



SEASONAL CHANGES

Well, another full-on year with what seems to have more challenges than ever. With Covid back in full control - not that it ever went away - we just got a little complacent on that one.

There are environmental pressures being thrown at us from all angles, and trees still been planted all over the place. You are almost forgiven for taking your mind off what we do best in the world, farm stock. I don't want to go on about the issues we face on farm as there is enough material thrown at you, but with terribly unthought over regulations trying to be pushed through at pace, it is no wonder the thought of planting trees on hill country has crossed many farmers minds. The economics are right in front of us, you are currently better off watching a tree grow rather than tending to stock on a vast area of our country. I struggle to get my head around companies buying their way out of dirty practices by planting a tree.

It's really heartening getting around clients and seeing the work that is been done to address our environmental issues. A great deal of planning has been put into

many of these properties, and farmers are proud of the work they are doing. We need to showcase this to the government and urban people. Let's keep making noise and show them we aren't going to take this lying down. Well done on the Groundswell movement.

Back on farm it's also been a reasonably challenging year. December and January were a dream to farm, with covers like I have never farmed before. Then the tap got turned off and back to reality again, average crops due to wet a November didn't help things. By the time we came around to mating things were very tight and the ewes didn't enjoy their home too much over the 17 days. We lost 4kgs on average, which wasn't ideal, (another reason for DNA mentioned later). Having a great deal of tag still on board from the growth earlier also didn't help. We mated our commercial ewes on crop, which was very successful. I strongly feel this

is the way forward in our very uncertain autumns that we are getting all too often. The ability to lock in lambs on board and the weight gains are a no brainer. The cost benefits are huge. We now find ourselves lambing on covers a lot shorter than I would like. And just spending the last seven days riding them, it's bloody dry. Point the bike wherever you want, it's scary the lack of mud about. On the positive side, it makes lamb tagging very easy.

While maybe a little challenging on farm, you can't help but only be positive on the current markets. Prices like we have never seen before, especially the likes of mutton. Lamb contracts going forward also point to some healthy returns for both the store guys and finishers, which is good for all. Beef also holds strong for both prime and manufacturing. Hey, even wool has doubled in price from 12 months ago! On a more serious note,



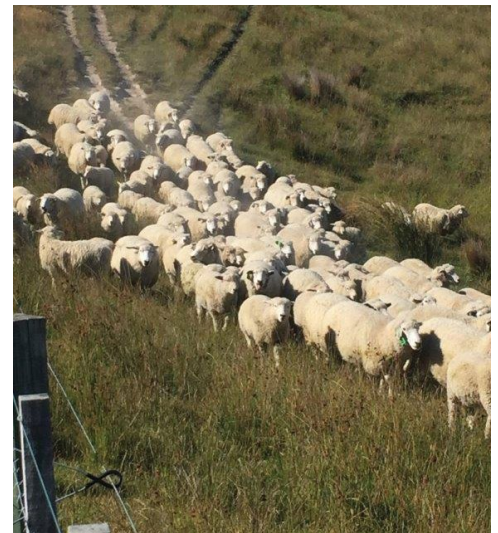
wool continues to be a bit like that relative you dread inviting for xmas. Great product, you wouldn't find a better fit for our clean green image that our current government wants so much to promote. A number of product development initiatives are well underway, from more competitive manufacturing of woollen carpets to compete with synthetic alternatives on price. I still don't feel that carpet alone is going to solve our strong wool problem. Some of the work that the Wool Research Organisation New Zealand is doing in deconstructing of wool to break it down into uses in other

products is very exciting. Imagine if we could break strong wool down into a disposable nappy?

Disposable nappies are a \$71 billion a year industry.

Disposable nappies take at least 500 years to decompose.

They say you need to hit rock bottom to then start the climb up, well we are well and truly there.



