



Sheep NewZ

#34 Autumn 2024



CONTENTS

- 2 Association News & Views – President
- 3 Association News & Views – Manager
- 4 Feature Breed – Hampshire
- 9 The success of the Wiltshire Horn (UK)
- 11 Pink Eye in sheep
- 12 Bale contamination
- 15 A Bit of History – Sheep for Australia
- 16 How to Support NZBA's Heritage Sheep Breeds
- 19 Show Round Up – Ian McCall's photos - Wanaka.
- 23 NZSBA – 125-year jersey order form – Price reduction!
- 24 Classified ads – Cleardale English Leicester dispersal

Hello Members,

Thank you to Ian McCall for supplying some show photos from the Wanaka Show and to Kevin Mawson for supplying photos of the Hastings and Central Hawkes Bay Show.

Articles were a bit thin on the ground this time, so I put pen to paper and wrote about the dire straits of some of our Heritage Sheep Breeds that are members of NZSBA. I hope some of you will take the time to read it. Thanks to RBST UK Ark & the Muster (Aus) for permission to reprint articles.

BIG THANKS also to the **Hampshire breeders** for wonderful support for their breed feature!!!!

I've been checking out the **Wool Impact** and **Campaign for Wool** websites. There are always interesting items to read.

On TV the other night was an item about research being undertaken with sheep at Auckland University.

“Scientists at the Faculty of Medical and Health Science (FMHS) are working on the delivery of medication to repair the inner ear organ (Cochlea) deep inside our ears that transmit sound signals. They have been experimenting with drug delivery approaches to the inner ear via the ear's round window membrane (RWM). They aim to develop a medical device that goes through the ear canal to extract information about what is happening in the cochlea...”

Ewes are a good model, with quite a round skull and an ear canal that is similar in size to that of a human child,” says Haruna. “The cochlear size is also really similar to humans.” Sheep also live to about 12 years of age, meaning they can be used in longitudinal studies to look at the long-term safety of the FMHS team's medical device over time.”

I finally got around to buying one of the NZSBA jerseys – a man's which is a bit long in the arms but is a good weight and surprisingly wind resistant. I can recommend them!!

Helen McKenzie
Editor

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Front cover photo

La-Mac 23/21 at the 2023 Ellesmere show

ASSOCIATION NEWS & VIEWS

From the President

Hello to all members and welcome to the Autumn edition of Sheep NewZ.



Summer in Canterbury probably has more of a traditional look about it with not much in the way of rain since December.

There have been some good days of heat for those with harvest to complete, but livestock farmers are looking to the horizon for any change in weather patterns which may bring about some moisture.

Except for Southland the rest of the South Island has become extremely dry.

Those with irrigation have established good crops of winter feed.

Lamb and mutton schedules seem to have the same “belly ache” as the weather. Finishing stock has become slow with the heat, then to get there with the weight, around \$6 a Kg is your reward if you are lucky at the moment.

Store farmers have suffered similar consequences at \$2-60 to \$2-80 a Kg recently although on-farm auctions in some cases seem to have been on a different orbit.

Ram sales, either at auction or privately, seemed to have held up to similar levels as last year. Even with a “pinched” income, rams are still a cost-effective purchase for any sheep farmer.

For those that participate, good luck going to the Autumn Shows in the near future.

I wish members all the best with their ewe mating.

Mark Copland
President NZSBA

Taking Photos

I know I have said this before but when taking photos of your animals I assume you want to show them to their best advantage.

Not all photos are the right shape for some positions. Landscape is good for the top or bottom of pages. If animals are grouped closely together should be OK for covers. Portrait is better for columns.

If a single animal, it is better to stand a bit behind the shoulder of the animal rather than directly side or front on. Make sure they are standing evenly balanced if a more formal photo. Watch for another animal's feet/head/bottom beneath or near the central figure. Make sure animals have clean backsides in all photos!

Helen



From the General Manager

Scanners Eye Muscle Workshop – I am pleased to report that we have just held a workshop for all new eye-muscle scanners and all three are now accredited. One person couldn't make the workshop. The accredited eye muscle scanners are Mathew Farmer, Carl Tairua, and Sarah Graham.

A huge thanks to Nigel Jay who ran the workshop at Lincoln.

RIP Digger McCulloch – Digger a past President of the Association died on 19 December 2023.

A huge crowd attended his funeral to celebrate his life at Waitaki Boys High School.

Digger was a dedicated member of the Association and would always make himself available when the need arose.

Digger had an uncanny ability to always light up the room. He will be missed.

NZSBA Promotion – CountryWide – ads appeared in last year's CountryWide 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. Whether we pursue with this will be up to the Council when we meet in July, as any ads are expensive.

South Korean delegation – recently a group of South Koreans visited the office to discuss them starting up a Sheep Society similar to the NZSBA in South Korea. Currently there is nothing in place.

Animal Welfare – Chris Blair (MPI) was recently in contact with the office regarding meeting with members regarding the tail docking ruling. Up to this stage they have been focusing on education rather than being punitive, but I understand there will be shift in their stance.

Breed Conferences – 2024 – Any breeds intending to hold conferences this year need to contact the office regarding dates.

NEW

Single Entries/ Ewe Transfers – now online – Please utilise this site on www.nzsheep.co.nz

Sheep for sale – more members are now using this site. Once on our site, go to sheep sales, then create ad. 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. This is happening now.

Financial Year – this year has been one of the most challenging years for the Association. Replacing Anne has been time consuming and expensive. Nicky is fitting into the role nicely and Anne is continuing to pop into the office throughout the year. With most expenditure items beyond our control, we should prepare ourselves for a debit balance.

Outstanding Debt Owed to the Association – As we are 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 – 2023 – the flock book has been published and circulated to those members who require a hard copy, and it is also online. Should you wish to purchase a copy, please contact the office.

Commemorative Jerseys - for sale –

Cost of Jerseys – Men's - \$140.00 – Ladies - \$115.00 (**reduced**) and these can be posted anywhere in New Zealand. Check out our website for more details.

