



PROVEN UNDER
PRESSURE!

AUTUMN 2010

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Marbling trial puts genetics to test

Ceri Lewis

Late last year Mount Linton jumped at the chance offered by AgResearch Senior Scientist Jason Archer to run an on-farm trial measuring the marbling potential of yearling heifers. The trial compares a mob of our heifers to a mob of Angus Kiwi cross heifers on both a grass only and a grass then grain finishing system. The key to the trial is to enhance the beef marbling potential of the heifers by growing them as fast as possible on an unrestricted diet of high quality pasture.

The trial has been running since December and will end in June. In early March half of each mob were randomly selected and sent to the Five Star Feedlot for grain finishing for the last 80–90 days.

I am convinced that it won't be long before we are being paid a substantial premium for well marbled beef off grass and we and our bull clients are going to be in a prime position to take advantage of this. The two bulls we have used most in our programme over the past ten years, Booroomooka Theo T30 and Merrick Rivers T149 are 2.3% and 2.2% respectively for their Intra Muscular Fat (IMF)EBV. More recently we used Te Mania Ambassador who's IMF EBV of 3.8% is the top of the breed in Australasia and this year Rennylea C511 with an IMF EBV of 3.5%.

This year's Ultrasound scanning of our 400 stud 15 month heifers was further evidence we are leading the charge on carcass quality. We had the only three heifers in the New Zealand Angus population that scanned 8.3% (raw data) for IMF, they were scanned by Bill Austin who scans the vast majority of the Angus herds in the country. The Ambassador daughter's were particularly impressive and while Ambassador was a carrier of both AM (curly calf) and NH (recessive gene causing still-born calf) we have several sons in our herd that have tested clear.



Some of the heifers in the marbling trial run by AgResearch on Motu. The heifers weighed 466kg in early April after putting on 41kg in three weeks.

From the GM

The season has been kind to us since the New Year and we have been able to drag our mean lamb kill date back a month as well as lift the carcass weight by a kilo on average. We are again going to mate all ewe hogget's over 42 kgs which looks like being about 8500, and hope we don't get 8 inches of snow the weekend they start lambing like last year. There is more feed about at this time of year than I have seen before and this is reflected in the condition of the breeding cows and ewes.

Our hill country development on the Station continues and this year's turnip's are looking like a 10–12 Tonne/ha crop. We have also put 150Ha in to crop on our Wether Hill block where we have been repairing fences and our new digger driver "Tomo" Anderson has built the flashiest laneway in Southland to link it with the Station.

The annual ewe fair on the Station attracted strong interest and 2800 ewes went under the hammer for an average of \$88. A top price of \$106 was paid by a local for a pen of 5year Texel/Romney ewes and all but one line stayed in Southland.

On the HR front, Jim and Linda Ferris have left us to manage Wisp Hill at Owaka after more than five years at Mount Linton, the last four managing our Motu block. They have both made a great contribution to Mount Linton and we thank them for their efforts and wish them well in their new venture. Mike Nichol has shifted over to the Motu from the Station where he was looking after the Wether Hill block and is really getting his teeth into it. Sean O'Boyle has joined us from Lincoln College with his nine dogs, and William Terry straight from Southland BHS, both these young guys have a great deal of potential and have fitted in very well.

Hamish and I are on the road again (South Island) this winter and look forward to catching up with as many of you as possible.

Ceri Lewis
Mount Linton General Manager

www.mountlinton.co.nz

Upcoming Events at Mount Linton

ANNUAL CATTLE AUCTION

WHEN: 6 May 2010
WHERE: Mount Linton Station
FOR SALE: 250 IC heifers, 200 IC annual draft cows
CONTACT: Ceri Lewis 0800 685 468

FIELDAYS

WHEN: 16–19 June 2010
Come and visit us at Mystery Creek in the Pavilion at site Pe5



A recent social club trip saw 22 staff and family members head down the Wairaurahiri River in a jet boat to stay in a lodge by the coast for hunting and fishing.



From 1 December 2009 to date, the Station received the yield payment for 84% of the 30,557 lambs supplied to Alliance between 14.5kg and 19.5kgs.



A hill country development paddock of Turnips for winter grazing this year.

