



Newsletter - September 2019

mr Motu-nui Rams



DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

I seriously think our beloved leaders have set up a raft of select communities and working groups just to challenge the farming sector. The negative impact of farming seems to be the hot topic everywhere you turn - it really feels like every paper you pick up has us in the headlines for the wrong reasons.

As if it's not hard enough to get the job done on farm, we are now changing our clothes after work and fighting the other challenges being thrown at us from all quarters. We need to get some strong voices around some of these issues and make a stand. We need to send a bit more than a tractor up the steps of parliament this time! It's going to take all of us to be heard.

On a more positive note, we've enjoyed one of our best seasons in memory here on the Wairarapa coast, with good moisture through summer and autumn, and a mild winter without too much mud. Meat prices continue their historic high levels. Despite some nervousness that half our sheepmeat is now heading to China, I think the signals out there are pretty good.

There are plenty of consumers out there wanting good protein and have the money to pay for it. Let's just keep up the good work and continue producing quality along with a good story.

Drone shot of drafting at the Waiteko yards, taken by Meg and Simon's son Matt. For more of Matt's impressive camera work, see the video on our website www.motu-nuirams.co.nz

With all the current pressures, it would be tempting for farmers to just throw in the towel and sell up. It's great to see in my travels quite the opposite, yes sometimes feeling a little aggrieved, but in the main farmers are embracing the change we need to make in all areas. We are learning to better manage our soils and pastures, as well as harness good genetics, to maximize stock performance.

Here at Motu-nui we are working to continually improve our genetic gain as much as we can to work with our environmental challenges. The 15 years of efficiency culling now also combined with rating for body condition score is giving us a much more consistent ewe to work with. I really feel that consistency is key in our climate.

We continue to invest in areas that we feel are going to give our clients best value moving forward. This year we have begun a programme to introduce FE resistance into the flock. Keep tuned for progress. We have also started adding some DNA testing to our toolbox, having carried out 50K testing on all our Romney sires.

As always, we welcome you to come see what we are up to here at Motu-nui Rams, and to discuss these and other developments. **Jason**

A husband and wife were driving down a country lane on their way to visit some friends. They came to a muddy patch in the road and the car became bogged. After a few minutes of trying to get the car out by themselves, they saw a young farmer coming down the lane, driving a tractor.

The farmer stopped when he saw the couple in trouble and offered to pull the car out of the mud for \$50. The husband accepted and minutes later the car was free. The farmer turned to the husband and said, "You know, you're the tenth car I've helped out of the mud today."

The husband looks around at the paddocks incredibly and asks the farmer, "When do you have time to farm your land? At night?"

"No," the young farmer replied seriously, "Night is when I put the water in the hole."



DRENCH RESISTANCE TESTING – GREAT NEWS!

In a year when a number of Wairarapa farmers discovered major drench resistance problems, we were delighted with the results of our 3-yearly faecal egg reduction testing, which showed 100% reduction in egg counts for all drenches except 2 single action families (Bz and Levamisole, and even Bz was still at 97% effective). Even at the tougher larval culture measure, we still had 100% effectiveness for

Abamectin-based singles, doubles and triples. Our vet practice said they were some of the best results they'd seen this season.

Getting good results like this is all about good management, made easier when you have good genetics! Yet more value we offer to our clients.



Terminal and crossbred sire rams at Ica yards.

SOUTHERN MUSTER 2019 SPRINGING INTO ACTION

Spring is just arriving and there is general excitement in the sheep sector that we have not seen in a very long time.

After a very positive 2018/19 kill season just behind us, the outlook for the coming season looks even more promising. Many of us have waited a lifetime to be in this position. Commentators would have us believe it could last for the foreseeable future, so we must take advantage of this by investing in good genetics and catching up with infrastructure and repairs that we have not been able to do in the past. It is great to see so much positivity in the sheep sector and also nice to be able to talk to bankers and accountants on a positive note.

The thing that does concern us and most farmers is our current political attitude towards the farming sector. We are most often forgotten and taken for granted. Agriculture is

NZ's no.2 export earner but we never get any credit for this. We are certainly loaded with more taxes or environmental laws than ever before. Carbon tax, water and land care taxes, environmental constraints and more expensive car pricing for diesel and petrol vehicles, to name a few.

