flock at Coutts Island.

STUD PROFILE

Dry Creek Flock # 1001

Established 2008, Middlemarch

Owned by Anton & Will Gibson



'*Dry Creek*' Suffolk Stud is owned and operated by the Gibson Family who purchased 'Foulden Hill', a dryland Otago Hill Country property 8km east of Middlemarch in 2009. The Middlemarch area has seen a run of tough seasons, with 2023 looking like it's following suit. 2022 saw us only just get over 400mm of rain for the year.

The '*Dry Creek*' Suffolk stud was formed by the purchase of 6 ewes in 2006 from Cheryl MacDonald.

The stud mates approx. 150 Suffolk ewe, including hoggets a year, with some ewes being mated to a Texel to produce a few 1st cross rams.

Most rams sold get mated to Merino or Halfbred ewes. Lambs are September born, weaning around 175%, focusing on muscle scanning early to give us a good ability to put pressure on genuine early growth in a hard environment. With reproduction being reasonably consistent we have a top line of 2nd cut ewe lambs available every year.

The flock is fully recorded on SIL, all animals alive get a weaning weight, dag scored, and muscle scanned prior to any culling.



Anton Gibson showing 2016 National Suffolk Tour group his rams.

“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.”

In 2020, a Suffolk ram, Sayla Park 180111, was seen in Australia that impressed. We made the decision to purchase some semen from him and AI a line of ewes. This has given us a full outcross sire that has bred a very typey line that have performed well on property and on paper. 5 sons were sold to stud in 21/22 sale season averaging just over 5K.

2023 will see an exciting mix of sires in use, which will include the \$17,000 Collie Hills ram bought in syndicate with **Waterton** and **Karendale** Studs, a new AI sire from **Sayla Park** alongside home bred rams, and a very exciting full brother to the ram Andrew Adams purchased at Gore looks to be breeding well.

The Suffolk stud runs alongside a Merino ewe flock producing fibre down to 12 micron and averaging around 15 microns.

Two cattle studs are also run on the property, Hereford and Santa Gertrudis: We will be having a combined Bull sale with a local Angus stud in late May.



These ewe lambs are fully recorded on SIL, have been EMA scanned & some are progeny of Aussie genetics. They are for sale. Please contact me if interested.

Will Gibson, Ph.0274360237
‘Dry Creek’ Suffolks,
Middlemarch,
Otago, NZ



2022 SUFFOLKNZ AMBASSADOR **OF THE YEAR**



(Left) SuffolkNZ Chairman, Symon Howard presenting the Trophy to Eric at the 2022 Canterbury Stud Ram Fair. With them is Eric's son in law, Wade Newlands, also part of the Collie Hills stud team.

Eric Ross of the Collie Hills Suffolk Stud, Flock 528 was awarded the Suffolk NZ Ambassador of the Year 2022.

This was in recognition of the high standard of rams Collie Hills Stud has produced over the years, especially in recent times. The award was presented prior to the Suffolk rams being sold at the Fair. At that stage Collie Hills rams had gained the top price for a Suffolk ram at the previous 3 Canterbury Stud Ram Fairs. Within 20 minutes of Eric being presented the award, Collie Hills 81/21 went under the hammer to gain the top price for a Suffolk, \$17,000 and broke the Canterbury Suffolk record and gain top price of all breeds for the day. I'm not sure if anyone has gained the top Suffolk Ram price at the Canterbury Fair for 4 years running.

Eric established the Collie Hills Suffolk Flock in 1981, which is now run in partnership with his son-in-law, Wade Newlands. Currently, the Stud has a flock of 266 ewes. The Stud is part of a large commercial sheep operation at Kurow in the Hakataramea Valley, South Canterbury.

Eric soon developed a reputation for producing meaty, hardy, structurally sound sheep, and has been at or near the forefront of the Suffolk breed ever since. At the National tour five years ago, based in Otago, it was a privilege to see a line of over 250 ewes at Collie Hills. They were a very even line of very good ewes, so you could see why Collie Hills sheep are so sought after.

Eric is recognised as a very good sheep judge of not only Suffolks, as he is a NZ Sheepbreeders' Association Master Judge and has judged sheep at shows all over New Zealand.

