



# EWES NEWS



**Andrew Black and the family out for a ride in the Mahindra.**

## *The turns and twists in sheep and beef trading at Torach Farm*

Andrew and Megan Black at Duntroon have had a reasonable summer on their 720 Ha (160Ha irrigated) rolling hill country property. The trading climate has not been typical and forced a number of changes to his usual system.

“The farm exploded in January with grass and I traded more lambs than usual” Andrew said. “Paying \$2 - 2.30/kg for stores, lambs did well through the dry February and March, averaging around \$30 margin.”

Andrew saw early that he was not going to get the dairy cow wintering and R2 bulls would be in short supply, so has

doubled the number of winter lambs and will take through 400 more R1s. With Andrew’s winter fine wool lambs he’s budgeting on a \$5.20 spring schedule and \$25 of wool. “We should do a \$40 margin + wool for winter lambs”.

That’s about 22c/kgDM eaten. 4000 lambs will be wintered on fodder beet and baleage this year. Although Andrew claims to not know what the best thing is to do trading-wise, he has been very positive about his options. His flexibility and having quality feed available in multiple forms for all seasons, whether that’s fodder beet, rye-corn, lucerne, red clover-cockfoot, rape or plantain ensures stock are generally growing, healthy and turning a profit. It will be interesting following Andrew’s results with lamb finishing on fodder beet this winter.

## *Animal health the key to success with fine wool lambs*

**Dave Robertson BVSc, BSc**

The essence of successful fine wool lamb finishing is keeping the **worms out, the feet sound and the guts right.**

The gut microflora on fine wool lambs is more delicate than others. Smaller lambs (less than 23kg) are at much higher risk of scouring issues. There isn’t the scope to debate the virtues of enzyme drenches or explain this complex here, suffice to say avoiding the scrubbers will reduce wastage.



### **Fine Wool Lamb Parasite management**

The way merino lambs camp and graze together with an immature immune system, means they can be more prone to internal parasitism. A solid preventative drenching program from the start is vital. Woe betide

skipping or stretching out a drench in the autumn...

Many find a SeCo capsule or LA injection takes care of the autumn worm issues. An exit drench of Zolvix or Startect is a prudent measure to ensure any resistant worms are not carted through the winter.

**Clostridial vaccines** (2 shots) are a no brainer. These valuable animals (as pointed out above) are the highest risk because they’re on your property longer, have several feed

changes and are expected to grow fast in the spring after shearing.

### **Fine Wool Lamb Feet Soundness**

Having a plan and set up for managing feet and starting with inspecting feet when they first arrive is advised. You can’t take chances with footrot. If an infection is left to spread in mob it can really smash your margins and making running these animals a misery. With planning and good management fine wool hoggets can do very well on improved pastures. Because of the dry summer this year, there have been less footrot infected lambs at weaning, but the back end of autumn with dewy conditions footrot infection can take off in hoggets if not managed.

*For more specific details about animal health and feet management for successful fine wool finishing contact the Veterinary Centre.*



# Outlook on Beef - with Beef Stud Breeders

We asked Beef Stud breeders in our area a series of questions on the beef market, how they've handled the summer and how the Vet Centre fits in with their animal health needs.

Like animal health, genetics play a big part in the profitability of livestock. The Veterinary Centre's interest and involvement with seed stock businesses demonstrates our commitment to beef cattle performance and profitability.

We don't just PD cows, we work hard to focus commercial farmers on the areas that can create better in calf rates and improved feed conversion. We are excited by the beef cow research that we are compiling... more to come at our winter road shows.

**Colin, Scott and Nicky Gibson**  
**Horned & Polled Hereford Stud**  
Seadowns, Oamaru



All our bulls are grass fed, heavy boned, have good meat cover with good dark coats.

We enjoy long standing relationships with many of our clients. We have sold bulls to one client for eight years and he still has all of them. Many bulls go to South Island high country farms.

Scott says lot 2 looks to be one of the picks at this year's sale so keep an eye out for it.

Colin has recently returned from the world Hereford tour and I'm sure will have many yarns to spin with you.

