



SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER 2019

SHEEP & BEEF GOLDEN RUN CONTINUES

Greetings from us here at Glenview. Once again we find ourselves at that point in the season when we put our ewes on autopilot for lambing and I get to sit in a warm office and attempt to put a newsletter together. Normally this is not something that happens easily or quickly given my susceptibility to distraction and 'writers block', but with any luck the finished product will be in your hands before the 2019 Rugby World Cup has progressed too far!

Barb and I trust you and your stock have wintered reasonably well and we hope that by the time you are reading this your lambing/calving has reached a successful conclusion and your season is nicely set up. After the hammering many of you got during lambing last year we hope that this season delivers a payback so that some profit can finally be banked.

For a second successive season record prices for sheep meat have been paid and it is generally agreed that this is likely to be the new norm and should be sustainable. China continues to be the mainstay and due to their pork industry being decimated by African swine fever their appetite for our meat has grown further. The dire drought situation in Australia has also influenced the supply and demand in our favour.

It is wonderful to finally be paid well for what we produce as it not only allows us to pay the bills and have a more relaxed relationship with our bank managers but also provides funding for infrastructure upgrades and other farm investment that in many instances has been put on hold for decades. Exceptionally low interest rates have also provided opportunities and enhanced viability over the last couple of seasons which all adds up to the fact that this is a great time to be a sheep and beef farmer!

ETS & COMPLIANCE CONSPIRE TO 'RAIN ON FARMING PARADE'

In contrast, the constant barrage of attacks on the farming sector with regard to climate change, ETS, compliance around water quality and compliance in general is upsetting and worrying. And to a degree has already taken some of the gloss off the 'golden run' that we have been having.

The latest thing that cropped up here in the Wellington/Wairarapa region a couple of weeks ago was the release of the draft Regional Plan. The previous draft plan had been breathtaking enough regarding water quality and stock exclusion but the latest version has stopped most cocksies in their tracks. It states that now even SHEEP have to be excluded from any hill country gully or slight hollow that has the potential to carry even a trickle of water on an ongoing basis for a period during the winter and would therefore need to be double fenced.

The cost of that fencing has been roughly estimated to be in excess of \$1M per average hill country farm which would be prohibitive and in most instances banks would be unlikely to lend that amount of money especially for something that would be completely unproductive. The second fundamental reality is that in the majority of cases hill country gullies are unfenceable given the nature of the terrain. ie it couldn't be done.

But the craziest thing of all is that even if it could be done, excluding sheep from waterways in an extensively farmed hill country environment would not benefit water quality given that sheep (like cats) hate standing in water and therefore don't pollute.

You really do wonder how a handful of academics who clearly have no understanding of what they are dealing with can wield so much power and hold the rest of us (and the NZ economy) to ransom. Needless to say we all want clean water and a green environment and we are keen to progress that cause, but it is the lack of common sense that is so upsetting. I should point out that according to official monitoring the water quality in most Wairarapa rivers has actually been improving over the last decade or so.

Federated Farmers have reacted by saying farmers have been "thrown under the tractor" by these proposals and are planning to lodge an appeal. They are asking for a financial contribution of \$200 per farm to help fund the appeal and we would urge any Wairarapa landowner to contribute given the horrendous implications of this proposed legislation.

We appreciate that many, if not most of you will be grappling with similar issues in your own areas so we wish you luck with that! In the interim all we can do is hold our collective breath and hope that competence and common sense prevail in the end.

Anyway, on with the newsletter....

GLENVIEW ROMNEYS TURNS 30

We have now been breeding and selling Romney rams for 30 years and over that time the operation has steadily evolved and grown. At the outset we would like to acknowledge the support that we have had from a very loyal and solid client base. We still have a couple of clients who have been with us from the outset and a good number who have been coming in our gate for over half that time. Their flocks are now performing in a very similar way to our own. That generates a huge amount of satisfaction for us and them and spurs us on in the quest to do even better.



Ram hoggets waiting for some wind prior to being shorn (August).