Eric is a worthy recipient of the 2022 Suffolk Ambassador of the Year.

Chris Hampton, Breed Committee Rep. SuffolkNZ

SUFFOLKNZ LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Norman Carr, Omagh Stud, Flock 336

Norm Carr receiving the SUFFOLKNZ Life Membership badge from Chris Hampton, Breed Committee Rep.



At a dinner held in West Melton, November 2022, Norm Carr was awarded his Suffolk NZ Life Membership. This award is in recognition of his long service to the Suffolk Breed in NZ.

Norm Carr is a staunch supporter of the Suffolk Breed. He has been involved with the Canterbury Club and a valued Breed Committee member for many years. He spent 8 years on the Suffolk NZ Breed Committee where he held the position of Vice Chairman. He always had a level head especially when some discussions got exciting!

He is a doer, and is always happy to help, both at shows and guide new breeders with advice from setting up their stud, to relating many Suffolk breed points.

His sheep are a great example of if you have good genetics and you feed them well, they will perform very well.

Norm is a very good breeder of Suffolk Sheep with a good eye for quality. He, along with wife Margaret, have been very successful in the Show pen and Ram Fairs. Most Flocks in NZ would have used at least one Omagh ram.

This was not the only case with his Suffolk's, but also when he used to farm exceptional commercial ewes (4000) with which he and Margaret were finalists in the National Ewe Hogget contest on many occasions with both Romney and Border Romney. They went on to win both sections on different occasions.

The Carrs have not only won the Suffolk ewe hogget class at the Christchurch show many times, but their ewe hoggets have also gone on to win the 'Miss Canterbury' contest Champion Ewe Hogget, (two or three times from memory). In 2020, Norm was awarded the Suffolk NZ Ambassador of the Year for his services to the Suffolk breed and the NZ Sheep industry.

In the spring last year, 2022, Norm and Margaret sold their Omagh Stud to James & Sally Carr. James commented at the dinner where Norm was awarded his Suffolk NZ Life Membership, how easy the transfer of ownership was, as in true Norm and Margaret style, they introduced James and family to the Suffolk community and helped the new generation of Carrs' take the Omagh Suffolks to the next level. This life membership is in recognition of the long service by Norm Carr to the Suffolk Breed.



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Annette Millar, Camshorn Stud, Flock 530

Annette Millar receiving the SUFFOLKNZ Life Membership badge from Debbie Holmes, Breed Committee Rep.

SUFFOLKNZ awarded Life Membership to Annette Millar at the 2022 Christchurch Show in recognition of her years of service to not only the NSISBC but also to the Suffolk Breed nationally.

Annette, along with husband Michael, established the Camshorn Suffolk Sheep Stud flock 530 in 1982. Within four years she had purchased almost 100 Suffolk ewes from well-known Canterbury Studs, which was a good foundation for the Camshorn Suffolk Stud. 'Peak Hill' up the Rakaia Gorge was a great testing ground for her sheep which you could buy with confidence.

Very quickly Annette became involved in the local Breeders Club and by 1989 she became secretary, a position she held for four years.



It was never a problem for her to travel down the gorge to a meeting and then home again. She stepped up again in 2016 when the club was again looking for a secretary.

Annette helped organise many National Tours even when she was unable to attend them herself.

Along with Lesley Seaton, Annette organised the popular vote prior to the Canterbury Ram sale for as long as I can remember. She didn't have to be asked, she just turned up with her ice cream container and voting cards.

The year after Canterbury A & P moved to the new grounds, Annette, Lesley & Elizabeth Bedford started writing up the show tickets and have done ever since. This year Annette handed the reins over to Elizabeth Hampton, and even though she has dispersed her Stud, she still showed up to help write up the cards at the show with Elizabeth & also showed her how to organise the popular vote at the Ram sale.

Annette is a very well organised, friendly woman who is always in the back making sure things are running smoothly. She is a very deserving recipient of SuffolkNZ Life Membership. Congratulations Annette Millar.

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A Bit More History

Stud Sheep Shipment for South America

National Library, *Papers Past* Press, 3 February 1966

Thirty-nine stud Romney and Corriedale rams and 26 stud Romney and Corriedale ewes are due to go aboard the Argentinian Reefer at Lyttelton today for Buenos Aires in the Argentine

Some of the Romney rams were purchased by Mr JF Morroghbernard, an Argentinian buyer, at the recent Feilding ram fair and he has also selected the other sheep in the consignment which are going to South American buyers. The total consignment is likely to be of a five-figure value.