**Fossil Creek Angus and Roseville Charolais Bull Sale**

- When - 2.00pm Mon 30th May 2016
- Where - Rosebery Road, Oamaru
- What's available - 25 x Hereford Bulls



**Drew & Carolyn Dundass**  
**Taiaroa Charolais**  
Paerau, Maniototo



It has been a tough season but the cattle have done well. Beef prices remain good and this is helping people see the value of using a terminal sire. As well as heavier weaners it allows for more careful selection of which cows to keep replacements from.

Last year charolais weaners sold well at the sales and we expect that to also be the case this year. All bulls have been service and semen tested by Veterinary Centre veterinarians.

The breeding focus is on good meaty animals with good conformation and temperament.

**Paerau Bull Sale**

- When - 2.00pm Mon 23rd May 2016
- Where - Paerau, Maniototo
- What's available - 30 x R2 Charolais Bulls



**Andy Denham**  
**Stoneburn Herefords**  
Stoneburn, Palmerston



Andy reports "It's been another testing spring, summer and autumn in East Otago.

Fortunately, beef is still in demand with beef, calves and most other cattle selling really well. I haven't heard that beef cow numbers have dropped at all so hopefully there is a demand for beef breeding bulls.

Our bulls have done really well considering the dry season and only been fed grass as always. They will be much the same as last year's line-up. I hope we experience a good winter and I wish all farmers a more prosperous time in the future."

**Stoneburn Hereford Bull Sale**

- When - 1.00pm Fri 27th May 2016
- Where - on farm 1473 Taieri Peak Road, Stoneburn, Palmerston.
- What's available - 26 x Hereford Bulls



**Lindsay Carruthers**  
**Netherton Angus**  
Ngapuna Road, Middlemarch



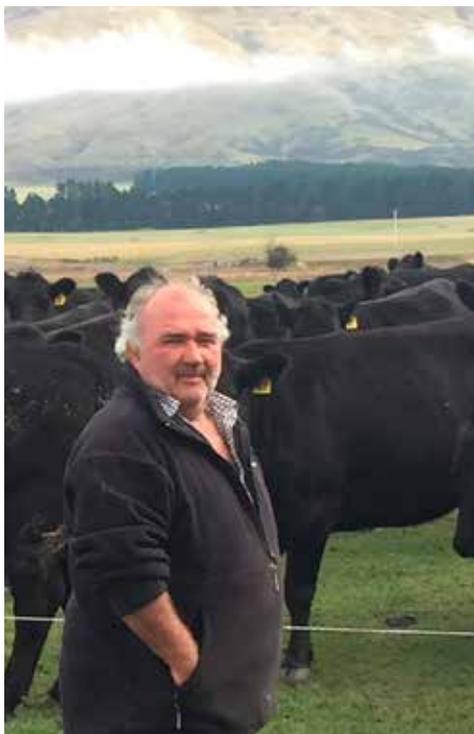
Lindsay has been breeding hill country Angus for 30 plus years and has a straight forward, commercial approach to breeding. "They've got to be able to walk, eat and get in calf. If they can't do those things well they're no good to me."

Lindsay does pay attention to EBVs, but is very much a look at the animal first kind of stockman. "I avoid extremes and try to breed a moderate frame, fertile cow that rears a decent calf".

Clients seem to appreciate Lindsay's frankness and honest approach to stud breeding.

### **Stoneburn Hereford Bull Sale**

- When - 2.00pm Tue 7th June 2016
- Where - Netherton, 307 Ngapuna Road, Middlemarch
- What's available - 25 x Angus Bulls



**Neil and Rose Sanderson**  
**Fossil Creek Angus and Roseville Charolais**  
Paradise Gully Road, Ngapara



Fossil Creek Angus and Roseville Charolais Bulls have a strong reputation for docility and the ability to move to most challenging environments. The herds have been selected for strength of maternal traits and structural soundness and being fit for purpose, so sire selection is a very measured and careful process.

The Angus breed is known for its strength as a maternal base. The traits supporting this must not be compromised in favour of fads, but with evolving market premiums being offered for meat quality and eating experiences the traits associated with these must be included but not at the expense of fertility.