Suftex, Texel, Maternal



Selecting for meat yield using CT scanning pays its way

A key selection trait in both the Maternal and Suftex flocks is meat yield and Sheep Genetics Manager Hamish Bielski explains how it is evaluated.

All ram lambs are weighed and eye muscle scanned (EMA) about 8–10 weeks after weaning, which is close enough to the average kill date on commercial farms. From the top 12–14% of ram lambs for growth and EMA, about 80 are selected for CT scanning at Invermay near Dunedin.

To maximise genetic progress we try to CT scan a line of between 3 and 8 rams from each sire. This gives the best possible genetic comparison between them, remembering that they have all been run in the same management mob and environment. This information not only gives us more accurate information on top performing sires, but on the females that will be selected.

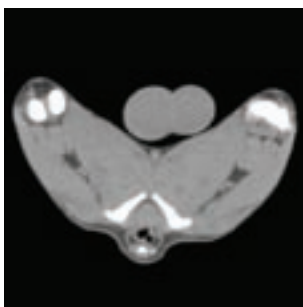
Once at the CT scanner, each individual carcass is evaluated. Two slices of the shoulder, loin and leg are scanned and the meat, fat and bone ratio are dissected using a computer program. The total weight (kg) of lean meat and fat are then calculated for each of the cuts relative to their value in the market. This process is called innervalue, innervision is when the total meat and fat area is calculated. It is Innervalue that allows us to increase lean meat in the more valuable cuts of lambs where the consumer pays the most money.

The following information on each ram is used to make further decisions on its value to our breeding programme.

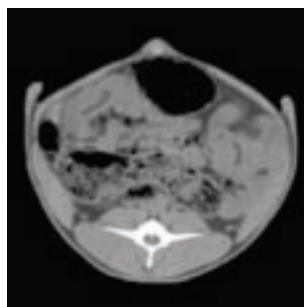
	SHOULDER LEAN Breeding Value (BV) x set \$ value at market	LOIN BV x set \$ value at market	LEG BV x set \$ value at market	FAT BV x set \$ value at market	Innervalue meat index (\$)
RAM A	1kg x \$2.40	.3kg x \$9.60	1.3kg x \$4.80	.5kg x -\$1.0	\$10.94
RAM B	.9kg x \$2.40	.5kg x \$9.60	1.5kg x \$4.80	.4kg x -\$1.0	\$13.76
RAM C	1.1kg x \$2.40	.2kg x \$9.60	1.1kg x \$4.80	.8kg x -\$1.0	\$9.04

Breeding values (an estimate of genes passed onto progeny) for lean meat and fat are expressed in kilograms above the base year 1995. So if in 1995 our average lean meat (carcassweight) was 15kg then as a breeding value this is given zero. This means if a sire has a BV for lean meat of +3kg, then his progeny have an average of 18kg CW.

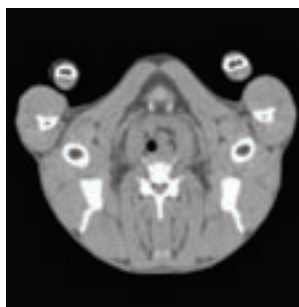
CT scanning allows us to dissect a carcass into more detail, giving us greater accuracy which helps us make better decisions, considerably increasing our genetic gains. This in turn leads our clients into making more money.



Hind leg



Loin



Shoulder

KEY TO CT SCANNING IMAGES ABOVE

	Meat		Bone		Fat
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A Mount Linton ram lamb being CT scanned with his shoulder image on computer screen.

Angus



BREEDING OBJECTIVE:

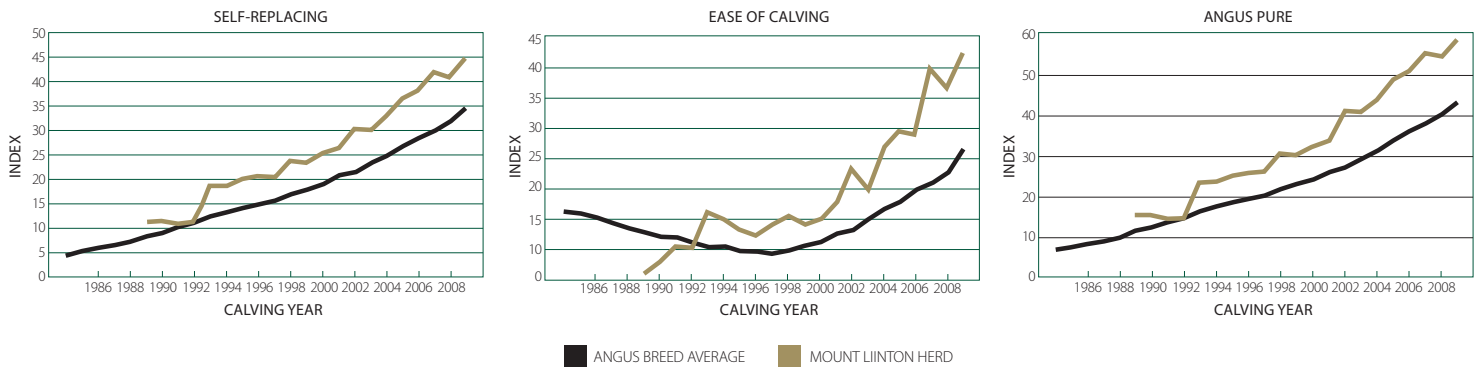
"To maximise returns to clients through high fertility, above average Self Replacing Index with increased carcase attributes."

Profitability Indexes drive Mount Linton Angus herd

Ceri Lewis

The primary driver of profitability in our herd is the Self Replacing Index (SRI). This Index favours production of a cow herd with excellent reproductive efficiency, rearing calves with moderate to high growth rates and high yielding carcasses. Drivers of the SRI in order of economic importance are direct and maternal calving ease, growth and meat yield, cow survival, finishing ability, fertility and cow efficiency (Mature Cow Weight). We also place considerable importance on the Calving Ease Index (CEI), this ranks bulls on their ability to generate profit in dollars per cow mated when crossed with dairy females, but is also a good indicator of suitability for use over beef heifers. Calving ease is the most important profit driver in this index but growth and to a lesser extent meat yield also contributes. The other profit index available is the Angus Pure Index (API). This index is similar to the SRI but highlights animals with higher marbling and progeny turn-off at about 16–17 months of age, which is exactly what the Mount Linton programme is focused on. Our latest genetic trend graphs for SRI, CEI and API are included below for your information.

2010 AUSTRALASIAN ANGUS MARCH GROUP BREEDPLAN: MOUNT LINTON AND BREED GENETIC TREND COMPARISON



Misconceptions of breeding program put right

Of the 140 plus yearling bulls we sold in the spring, only two were above the average Australasian Angus Group Breedplan EBV for birth weight. This is an extraordinary result and may reveal a misconception in the industry that the Mount Linton Angus herd is a heifer mating specialist. Industry research conducted with the help of our main genetic partners showed that there may be some misconceptions about our breeding program.

The first as already mentioned is that Mt Linton is a heifer mating specialist. While this is undoubtedly the case, it should be pointed out that many of the bulls we breed are curve benders in that they are low birth weight yet above average for growth. This makes them suitable for any self replacing programme, whether heifers or cows. For instance we used a bull in our yearling heifer AI programme that had an EBV of 3.4kg for birth at the time we purchased the semen, by the time the calves were due to be born the bull's birth weight EBV had jumped to 5.5kg (his accuracies had increased dramatically as he had since been heavily used). Despite this all the calves were born unassisted which was no surprise considering his Calving Ease Index is \$55 (breed average is \$21). We have many bulls in our catalogue that are above breed average for birth weight yet are double the breed average for calving ease because birth weight is not the only factor in the equation.

The other misconception is that because we sell a large number of yearling bulls, the best genetic bulls have all been picked through as yearlings. This is, again, not the case, we have always sold a number of eighteen month bulls which were not for sale as yearlings, and in some circumstances take these bulls through the second winter for a spring delivery. Next year, to assist our clients in making better decisions, we will be producing a separate catalogue for the eighteen month bulls.

R2 bulls on sale now



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www.mountlinton.co.nz

Office

T: (03) 225 4838
F: (03) 225 4843
E: office@mountlinton.co.nz



Ceri Lewis

GM / Cattle Genetics Manager

T: 0800 685 468
A/H: 03 225 4687
E: clewis@mountlinton.co.nz



Hamish Bielski

Sheep Genetics Manager

T: 03 225 4689
M: 021 779 485
E: texels@mountlinton.co.nz