Thirty-seven of the rams and all of the ewes are being shipped by arrangement of Wright Stephenson and Company, Ltd. These included 35 Romney rams and two Corriedale rams and 22 Romney ewes and four Corriedale ewes.

Among these sheep are 24 Romney stud rams and six Romney stud ewes from AL Wheeler, Leedstown, Marton; three Romney stud rams from White Brothers, Tiger Hill, Omakau; three Romney stud rams from D H Robertson, Merrydowns, Gore; four Romney stud rams and six Romney stud ewes from Brown Brothers, Bankhead Stud, Feilding; one Romney stud ram from G Craine, Nikau Stud, Feilding; six Romney stud ewes from JD and WT Robertson, Merryvale Stud, Gore; four Romney stud ewes from R Marshall, Tut Totara, Marton; two Corriedale stud rams from the estate HT Little, Hui Hui, Hawarden; and four Corriedale stud ewes from the Bushey Park estate, Palmerston.

Two stud Romney rams are also being sent under arrangement of Dalgety and New Zealand Loan, Ltd.

The sheep will travel on deck in export crates. They will eat special concentrate fodder. During the voyage, expected to take about 20 days, they will be looked after by Mr AD G Ross, who has been working in the North Island and will be returning home to the Argentine.



PHOEBE RAM SCOOPED THE POOL AT CANTY...

Grant & Di Beckett were absolutely elated when their **Suffolk Ram Phoebe 160/21Tw** won several classes he was entered in, at the 2022 Canterbury A & P Show.

Phoebe 160/21's achievements:

1st Suffolk Ram Hogget

Champion Suffolk Ram

Supreme Champion Suffolk

Best Suffolk Carcase

3rd Meat Breeds Best Ram hogget



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WOOL – AND HOW IT GROWS

A revised series of article on aspects of wool biology. *(First published in Black & Coloured Sheepbreeders' magazine Issue #17, November 1980)* By Roland Sumner, AgResearch, Whatawhata Research Centre. Reprinted with permission of BCSBA & Roland Sumner

Part 7 – Effects Of Shearing On The Sheep And Its Fleece

Shearing has been described by some animal behaviourists as the most traumatic experience in a sheep's life.

Suddenly after being comfortable and dry, protected from extreme heat and cold, and insulated from hard knocks in the sheep yards, the sheep can be wetted to the skin, become either sunburnt or chilled to the bone and severely bruised with rough handling in the sheep yards.

The sheep is however well adapted to sudden changes in its "personal microclimate" and is able to adapt relatively quickly. Immediately after shearing the animal feels cold due to the sudden increased loss of heat from its body. The extent of the loss in body heat is dependent on weather conditions at the time. Temperature is important but wind and to a greater extent wind combined with rain, are more chilling than low temperatures and still air. Freshly shorn sheep are thus more stressed by being put out into wind and rain at an air temperature of 12° C than a - 6° frost.

In an attempt to maintain body temperature a sheep naturally tries to minimise heat loss and at the same time to generate more body heat to replace the heat which it does lose. Firstly, the sheep will attempt to seek shelter, but generally only after they have had a good feed. Their body also adjusts. Within hours of being shorn the skin begins to thicken with a build up of water in the tissues, thereby reducing heat loss. Body heat is also increased by the sheep breaking down some of the fat depots in its body. Some fat deposits cannot be quickly broken down with the result that in severe storm conditions very fat animals may succumb to the cold as quickly as very lean animals. In a further attempt to generate more body heat the sheep also increases its appetite and eats more. Some trials have reported up to a 40% increase in appetite lasting for up to four to five weeks following shearing. This is if the cold stress is not too severe immediately after shearing. If it is severe, such as with low temperature, wind and driving rain, the sheep's appetite will be severely depressed, and the animals may die within a few hours. The first 24 hours after shearing are the most critical to a sheep's survival during bad weather. If the weather looks like it is going to get rough it is

more important to let freshly shorn sheep have a good feed before shutting them up again as protection against the coming storm.