Tag Discounts - Shearwell, & Allflex - 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.

To our sponsors and to Helen thank you for your continued support.

Greg Burgess
General Manager,
NZSBA





Feature Breed HAMPSHIRE



Hampshire ram aged 15 months.

ORIGIN & HISTORY

The breed was developed in the county of Hampshire, England, during the nineteenth century, through the crossing of Southdown rams with ewes of the old Wiltshire Horn (similar to today's Wiltshire Horn) and Berkshire Nott breeds (latter extinct by 1837, was said to be hornless and dark faced). It was fixed as a breed in 1889 and called the Hampshire Down.

The breed arrived in New Zealand in 1861 and several flocks were established. Registration of these flocks had lapsed by 1903. The revival of the breed began in 1951-2. Two new flocks were imported from England, followed by stock from Australia. Now known as the New Zealand Hampshire, the breed still flourishes in all prime lamb producing areas throughout New Zealand.

BREED DESCRIPTION

Breeders aim to produce an animal that is described as wedge shape, with fine clean shoulders, and with plenty of length from the last rib through to the tail. This should carry the maximum of meat cover and have a minimum of fat. Muscle in the back legs should be full to the extent of transmitting muscle onto the foreleg.

Bodyweight

Ewes: 80-100 kg (180-220 lb)
Rams: 100-120 kg (220-264 lb)

Meat

Meat lean, sweet, and of good quality.

Breeding/Lambing

140-180 percent

Numbers

2023 NZSBA Flock book figures
Ewes: 1100 approximately, plus youngstock.

Wool

Fine. Down type. Free of black fibre.
Fibre diameter: 26-30 microns.
Staple length: 50-75 mm (2-3 inches).
Fleece weight: Range 2-3 kg (4.4-6.6 lb); Average 2.5 kg (5.5 lb).
Uses: Woollen hosiery, hand-knitting yarns and flannels.

WHY USE HAMPSHIRE DOWNS

Hampshire Down rams are the modern and intelligent choice of terminal sire at a time when the commercial farmer is looking to reduce inputs and increase margins. Cross-bred lambs are fast growing with exceptional feed conversion rates and the ability to finish off milk and grass without the need for concentrates. They will finish at target dead-weights from 12 weeks and grade within the preferred specification.

Hampshire breeders have embraced performance recording allowing them over the last 20 years to produce faster growing lambs with a longer, leaner, more muscled carcass.



STUD PROFILE #1
La-Mac Stud Flock #260
Established 2006
Owned by Ben & Lucy
Butterrick,
Christchurch



In 2006, when I was 12 years old, my journey with the Hampshire breed began with the purchase of five two-tooth ewes from Philippa Charlesworth of the *Teviotdale* stud. Over the next five years, with some additional purchases from

Philippa, I expanded the stud to approximately 40 ewes. It was during this time that my grandmother, Pat Butterrick, acquired 40 ewes from Kim Ridgen when the *Toropuke* stud was dispersed. Pat and I then formed a partnership, providing us with a good base for the stud, and we farmed the Hampshires for 10 years together on the family farm at Kaituna, steadily increasing our numbers to around 130 ewes. Throughout this time, we made significant investments in AI and ET work, which we had great success with.

Our efforts were further rewarded with prizes at local shows, including winning the Champion Ram Hogget at the Christchurch Show in 2019, a moment that brought immense pride to us both. In that same year, my wife Lucy and I took over ownership of the stud from Pat and continued to invest annually in ET work. One particular ewe, who has flushed well, and we will never forget is La-Mac 912/17, who has produced close to 30 lambs across four years, grossing more than \$40,000 in ram sales for the stud. Many of her progeny have gone for stud duties, and one holds the record for the highest auction price paid for a Hampshire ram in New Zealand. We kept two sons for ourselves, and they have not only bred well for us but have also generated great success for us at shows, a highlight being La-Mac 9/20, who won Supreme Meat Sheep at the NZ Ag Show in 2022.



La-Mac 9/20 🐑



Rams on sale day

In 2019, we took the leap and decided to host an annual on-farm ram sale. This has been pivotal to the stud's growth in recent years, allowing us to invest more every year into our breeding programme, as well as growing our brand across New Zealand and internationally. It's great to have the ability to put your whole crop on display each year and give everyone the opportunity to buy what rams suit them best. We are averaging about 40-45 rams sold at auction each year, and we intend to continue increasing this number without sacrificing quality. Coming from a marketing background, my wife Lucy has really enjoyed being able to put her stamp on it, creating a brand true to us and using social media as a tool to not only promote our breeding programme and ram sale but also to connect with the new generation of young breeders coming through, as well as overseas studs.

Fast forward to today, the stud is now based at Ahuriri Farm, a 1,400 ha (800 ha effective) property I am currently managing, set on the Port Hills just out of Tai Tapu. The stud is integrated with the existing 6,000su sheep and beef operation, as well as 70 Lochaire Poll Dorsets which we farm in partnership with Warwick and Amanda Boon. We are a very summer-dry property, and this alone challenges the constitution of our sheep. I feel the longer we are breeding sheep in these environments, the more natural constitution we are breeding into them. Anything that struggles to withstand these challenges simply doesn't get to stick around, and over the years as we have strived to increase numbers, we have taken a harder attitude towards what stays and goes. I believe it's more important than ever that the sheep we are breeding are able to shift well and do the job in a range of environments.

In the autumn, there will be approximately 170 ewes going to the ram. Our goal is to breed a consistent line of what we call a "modern-day" Hampshire, that is structurally sound and has a good constitution, with plenty of meat in the loin and back end. In recent years, we have intensified our efforts to enhance the genetic diversity of our flock, sourcing new bloodlines from Australia and the United Kingdom. We are mindful of the small gene pool in New Zealand and are



La-Mac rams

constantly striving to find good outcrosses. We have had great success with line breeding recently, but it is crucial to ensure you have a good outcross every now and then. This year we will be using a couple of ram lambs which were sired by semen brought in from *Ballycreelly* Stud in Northern Ireland. At this stage, they look to have plenty to offer, with great carcass attributes, and we are really excited to see how they breed on.