As we have stated previously we are extremely grateful for your repeat business and we appreciate your feedback and enthusiasm, and genuinely regard it as a privilege to be able to play a part in your farming

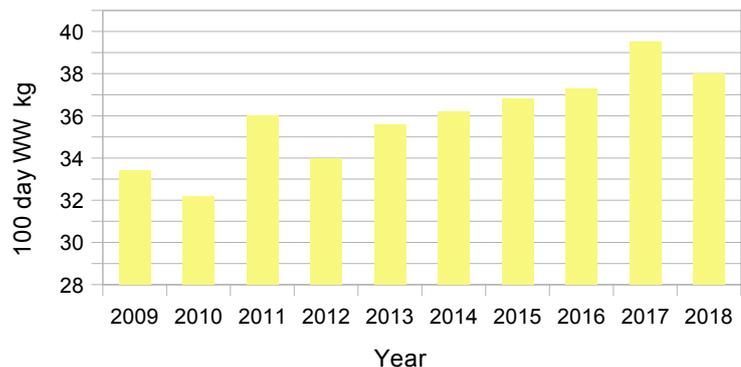
operations. Needless to say if there are any negatives that we ought to know about then don't hold back – client satisfaction is of paramount importance to us.

How have our Romneys evolved?

30 years is a decent stretch of time and it provides sufficient scope to compare our current Romneys with what we started with:

- Physically not too much has changed. We have always sought to breed wide, deep, wedge shaped sheep with heaps of meat in the back end that have a hardy constitution. We have always required our sheep to be open faced with good feet and pasterns and have a good jacket of medium style wool without faults. Over the last 3 decades we have simply stuck to that formula and applied it over and over again. Consequently the flock has become more and more uniform over the years.
- Ewes much more fertile – now consistently scanning around 200% (incl 2ths) irrespective of the season. This year the flock scanned 201% (studs and commercials combined). No pregnancy scanning was done 30 years ago but we suspect our ewes would have scanned around 160% back then.
- Ewes now wean up to 165% unshepherded in a good year whereas 130% would have been a reasonably good result back then. We have also noted over the years that the lambs are better and more even at docking time.
- Lamb weaning weights now sit around 38kg (adj. 100days) compared to say 28kg 30 years ago (see graph).
- Less drench as lambs (only 1 drench prior to autumn).
- Less dags – only 30% of ram hoggets required dagging (mostly minor) prior to shearing in August after being shorn as lambs in early February. All ewes were dag scored at crutching time (August) and close to 90% had an 'A' rating after also having been shorn in February.
- Significantly better performance from triplet scanned ewes. Even up until 10 years ago we continued to be disappointed and frustrated with the indifferent lambs that we ended up with at weaning that had been reared as triplets, despite having fed them preferentially. There was always the odd set that was impressive but more often we would end up with 1 good lamb (36kg), 1 average lamb (29kg) and 1 poor lamb (24kg). However over the last 10 years or so things have changed quite dramatically despite continuing to farm them in much the same way. In a normal season the triplet mobs now dock around 235% with most lambs reared as triplets weighing 33-40kg at weaning (adj. 100 days). Two seasons ago our triplets (reared as triplets) were actually heavier at weaning than our singles. We should point out that we did the singles particularly hard that season and the triplets had had the benefit of new pasture that had been sown on a block that we purchased the previous winter.
- Ewe hogget pregnancy scanning results have not moved much since we started mating hoggets about 20 years ago – normally 100-115%. All hoggets are mated to Romney sires and over the years less and less intervention has been required

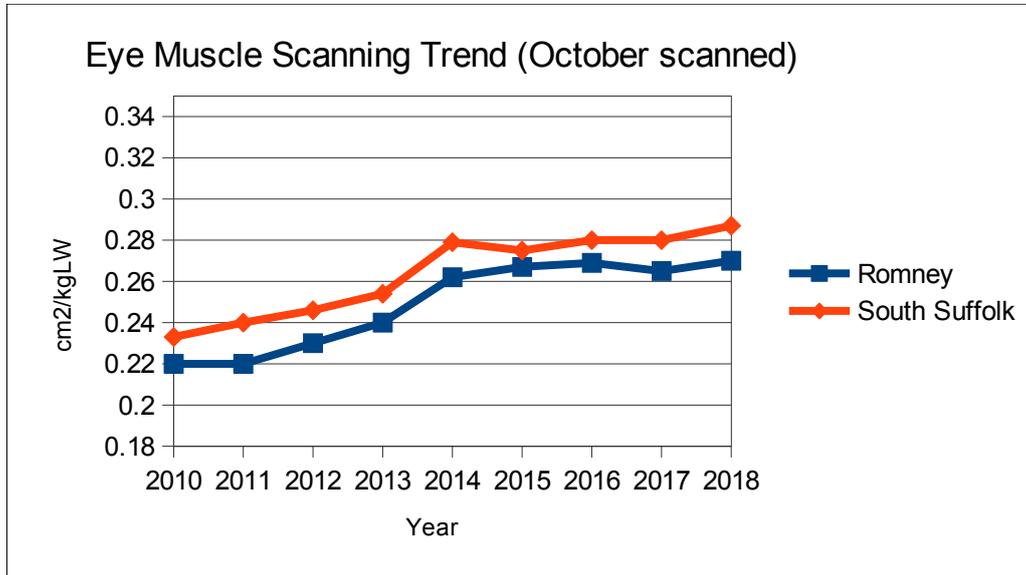
Romney Weaning Weights (100 days)