There is a real urban-rural divide forming, and the government of the moment is sadly at the forefront of it all. We as farmers must stand together and oppose this current governmental focus, and if the opportunity arises please stand up and be counted with your rural counterparts or else our licence to farm will never be the same. Instead of being able to pocket the lift in sheep prices it is being eroded by government legislation.

Clients

We have continued our annual run of client visits and it is always exciting to see good farmers doing well with our genetics.

We had a Day One client Lindsay Carruthers from Middlemarch retire and have a very successful clearing sale. His ewes sold at a real premium and went to farmers all over Otago and Southland. His flock was an absolute credit to him and we will certainly miss his cheery face and good-hearted banter after 15 years with Motu-nui South. The team would



Peter Clulee scanning ram hoggot at Motu-nui South.

SOUTHERN OPEN DAY

We are hosting an Open Day - Friday November 8th – a chance for clients new and old to view the rams at the farm, so mark the date in your diary and come for a visit and some hospitality.

Home Front

Once again a busy 12 months but all things aligned for a great season.

A good lambing, great grass growing season and being paid well for our lambs made for our best season in memory. We sold more rams than ever, works lambs averaged 19.4kgs and we found a steady demand for ewe lambs from breeders going back into sheep.

Casey got married in our lovely garden to Luke Caldwell in February; a fantastic weekend and the weather played its part.

Casey once again coached the local senior A men's rugby team but unfortunately they lost the final 20-18 in an epic match. Motu-nui South also sponsored the Senior C men's team again and they won their final 45-3, so a big weekend all round. Marc is still in charge of Southland Country Rugby and you may have seen him recently featured on Heartland Rugby.

On the genetic front, we have decided to infuse some Beltex

genetics into our Dorset Down flock and the lambs being born look promising. We await the outcome with much enthusiasm.

We are just heading into lambing and the first week looks very promising so hopefully the weather will play ball for the duration. The rams have come out of the wool extremely well and we are very pleased with them.

We wish you all a good lambing and a good spring.

Looking forward to catching up with you all in November

Regards Bruce, Carolyn, Marc, Jolene, Casey and Luke

NEW FACE AT MOTU-NUI

Earlier this year we said farewell to Sam Clark, who has left to pursue other opportunities. Sam had been with us for 8 years, coming to us straight from Taratahi. We wish him all the best in his future. Says Jason: "I will miss him and his enormous work ethic - he will always be part of the family".

Replacing Sam we have Mark Taylor, who comes with great experience and who we were very lucky to secure only due to business sale. Having previously worked in the stud game, he is looking forward to being part of the genetic team.



Mark raring to go!

EVENTS AND ORGANISATIONS WE HAVE SUPPORTED OVER THE PAST YEAR INCLUDE:

- Lifeflight Trust
- Pet's Days at Gladstone and Whareama Schools
- Pahiatua Shears
- Pre-Shears Woolhandling Champs
- Puketoi Rugby Club
- Alfredton School
- Gladstone Rugby Club
- Homewood Claybird Shoot
- Pongaroa Golf Club
- Douglas Villa Skulls Soccer Team
- Te Wharau and Tinui Dog Trials
- Langdale Sports Club

EBVS AND INDEXES EXPLAINED.....

It's often asked when buying rams what the estimated Breeding Values (eBVs) and indexes mean, how they're made up, and what traits influence the overall makeup of the index. In this article we explain these concepts and how they are brought together in the New Zealand Maternal Worth (NZMW) index.

In a nutshell, estimated breeding values (eBVs) and indexes indicate the value of a ram (or ewe) in terms of what they are likely to pass on to their offspring.

Although each parent contributes half of the genetic merit of the progeny, more than 80% of your flock's merit is determined by the rams you bring in. This is because a ram has many more progeny each year than an individual ewe.

An eBV is an estimate of the breeding value of an animal as a parent for a characteristic or trait. The math used to calculate the eBV adjusts for known non-genetic effects and how heritable the trait is. eBVs are given in the units they are measured in, e.g. kg for weight, number of worm eggs in faeces. Generally, a more positive eBV is more favourable but there are some exceptions (e.g. less worm eggs are more favourable).

Indexes have been created with the commercial farmer in mind. They group selected eBVs together by valuing them in terms of economic return to the farmer. A more positive economic value is always more favourable.