Over the last three years, we have explored the quality of intramuscular fat (IMF) in the Hampshire breed, and we can confidently say this breed has a high percentage of sheep which are naturally high marbling and could prove to be a very exciting prospect going forward. We have leaned on the expertise of Pete Clulee from Otago Ultrasound, using the technology and scoring system he had adopted to score our sheep from 1-3, depending on the level of IMF in the loin. These scores have been included in the ram data for our last three auctions for those that take an interest in it. At our last sale in December, we found there was more interest than ever in this attribute. Our biggest issue with IMF at the moment is that there is no consistency with the scoring or the way they are being scanned across breeds and studs, which we noticed from looking through other ram sale catalogues. If this is going to factor into the selection of ram purchases in the future, then for the good of the industry we need to ensure there is consistency across the board for determining which animals are superior for IMF.

With the emergence of new flocks in the past few years, we believe the Hampshire breed is in a stronger place than ever before, with plenty of enthusiastic, commercially minded breeders wanting to take the breed to the next level, as well farmers who are recognising the qualities in what many deem a niche breed. Thinking back to when I was 12 years old, I would never have thought the stud would be where it is today. Lucy and I are looking forward to our upcoming trip to the UK in June where we will be scoping out potential sires. The stud has given us the opportunity to meet so many great

people in the industry and we are looking forward to what the future brings.

Ben & Lucy Butterick
La-Mac Hampshire Stud

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**Call Andrea
027 602 4925**

FARMERS WEEKLY

STUD PROFILE #2
Peak View Stud Flock #267
Established 2006
Owned by Kevin & Christine Mawson
Hastings



◀ *Peak View ram hoggets.*

Time is sure flying by. Most Hampshire ram sales are finished now, and planning will be starting with which ewes will be going to what rams this coming season.

This year I will do a few AI ewes. Last year I did not have time to get the ewes ready as in early May we went to Belfast to see the Balmoral show. The shows in the UK and Ireland are big and well worth a visit. The animal sections are so big that it takes a day just to see them. Naturally my main priority was the sheep section where there are so many breeds compared with our shows.



Some of last season's new lambs ▲

While I was there, I had a chance to talk with the breeder I have been importing the semen from, and to see his sheep. He has had great success in getting semen and embryos into South America. One of the ram lambs born over there was put up for sale and made huge money. The Hampshire's are very popular with the farmers in Argentina and Brazil as the meat has the right amount of fat for their cooking techniques.

I was at the Great Yorkshire show in 2019 and noticed there is a larger number of Hampshire sheep now in 2023 than 2019. I put this down to the Hampshire Society running workshops on how hardy the breed is and how the lambs are

up on their feet and suckling quickly after birth. They also finish early ready for the markets.

The British breeders are active on Facebook; showcasing how they did at shows and prices they are getting at sales. Meat displays in the butcher shops push the eating quality of the meat, forcing large supermarket chains to sell Hampshire lamb.

This year I attended two shows, Hastings, and Central Hawkes Bay. Hastings was a bit of a disaster as it rained so much. I couldn't keep the sheep clean as I don't have a covered yard, so it was off the sodden ground and on to the trailer. At least people could see the Hampshire breed if nothing else.

The show didn't have many entries of any breed except for the Black & Coloured Sheep Association. I put this down to the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle and the continuing wet winter. Wouldn't it be great if more, younger farmers put in a bit of effort instead of putting it in the too hard basket, so we could see a vibrant show again as that is what the public want. It was amazing how many younger parents bring their children through the sheep pens and petting zoo. Some of my photos are from the Central Hawkes Bay Show where the organisers put in a lot of effort for the children and parents.



Pet lamb class at Central Hawkes Bay show. A lot of work goes into the manufacture of their costumes.



STUD PROFILE #3
Morven Hills Stud Flock #271
Established 2020
Kay McKenzie, Dannevirke



Morven Hills ram lamb

Well, it's been 3 years now since I've had my Hampshire stud and still building it up slowly. It's been really heart - warming to have clients that have continued to buy 2th rams from me as they have been very happy with the progeny, health and longevity of the rams. With these regular clients coming back each year is very encouraging with fantastic feedback of the lamb weights, and early maturity, making them money and coming back is awesome, I'm doing something right.

Every year I worry, will I sell all my Rams but I get new enquiries and interest in the breed. One couple had an uncle with a stud and reminisced about going out to feed the ewes, that they were so huge and friendly. He bought a ram and 3 ewes to have that memory and experience, they are loving them, and uncle has visited and is happy with the stock.

One of my local clients had an English vet come out to their farm during scanning and said that in his eyes the Hampshire was the best breed as a terminal option. When they saw I had the Stud, he contacted me and has brought 3 x 2th's each year now. He has tried many breeds but prefers the Hampshire as a terminal option. I still take a trailer load of Hampshire 2th's

through to Gisborne, where the majority of my stud originated from. This year I had fewer rams available as I culled more heavily during late winter.

I had more ewe lambs born last lambing with more singles, maybe due to the number of older ewes, or the season. This is good for replacements. I also had an outbreak of Salmonella and lost 7 Hampshire Ewes, and 2 x 2th Rams. It halted shearing and attendance at our local Dannevirke A&P show. I decided to leave some lambs on their mums to minimize stress on the ewes and their lambs.

Recently the Hampshire breed has had the pleasure of being accepted to be part of a meat monitoring trial; a Hampshire ram was selected into the Central Progeny Test (CPT) for 2024, and as a breed we have been importing semen from Australia and the UK.

"This has given us an international and national gene pool," Greg Crombie from Leefield Station Hampshire Flock No: 270 near Blenheim says. They have been the best terminal sires I have used in the 30 years I have been farming".

