



# Sheep NewZ

#36 Spring 2024



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Hello Members,

Who noted that the Prada-Parelli Luna Rossa boat in the challenger series for the America’s Cup had the International Woolmark on their sail? Pity that NZ ever moved away from it to the Fernmark really.

Until recently, trying to buy a wool carpet and do the right thing for NZ producers almost got one laughed out of the carpet shops. Fortunately, that is now rapidly changing. History repeats itself and wool is on the rise again. The main thing is, if you do have a wool breed, make sure a good standard of fleece preparation in the shed is maintained.

Lately a phone call from a NZSBA member who had recently attended a Beef+Lamb NZ Wormwise Seminar. He wanted me to stress the importance of not overdrenching one’s sheep. Talk to your vet and get a programme in place that will minimise the use of drenches. There are some farmers with an entrenched mindset who are failing to accept the modern theories on drench resistance and putting the whole NZ sheep farming scene at risk. If you buy in stock with inbuilt resistance, they will transfer the problem to your farm!

Finally, on a personal note I am hoping to retire from editing the Sheep NewZ after the December issue, or at the least reduce it to twice a year. Turning 70 kind of focuses the mind on all the undone family/farm projects that time is running out for!

Will also be looking for passionate people to take on our Shropshire & Ryeland flocks & Red Poll cattle stud in the next year or two.

*Helen McKenzie*  
**Editor**

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

**Front cover photo:** Mixed age Valais rams from the Brock flock, based in Southland.

## ASSOCIATION NEWS & VIEWS

### From the President

Hello to all members and welcome to this year’s Spring edition of Sheep NewZ.



The weather latterly has changed into the good old fashioned Spring with constant north westerlies changing to brief southerlies with some northerly winds as well.

I think Spring has happened upon us earlier than in recent years with daytime temperatures forcing growth to kick into gear.

Lambs in this region have largely had a good start.

Spring hogget shearing has taken place with Halfbred, Border Merino and Merino fleece coming off in very good order.

Lamb schedules have risen about \$1 in the last five to six weeks to be around \$7-80 for most meat companies as at early to mid September. Not the best and with the current weather will probably entice many to put good weight on those winter lambs before killing. I hope the heavier end don’t become the majority and saturate the market.

At our recent Annual Meeting it was debated about the future of sheep breeders and sheep farming and with this subject in mind a small sub-committee was formed. Jon Hickford, from Lincoln University, was co-opted and a meeting was held there on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> August. Going forward another meeting is planned for October with more industry people being invited to attend.

I wish members all the best for the rest of the Spring and look forward to another ram selling season and maybe the odd A & P Show.

*Mark Copland*  
**President NZSBA**



## From the General Manager



Our NZSBA Council and AGM meetings were held in mid-July, and below is a brief meeting report -

**OBITUARIES** - Mr Digger McCulloch, Mr Tony Ellis, Mr Ross Manson, Mr John Gunn, Mr Brian Ashby, Mr E M Skurr, Mr Tony Tripp & Mr Neil Evans.

The meeting held a minute's silence as a mark of respect for the departed members.

**ELECTION OF PRESIDENT** - Mr M M Copland was re-elected President.

**ELECTION OF SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT** - Ms P Loffhagen was re-elected Senior Vice-President.

**ELECTION OF JUNIOR VICE-PRESIDENT** - Mr C J Hampton was re-elected Junior Vice-President.

### ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

The Annual Report and Accounts having been circulated were accepted.

**President's Report – circulated - approved**

**General Manager's Report – circulated – approved**

**Treasurers Report – circulated - approved**

### COUNCIL REPORT:

**Eye Muscle Scanning Workshop** – A workshop at Lincoln was held earlier this year and 3 new scanners were accredited. Messrs S Graham, Mathew Farmer, and Carl Tairua.

**NZSBA Advertisements in Country-Wide** – Printed media versus digital advertising was discussed.

**Annual Tour** – Suggested last meeting that when a breed is having a conference they are asked if they wish to open up the conference to other members.

Suffolk NZ are holding a tour next year and are looking at inviting another breed to join them.

**Annual Returns/ewe & ram transfers/registering rams** – Now online and a number of members are using this option

**NZ Youth Classes** – Members spoke positively of the youth classes held at Christchurch, Amberley and Fairlie.

**Sponsorship** – It was agreed that the NZSBA provide sponsorship of \$200.00 at the 3 shows.

**NZSBA Youth Initiative** – We have 26 flocks under our youth initiative. Shropshire, 2, Suffolk, 10, South Suffolk, 3, Dorset Down, 1, Corriedale, 2, Texel, 1, East Friesian, 1, Dorper, 1, Valais, 4, Awassi, 1.

**NZ Agricultural Show – 2024** – Ms Drummond informed the meeting that there now will be a sheep show this year with details to follow.

**Restructuring of NZSBA** – A sub-committee was established to speak to various organisations and to assess what the role of the NZSBA should be in the future, and to raise the profile of sheep farming.

**Subcommittee** - Messrs D Croy, H Taylor, C Hampton, M Copland, C Letham, P Loffhagen, with J Hickford coopted to form the subcommittee.

**Suffolk – Ram Fair** – that the upset price for the Suffolks be \$1000.00 and that unregistered breeders to pay the full transfer price.

**Letter to the Canterbury Ram Fair Committee** – informing them that the acoustics need improving, and that the agents should name of the purchaser once the sheep has sold.

**New Breed admitted to the NZSBA** – Kerry Hills approved.

**Appointment of Financial Accountants** - Brown, Glassford and Co were re-appointed the Financial Accountants for 2024-2025.

**Subcommittee** – The subcommittee held their first meeting at Lincoln University in August. Farming Issues were discussed and also, the ways we can lift the profile of members.

How to raise the profitability of the sheep farmer was discussed and it was generally agreed that we need to raise the profile of the NZSBA before we approach a person(s) to lead the marketing campaign.

It was acknowledged that there are a wide range of breeds under the NZSBA umbrella.

Agreed to have a follow up meeting late October/early November.

**NZSBA Flock Book** – This year's Flock Book is nearly completed and will be sent to the printers very soon.

**No Annual Return – 2024** – Members need to be aware there is a \$100.00 penalty fee if no Annual Return is received. The office makes every effort to help members furnish a return. If you require help, please contact the office.