TERMINAL

This has been a large growth area for us, we continue to invest heavily in our terminal flock with the purchase of top outside genetics, along with the use of our own. I have found over the past 2-5 years many of our clients are growing their terminal flocks. A lot more emphasis has been put on culling their main breeding flock, with only superior ewes going to maternal rams, so culling of ewe lambs is at a minimum. This is giving them way more options come weaning. We get regular positive feedback on clients' kill sheets and it's

great to see the work we are doing is paying off. We have also worked hard on constitution and colouring in our crossbreeding.

It's great to have Georgie (Davey and Wendy's daughter) come home to the family farm. She has a real passion for the stud and all the technology associated with recording data. Georgie will be out and about with me over next few weeks, and she looks forward to meeting up with some of you.



Davey and daughter Georgie



FE AND PIQUET HILL

We have recently joined forces with Will Jackson of Piquet Hill and are working together on a breeding programme. Having looked around at many FE flocks, I was really impressed with the structure of Will's sheep. Will has been at the forefront of breeding for Facial eczema for many years. He shares very similar breeding objectives to us. We were both in agreement that to make faster genetic gains we needed to go at scale, and have a good base for culling, to get to our end goal faster.

We have set up a separate breeding flock, using ewes and elite rams from both our flocks. We are into our second year with the next crop of lambs hitting the ground lambing this year. We will have rams for sale this year from this breeding programme. Watch this space.



Will and Nicola



DNA

We have decided that it is time to head down the DNA track. This will take the pressure off single mating, as it is becoming very challenging with our dry autumns. Also, tagging at birth will be replaced. Finding staff to ride the hills is getting only getting harder. Other benefits will include the use of genomic data to go along with the intense phenotyping we are currently doing. This is another tool in our toolbox to speed up genetic progress.

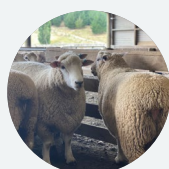
DNA testing underway in yards.



MR SHEEP BREEDS



ROMNEY Our base breed that we have focused on for over 40 years. Bred for the hills with low input. We have now not drenched a ewe since 2016.



MR CROSSBRED Based around our Romney with Texel for carcase, along with Coopworth and East Friesian for prolificacy and milking and growth.



MR ROMTEX Add the carcase attributes of the Texel, along with the maternal traits of our Romney.



MR SOUTH SUFFOLK Easy lambing, high yielding lambs that grow to big weights. Easy identification.



MR SUFFTEX Breeding since 2005, high survival, high yielding, and strong constitution with dark colouring for easy identification.

THE FUTURE

I have been thinking for some time of the future succession of the stud. I looked at possible equity possibilities with the right person getting involved, but wasn't until I was approached by Ben Morison that we talked about the idea of moving the stud to his place, which is based between Pongaroa and Weber.

Ben has been a client of mine for the past 10 years and his growth, along with his wife Vibeke, has been phenomenal. Rising from a stock manager's role 11 years ago to now owning 1655ha along with leasing a further 1300ha, of which half is effective. What makes this even more astonishing is they have done it with no financial backing other than a family guarantee. The property has very similar aspects to ICA, with dry summers and a lot of wind. The sheep certainly are not in for a free ride.

Ben very much shares my vision on sheep breeding. This move will be transitioned over the next 12 months, with our last ram sale at ICA this coming November. This move will allow me to spend more time on the Genetic and client liaison, along with working more closely in our other breeding partnerships. More importantly, I suppose, is finally finding more time to do the thing I love!

As I often tell myself, if you keep doing the same thing you will keep getting the same results. This is exciting times for Motu-nui and breeding even better sheep into the future.

Please don't hesitate to ring and catch up as I endeavour to get around and see as many as possible over next few weeks (Covid Pending of course!).

Above. Ewes coming in for Scanning at Ben Morrisons . Ben and Vibeke with children, Monty and Harvey out enjoying the evening hills.



Jason Le Grove

Director, Stud Operations
(06) 372-3841
(027) 326-7734
jason@motu-nuirams.co.nz

Motu-nui Terminal

Davey Moore
06 372 3848
waiorongo@xtra.co.nz