What effects does all this stress have on the fleece? Various trials have shown stress to have a major short-term effect on individual follicles. Many stop growing for a short while when freshly shorn skin is exposed to extreme cold. This effect is short lived and does not affect the fleece which subsequently grows. One effect of shearing that does affect the fleece is the stimulation in appetite. As a result of this increase in appetite more protein is available from the diet to be converted into wool and the wool grows faster. Thus, though it may appear that the farmer is getting something for nothing the efficiency of conversion of food to wool does not change. The energy and some protein from the increased appetite is used to maintain body heat. As well as growing faster the wool fibres also tend to be coarser with many, in the case of crossbred wool type sheep, becoming medullated (hairy). If the sheep have access to good feed for some time after shearing this growth response may develop into a fault called "hairy tip".

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FARMERS WEEKLY

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It is because of this stimulus to a sheep's appetite that animals shorn more than once yearly may grow more wool than animals only shorn once. As the efficiency of wool growth does not change this just means that more of the grass available to a sheep is converted to wool. If however, there is not adequate grass to satisfy the sheep's appetite wool growth will not increase following shearing.

By the time the new fleece is about 15mm long it has almost all the insulative properties of a full fleece. If you are thinking you can make more money by shearing twice a year because the sheep grows more wool do not get carried away. Spinners do not want your short wool and neither does the wool trade. A comprehensive trial at the Whatawhata Research Centre

over several years has shown the economic returns for wool from twice yearly shearing compared with once yearly shearing are less due to the increased costs of shearing and the lower price for shorter wool.

In an earlier article I discussed the seasonal growth cycle of wool emphasising how growth slows during winter. If sheep are shorn in spring the finer winter grown wool is near the base of the staple, the risks of storms is less than in winter and there is also likely to be adequate feed to minimise cold stress for the sheep during those first critical days after shearing.



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‘Shear4U Event’

Item from Scott Small, Wools of New Zealand Ltd

The ‘Shear4U’ charity event was held over the weekend of the 21st and 22nd of January. Four farmers Adam Roe, Isaac Scott, Vaughan Wrenn and Dan Billing had a goal of shearing 5000 ewe lambs in 24 hours. These four men, including a few guest shearers, ended up smashing what they set out to do and shored 6,654 ewe lambs pressed into 30 bales, raising \$128,534.56 for The Rural support trust, National Hear 4 U and The Breast Cancer foundation. This cleared the target of \$100,000.00 originally set by over \$28,000.00. Most of this money came from an auction, the wool shorn, sponsorship, the sale of wool and the give a little page set up on Facebook. The event was held at Pukemiro station just out of Dannevirke.

The whole atmosphere was electric, with plenty of cheers and claps at the end of each run. There were also a lot of spectators that showed up throughout the night offering support to these four legends. At one point you couldn’t fit any more spectators into the shed with crowds spewing out onto the neighbouring paddocks. They even ran out of sheep to which they mustered up more from up the road. This event was very well supported from the public with some of the community helping with food, drink, mustering, pressing and the classing of wool.

The four men involved trained for months to condition their bodies for 24 hours of shearing, which is simply just unheard of. The amount of stamina and pure grit these men showed was truly inspirational, especially Dan Billing who injured his hand quite severely early on in the piece but continued, to the amazement of the spectators and support crews that were present at the time. Also, a special mention should be made to Vaughan Wrenn who shored the most ewe lambs (1306). The event also had a few special guests who also shored including some of the Pukemiro cadets. The shearing took place from the early hours of Saturday morning and wound-up late Sunday afternoon to the cheers of many. At the end of the last run the boys had to dig deep working through injury, sleep deprivation and fatigue but came out as heroes outdoing what they had originally set out to do, all in the name of charity.

Wools of NZ took part in the sponsorship of this event and were very proud to do so with a beautiful rug that was put up for Auction raising just shy of \$2000, and individual sponsorship from Wools of NZ employees, Dean Shuker and Roger Hale, who had clients participating in this event. It was a fantastic event that was well supported from the public and something Wools of NZ would be very proud to sponsor again if the opportunity was to arise.



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Supreme Champion Sheep of the Show at 2023 Amuri Show. Corriedale ewe, exhibited by the Hoban family.