Annual Returns are a requirement of the Association Rules and make the Flock Book relevant.

**Commemorative Jerseys - for sale –**

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

**Tag Discounts - Shearwell, Datamars, & Allflex, -** continue to offer discounted tags/products 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**



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FARMERS  
WEEKLY

**A BIT OF HISTORY**

**MERINO SHEEP  
RE-EXPORT CONTROL  
SAFEGUARDS IN FORCE**

**Per Press Association, Wellington July 8th**  
Manawatu Standard, 9<sup>th</sup> July 1937

*National Library, Papers Past*

With a view to preventing stud Merino sheep imported into New Zealand from Australia being re-exported elsewhere, the New Zealand Government has agreed to co-operate with the Australian authorities. This statement was made by the Minister of Agriculture (Hon. Lee Martin) when referring to-night to a recent cable message from Sydney stating that the opinion was expressed at the last annual conference of the Graziers Association of New South Wales that the effectiveness of the embargo on the export of Merino sheep from Australia was endangered by the sale of sheep to New Zealand.

“Re-exportation is carefully guarded against,” said the Minister, “and from inquiries made it has been ascertained that in no case have Australian-bred sheep been re-exported from New Zealand. The Government has the co-operation of the stock and station agents who are principally concerned in the importation of sheep from Australia, and it is quite clear that the correspondent referred to in the cable is not conversant with the position. Recently 250 Merino sheep were exported to Japan, but these sheep were obtained from a flock which has not had any fresh Australian blood introduced into it for many years past, and apart from this shipment the export of Merino sheep from New Zealand is of very small moment. The officers of my department will continue to keep a close watch on the position and the Graziers Association of New South Wales need have no fear that Australian-bred Merino sheep will be re-exported from this dominion, steps having been taken to safeguard against this possibility.”

**Editor’s Note:**

*The embargo was set in place in 1929. It was partially lifted in 1968 for the sale of 300 auctioned stud rams a year. No ewes, semen or fertilised ova were allowed to be exported. In 2010 all restrictions were finally removed.*

*The webpage for the Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders under ‘About’ makes very interesting reading about the history of the breed and the embargoes in Australia.*

## Feature Breed

# VALAIS BLACKNOSE

### ORIGIN & HISTORY

They may hold the tagline of “the world’s cutest sheep” but the Valais Blacknose sheep are so much more, as they continue to gain popularity across New Zealand and other parts of the world.

Originating from the mountains of the Valais French (French) or Wallis (German) areas of Switzerland, the Valais Blacknose sheep breed can be dated back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

The Valais Blacknose is considered a rare breed with total numbers not known, but in the vicinity of only 30,000 worldwide. In their native Switzerland, their existence is currently threatened by the recent return of the wolf to the country.

### Valais Blacknose in NZ

The first Valais Blacknose lambs were born in New Zealand in 2017, and these were from embryos imported from the United Kingdom.

In 2019 the New Zealand Valais Blacknose Sheep Society (NZVBSS) was formed.

Today, there are 1,136 pure Valais Blacknose sheep registered in New Zealand and just over 200 registered flocks within the NZVBSS.

Our breeders come from all demographics – lifestyle block owners to commercial sheep studs. Although it is an interesting statistic to call out that, amongst the registered breeders, the majority are strongly women.

Whilst there is a dedicated society of breeders aiming at continuously improving the quality of the New Zealand bloodlines, there are going to be those sheep that do not make the cut. As with all breeds, animals with things such as poor conformation, mouth and teeth issues, poor milkers and those that fail to meet the breed standard should be culled. Similarly, there is a strong focus on continuing to improve our kiwi genetics and there are some dedicated breeders who regularly import embryos and semen from the UK to ensure we have fresh genetics available.

The export market for kiwi genetics of Valais Blacknose sheep is also in high demand, with the United States being our biggest market. The demand from Asia is also

growing. New Zealand breeders profile highly in some of the world’s largest Valais Blacknose sheep shows. New Zealand Valais Blacknose sheep genetics are now proving their value, featuring prominently in overseas show winners, with recipients of maximum points graded animals coming from NZ bloodlines.

In 2023, 11 kiwi breeders, representing 7 studs, joined breeders from England, Wales, Scotland and Sweden, and attended the first USA National Valais Blacknose Show in Des Moines, Iowa. In September, several kiwi breeders will again be attending the USA National Valais Blacknose Show, offering embryos and semen straws for sale. Our breeders regularly travel to the United Kingdom and Europe for shows too.



*Kiwi breeders visiting the USA in 2023*

**So, apart from being cute and very friendly animals, what are they good for?**

Valais Blacknose are prolific wool producers – with a long staple of up to 30cm of fleece a year. This wool is high in microns, around 36 – 40 microns, but highly valued by the crafters and artisans, especially those who felt and spin yarn. The pelts make beautiful rugs, with their long, spirally wool locks making it aesthetically appealing for various creative uses. It is exciting to have several breeders within the NZVBSS able to make a successful business out of creating and selling Valais woollen products.

Some of our breeders utilise the excess wool for mulching plants and trees, slowly releasing nutrients as it breaks down whilst enabling the soil to better retain water.

Valais Blacknose sheep offer high quality meat that stands out due to its flavour, tenderness, and marbling. Being well-marbled contributes to its juiciness and depth of taste. The fat content in the muscle has been clinically

tested<sup>1</sup> to be 7.7%, with lamb meat generally having sufficient juiciness of the fat content in the muscle greater than 3.5%. The meat also has lower saturated fatty acids and monosaturated fatty acids but are higher in nutritionally beneficial polyunsaturated fatty acids. These polyunsaturated fatty acids include omega-3 fatty acids and conjugated linoleic acids (CLA), which have positive effects on the consumer.

In traditional regions of Switzerland where Valais Blacknose sheep are raised, their meat is often considered local specialty. This can add an element of exclusivity and authenticity to dishes made with their meat.

They are a big animal with rams ranging from with a height of 75 – 83cm and ewes ranging from 70 – 90kg and 72 – 78cm in height. Being a large sheep, their slaughter weight is also higher than average in New Zealand.