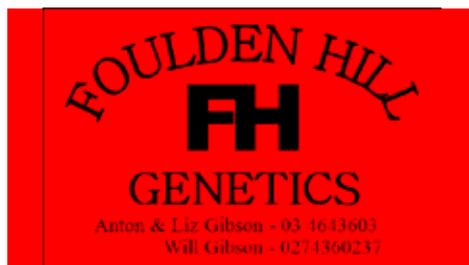
Fossil Creek Angus client feedback has seen many achieving targets for premium branded beef programmes.

### **Ngapara Bull Sale**

- When - 2.00pm Thu 16 June 2016
- Where - Craigevar, 100 Paradise Gully Road Ngapara, Oamaru.
- What's available - 50 x Angus, 15 x Charolais.



**Anton, Liz & William Gibson**  
**Foulden Hill Genetics**  
Ngapuna Road, Middlemarch



With parents Anton and Liz, William works under the banner of Foulden Hill Genetics. Based in Middlemarch the Gibson's offer Santa Gertrudis and Hereford lines.

Santa Gertrudis offer the greatest potential of heterosis (Hybrid Vigour), bloat tolerance, low birth with high growth rates and high yielding carcasses. The first cross females if retained offer exceptional milking and mothering ability.

With the Hereford we make good use of AI to incorporate consistent breeding sires and new sires showing promise in the industry. Consitution and mothering are all major strengths of the Hereford breed and the direction of the herd is to incorporate this with growth and carcass traits.

Our goal/focus is to have our clients purchasing bulls that will shift well and continue to help our clients improve beef production on their farms.

### **Middlemarch Hereford and Santa Gertrudis Bull Sale**

- When - viewing from 11am, sale time to be advised, Tue 7th June 2016
- Where - To be held in conjunction with NETHERTON Angus, 307 Ngapuna Road, Middlemarch
- What's available - 14 x bulls to be offered at auction with a mix of Registered Hereford and Registered Santa Gertrudis bulls



# Science & Research

Dave Robertson BVSc, BSc

## Capsule trial

A pre-tup capsule trial is underway at the Veterinary Centre. The aim is to investigate whether sustained worm control in North Otago hill country 2 tooth sheep over the Autumn - early Winter period may yield an ovulation and/or body condition advantage that produces an economic advantage. I am interested to compare this response to the traditional pre-lamb capsule.

This trial has been designed with a very specific question to answer. It will have large numbers to give statistical power and is data from our own environment which I think our clients will appreciate.

## Ram body weight and longevity study

This month Bridget, Angus and I are commencing stage 2 of the ram health and husbandry study. In this part of the project we are looking at how much weight and condition rams actually lose during mating. We will be looking at around 10 mobs of rams throughout our catchment, measuring pre and post tup body condition, along with any relevant health status comments. We will repeat the measurements in the following summer to see if they have rebounded, noting any rams that have died or are to be culled, and the reasons why. The ultimate goal of the project is to get a better handle on the factors that influence ram health and longevity. It is funded by beef and lamb genetics and is a Veterinary Centre initiative.

## *Hogget Mating Animal Health* - Michael Lilley BVSc



**The Greer's work with contractor Sam Pringle to administer pre-tup treatments prior to hogget mating.**

Robert and Anna Greer run 4000 Romdale ewes near Ranfurly. Unlike last year Robert and Anna have decided to mate the hoggets. A well thought out animal health plan is essential for getting hogget mating right. Hoggets are the most prone to abortions and parasitism and still need to grow out.

"We didn't want animal health issues to be a limiting factor in flock performance"

A drenching programme combined with Toxovax and Campyvac performance vaccines and Flexidine mineral supplementation were agreed on to cover the necessary bases and support optimum lambing percentages.

The other big factor in the Greer's decision was based around resources for administering the treatments. Traditionally they have been done up the race. The time and resource required was a major issue to resolve before giving the treatments the green light - "...at a busy time of the year it is difficult to spend days in the yards...".

The extra workload resulted in an approach to Sam Pringle of Central Otago Sheep Handling to assist. Using the conveyor resulted in less stress on staff and sheep and allowed all the required treatments to be administered correctly and efficiently.