Photo: Lucy Burrows



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NZWCA December 2022 Newsletter

SHOCK TACTIC

on bale contamination hits the mark

A ute load containing six weeks' worth of wool bale contamination delivered a hard-hitting message at the NZ Wool Classers Assn North Island Industry Day in Napier in October.



Andy Coleman, of WoolWorks (NZ's only wool scouring company) chose to illustrate his speaking slot at the NZWCA day by loading the things found in bales that weren't wool, during just the previous six weeks, in the back of his work ute which he parked just outside the door of the room being used for the Industry Day at the PGGW wool store in Napier.

The problem of contamination in wool bales is costly and risks NZ wool's reputation overseas. It is an issue in both the North and South Islands said Andy, however statistics collected in recent years proved it was much more of a problem with wool baled in the North Island than the South.

Andy's summary, and plea: "All I can really say is that, in the wool shed only wool needs to be on the floor, all clothing needs to be hung up and all the rubbish is in the bin." As for the huge number of press bars- a note for pressers: "If you press a bale with four bars and then there are only three when you press the next bale... there is one missing and it's in that bale.... so, try find it in the side of the bale or just write on that bale **press bar in here**," said Andy.



[Home - Wool Classers Association](#)

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Page 4 | 22

The following article is reprinted with permission from the NZ Wool Classers' Association newsletter.
December 2022



NZWCA December 2022 Newsletter



Richard Gavigan presents some compelling reasons to uphold quality crossbred wool preparation, and makes a case for the Q Course (Grading Certificate)

***This is the presentation made by Richard to the
NZWCA North Island Industry Day***

It's a long time since I've had the chance to talk to a group like this on a wool-related topic – over 20 years in fact. But during that time, I've never lost my passion for and interest in wool, so it's really great to be back!

I'm a farmer – a crossbred wool producer - as well as a wool teacher, and like all my farmer colleagues I've found the wool part of our farming system very tough going in recent years.

We farm 320ha of medium to steeper hill country just south of Pahiatua and we typically mate around 2,100 ewes and run R2 steers and heifers. We shear the ewes twice a year, in late January and late June, and we time our shearing to:

- fit around weaning and scanning
- take advantage of the mid-pregnancy shearing lamb birthweight effect that Massey University found can help lamb survival
- reduce the number of ewes that get cast around lambing time
- make ewes easier to manage and work with
- make it easier to get sheep dry for shearing, and
- optimise wool quality

Rightly or wrongly these reasons, I guess, are listed in order of importance to me as a farmer of crossbred sheep. As you can see, there's no mention of wool until we get to the last point – something that as a strong supporter of wool I sometimes feel a bit guilty about. But this is the way it is for most crossbred wool producers.

Luckily, shearing twice a year at those times of the year in our typically summer-wet environment helps us out in terms of wool quality by giving us better colour, very little VM and no other faults that can be associated with full fleece wools.

But it's understandable why a lot of farmers might not even have the last point – optimising wool quality – on their list at all.

You've possibly heard or seen the following figures before, but I think it's important to revisit them to put crossbred wool and its quality and the need to work really hard for some change in the industry in context.



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NZWCA December 2022 Newsletter

Richard Gavigan's presentation, continued

When we finally got our ewes shorn in June – it was a nightmare weather-wise this winter and we would have struggled to get them shorn if they hadn't been short second shear – we ended up getting 182c/kg greasy in the shed for the wool. To give you some idea of how farmer morale has slipped, I felt quite good about the price – it was nice to have cracked \$1.80!

Each ewe clipped about 2kg of fleece wool, giving us around \$3.70 wool income per ewe if you add a little extra for the B/P. It cost us around \$5 per ewe to get the sheep shorn and the wool prepared for sale.

So, it's easy to see why crossbred wool producers have become disheartened and are looking to reduce harvesting costs and "cut corners" in other wool-related areas. Unfortunately, this approach has also rubbed off on woolshed staff – more about that later.

But "here's the thing". Farmers, and the rest of the crossbred wool industry, are not in a position to cut any corners. It will reduce prices further, remove the advantage in wool quality that we have over other wool producing countries, and ultimately kill off our industry.

Shearing contactors have come under pressure from farmers to reduce the number of wool handlers to keep a lid on the cost of shearing. Employing one wool handler per shearer used to be standard practice, but it's certainly not anymore.