They are known for easy lambing and can lamb all year round.

Both ewes and rams have large horns. Rams typically have large, downward spiralling horns that can grow quite prominent. Ewes tend to have horns that are lighter and spiral more outwards.

The NZVBSS is a very proactive group, particularly in local A&P shows and on social media. NZVBSS also has a range of merchandise available for sale. The physical appearance of this sheep breed means it gets more than its fair attention in the media, particularly as popularity continues to increase. You will see this breed featuring in the upcoming Season 4 of Clarkson's Farm in the UK.



In 2023, the Valais Blacknose sheep featured in their own inaugural classes at the NZ Agricultural Show in

<sup>1</sup>Lamb meat quality from Swiss sheep breeds by Heckendorn, Lieber & Probst

Christchurch. The first show was well represented with over 30 animals and 7 breeders attending, with breeders even travelling from the North Island to attend. A standout of the show for the breed was having a Valais Blacknose place third in the Champion All Breeds Best Wool Breed Ram Hogget, beating out other more traditional sheep breeds with his outstanding fleece.

### **So, what's the core purpose of these sheep? What's their commercial value?**

As the NZVBSS breeders continue to improve the kiwi genetics, it is fair to say that there is now a huge variation in the quality of Valais Blacknose sheep for sale at the moment and this is reflected in the price. A quality purebred ram featuring new genetics can still fetch in excess of \$4,000 in New Zealand and a good ewe up to \$10,000.

The popular *Breeding Up Program* for Valais Blacknose sheep in New Zealand allows for cross breeding to build local flocks, given that pure Valais numbers remain limited. Foundation ewes can be any breed or cross and are bred with pure Valais rams, resulting in progressively higher percentages of Valais genes across generations (F1 to F5 ewes).

The registry, managed by the NZ Sheepbreeders' Association (NZSBA) on Grassroots software, tracks these crossbred sheep. Only F6 generation sheep, classified as 98.43% Valais Blacknose, are eligible for the main purebred register. There are currently a few F5 generation ewes in New Zealand, with the potential for the first F6 to be born this year and officially enter the purebred flock.

The program includes specific rules for membership, breeding, tagging, and registration to ensure consistency and quality within the NZ Valais Blacknose Sheep Society (NZVBSS).

Finally, it's the personality of these sheep that win people over – despite their attractive appearance. They say you meet a Valais, and you have a friend for life! Their characteristics are more likened to a dog than a sheep. They come when called, love scratches and are completely trainable to jump up onto the trailer (very handy) and are very easy to handle. This makes them the perfect sheep for agri-tourism ventures.

Our advice... go meet a Valais Blacknose sheep!



**BREED DESCRIPTION**

<b>Bodyweight</b>
<b>Ewes:</b> 70 – 90kg <b>Rams:</b> 80 – 130kg
<b>Meat</b>
Well-marbled, the meat also has lower saturated fatty acids and monosaturated fatty acids but is higher in nutritionally beneficial polyunsaturated fatty acids. Lamb slaughter weight is higher than average in New Zealand
<b>Breeding/Lambing</b>
They are known for easy lambing and can lamb all year round.
<b>Numbers</b>
1,136 pure Valais in NZ
<b>Wool</b>
Prolific wool producers – with a long staple of up to 30cm of fleece a year. This wool is high in microns, around 36 – 40 microns. Highly valued by crafters and artisans. The pelts make beautiful rugs.



*Pet lamb fun with a Valais* ^



*Parkdale stud pure Valais* ^



*Valais and handlers at the NZ Agricultural Show at Christchurch*

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.”



## STUD PROFILE # 1

**Woodland Valais, Flock # 49**

**Established 2020**

**Owned by Nikita and Mathew Woodhead,  
Mosgiel**



*Supreme Valais (ewe) Rose Creek Barbie with Woodland Willow at foot.*

After purchasing our lifestyle block, we explored a few options of sheep breeds to get set up as a stud. After seeing how well Valais was doing for a local friend, we purchased our first purebred ram. We now have a small flock of thirty pure and bred up Valais ewes.



*Woodland flock, purebred ewe*

Initially, we had a crossbred flock, 'breeding up' to purebred using the ewes we already had as a foundation flock. Our aim with the breeding up program is to produce Valais that thrive in New Zealand conditions either as stud animals or for lifestyle blocks and small farms. Our main focuses have been on ease of lambing, growth weights and good feet. Starting out with breeds that we thought would complement and improve the breed; mainly Texel, Suftex, Beltex and Romney to add more muscle, but also Arapawa ewes for the fleece and mothering ability. Valais are a fast-growing large breed.

By using the foundation ewe breeds above, we have found them to produce a reasonably fast growing large-framed lamb with a good amount of meat in the first few generations we have bred. While they may not be the ram of choice for large farms or commercial operations (unless wool prices improve) we think they are the perfect sheep for the pet flock, lifestyle blocks and small farms.



*1<sup>st</sup> cross Valais hogget carcass*

Over the last two years we have starting breeding purebreds with ewe purchases from Rose Creek and Remarkable studs. We are expecting lambs from six purebred ewes in spring with several different lines with the hope of getting a couple of quality future stud rams for our flock in order to be self-sufficient for several years.

We have shown our sheep right from when we set our stud up. The feedback from judges and other sheep breeders has been invaluable to our stud, and it has been great talking to so many people wanting to know more about the breed.



Our sheep have been successful for us as well, which is exciting, with many Champion and Supreme awards for rams and ewes. They have competed well in the specific Valais classes as well as in crossbred ewe classes and to our excitement in the All-Breeds Wool section at the Palmerston A&P Show where we won Champion with a homebred F2 (75%) Valais hogget and Reserve Champion with a lovely Rose Creek purebred hogget.



Nikita has also started making use of the fleece for crafts such as peg loom rugs and felted fleeces and by selling to crafters for felting and spinning.



*A peg loom rug. The family cat wanted to be involved!*

A peg loom is super simple and perfect for those like me who aren't super crafty. The hardest part is threading it up!

I use raw fleece and wash the rug once it's complete, but I know some will use carded wool, actual spun wool or fabric scraps to make them as well.

It is also popular at our roadside stall, selling anything not suitable for crafting as mulch to keen gardeners.