It is proven that Hampshire's have a superior level of intramuscular fat (marbling) that gives the meat superior taste and quality over other breeds, and as a popular Terminal sire choice, farmers recognize the crossbred lambs are early maturing, good length, quality meat and quick returns. Going forward I really want to market the meat to restaurants as we don't get any recognition from local meat processors.

As a breed some of us are doing some embryo sharing to increase and share the Hampshire genetics in NZ. This is very exciting. As a group we can provide new blood and compare data within the Hampshire group and improve and grow our clientele as this breed is an old, tough breed, that offer excellent terminal results. For a couple of years, we as a group, have tried to hold a North Island Hampshire tour but with Covid and other issues it is still on the "too do" list.



Mixed sex Hampshire lambs at Morven Hills

Reprinted with permission from *The Ark [UK] Spring 2023*

The Success of the Wiltshire Horn

As the Wiltshire Horn Sheep Society celebrates its centenary, Paul McAvoy describes how this breed has moved from being designated rare on the Watchlist to become a thriving native breed.

If someone came to you today and said they knew of a native lowland breed that could produce and raise vigorous, active lambs with minimal intervention and exceptional flavour; with rams that make successful terminal sires on other breeds; ewes that when not breeding pure, would successfully cross with commercial meat rams to produce and rear quality butchers lambs; and greatly reduce the input costs associated with wool (fly strike, dagging, crutching, shearing etc) due to the breed's short hair coat that sheds naturally each spring – that would pretty accurately describe the Wiltshire Horn and many modern keepers of sheep would be, and are, very interested indeed.

Originating, as the name suggests, as the traditional breed of the Wiltshire Downs, these sheep were widely appreciated and kept in surprisingly large numbers during the Agricultural Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries. By the end of the 19th century the stronghold of the breed had spread from Wiltshire itself into Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and North Wales, including Anglesey. The flocks by this stage were tending to be smaller, with an emphasis on producing rams as terminal sires to be put onto other breeds, and ewes very seldom came onto the open market. This understanding of the particular market for the breed at the time and the value

of the existing bloodlines meant that, even without pedigree registration, breeders were already being careful to avoid outcrossing and remain true to the original type of the breed.

The Wiltshire Horn Sheep Society was established in 1923, initially with just 22 members, to put the breed onto a sound pedigree footing for the first time and to foster and promote it into the future. The Society defined the breed standard and rigorously inspected all the available flocks to ensure they met it before they could be admitted to the pedigree flock book. The original animals admitted by inspection appear to have been under 1,000 ewes and under 500 rams, this imbalance reflecting the market for terminal sires at the time. Lambs were registered, pedigrees built, show classes set up around the country and annual sales established, but the breed remained low in numbers.

By the 1960s, the Wiltshire Horn breed was in decline through a number of factors; not having wool was seen as a detriment; the pelts of other breeds were increasing in value; many farmers in the Wiltshire Horn heartlands were turning to arable production; and the introduction of new, continental breeds attracted people away from native breeds generally.

When the Rare Breeds Survival Trust was set up in 1973, the Wiltshire Horn sheep was truly a rare breed and came naturally under the protection of the Trust, with RBST and the breed society working together to protect and promote it. In recent years the number of registered pedigree sheep has significantly increased, and the breed has developed into the large national flock it is today, coming off the RBST Watchlist in 2005 when the number of registered ewes exceeded 3000.

During the last twenty years the breed has progressively moved forward as sheep quality has improved and flockmasters have appreciated the self-shedding benefits which are increasingly important to those wishing to develop low maintenance, and low input sheep systems. Stock have



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.”

been exported to Australia, New Zealand, South America, and the West Indies, with a growing flock throughout Europe – although recent political upheavals have brought European exports to a halt at the time of writing.

Today the national pedigree flock stands at around 9,000 animals, although there are no doubt, many more Wiltshire Horn sheep out there without pedigree status. Some of the pedigree flock are in large commercial flocks, founded on the breed’s low maintenance and strong maternal characteristics which have become much more appreciated since the 1990s (see sidebar). Recent years have also seen many smallholders take to the Wiltshire Horn. While the breed is obviously not of interest to anyone keen on spinning and weaving, to someone with only a few sheep who struggles to find a shearer for them, the attraction of this self-shedding breed is obvious.

It’s worth considering why having a pedigree breed society matters. Preserving unique genes, such as those of the Wiltshire Horn sheep ensures that they aren’t diluted or lost, genes continue to exist and excellence can be traced and potentially replicated. In the case of the Wiltshire Horn sheep, their ability to shed the fleece annually has been a much sought after trait of late and has contributed in no small measure to the development of hybrid shedding breeds. However, it is essential that the original pure Wiltshire Horn DNA must be maintained, so that future opportunities for breeding and development will not be lost. Showing is also a key activity for the Society and the Wiltshire Horn classes are valuable “shop windows” for the breed in a public arena where the members show their best quality livestock and where championship rosettes and cups are much sought after accolades amongst the competitors.

A century on from its foundation the Wiltshire Horn Sheep Society continues to look after the pedigree Wiltshire Horn Sheep and RBST is pleased to see the breed no longer in either the “Priority” or “At Risk” categories. Far from being a rare breed, the Wiltshire Horn is now classed by RBST as simply a “UK Native Breed” which continues to grow and thrive. 2022 saw new record prices for stock set at the society’s Premier Show & Sale, the start of Royal Patronage by HRH The Princess Royal to mark the 2023 Centenary of the society and the beginning of the next hundred years.



The Cobland flock

N James Bond’s pedigree Cobland Flock can be found on a 500-acre arable and sheep farm, six miles west of Plymouth on the south coast of Cornwall. Here the land rises steeply from sea level to 500 feet, with 2 miles of cliffs designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Cropping includes 180 acres of winter wheat, spring malting barley, milling oats and lupins grown for seed, in rotation with 120 acres of three-year grass leys for cutting and grazing. The remaining area is permanent pasture, hills and cliffs.