So far so good!

at lambing – only 2 required assistance last lambing. The standard of the hogget lambs at weaning has steadily improved over the years to the extent that a significant proportion are retained as flock replacements or sold as 2th rams the following season. Nonetheless the performance of our in lamb ewe hoggets is a work in progress, especially the twinning ewe hoggets.

- Our ram hoggets have been eye muscle scanned for over 20 years and over that period progress has been steady but not spectacular in terms of eye muscle area relative to live weight (see graph).



- Sheep have become more intelligent and free moving with a more enhanced survival instinct. This became evident about 15-20 years ago and for the most part has been a very positive feature although shorn 2th ewes and rams can be a bit challenging on the drafting gate! Clients have also noticed that lambs are a little more 'bouncy' in the docking pen!

Our breeding focus going forward

Our focus and emphasis will not change with regard to the multitude of things that we have worked on up to this point. Our intention is to keep compounding the good and reinforcing the gains we have made over the years in order to hopefully keep improving. Fertility is the only trait that we do not wish to push any further given that we feel we are now at the optimum point and do not want more triplets. There are however 3 areas that do need more emphasis from now on:

- ewe hogget conception and hogget lamb growth rates
- worm resistance/resilience
- facial eczema tolerance – we are currently using 3 sons of sires that have a moderate FE tolerant background but we are only at the start of a very long journey in that regard.

Over the years we have come to appreciate the value of the 'compounding effect' in a breeding programme and how that creates more and more consistency. We have also found that improvement tends to go in steps where you get lifts in performance and then go through a period of consolidation at that new level prior to getting another lift. ie genetic progress is not always visible year on year.

DNA PARENTAGE FOR BOTH ROMNEYS AND SOUTH SUFFOLKS

Following last year's decision to move the Romney flock over to a DNA based system for parentage we decided to 'go for broke' this winter and move the South Suffolks in the same direction. Despite incurring significantly more cost we have no regrets and are genuinely excited by the advantages and opportunities that a DNA based system offers.

In addition to it being more accurate and enabling the use of multiple sires together at mating time, it will also give us access to Zoetis' Sheep 5K and Sheep 50K genomics for the Romneys.



Ram hoggets April 2019

As we understand it this genomic technology allows sires to be evaluated in a significantly more detailed way using 5000 and 50000 gene markers respectively. This eliminates the need to wait until large numbers of progeny are born and develop in order to calculate breeding values for sires. With sheep this saves about 2 years, reduces the 'guesswork' and therefore speeds up the rate of genetic gain significantly.

In the winter we attended a local field day run by Zoetis to improve breeder's understanding of the concept which we found quite worthwhile. Unfortunately we have since forgotten a fair bit of what we were told and would probably benefit from a refresher course!

Nonetheless we did come away with some notes and one of the charts they showed us probably illustrates the value of Sheep 5K testing quite well (see chart).

The numbers in the left hand column rank the top 10 rams in the mob after 5K testing and clearly don't correspond with the rankings on the right which were done prior to 5K testing using SIL figures. Note that the NZMW average of the top 10 is significantly higher also.

ROMNEYS AND SOUTH SUFFOLKS ON SIL

Our involvement with Zoetis has given us the opportunity to move both flocks on to SIL relatively easily and seamlessly. Accordingly we will have SIL figures for all Romney rams and most South Suffolk rams this season. The SIL data will kick in for the balance of the South Suffolks next season.

The reason we have not previously been involved with SIL is that originally their system did not cover a number of the traits that we were recording. Accordingly we devised our own index system that all of you are now familiar with which incorporated all the traits that we were measuring and provided a lot of detail based around 'actual' data.