A lot of sheds harvesting second shear wool are now often working with only two wool handlers for four shearers, while full-wool sheds using a wool table are now operating with three at best. Removing one wool handler from a woolshed saves a farmer around 20 cents/sheep – remember that figure. The shearers aren't shearing any less sheep in a day so, in the words of one Southern North Island shearing contractor, "it's pretty much impossible to do anything like a decent job with the wool."

And, unfortunately, the shearing contractor is right. Back in the 1980's, when a lot of good wool stuff was done, time-in-motion observations made by New Zealand Wool Board staff showed that in a closed-board woolshed, around 50% of a wool handling team's time was spent simply moving wool rather than preparing it.

So, looking at the effect of reducing shed staff, we can do some calculations:

- 4 shearers, 1000 sheep shorn per day
- 4 wool handlers x 8 hours worked = 32 total wool handler hours
- 50% x 32 hours = 16 hours moving wool (+ 16 hours optimising wool quality)
- 2 wool handlers x 8 hours = 16 total wool handler hours
- Daily wool volume does not change; hours available to optimise wool quality = 0

In better-designed open-board woolsheds less time is spent simply moving wool so more time is available for clip preparation. In these sheds, wool quality is less sensitive to changes in staff ratios, but can still be affected if we don't get the staff ratios right for the particular job.

So, what financial impact can the quality of clip preparation have on wool prices and how does this relate to the cost savings we might make by reducing wool handling staff? Earlier in the year I wrote a story for Country-Wide magazine on wool quality. I spoke to a number of the wool trade and we came up with some indicative price discounts for faults present in what would otherwise be good quality wool clips. We've updated those discounts, and while they can vary a bit during and between seasons, this is where we think they sit:

- Inconsistent preparation (discoloured wool, short wool and/or wool containing vegetable matter present) = 30 c/kg clean discount.
- Poor preparation (larger amounts of fault present) = 50 c/kg clean discount.
- Colour = 20-30 c/kg clean when Y-Z is over 3.5.
- Vegetable matter (VM) = 25 c/kg clean discount when VM is above 0.2% in good coloured wools (Y-Z less than 2.0); 35 c/kg clean discount when VM is 0.4% or greater.
- Penstain = 40 c/kg clean when moderate to heavy.
- Cotting = 40 c/kg clean when present, even in very poor coloured wool.
- Sheep markers = over 100c/kg clean discount when present in significant amounts.



NZWCA December 2022 Newsletter

Richard Gavigan's presentation, continued

Given that even second shorn ewes will likely clip at least 1.8kg of clean fleece wool at shearing time, the potential discount for sub-standard clip preparation typically ranges from around 40 – 90 cents/sheep, depending on how poor the job is.

This is a lot more than the cost saving for a wool handler of 20 cents/sheep, so we've got to be very careful. As farmers, we can quite easily end up "shooting ourselves in the foot", so to speak, while also having an effect on wool processing and New Zealand's reputation as a wool producer.

I think we need to work hard to get this message out to farmers and shearing contractors, and we all have a role to play here.

I'd also like to say a few words about wool industry training – something I've been involved with over the last couple of years, working alongside long-time wool teacher Laurie Boniface who I'm sure you all know.

Putting my farmer's hat on again, I've noticed a real drop-off in the level of understanding of wool handlers of what they should be trying to achieve in the woolshed. A lot of them can "move a broom", but not as many understand the "why" of clip preparation and what they need to do in a particular woolshed to maximise the farmer's returns and, at the same time, optimise the value of that wool to a processor.

Now it's not the fault of our wool handlers – we simply have not provided them with the training opportunities in recent years. WOMO Life and Elite Wool Industry Training have been doing some really good stuff in the last couple of years introducing new people to the industry and teaching the "how" of wool handling, but we also need to be teaching the experienced wool handlers the "why" of what they're doing so that they can go into a shed, look at an individual wool clip, decide what needs to be done and manage the wool harvesting team to get the best results for the farmer and the rest of the industry outside the farm gate.

We used to do this type of training – back in the days of the New Zealand Wool Board and WoolPro when we had the old "Leading Shedhands Courses" – but there has been none of that sort of thing for some years – and we're paying the price now. We badly need it to give our woolshed staff a quality focus again.