**nikitawoodhead@gmail.com**  
**027 346 7000**

## STUD PROFILE # 2

**Letts Gully Valais Blacknose**

**Flock number – A104**

**Established – June 2022, Central Otago**

**Principal – Karen Thompson**

**Contact details – 0274 178 347**



*Letts Gully Rose, purebred ewe lamb*

I genuinely can't remember how I came across the Valais Blacknose sheep breed. At the time I was looking to buy two donkeys for our new lifestyle block and before I knew it three pregnant F2 (75% pure) ewes were in the back of my trailer and on their way to their new home. That was in 2022.

Since then, I have bred those three ewes two more times, with the latest lambs due in early September. I am actively participating in the Valais Blacknose *Breeding Up Program*. So far, I have kept the ewe lambs for breeding up and culled the wethers - the meat is exceptional and I've had their beautiful hides tanned as rugs!

Last year I delved into the world of purebreds by purchasing a recipient ewe. At scanning it was revealed she was carrying twins and last year I was fortunate to have two healthy purebred lambs arrive – one of each.

The ram, Letts Gully Shaggy, as he has come to be known, is a great wee ram and is expecting his first

progeny very soon. He has now moved onto another stud to do what rams do.

The land here in Central Otago is very arid – desert like – which seems to suit this breed. 2024 has been tough to keep up the grass and I have been feeding out hay and baleage since late February. But with winter coming to its tail end, I can now irrigate again (hopefully no more frosts) so, things are on the up and up for spring.

We've only got 5 acres, so I am currently running only 6 ewes (5 of whom are pregnant). If I had more land, I'd have more sheep for sure!

My sheep are incredibly tame and are trained to jump onto the trailer, follow me into the yards, actually... follow me anywhere. They love a good scratch and are very affectionate – more like a dog than sheep.

As a committee member of the New Zealand Valais Blacknose Sheep Society I am constantly promoting the breed and encourage anyone who is interested to reach out to one of your local studs to find out more.



### STUD PROFILE # 3

**Mayfield Valais Stud**

**Flock number – A51**

**Established – 2021, Mosgiel**

**Principal – Victoria Chapman**



*F4 twin ram lambs just born 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024. They are out of a 2022 born F3 who lambed as a hogget. She is a keeper!*

Mayfield Valais is a breed-up stud aimed at improving the robustness of Valais Blacknose through good selection (culling!). Improved fertility, better growth and fewer dags are the key traits being focused on. The flock started from a line of high performing commercial Romney ewes and since then, Beltex-Suftex cross, (producing the fabulous ValteXX offspring!!) Suffolk and Merino (for finer wool) have also been used as foundation ewes. There

is a strong focus on keeping the gene pool as wide as possible and to that end, inbreeding has been minimized with new ram pedigrees scrutinized before purchase. The Checkmate application in Grassroots is genius!

The flock is about 55 ewes currently and 40 hoggets (which needs to be reduced), mostly consisting of F2 and F3s.

2023 saw the first F4 ewe lambs, with one going to the ram as a hogget, in 2024. I give it a 1% chance of her having a ewe lamb but don't we all live in eternal optimism?!

To complicate matters, I am breeding up a ram line also, so there are multiple layers of F1 & F2 animals and finding different rams for them all gets quite expensive. The goal here is that bred-up rams will be more diverse genetically and hopefully superior in performance (fertility etc) than their Swiss ancestors, so will make a better sire for the ewes. But it's a long road. I am particularly interested in hearing about anyone else who is doing the same thing. I cull a 'well marked' ewe, if for instance she won't get in lamb, in preference for poorly marked ones who have twins. From what I can see as purebreds, you get a mix of 'correct' markings anyway, so I'd rather have superior performance.

It cost me \$400 to shear the ewes at Christmas and the wool broker over the road gave me back just over \$200. Until that time, most of the wool went around the native trees I had planted down the back of the farm and latterly it was spread on the garden. Looks a bit unsightly over summer so will be something I spread in autumn to rot down over winter in the future.

With encouragement from Nikita Woodhead at Woodland Valais, rams and ewes have been entered into the Milton and Mosgiel shows, but I have been discouraged by the judging- I have often entered a reasonably good-looking hogget but because she had just lambed and was skinnier than a maiden hogget, she wouldn't win. I guess that is the difference with showing vs commercial performance.

If you are interested in swapping rams or have a similar vision for improving the breed and might have a ram available you have bred up, I would love to hear from you!

**Please phone 0274583196 to discuss breeding magic!**

Victoria





# Closed Loops and Regenerative Agriculture.

By Professor Jon Hickford, Lincoln University

Ever had a ‘cornflake-spitting moment’? I was introduced to this statement, when a friend and well-known New Zealand philosopher Professor Denis Dutton asked me how I felt about Dame Susan Devoy (a handy squash player by any measure) voicing an opinion on the use of genetic modification, about which she knew very little. That was at least 20 years ago, but it illustrates the point that one needs to be careful in the public space when straying ‘off topic’, as the good Dame did.

I had another ‘cornflake-spitting moment’ a few Mondays back, when a Radio New Zealand journalist, Farah Hancock, presented opinion that Fonterra may be guilty of green-washing to impress foreign customers keen on purchasing products derived from regenerative agriculture (RA; see <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/country/525503/fonterra-accused-of-greenwashing-to-impress-big-foreign-buyers-keen-on-regenerative-agriculture>).

Now I will come back to the bigger issue of RA in a moment, but in the lengthy and quite well written article, Farah quotes Dr Mike Joy. Mike pops up nearly

everywhere these days when one wants to broadside New Zealand agriculture. If one was to read social media, he is perceived by many to be the doyen of all that is good and honest, and hence the shining light and only hope in repelling farmers and the evil corporate interests that control farming and food production, and who apparently want to destroy the planet.

What I can’t live with is the garbage paraded by Farah in quoting Mike Joy in the RNZ piece.

To quote it directly:

*Joy says regenerative agriculture is farming where the land regenerates itself. "You don't have to bring stuff in from the outside, it regenerates from within, so you have a closed loop.*

Now I can see the appeal in statements like this. For starters, I would be hard-pressed to find any farmer who doesn’t want to reduce expenditure on “stuff” from “outside”. Is the closed-loop Utopia, or is it complete hogwash?