James runs two flocks of sheep: 250 Dorset Downs, which are lambed indoors in January for early finishing off the grass leys, and over 400 Wiltshire Horns which are lambed outside in late March/April. These are managed very much as a ‘dog and stick’, low maintenance flock, making good use of the permanent pastures and rough grazing, with their lambs sold through the winter months.

The Wiltshire Horn sheep are useful on the SSSI cliffs, helping to clear the brambles and scrub, benefiting the various rare plants and herbs.

250 of the best Wiltshire Horn ewes are bred pure. The remainder are put to Dorset Down rams to produce commercial lambs.

The Cobland Flock—has been involved in the performance recording scheme in the South West, selecting for milkiness, lean meat growth and ease of lambing.

The Cobland Flock ▼



Pink Eye in Sheep: Treat or Let it Run its Course?

Adapted from an article written by Janet Garman. Reprinted with permission from The Muster (ABSS) December 2021

Pink eye in sheep can be a common livestock issue. Small ruminants easily transmit pink eye from one animal to the next. This highly contagious bacteria is more common in spring and summer but can occur at any time of the year. Outbreaks of pink eye can show up after a new animal has been introduced to the flock.



Inflammation of the cornea and conjunctiva of the eye is the tell-tale sign of pink eye in sheep. Clinically, pink eye is called infectious keratoconjunctivitis. The bacteria that cause pink eye is one of two bacteria. *Chlamydia psittaci (ovis)* and *Mycoplasma conjunctiva*. These are the culprits behind most cases of pink eye in sheep. *Chlamydia* is also the cause of spontaneous abortions in small ruminants.

In addition to close contact with affected animals, stress can also play a part in sheep contracting the bacteria. Moving animals, new surroundings, and extreme weather changes are some ways your small ruminants can experience stress.

What are the Symptoms of Pink Eye in Sheep?

The animal with pink eye will blink frequently. The eyes are more sensitive to any irritant and can be bothered by bright sunlight. You may see the sheep holding its eyes partially or all the way closed in bright light. Tearing and wet stain below the eye is often noted. The eye membranes are red and inflamed looking. An opaque appearance can take over the eye and temporary or permanent blindness can occur, in severe cases.

The Economic Impact of Pink Eye

Pink eye is rarely fatal. Loss of condition can occur if the animal's blindness leads to it not finding enough food. Mostly, the infection is annoying to the animal and may lead to some weight loss. The economic impact occurs mainly from the cost of treating a large flock. Some farmers with large flocks of sheep will choose to use an antibiotic. Consult your veterinarian for advice when administering drugs to your flock.

With smaller flocks, treating pink eye is more feasible. Isolate any animal showing signs of illness or infection. The most common treatments are Ophthalmic Gel, which should be administered 2-3 times a day to the eyes; doesn't include antibiotics or steroids; can be used as a preventative; and includes no withdraw time. Begin by cleaning up the area surrounding the eye. Often beneath the eye will be wet or sticky from the irritation. This can attract flies. Keep the area clean by gently bathing the area with a good antiseptic spray. Your sheep are not going to appreciate being spritzed in the eye. Grab a gauze pad or clean rag and spray the liquid onto the rag. Then, clean the sheep's face.



Can the Animals Recover Without Treatment?

Since the disease is considered self-limiting, many animals can recover without treatment. Some short-term resistance has been observed in animals that recover with no treatment. The immunity is not long lasting in sheep and goats. Vetent (www.vetent.co.nz), a New Zealand website noted that early treatment can hasten recovery and spread of pink eye. However, they also noted a higher incidence of reinfection with sheep that were treated versus those animals that went untreated. In any case, proper care is essential to the good health of your flock. Cleaning the eye area when it is wet or sticky, can prevent flystrike and other eye issues.

Prevention of Pink Eye

Cleanliness is an important factor in battling pink eye. Wear gloves when examining animals. This lessens the spread of disease. Keep the pen clean and keep dust under control. Fly control is also important in the fight against pink eye. A closed flock is less likely to have an outbreak of pink eye.

Pink eye in sheep may not be the most serious disease shepherds have to deal with, but it can be costly to treat. Following good health and herd management practices will lessen the chance of an outbreak in your flock.

BALE CONTAMINATION

The NZ Wool Classers' Association is backing the call for greater vigilance.

Woolshed checklist created to reduce wool bale contamination and raise awareness of the problem.

An alarming increase in the amount of content that's not wool is being found in NZ wool bales by wool scourers, wool buyers, exporters, and manufacturers locally and internationally.

The cost to our NZ wool industry is damaging financially and to this country's reputation as a producer of quality wool. It has been suggested that low Crossbred wool prices are contributing to a quality complacency that undermines efforts to achieve higher prices.

The NZ Wool Classers Association is throwing its weight behind the call to raise awareness of the problem and has come up with a checklist (on the following Page 9) to remind wool growers and wool harvesting staff of practical measures to take to reduce the risk.

Says NZWCA Registrar Marg Forde: "Our classer and grader members work mainly with Merino and Mid Micron wool and we are told the contamination is predominately in Crossbred wool bales. However, our association firmly advocates for quality wool preparation and education, so we are backing the call for greater vigilance and ringing the alarm bells too. We have created a checklist that we hope will be put up in every woolshed in the country, and that every wool grower and wool harvester reads."

NZ's only wool scouring company, WoolWorks, tracks wool bale contamination at their facilities and the data makes sobering reading. Between July and October this year 955 items that weren't wool were discovered and documented in wool bales. They range from one tool to many rubber docking/tailing rings.

The finds include the following items:

223 plastic	10 clothing
36 wood	80 metal
37 press bars	31 pieces of fabric and
54 rope/string.	