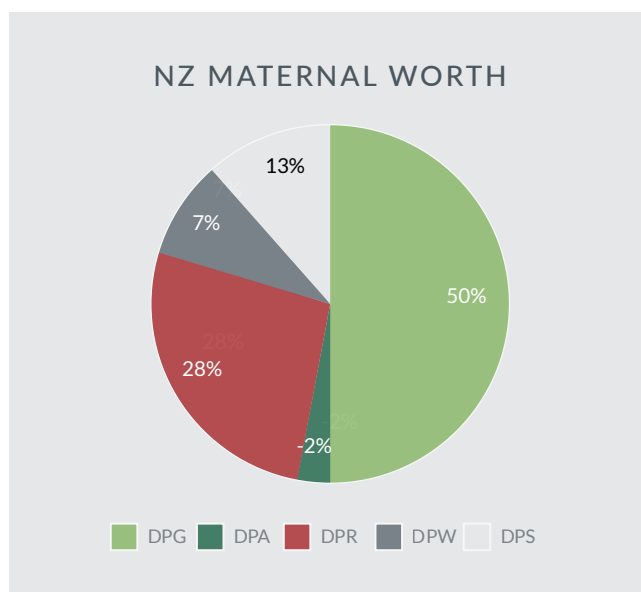
In 2016 the NZMW index replaced other indexes as the main go-to for all SIL-recorded Maternal flocks. This covers 5 core traits within the Dual Purpose (DP) breeds.

- Lamb Growth - DPG
- Reproduction - DPR
- Lamb Survival - DPS
- Wool Production - DPW
- Adult size - DPA

Each of these core traits is in turn made up of more specific eBVs:

DP LAMB GROWTH	DPG	A function of 3 BVs: pre-weaning growth and ewe milking ability (WWT & WWTm), and carcass weight (CW)
DP LAMB GROWTH + ADULT SIZE	DPG+A	As above plus DPA
DP LAMB SURVIVAL	DPS	A function of 2 BVs: lamb vigour (SUR) & ewe mothering ability (SURM)
DP REPRODUCTION	DPR	The economic value of more lambs per litter, per year, for 2-tooth and older ewes. Based on NLB BV
DP WOOL PRODUCTION	DPW	A function of fleece weight BVs (LFW, FW12, EFW).

The Graph below gives the weighting for each trait in the overall NZMW index.



Additional economically important traits/eBVs also measured at Motu-nui and are not explicitly included the NZMW are:

DP FACIAL ECZEMA TOLERANCE	DPX	A rating of an animal's ability to tolerate an FE challenge, based on the RamGuard system. The level of challenge can differ between farms so this index is most accurate for comparisons within farm and birth year. Based on GGT21 BV.
DP HOGGET LAMBING	DPH	A function of ewe lamb fertility (holding to the ram) and litter size as a 1-year old dam. Based on 2 BVs - HNLB, HFER
BODY CONDITION SCORE	BCS	Body condition score 1-5

A word of caution when using indexes to compare across flocks – the most valid comparisons can be made where there is a high degree of genetic relatedness. We believe we have not quite reached this level of relatedness nationally. Use the indexes as a useful tool, but back this up with good discussion with your ram breeder!

Hopefully this provides clarity over the sometimes-confusing barrage of facts and figures when it comes to ram selection.



CLIENT FILE: BEN MORRISON

Ben & Vibeke Morrison farm 16000 SU at Weber.

"I've been using Motu-nui Romneys and Sufftex's for the past 9 years. I find them to be a good compact sheep which bounce back from hard times very well. These sheep consistently perform for me, lambing between 140-150% off harder marginal country.

I also have fattened a large number of bought-in lambs along with my own, the Motu-nui bred lambs by far stand out with greater growth rates and vigour".

A married couple celebrating their 60th anniversary were asked the secret to a long marriage. The husband responded, "When we got married, we agreed that I would make all the major decisions, and my wife would make all the minor decisions." "In 60 years of marriage, we've never needed to make a major decision."



mr Motu-nui Rams

Jason Le Grove

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

Accounts/admin queries

191 Waimimi Road RD 12
Masterton 5872
(06) 372-3817
office@motu-nuirams.co.nz

Motu-nui Terminal

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

Motu-nui South

Bruce Roberston Marc Robertson
03 206 4894 03 206 47 96
duncraig@farmside.co.nz

For further information please contact one of our franchise managers. or visit our website www.motunuirams.co.nz