Now, with the help of the New Zealand Wool Classers Association, through the Southern Institute of Technology soon to be known as Te Pukenga, we actually have a course all ready to go. We're calling it the Q-Course – and it's already been approved by the NZ Qualifications Authority. We have a two-day Block Course programme and study material all ready to go, and have just received some funding from Wool Impact to run some courses this November.

This is what a Q-Course currently looks like – run out in the regions, working in with shearing contractors and their staff:

DAY 1		DAY 2	
8.30am	Registration and Morning Tea	8.30am	Day 1 Review
9am	Welcome and Introduction, Thanks to Sponsors, Course Outline	9am	Wool Grading: Demonstration and Assessment
9.30am	Welcome and Introduction, Thanks to Sponsors, Course Outline	11am	Practical Wool handling Assessment and Wool Pressing (in woolshed)
11am	Sheep Breeds: Demonstration and Assessment	12 noon	Lunch
12 noon	Lunch	12.30pm	Practical Wool handling Assessment and Wool Pressing (in woolshed)
1pm	Oddment Recognition: Demonstration and Assessment	2.30pm	Afternoon Tea
2pm	Tahi Ngātahī Introduction and Registration	3pm	Industry Speakers and Discussion
3pm	Afternoon Tea	3.45pm	Future Opportunities
3.30pm	Clip Preparation Best Practice: Discussion and Assessment	4pm	Finish
5pm	Finish		

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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.

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Rare world wide – Mixed age Ryeland ewes waiting to go out with rams at Rosemarkie Stud, Wairarapa

Photo: H McKenzie

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Special NZSBA Men's and Women's Commemorative Sheep125 Jerseys For Sale



◀ Men's Awakino –

Heavy weight merino quarter zip – this textured boucle knit merino jersey with nylon for extra strength is just what you need in the cooler months. This garment has rugged style – wear it to the game or to the pub with your mates. A very versatile style and a firm Wild South favourite.

Women's Merino ➤

Wild South product specifically designed for NZ Sheepbreeders, we have used our mid weight Merino fabric utilised by the NZ Defence force to create a durable, versatile merino pullover to keep the ladies warm without any compromise in style.



Both styles made in NZ

Measurements

in CM

WS213A Women's Merino

	8	10	12	14	16	18
½ Chest	42	44.5	47	49.5	52	54.5
Centre Back	63	64	65	66	67	68

MM047 Men's Awakino Pullover

	M	L	XL	XXL	3XL
½ Chest	56	58.5	61	63.5	66
Centre Back	69.4	71.4	73.4	75.4	77.4

COST

Men's Jersey - \$170.00 (gst inclusive) Women's Jersey - \$135.00 (gst inclusive)

Email form to NZSBA – greg@nzsheep.co.nz

Name			Email
I require:	Men's Jersey	Size:	Number:
	Women's Jersey	Size:	Number:
	Men's Jersey	Size:	Number:
	Women's Jersey	Size:	Number:
	Men's Jersey	Size:	Number:
	Women's Jersey	Size:	Number:

Please pay NZSBA bank account: NZ Sheepbreeders' Assn 03-1702-0107771-00 stating JERSEY in Code

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Hawarden Show Heritage Sheep Display

Photos: Rachel Foster



▲ Rare breeds sheep at the display. Note the four horns.



Tony Stuart and Murray Walter loading Murray's Raglan Sheep into the car. That's how Murray transports his sheep.



FOR SALE, ETC

Sheep Breeds posters are available at the Office.

Contact: greg@nzsheep.co.nz

Note: CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

FREE small advertisements are available for member breeders with surplus stud sheep for sale. Full, ½ or ¼ page ads may have a charge. Talk to Greg!

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

The **Closing Date** for next issue of the newsletter will be **May 20th for the June 2023 newsletter.**

Please get items in well before the deadline!!!

"FEATURE BREEDS" will be POLL DORSETS & DORSET HORNS

If you would like to be part of this section or the newsletter, **photos and stud histories of All Breeds are accepted at any time for next issue.**

EMAIL OR POST TO THE EDITOR – see front page for address details.

Published by NZ Sheepbreeders' Association

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