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Richard, Jedburgh Farms Ltd



NZ WOOL CLASSERS ASSOCIATION CHECKLIST: SUGGESTIONS TO AVOID WOOL BALE CONTAMINATION

Prior to shearing:

- *Wool growers consider how they are using wool shed for storage – ensure wool room is clear prior to shearing*
- *Shearing board and wool room washed and cleared prior to shearing*
- *Classers, pressers and woolhandlers check all fadges before putting wool in them, especially those that may have been sitting partially full before shearing begins*
- *Count press bars at the beginning and at end of each shearing – there should be four!*

During shearing:

- *Rubbish bins provided and accessible*
- *Designated storage area (hooks, shelves or large containers) for personal belongings of shed staff*
- *Only work equipment (e.g.: fadges, brooms) in the wool room*
- *No drink bottles, clothing or towels stored near oddment fadges*
- *Remove all rubber rings and lambs purses from wool*
- *No smoking in wool room*
- *Personal hook for Presser close to wool press*
- *Count press bars before pinning each bale, there should be four!*
- *No food consumed in wool area – separate eating area is the ideal*
- *Supply newspaper for Bin bales – don't use wool packs as bale dividers*
Refer "Clip Preparation – Best Practice Guideline" <https://woolclassers.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/NZWCA-2021-updated-Clip-preparation-document.pdf>

**If anyone has any suggestions to improve this checklist please forward them :
NZWCA Registrar Marg Forde reg@woolclassers.org.nz.**

We have a member with graphic design skills who has offered to turn the checklist into a poster once the list is finalised, which can then be reproduced and made available to be put up in woolsheds throughout New Zealand.

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South Island Tours NZ
 SMALL GROUP TOURS

Recent feedback from a November 2023 4WD group

“We thoroughly enjoyed the Molesworth 4WD trip with Chris. Awesome, interesting and well organised! Chris was part of the team from time of introduction, great company and very informative. We got to seriously use our 4WD vehicles, up steep slopes, river crossings etc. Meeting the station owners was also a highlight. Learning all about the day to day running of their stations, the history and statistics, was great, as was their hospitality. The food was the best and am sure we all packed on a little weight 😊

Would we recommend this tour? 100% YES. Will we do another? 100% YES.”

“Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil and you’re a thousand miles from the cornfield.”

Dwight D. Eisenhower

A BIT OF HISTORY

Sheep For Australia

Lyttelton Times 20 June 1894.

National Library *Papers Past*

The next three days will witness the despatch of the Canterbury consignments to the Sydney stud sheep fair, which takes place in the first week of July. Particulars of the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Association's shipments have already been given, and detailed of the other consignments are now available.

Mr F C Tabart forwards 550 sheep, namely: - on account of Mr John Grigg, Longbeach, 50 English Leicester rams, 5 Border Leicester rams, 10 Lincoln rams, 10 Shropshire Down rams, all these being two or four tooth; 25 English Leicester ewes and 200 Shropshire Down ewes. The ewes are four or six tooth, of the highest breeding. Mr Grigg, in his address at the Agricultural Conference at Wellington, explained how their respective breeds entered into the production of the mutton which he exports, and which the consignees have stated is the best that comes in any quantity to the London market in the frozen states.

For Mr John Reid, Elderslie, are shipped 50 Lincoln ewes, 25 Romney Marsh ewes and 25 Border Leicester ewes, all two and four tooth, and in lamb to special stud rams. The Elderslie Border Leicester and Romney Marsh stud flocks have been established for 24 years, and the Lincoln flock for 20 years; and during those periods have been most successful on the showground and in the sale ring. Whatever course the sales in Sydney may take, this consignment will command attention.

Mr Henry Overton, Kirwee sends 25 Lincoln and 25 Lincoln Leicester ram lambs. That Mr Overton does not send older sheep shows the run that there is on his rams, even in this dull season. The Lincolns "need no bush"; the Lincoln Leicesters are derived from the best of the two breeds, and are identical

with the "Improved Leicesters", for which a flock book was started in England two years ago, and which are most popular sheep for crossbreeding there and in North and South America.

Mr PC Threlkeld's contribution consists of 10 English Leicesters, 30 Lincoln two tooth rams and 20 Lincoln ram lambs. Mr Threlkeld's sheep are well-known in Sydney and will not lack buyers. From Mr HJ Hall, one of the pioneers of Lincolns in Canterbury, a nice line of two tooth rams goes over; and Mr M Duncan sends a selection from his Romney Marsh flock – the best in North Canterbury. Mr Guy Tabart goes over in charge of the shipment, which is consigned to Messrs Pitt, Son and Badgery, Limited.

Messrs Pyne and Co's shipment consists of 408 English Border Leicester rams, two and four tooth, from the flocks of Messrs Kelland Bros., Timaru, whose English Leicester are of the best blood in New Zealand, or, for that matter, in England; Mr John Reid, Elderslie, to whose present consignment previous remarks apply; Mr Oliver, Corriedale, Oamaru, and Mr W Boag, Christchurch, both of whose Border Leicesters are in the first rank. Mr Boyle goes over in charge of this shipment.

Messrs John T Ford and Co. send English Leicester from the flocks of Messrs Digby and Jeffs, Ashburton, than which there is nothing better bred in New Zealand; and Mr HA Knight, Racecourse Hill, an unimpeachable flock, which makes its first claim to public competition, the small line sent forward being reserved from the private demand which has always been more than equal to the supply.

The weather could not possibly have been worse for the appearance of sheep, and it is to be hoped that a good passage across the Tasman Sea awaits the shipments, so that their quality may not be altogether obscured when they come under the hammer in Sydney.



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Why It is Important to Support Our Heritage Breeds of Sheep in New Zealand.

New Zealand is the repository for genetics for several breeds of sheep that are rare, not only here, but in their country of origin, the United Kingdom. As ewe numbers drop the flocks become dilettante small flocks bred for showing, incapable of really contributing to the wellbeing of the breed and reducing the genetic resource for any future discoveries that they can contribute to the world sheep genetic base.