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Here's why it is hogwash. Every time you remove any product from a farm, be it milk, or wool, or meat, or baleage, or grain, then you are removing minerals. To quote the New Zealand Science Learning Hub, "A mineral is an element or chemical compound that is normally crystalline and that has been formed as a result of geological processes. "In effect, farming mines the soil. Depending on where you farm, some minerals are present in excess of what is needed, while others are in short supply. If you want to grow things, you need to understand this, and how those minerals are made available to plants, and ultimately livestock. For those minerals that are in short supply, but that are needed to produce the afore-mentioned products, you have to supply them and thus top up the soil reserve.

A key mineral is phosphate. It can be supplied in different ways, be it as superphosphate or Reactive Phosphate Rock (RPR), with the former good for dryland farming and the latter for areas with higher rainfall. If phosphate is not replenished, then phosphorus deficiency can lead to the stunting of plant growth and reduced yield. In excess it can damage water quality. I am no expert on this stuff, but New Zealand is fortunate to have scientists of the calibre of Professor Richard McDowell and Distinguished Professor Leo Condron working in this area. They are well known, well published and internationally rated and respected for their work.

What's at stake? One hundred grams (100 g) of lamb meat contains on average 205 milligrams (mg) of phosphorus, typically as phosphate (Because it is highly reactive phosphorus is never found as a free element on earth, but typically as mineral phosphate). Lamb meat also typically contains 260 mg of potassium, 6.58 mg of zinc, 1.9 mg of iron and 38.1 ug of selenium per 100 grams. It tastes nice, but that is my bias showing.

If we multiply up for the average lamb carcass, then at 18 kg and a lean meat yield of 50% (low by modern standards), the 9 kg of meat alone contains 18.45 grams of phosphorus (as phosphate). Having meat in our diets is good for our growth, not least because it is a rich source of phosphate, and because our bones require dietary phosphate to grow. Bone is also rich in phosphate, albeit it isn't available to us nutritionally.

In total a 70 kg ewe contains about 390 grams of phosphorus (It is present in meat, bone, teeth, wool, fat, DNA, cell membranes, etc), hence a flock of 2000 ewes, 500 rising two-tooths and perhaps 1000 ewe hoggets contains about 1.24 tonnes of phosphate, and all "mined" from your soil. That increases if you add in 1500 plus sale

lambs that also contain phosphorus and that take it with them as they leave the farm each year. There is no closed-loop option, as Mike Joy suggests.

This brings me back to RA. A few years back, as the President of the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural and Horticultural Science (NZIAHS), I asked some of our leading scientists to write about the topic. The full document is available here (<https://indd.adobe.com/view/693a575a-5482-4df0-bc4d-f986d3bce648>). In the foreword to the document I wrote the following: "*The cycle of life creates its own fertiliser*" is one such statement creating confusion. It sounds attractive, but it is biological, physical and chemical nonsense.' Little has changed since then, well at least in the understanding of Mike Joy.

In the 'scene-setting' section of the NZIAHS document, I introduce many ideas. I won't copy the text in full, but here are some key parts:

*'Farming and politics are abuzz with discussions about 'regenerative agriculture'. There are loud proponents for it in the farming community and politicians are bandying the words around. It is a cornerstone of the Green Party's agriculture policy, and taxpayer money has already been directed towards it and its advocates. What is regenerative agriculture? Can it be defined?*

*US-based business consultancy Terra Genesis International, defines it as follows: Regenerative Agriculture is a system of farming principles and practices that increases biodiversity, enriches soils, improves watersheds, and enhances ecosystem services. Regenerative Agriculture aims to capture carbon in soil and aboveground biomass, reversing current global trends of atmospheric accumulation. At the same time, it offers increased yields, resilience to climate instability, and higher health and vitality for farming and ranching communities. The system draws from decades of scientific and applied research by the global communities of organic farming, agroecology, holistic management, and agroforestry.*

*That sounds very compelling, albeit anyone with a scientific bent asks how you measure these things precisely, and where the underlying evidential basis for the claims made resides. It is easy to claim that you have undertaken decades of scientific and applied research, but where is that research published, how accessible is it to the public (scientifically literate or not) and has it been peer reviewed?*

*Science demands these things because science is driven by the quest for knowledge and understanding. It uses a*



*systematic approach, and its methodology relies on accurate and precise measurement, the accumulation of detailed evidence, and the robust testing of ideas using universally agreed observation methods and experimentation. It also relies on repetition and critical analysis, and scrutiny via peer review and assessment. It is a slow process, and good scientists typically refer to the 'weight of evidence' as they describe what they know, and what they do not know. Science is not something you can chose to believe in, because it is something that is true whether or not you believe in it.'*

I then wrote:

*'The advocates want you to believe in regenerative agriculture, too. That is fine, because the world is awash with things that you might chose to believe in, and many of these things bring you joy.'*

The key word in that is 'believe'. It's a word that marketing people love, because if you can get people to 'believe' then they are more likely to spend money. With that in mind, you can see the value proposition for Fonterra's marketing people, because if people believe in RA and that most NZ farming is RA, then they should theoretically be able to sell more of our dairy product.

But is that just green-washing?

To Fonterra's credit they are using a framework for defining RA created by the Sustainable Agriculture

Initiative (SAI). It is available here (<https://saipatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/sai-platform-regenerating-together-september-2023-1.pdf>). The framework proposes ten outcomes that are identified as important indicators to report performance. Pleasingly, these outcomes will be measured using verified measurement tools, for which validation criteria are provided. The outcomes have been selected based on current scientific consensus, empirical evidence, and farm applicability to maximise positive impact on the ground. It is hard to fault that approach, and it says science is important.

However, having a clear definition of RA appears to be of less importance to those who evangelise, or who naively think farming systems can be a closed loop.

It does also beg the question as to whether customers will pay more for RA products, which companies like Nestlé and Fonterra may then use to pay more to farmer suppliers that meet their 'criteria' for RA. This is true for some organic products like milk, but only time will tell whether the consumer will feel so inclined for RA products, especially those who can't prove their products are better, or have a smaller environmental impact.