SIL has evolved over the years and now includes most of the things that we measure and will provide a slightly different perspective on the information that we have always provided. All the usual 'actual' figures will still be available so there will be more numbers than ever for us all to get our heads around.

NZMW Rank	New Ram team (post 5K testing)	Previous ram team
	1	185
	2	17
	3	48
	4	94
	5	1
	6	98
	7	44
	8	9
	9	11
	10	5
Average NZMW of top 10	3265.5	2742

Finally we would like to make the point that for as long as we have been in this business we, like you, have been keenly aware that an experienced 'eyeometer' is an invaluable tool and sometimes too many figures can confuse the picture.

SOUTH SUFFOLK UPDATE



This part of the operation has also continued to grow and our expectation is that next season we will lamb approx. 350 ewes plus around 150 hoggets. The flock has grown a lot over the last couple of seasons and it has been very gratifying to have had a larger surplus of replacement hoggets that has enabled us to keep lifting the standard while still slowly lifting the numbers. In recent years the flock has converted high pregnancy scanning results into high lambing percentages which has boosted numbers. This year the South Suffolk ewes again scanned impressively at 198% and are about to start lambing next week so we are hoping the weather cooperates in order to convert that potential into live lambs on the ground.

We purchased 2 additional South Suffolk sires last season (Braewood & Rocklea Studs) to further strengthen our existing bloodlines. Naturally we will be watching their progeny with interest as they develop over the coming months. One of the many things we strive for in our breeding programme is uniformity so we hope the progeny from these new sires are not only impressive but also fit the Glenview mould.

We were fortunate last season to have a very strong run on the South Suffolk rams. As a consequence our numbers ended up being a bit tight and we weren't able to give clients quite as much choice as we normally do. Thankfully the whole sale line was particularly even last year which enabled us to cover the job without compromising any quality.

Rest assured that this year we have more rams available for sale so there will be the usual amount of choice and number to pick from.

MATT'S MIKIMIKI OPERATION



Matt Olds has come through his first year of farming some of our Romney stud ewes (plus cattle) with 'flying colours' despite experiencing a challenging season. While the rest of us 'down country' were swamped with masses of rain over the summer (for a change) poor old Matt missed out. As the summer and autumn wore on his area got drier and drier despite, ironically, being in one of the so called 'summer safe' parts of the Wairarapa, 15 mins NW of Masterton.

Nonetheless his stock came through in good shape relative to the season. All of the figures that we quote re. ewe scanning, lambing % and weaning weight include the stock farmed by Matt up at Mikimiki. His lamb weaning weights were understandably lighter than ours at home given the season and the fact that his block has much less scope and 'wiggle room' in an adverse season.

In most seasons we envisage that Mikimiki will provide a tougher test than our home property which we see as a good thing given that it exposes our sheep to different challenges and different management.

ROMNEY RAM PRICE INCREASE

Sorry to end the newsletter with some 'not so good' news. After agonising over this for some time we have decided to 'grasp the nettle' and lift our Romney ram prices by \$200/head.

We needed to adjust our South Suffolk prices 2 years ago and the factors that applied then now apply to the Romneys:

(i) our costs have risen significantly.

(ii) because our top end price has not increased for some time most new clients ask to come in at the top end (whenever we have sufficient rams available) and so we are getting a bit of a 'log jam' of enquiry at that level.

(iii) our prices have become too low relative to our competitors.

As we have stated previously it has always been our intention to price our rams somewhat conservatively relative to our competitors and we believe that will still be the case. If anyone has any issues re ram pricing then please come back to us so we can quickly come to an arrangement that works for you.

RAM ORDER FORMS

We would appreciate it if you could get your ram order form back to us asap or by **Monday 7th October** at the latest please. Not only will that guarantee your ram pick but it will also enable us to quantify how many rams we have available for new clients. An approximate indication of your requirements is sufficient as numbers can be fine tuned at picking time if desired.

When we receive your ram order (hopefully?) we will assume you wish to continue picking at the same level as previously unless you advise us otherwise and we will schedule you in accordingly.

We (probably Barb) will ring you prior to the usual picking time and arrange a day and a time that suits you and we will go from there. As always we very much look forward to catching up then.

In the meantime enjoy the rugby, good luck and good farming!

Kind regards

Geoff