Apart from the Merino, most of NZ's sheep breeds came from the UK, several prior to 1900. More recently many have come from other countries. However, my concern is with the UK breeds. As with our historic buildings that have made an aesthetic contribution to New Zealand over the years, some of our sheep breeds made large contributions to the founding of the agricultural industry as we know it and formed the basis of the New Zealand economy for many generations.

Figures used are from "Sheep Production Volume 1; Breeding and Reproduction" edited by G A Wickham and MF McDonald and published by the NZ Institute of Agricultural Science and Ray Richards Publishing in 1982; from the NZSBA Flockbook and from the Heritage Sheep Australia website.

Merinos are not a rare breed in NZ and did not come direct from the UK. They were the first sheep to come to NZ in 1814 but a viable breeding population was not established until 1834. (Captain Cook may also have landed 2 merinos in 1773.) In 1901 there were 26 registered flocks totalling 9358 ewes. A high point of 48 flocks with 10,989 ewes was reached in 1940. In 2023 there were 37 flocks totalling 15,961 registered ewes – fewer flocks but a higher number of ewes. Due to passionate breeders, a style of wool that stayed popular and the finer wool types increasing in favour (also some very astute marketing by various Merino farming groups) they have been a profitable breed to keep in modern times. Also, there are many commercial flocks. They are a breed that has the right wool for the right garments all the time. Not subject to fashion fluctuations.

The first **Lincolns** arrived in 1840 but no viable breeding population established until 1862. They registered with NZSBA in 1895.

The heavy-coated, long-woolled Lincoln's story is almost the reverse of the Merino above. As a breed they were the most suited to grazing the newly burnt-over bush areas as farms were being developed. Lincoln rams dominated North Island sheep breeding until the 1890's. For some time, they were mated to Merino ewes and then the female progeny put back to the Lincoln to produce three-quarter bred with a wool count of 46s [Bradford count] They were also used by James Little in the founding of the Corriedale breed which went on

to be very successful. In 1901 there were 122 registered Lincoln flocks but by 1940 flock numbers had dropped to 18 containing 1649 registered ewes. However, between 1940 and today, they had a rejuvenation for a few years which saw both numbers and prices soar. A great reward for those who had stuck with the breed throughout. In 1975 the 11 flocks numbered 967 ewes, mainly a few larger flocks, the most recent then were 2 new flocks joining that year. By 1988 the flock numbers had risen to 112 with 4 new flocks that year and a total of 4,626 registered ewes.



Thanks to Kyle Hill Lincolns for accompanying photo.

The cause of the boom? Someone figured out that by putting a dash of Lincoln through their Romney or Perendale flocks they could increase their fleece weights. Of course, all those people rushing to join the gravy train as ram breeders did not take into account that a ram only needed to be ¼ Lincoln or thereabouts – no one wanted the heavy Lincoln fleeces, just a bit of extra weight. By the year 2000 they were down to 17 flocks (mainly the old flocks of about 200 ewes each) and 1,610 registered ewes in total.

The boom has definitely passed and now they are down to 4 flocks with 113 ewes in total! In Australia there are 12 flocks with only 295 ewes. It only takes a couple of cornerstone flocks to give up and the breed will disappear. In the UK they are on the RBST Priority List – very rare indeed.

(As an aside it will be interesting to view the future numbers of the Swiss Valais Blacknose in NZ. As far as I can ascertain they were brought into NZ to be bred up in number enough to supply the demand from the USA for embryos and semen. An adjunct was the demand from the small holders' market, the 'cute' factor. Initial prices are high for foundation breeding stock realised by those taking the gamble to bring them into the country. Now there are 169 flocks, of which about half are Appendix flocks, in the NZSBA Flock book. These breeders need to remember that at the end of the day these sheep are only worth their value for wool and meat.

Oft times in NZ we have seen the 'rush to gold' – ostriches,

emus, Mohair goats all come to mind. Unless you have outstanding stock for sale that several people want then prices will come back to meat and wool values eventually.)

Another once popular breed in NZ is the **Ryeland**. They arrived in NZ in 1903. Once found only in the UK, Australia and NZ they are now in Europe as well. They have gone from the UK Rare Breeds Survival Trust's Watch List. However, most flocks are under 20 ewes and many of those have joined the UK fashion for coloured Ryelands. In Australia, which had around 750 ewes in 1990, they are down to 14 flocks and 369 ewes. Their last cornerstone flock dispersed about 10 years ago. New Zealand has 7 flocks with around 292 registered ewes. Ryelands are a great medium framed dual-purpose sheep. Used as a terminal sire they are good workers, very prepotent and stamp their progeny. They were one of the breeds used to poll the Poll Dorset.

Ryeland rams ▼



Put to a whiteface ewe they will leave a good even line of white face ewes suitable to keep for crossing to another terminal sire. The one thing that has hindered their progress as a terminal sire is that they are a whiteface breed and do not particularly colour-mark the progeny. They are also a very docile breed, hardy and thrifty too.

In the UK, **Shropshires** have moved off the Rare Breeds Survival Trust Watch List as they have gained greatly in popularity. As well as for terminal sires they have a specialist role in the cider apple and Christmas tree orchards as well as vineyards for grass control. They are also widely used in Europe grazing in Christmas tree plantations.



Shropshire ram

Unfortunately, in Australia they are down to 25 flocks with 401 registered ewes. In NZ we have 10 flocks with approximately 300 registered ewes. The black faced Shropshire leaves colour-marked progeny. They are renowned for being able to hold their condition in a drought. Like the Ryeland they are a medium framed breed.



Dorset Down ram Marnoch 401-16

Dorset Downs are on the Rare Breeds Survival Trust Priority List along with the Lincolns in the UK. This is the home of the breed. It is terrible that these breeds have been allowed to dwindle to such small numbers that they need to be on the Priority List. In Australia their situation is dire. They have only 4 flocks totalling 108 registered ewes. At present Australia cannot import genetics from NZ unless the semen was collected for the Australian market before the avenue to the UK genetics was opened to NZ.