Regardless, if you want to say that you farm with regenerative agricultural practices, then go for it, because it is still ill-defined and arbitrary. Just don't be so silly as to think you can farm with an entirely closed loop.



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## NZWCA JUNE 2024 NEWSLETTER

### Suggested wool preparation for different breeds this coming wool season

by Kevin Waldron D984



Brokers/merchants have advocated the importance of shed preparation for a long time now. This is becoming increasingly evident in the current market, where there are huge differences in price between well prepared wools versus poorer prepared wools.

Exporters (buyers) look for no fuss lines that process up to specification rather than lines that have imperfections that do not yield well in the final product. With increases in processing charges, buyers take financial risks when lines are not well prepared, so discount accordingly.

It is critical in all wool harvesting that someone takes responsibility for the wool preparation, whether that be a wool classer or leading shed hand.

PGG Wrightson Wool division recommends the following preparation for different breeds

#### Merino

Each clip is unique. The level of preparation depends on the quality, micron and end use of the wool.

The best industry practice for classing wool is called the bell-shaped graph (which means the highest amount of wool in the clip goes in the mean average micron of the clip normally called the medium line).

Most Merino clips in New Zealand are classed to a high standard.

#### Tips for merino wool preparation

1. The art of wool classing is to class wool like for like into as less lines as possible.
2. Unless stated for contract purposes it is pointless classing wool for both micron and style in the same micron range.
3. When skirting 1<sup>st</sup> Pcs don't only take the minimum amount of greasy skirtings, take approximately 50mm all along the side of the fleece. This way it keeps the style of wool better in the bins and keeps the line more even.
4. Flank ultra fine clips that are under 17 microns, taking off only wool that is visually broader or staples that lie flat. Do this only when there is scope to do it.
5. Optional keeping 2<sup>nd</sup> Pcs & Lox separate. If mixing Lox & 2<sup>nd</sup> Pcs check that they don't get too bulky.

#### Halfbred/ Corriedales / Quarterbred

Current market conditions are difficult. Worldwide stockpiles are high in the 26-30micron wools. Demand is still strong for wools under 26 microns provided they are prepared well. Heavy discounts for mixed lengths, seed content over 1.5vm and coloured wools, this shows there is demand for these wools, but it is not strong. Wools 26.5micron and stronger have very little price difference. Currently there is more competition from buyers on larger lines in the 26.5 - 30 micron range.

#### Tips for Half-bred/ Corriedales

1. Skirt well, keep fleeces lines as free from seed as possible.
2. Keep short wools out of main lines.
3. Fleece lines free from visible colour.
4. Line size as large as possible in courser lines.
5. Take out wool that is obviously too strong for binning/interlotting.

Although stronger lines can be more broader in micron it is still important to have either a classer or senior shed hand preparing these wools.

#### Crossbreds

Once again preparation is the key to a farmers return.

Skirt all fleece wools apart from cots. Wool is skirted for a reason. Wools that are not skirted incur a heavy discounts because they cannot be processed properly, therefore cause problems throughout the whole of the processing chain.

[Helping Grow the Country | PGG Wrightson](#)



# Strong wool preparation for new season

by Mark Greenlaw



Firstly it is important to know before entering a shed if there is a contract in place and what degree of preparation will be required to meet the contract specifications, in most cases the contractor and client will have planned what will be required in the shed.

Not all growers have contracts so it's still important to focus on providing the best job we can to achieve the best return for the grower, and yes growers will continue to look at the harvesting costs of their wool and the woolshed takes the first hit, but you as graders /classers should not lower your standards, therefore continue to prepare the wool to best practise guidelines.

## Preparation

The market is starting to show definite signs of premiums for better prepared lines of wool, new season pre lamb fleece wool must be skirted across the table and skirted correctly, this will include removing necks and backs that contain VM and removal of skirtings, a well thrown fleece certainly helps with the skirting of a fleece and shed hands need to be able to throw a fleece correctly to assist in making the skirting easier and faster, nothing worse than trying to skirt tangled fleece.

In the bigger sheds keep the pieces and bellies separate, bellies are usually lower yielding and have a degree of seed in them especially in the drier parts of the country at the moment.

Good full wool pieces are fetching better prices, hence offering separately. Hard cots and yellows need to be kept separate. Bellies to be fripped, lox kept separate.

For the second shear and lambs wools, skirting on the board would be sufficient, the body wool should still be blended on the floor in front of the wool press and any obvious skirtings removed. Bellies and Pcs can be blended together.

Lamb purses should be kept away from any of the lines as they cause a contamination issue when scoured.

BRANDS still need to be removed.

## SUMMARY and Invitation

I encourage all graders, classers and shearing contractors to make themselves available throughout the season to visit the Brokers Stores to view the samples up for sale. This can be very beneficial to you all, seeing the preparation of lines in the sample boxes and also any feedback from exporters who could be valuing wool for sale at the same time.

Cots being left in lines of free wool can see the line discounted up to 40 to 50 cents per kg. Thistles can also have the same sort of discount and in some cases more.

Wools of NZ have their showfloor in Christchurch and have the NZ Yarns factory which dyes and spins the wool into yarn. This is a very unique operation and it can give you an appreciation of the processing of wool .

Feel free to contact me to arrange a visit at some stage throughout the season

**Mark Greenlaw**

**National Wool Sales Manager**

**Wools of New Zealand**



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



## FOR SALE

### EXCITING OPPORTUNITY!!

#### **DairyMeade dairy sheep flock and Kingsmeade Artisan Cheese company for sale**

With owners' retirement imminent, we have for sale our DairyMeade milking flock (approximately 200 – 250 ewes milked) and Kingsmeade Artisan Dairy brand, IP and all our cheese making equipment (to relocate).

We would supply you with all our contacts, customers and offer training, advice and assist with compliance.

All our equipment is currently RMP compliant, in use (not in storage) and fit for purpose.

The DairyMeade breed was developed from the first East Friesian sheep imported and released on to the market in 1996.

Registered with the NZSBA in 2016. Careful selection for milk production, temperament, udder shape, teat placement and the ability to cope with New Zealand outdoor farm management.

