



mr Motu-nui Rams

Newsletter - September 2022



WELCOMING IN CHANGE

OUR VISION AND GOALS

Ben and I have set clear goals on where we are aiming with our breeding programme. Low input, high output is our vision. The structure is paramount, hardiness and the ability to hold condition. We continue with our no-drench policy and dagg scoring. Facial Eczema will be phased in across all our breeding stock over the next five years. Fertility and growth are still also at the forefront of culling criteria.

Sun kissed hills overlooking Weber.

It has been a while since we have seen an Autumn in the Wairarapa, like what 2022 has given us.

The weather was well received on the back of last year's very average spring and gave many the chance to put weight back on the long-suffering ewes. After the past couple of rubbish years, it was refreshing to almost farm in cruise control for a while. When you get conditions like we had, you also have to contend with all the bugs that come with it. Across the East Coast it has been a terrible year for fly, worms and scalds. The young stock also struggled with poor growth rates due to a lack of sunshine and soft feed. I would take those issues any day instead of wondering when the next rain was coming.

All that said, things have been hugely different both further north in the likes of Waikato and in the deep south, where

they experienced one of their driest periods on record. Highly fortunate to them that there were strong store markets and options to unload quickly as things tightened for them. We were extremely fortunate that a large part of the country had grass as work space has been a nightmare. It could have become an animal welfare issue if the east coast had been dry. We have serious challenges in getting people to work in all our meat processing plants. We could put all the blame on Covid, but generally, getting people to work is extremely hard. My view is as long as we have this current lot in power, we are breeding entitlement. Let's sit back and wait for a handout! Having travelled to Fiji recently, we were lucky enough to spend time in a local village. These guys have done it tough for the past

two years with little or no income from covid. They need the work to help rebuild the economy and infrastructure of these villages. It is a win-win for both sides to get them in and get them working. I know this is not the only area holding back productivity, but it would be an excellent place to start.

It has been a smooth stock transition from ICA to Bens at Weber. The last truck rolled out of ICA at the end of January and have adjusted well to their new home. Helped with a bucket load of rain the first week they arrived; it did not take long to get them to their optimum mating weight. All stock has moved well, as I knew they would.

2TH EWES FROM MOTU-NUI FE PROGRAM



FE PROGRAMME

Our FE programme is well on track, with numbers steadily growing. Our focus has been heavily on culling for type and constitution and steadily increasing the levels we are testing at. We will have a good amount of rams available this year tested at .5. Along with Romney FE, we have also gone down the same lines with a crossbred FE.

DECISION MAKING THROUGH SCIENCE

Management was made a lot easier come mating with the use of DNA as, for the first time, we had the luxury of mass mating instead of single mating. Indeed a damn sight easier than having to find shit loads of paddocks and mobs coming in and out of yards. We still had to change rams over at specific intervals to get the right numbers for progeny as we wanted from certain sires. Not only did it allow for better grazing management, but conception rates also proved better; with the ewes scanning over 200%, survival will also be greater as we no longer have to tag at birth. It comes at a cost, but the added benefits in productivity and genomic value will benefit our clients and us.



Scanning at Morrisons farm, Kai Tak



Dayanne Almeida from Zoetis helping with DNA collection of recorded ewes.

TRIPPING AROUND

I have enjoyed getting out and about catching up with clients; on-farm morale is high, with many having better than average scanning results; the winter has proved to be a real slog, though. The same issues still hang around, and it's not good to see farmer confidence at its lowest since 2009. Inflation and supply chain disruption fallout from Covid and Russia's invasion of Ukraine is part of it. Still, the continued concern over the pace and direction of government reform and regulation, not to mention staff shortages, are also contributing to uncertainty and gloom. Many have identified their top concerns as Climate change policy & ETS, regulation & compliance costs, input costs, debt, interest, and banks. We possibly need to take a leaf out of other countries such as the Netherlands and France before we get entirely sold up the creek!

IMPACTS OF INFLATION

It is never an easy decision to put our prices up, but for obvious reasons, we have decided to make a move. I have had discussions with other breeders, and it seems to be a consensus that we inevitably have to move at current prices and increased costs. Having attended several Bull sales and seen the countrywide bull sale reports, many have an appetite for spending good money on stud bulls. I know I have mentioned it before, but simple maths.

For example

5 SU Bull - \$10,000 over 50 cows = 46 Calves @ \$700 each = \$32,200 = \$6,440 per SU

5x Rams - \$7500 over 500 ewes = 700 lambs @120 each = \$84,000 = \$16,800 per SU

It makes rams cheap!!



Above. Team Motu-nui Left to Right - Jason Le Groves, Ben Morrison, Vibeke Morrison, Raphael Tobin, Kieran Tobin, .

TEAM MOTU-NUI

We thought this newsletter provided an excellent opportunity to introduce some of the team we have working here at Motu-nui.

Kieran Tobin has been with the business for the past 12 months moving from large station life in the South Island. Keirin is the block manager on the home block at Kai Tak.

Nadesha Dick (Keirans Partner) has been with the business for the past 12 months and comes from station work down south. Nadesha, up until recently, was a full-time shepherd general. Expecting their first child in December has now scaled back to part-time.

Raphael Tobin had recently joined the team after five years at Ngamatea Station. Raph is the block manager of Coast Road and the Mara.

Chris France has been with the business for three years as fencer general. Chris is a local Pongaroa resident.

Jason Le Grove is our stud co-ordinator, marketing and client liaison, and general hand when required and time allows.

Ben, business overseer and operations manager, is also very hands-on, working with Keiren and Raph.

Vebe is our admin superstar and juggles that with being mum to two growing boys.

FUNNIES WRAP-UP

A father entered his daughter's bedroom and saw a letter on the bed. With the worst premonition, he opened it with trembling hands and read...

Dear Mum and Dad,

It is with great regret and sorrow that I'm telling you that I've eloped with my new boyfriend. I've found real love, and he is so nice, especially with all his piercings, scars, tattoos, and his big motorcycle. But it's not only that, I'm pregnant, and Ahmed said that we will be very happy in his trailer in the woods. He wants to have many more children with me and that's one of my dreams. I've learned that marijuana doesn't hurt anyone and we'll be growing it for his friends and us. They're the ones providing us with all the cocaine and ecstasy we could ever want. In the meantime, we'll pray for science to find the AIDS cure, so Ahmed gets better. He deserves it. Don't worry about money. Ahmed has arranged for me to be in films that his friends Leroy and James make in their basement. Apparently I can earn \$100 a scene. I get a \$100 bonus if there are more than three men in the scene. Don't worry Mum. Now I'm 16 years old, I know how to take care of myself. Someday I'll visit you and Dad so that you can meet your grandchildren. Your loving daughter Aimee ps. Dad, it's not true. I'm watching TV at a neighbour's house. I just wanted to show you that there are worse things in life than the "All Blacks" being beaten by the South Africans, The Irish and Argentina!



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FIND US

Obviously we have a change of address for ram sales this year taking place at Kai-Tak, 10 minutes north of Pongaroa staying on Route 52 or 30 minutes from Dannevirke on the Weber Road. Will have it well signposted. We look forward to catching up with you come Mid November until then good luck with trying to get the docking done!