In NZ there are 43 flocks with a healthy total of 4327 ewes. However, they have a number of cornerstone flocks, one with 650 ewes, another with around 400 and four of over 200 each. If they should all disperse, they are down 1,900 ewes overnight.

English Leicesters are another breed in need of support in NZ with 7 flocks – the largest, of 137 ewes, is currently up for sale. This leaves one large flock of 93 ewes. In total, there are 320 registered ewes. In Australia there are 21 flocks with 515 registered ewes. *English Leicester ram* ▼



Other breeds once large in NZ include the **Romney**, which has now returned to the aegis of the NZSBA with just 32 registered flocks putting in a return this year with a total of 4541 ewes. In 1977 the NZ Romney Sheep Breeders' Association had 723 registered flocks with a total of 168,358 ewes, an average of 232 ewes per flock. New Zealand has many thousands of commercial sheep related to Romneys. Many are now part of modern composite breeds.

In Australia the Romney breed now has 16 flocks with 702 ewes. Romneys were never their most popular breed of course – the big emphasis in Australia was on various strains of Merino.

Although not in the NZSBA flockbook, Cheviots are another breed that seem to be having a resurgence with 23 flocks now although down to around 1000 registered ewes from 2000 odd in the late 1980's. In 1977 there were 76 flocks with 7281 registered ewes. Currently a diminishing number of sire lines is more their problem. Australia has only 9 Cheviot flocks with around 400 ewes.

These are breeds that have previously contributed to the founding of new breeds in New Zealand. Who knows what attributes the previously mentioned breeds may also have that

will find a niche in the future. Once these breeds have gone that is it, unless embryos and semen are kept in banks for times to come.

Currently we can bring in genetic material from the UK but if blue tongue should get hold over there again or another European - based disease (possibly of Asian origin) should get to the UK, that could be it.

What are we going to do to help keep a broad genetic base of breeds in New Zealand?

Many farmers are rushing to convert their flocks to shedding breeds. I sincerely hope that they do not go out of their current wool breeds entirely. Better to keep a foot in each camp at present with the environmental sustainability of woollen fibres as well as the use of the components in a strand of wool which are being used for the manufacture of cosmeceuticals and pharmaceuticals as well as breaking down the fibres to re-establish them as a totally new type of fibre – all likely to increase the demand for good quality, clean, black fibre-free wool.

Massey is running trials on how to convert your wool flock to shedding sheep. I'm not sure why they simply do not talk to the Morrison family of Marton who have had Polled Wiltshires and kept a few Wiltshire Horns very successfully



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FARMERSWEEKLY

since the late 1980's and obviously know how to breed them! A lot of money seems to be being wasted by Government researchers repeating trials for which the results were known many years ago.

Modern genetic tools such as collecting semen and embryos would seem to be the logical step to take in keeping some of the older lines from these rarer sheep breeds. Of course, this has to be financed by "someone" and organised – ram training, agistment, semen collection and storage cost money, and embryos are even more expensive, especially if one is not going to make an instant fortune from doing so. Long term storage is the name of the game – 30 – 50 years ahead of need. Certainly, any sheep of the breeds so stored that remain 'in person' so to speak will no doubt change during that time but should outcross bloodlines from overseas be unavailable this stored material may well fill the gap, particularly if genetic

modification has happened to the original breed in the meantime.

Another way to do it is to encourage all of our NZSBA breeders to take a small number of a second breed under their wing – twenty to fifty breeding ewes in a few extra flocks could make the difference between a breed surviving or not. Remember all sheep are worth something in the meat/dairy trade if not in the wool at present.

Lastly perhaps we try and get the Government via Landcorp (Pamu) to get involved, dedicating one of their sheep & beef farms to NZ heritage breeds, especially an organic farm – they may be pleasantly surprised how well these breeds can do with adequate nutrition and good husbandry.

Helen McKenzie

<p>WANAKA SHOW</p>	<p>Photos by Ian McCall</p>
	
<p><i>The Armidale Merino stud had a very successful show at Wanaka, with this ram being judged the grand champion sheep of the show.</i></p>	<p><i>The grand champion fleece at the Wanaka show, was this 20 micron ewe fleece, with a score of 99 points, exhibited by Armidale Merino stud.</i></p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">LambEx 7-9 August 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Adelaide Convention Centre</p> <p style="text-align: center;">North Terrace, Adelaide, South Australia</p> <p>Join us in Adelaide 7-9 August 2024 for three epic days centred around Australia's sheep, lamb and wool industries.</p> <p>LambEx 2024 encompasses the whole supply chain for Australia's sheep, lamb & wool industry from producers, processors, research & development and exporters from food and fibre sectors.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Google Lambex 2024 or contact Bradley Hayden on conference@lambex.org.au</p>
<p>A.R. & T.E McCall's Collie Hill's breed Suffolk ram and F.A Fletcher's Dorset Down ewe being judged for the title of grand champion all breeds (other than Merino) sheep of the Wanaka show which was awarded to the Suffolk ram.</p>	



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The advertisement features a central image of a black and white cow wearing a vibrant green cape. To the left of the cow is a white plastic jug with a green cap, labeled 'QELPO'. The background is a soft-focus green field. The top of the ad has a dark green header with the product name 'QELPO™' in large, white, bold letters. A curved banner on the right side contains the tagline 'The ultimate plant growth stimulant'. In the bottom left corner, the 'Agri' logo is displayed with the tagline 'Specialised to succeed'. The bottom right corner contains contact information for Agri Technovation Ltd, including their address, phone number, email, and website. Stylized green leaf graphics are scattered throughout the design.

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.”

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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

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Email adverts to the Editor or greg@nzsheep.co.nz

The **Closing Date** for next issue will be **May 20th for the June 2024 newsletter.**

Please get items in well before the deadline!!!

“FEATURE BREED” will be RYELANDS.

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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Sheep breeds on display along with the sheep section trophies at Central Hawkes Bay show

Photo: Kevin Mawson

“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.”