Being able to produce a pedigree for each ram or ewe in the flock has enabled several exports of both live and embryos to China and Australia. Besides the milk that is produced, this is a potentially lucrative income stream.

We are looking to sell as a going concern but would split the sale into DairyMeade Sheep and/or the cheese company. Prepared to discuss various purchase options.



If the above is of interest to you, please contact us at [info@kingsmeadecheese.co.nz](mailto:info@kingsmeadecheese.co.nz)  
ph. 027 478 1778 or (06) 377 5252.

Company details at [www.kingsmeade](http://www.kingsmeadeartisan.com) artisan dairy



### Sheep Poo Study: monitoring Facial Eczema in NZ over three years

This study will help understand the extent of facial eczema (FE) across New Zealand. It will help fill gaps in our understanding about how common it is, and what factors contribute to its presence.

The study is running over three FE seasons, from 2023–2026. Testing occurs from October to May, and we aim to engage the same farms annually, targeting 350 farms each year.

FE is associated with toxin-producing fungi that affects pasture-grazing livestock in the North and South Island of New Zealand. The toxin causes liver damage which can result in reduced fertility and fecundity, weight loss, reduced growth, reduced milk production (where applicable), photosensitivity and sunburn and, in severe cases, death. Currently, there is no cure.

B+LNZ's Economic Service estimates the annual cost of FE to the New Zealand sheep, beef, dairy and deer sectors to be around \$332m per year.

*Status: This project is currently active.*

### Farmers' active involvement will shape future tools and solutions for managing FE

Here's a summary of what it means to be involved:

- Roughly every two weeks, we need farmers to collect 10 individual poo samples from one mob of sheep each year between October and May.
- Instructions, sampling kits and pre-paid return courier packaging are sent by Gribbles Laboratory on behalf of B+LNZ who are covering costs including testing. The B+LNZ Research team will send farmers fungal spore count results and also produce a map (updated monthly) that shows anonymised spore counts across the country.
- We also ask farmers to provide data about their farm, the sheep involved, and how they currently manage FE. This information will help identify risk factors to better understand the disease and its prevalence.
- Participants also have the option to share their insights on broader impacts of FE, including its social and economic effects, contributing to a deeper understanding of the disease's wider implications.

### Saying thank you

- Farmers who manage to send in all their samples by the end of the season will receive a Prezzy Card.
- Each year, 25 randomly chosen farms will undergo monthly FEC (Faecal Egg Count) and larval culture testing from October to May.
- **Expressions of interest for the 2024–2025 FE season are now open!**

B+LNZ Lead and contact: Dr Cara Brosnahan, B+LNZ's Principal Advisor, Animal Health Research

[cara.brosnahan@beeflambnz.com](mailto:cara.brosnahan@beeflambnz.com)





# NZWCA JUNE 2024 NEWSLETTER



## MUKA TANGATA

### People, Food and Fibre

### Workforce Development Council

#### **Muka Tangata developing solutions for wool harvesting industry**

Muka Tangata has finalised the form and content of new skill standards and micro-credentials which will provide a training pathway for those looking to join the Wool Harvesting industry, and the opportunity to have the skills gained formally recognised.

In total, four micro-credentials and five skill standards in shearing, wool handling and wool pressing have been developed at level 3. These training tools are a key step in establishing a sustainable and enduring formal learning pathway for the wool handling industry after decades of the absence of such opportunities.

Initiated in August 2023, the development project has seen Muka Tangata work with industry leaders and vocational education and training bodies to research, analyse, and construct a workable solution for the industry.

“We decided it was a priority to develop suitable education and training solutions for the industry based on what we were hearing from industry – that pathways into the industry are not clear and there isn’t a currently a formal training model for these roles within the industry. Providing formalised but flexible credentials for learners within the industry may go some way to addressing this problem, and to improving retention of those who have entered the industry,” says Muka Tangata Chief Executive Jeremy Baker.

Muka Tangata is now socialising the training products with the wider industry and vocational education and training sector.

“Alongside the development project, we have also discussed the new products with our formal provider partners with several indicating an interest in offering these products when they are approved and listed on the New Zealand Qualifications and Certificates Framework,” Baker says.

Email [qualifications@mukatangata.nz](mailto:qualifications@mukatangata.nz) for further information.

**NOTE: NZWCA has contributed to the above project with Board members Allan Fraser and Sonya Johansen being on the steering and working committees respectively, and Registrar Marg Forde on the working committee.**



## Maple Genetics

### Texel - Dorper - Beltex

## Sale Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025 to be held at the Canterbury Park Saleyards

We have enjoyed the journey of Stud Breeding but have decided it is time to downsize as our main Lease Block will not be available to us after March 2025.

#### Texel

Texel stud has been built from original purchase of 13 Ewes from the Sunny Mac Stud in 2014.

In 2019 we used UK Semen to produce a Ram that could be used in the flock, this resulted in Maple 9284/19 “Boris” from our Show Ewe Maple 684/16, he has been used very successfully to increase the Maternal value thru easy lambing and milking ability. The UK Semen also produced 3 Rams sold into Studs and 1 exported to Peru.

In 2021 we had the opportunity to purchase embryos from the Vorn Stud in the UK, these bloodlines have had a big influence in getting more meat into our flock as well as the added bonus of self-shedding.

In 2023 we used a small amount of UK Semen which resulted in the Ram Maple 23287/23 who is full UK blood line and has been used for the 2024 mating. Progeny as lambs are looking great.

Also 2024 we have used Egilshay 89/23 over mainly the UK Ewes and their daughters and Maple 23280/23 son of Boris from a UK ewe.

These 3 Rams have sired the majority of the Lambs born in 2024.

We are wanting to retain a few of the Texels, therefore, to be fair to purchasers our entire line will be offered for sale, some will be paired with the purchaser taking their choice and the other one retained by us.

#### Dorper

Dorper Stud was established in 2011 with the original purchase of 20 Ewes

In 2016 we imported Embryo’s from the Dell Stud in Australia resulting in Rams that were used to give an outcross from the NZ bred Dorpers.

In 2017 we purchased 2 ewes, also from the Dell Stud in AU they were flushed with Embryo’s Sired by an Amarula Ram which have had a big influence in the Stud both thru the Rams and Ewes.

In 2021 we purchased a Ram from the Amarula Stud, “Thumper” who has been used very successfully thru semen and also thru his sons.

Our entire line of Dorpers will be for sale, which will include Embryo’s and Semen.

#### Beltex

Our Beltex Stud has been built up using Stud Rams purchased from Beltex NZ and using the grading up system from the pick of our commercial Ewes in 2019, these were Texel and White Dorper Ewes.

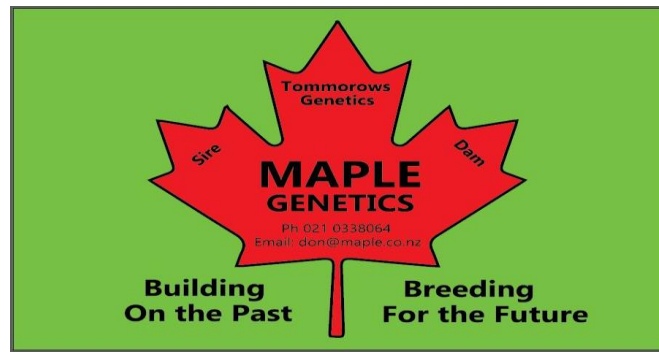
On offer will be Approx. eight 94% Females which are recognised as Pure Bred

**Enquiries and inspection welcome,**

**Call Don on 021 0338064 or**

**Simon Eddington (PGG) 027 5908612**





## Maple Genetics

Texel - Dorper - Beltex

**Sale Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025 to be held at the Canterbury Park Saleyards**

**Texel Stud** Flock # 330 SIL # 3095 - Approx. 120 Ewes and 15 Rams Selling



The matron of the Texel Flock Maple 684/16 just lambed Twins again this year, Her Bloodline features in 75% of our Texels

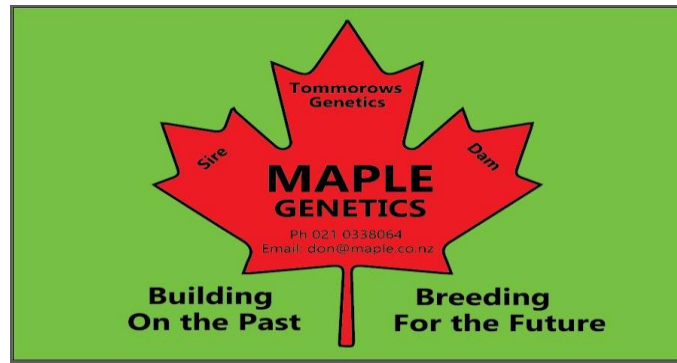


Our UK Texel Genetics will feature in the Sale

Self Shedding Pure Texels will be offered

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



## Maple Genetics

Texel - Dorper - Beltex

**Sale Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025 to be held at the Canterbury Park Saleyards**

### Dorper Stud

Flock # 149 SIL # 3091 Approx. 70 Ewes and 5 Rams mainly AU Genetics



Maple 20003/20 (ET) Supreme Champion All Breeds Ashburton Show 2023



Dam Maple 20009/20 (ET) and Son, Champion Ewe and Ram Courtenay Show 2023

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





## Maple Genetics

Texel - Dorper - Beltex

Sale Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025 to be held at the Canterbury Park Saleyards

**Beltex Stud** Flock # 4 and A4 SIL # 3093 Aprox Ewes 7 Pure Bred, 18 - 87% and 10 - 75%

Ram Lambs will also be offered



Maple 21083/21



Dam Maple 20087/20

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

## 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~~ Now \$140 (gst inclusive)

Women's Jersey ~~\$135.00~~ Now \$115 (gst inclusive)

Email form to NZSBA – [greg@nzsheep.co.nz](mailto: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





# WOOL IMPACT


## Wool for the win at Fieldays.


In June, Ross McIsaac of Wool Impact was at the Fieldays talking strong wool on the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) stand with other wool sector supporters. There were many visitors to the MPI stand who appreciated seeing wool being showcased and celebrated in so many new and innovative ways.

There were four wool concepts and products that made it through as finalists in the Fieldays® Innovation Awards, with two picking up awards.

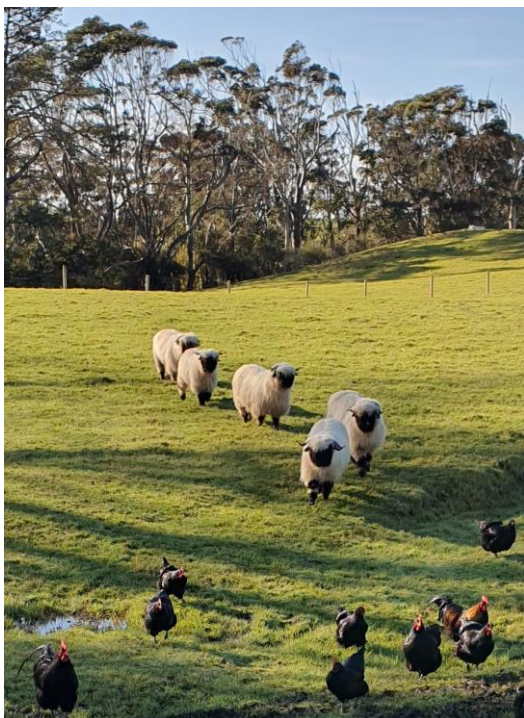
 **Fleecegrow:** winner of the Prototype Award. This is an inventive wool growing medium for horticulture and glasshouses showcasing wool's adaptability in promoting sustainable agricultural practice (winner of the Prototype Award).

 **WoolAid:** a hyperfine merino wool plaster that allows your wound to breathe, and the fabric of the plaster biodegrades in approximately 4 months (winner of the Growth and Scale award).

 **Iona College:** created a modular study unit made from wood and wool (finalist).

 **Floating Peaks:** protection for poplar and willow poles and garden products made completely out of strong wool (finalist).

Well done to the finalists and award winners, it was a wonderful demonstration of the range of applications for wool.



## FOR SALE, ETC

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

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

The **Closing Date** for next issue will be **November 20<sup>th</sup> for the December 2024 newsletter.**

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

**“FEATURE BREEDS” will be Beltex, East Friesian and Dorpers.**

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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