MOUNT LINTON GENETICS

PROVEN UNDER PRESSURE!

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SPRING 2020

From the GM

I wrote the Autumn newsletter as we headed into level 4 lockdown, we had quite a big bubble on Mount Linton with 18 full time staff and our families. One of the more surreal experiences I had was driving to Lake Pukaki (which I was able to do with a permit as an Essential Services Industry) to wean calves on a Station that had been share-farming cows with us. It's a four-hour drive and I saw three other vehicles, it felt like Armageddon!

We had bought several thousand store lambs during the summer and found ourselves with 18,000 lambs on board heading into lockdown and with it the social distancing regime introduced at the meat processors. It had the potential to turn a bit pear shaped but we chipped away and got there. A very kind autumn and some great people on the Station was a huge help.

It has been a kind winter other than four days in July when we had five inches of rain. Plenty of minus 5-degree frosts to follow soon sucked the moisture out of the ground and as I write at the end of August the last of our crop paddocks look like a Central Otago scene with dust rising as the ewe hogget's bounce around.

HIGH IMF SHEEP UPDATE

We have been very pleased with how our Aussie high marbling sheep have come through their first season and have been particularly impressed with their structure, we feel we haven't lost anything and gained a great deal.

Both the Maternals and Terminals were ultrasound scanned for IMF at about 40kgs liveweight which is when we would usually kill them, and ranked from 1-3, 3 being the best. We were pleasantly surprised at how many 3's we had particularly in the Maternals. We think this is because we have had more of an emphasis on fat in our maternal sheep programme because we need it in our climate and so our ewes will have IMF built in due to its genetic relationship with subcutaneous fat. We realised from the start from our experience with the cattle that if you want to push the go button hard on marbling you make so much more progress when you infuse it through your maternal sheep as well as the terminals.

A number of the ram lambs from each of the four high marbling sire groups were also CT scanned at Invermay and an IMF ranking given. It is early days in terms of the technology because as an industry we haven't been breeding or looking for IMF before so there are very few phenotypes to measure but you have to start somewhere and draw a line in the sand.

We ended up with 50 cull lambs of both sexes which have recently been killed and the carcasses are currently being analysed by Agresearch including chemical extraction of the IMF. Once we have these results we will be able to compare the carcass data with the ultrasound scan and hopefully get a correlation.

We have mated 7,000 Station ewes to the high IMF ram lambs, about half to the Hampy-Suftex and the rest to the Maternals and are working on a market for these lambs as we speak.

At the Sheep Genetic Unit we have mated half IMF ram hogget's over half IMF ewe hogget's as the two rams we used in both breeds were unrelated, this will give us a three-quarter and further boost the marbling. Because we have access to the very best rams at Kinross and the genetic progress that Tom is making with marbling, we are going to be right up to speed in no time.

A CHANGING WORLD

Like it or not the world is changing, we are being asked questions by the people that consume our food and fibre about how it is produced and what impact it has had on the environment and whether the animals have been treated ethically. I believe in our part of the country where we grow very little grass over the winter months and rely on fodder crops to get our stock through, the recent environmental regulations will have a significant impact on our traditional farming practices.

We will need to reduce our stock numbers to accommodate the new regulations and we will have to add value to the stock we do have to survive.

NZ lamb is a good product but it is still a commodity. High marbling lamb, like beef is a completely different gig and I know that from experience having eaten it on my annual visits to Kinross, and discerning consumers will be willing to pay for it. Tom Bull from whom we source our high IMF sheep genetics and who spoke at our last Fielday at the Station in 2016, sells his prime lambs for $450/head. He has a high marbling niche product, has developed a brand and doesn't have any gimmicks about what you have to feed them, you just have to feed them.

I'm picking this will take off on our side of the ditch as well and we will see significant premiums for lamb that can be differentiated for their marbling and we plan to be in the box seat when this happens, why wouldn't you when there doesn't seem to be any downside?

We will have a limited number of Maternal and Terminal high IMF rams available in January, please contact either Martha or myself if you need any more information on these rams or would like to come and have a look at them.

Ceri Lewis
Mount Linton General Manager

Angus

BREEDING OBJECTIVE:

"To breed fertile, thick, moderate framed cattle that lower the cost of production and produce a high value niche product"

Mount Linton Genetics paying dividends *Ceri Lewis*

John, Stephanie and Adam Stevenson farm the Burgan Run in Middlemarch and have been using Mount Linton Bulls for many years. They killed a line of steers through the Alliance high marbling Beef Hand Picked Programme recently and achieved a 100% hit rate. John was delighted with the result and said the premiums were between 80 cents and $1/kg above the schedule for the entire line.

Cameron and Robert Grant farm several properties around Otapiri-Mandeville area in Southland and run some Hereford and some Angus cows and buy Bulls from several Angus breeders including Mount Linton. The boys cut their teeth at Mount Linton as young fellas and have gone home and vastly increased the size of their business.

A few years ago, they decided to use only Mount Linton genetics over their cows on their Otapiri farm and have been killing their steers through the Handpicked programme. The steers from the Otapiri farm have been killing at around 90% hit rate compared to around 70% on their other properties. In a recent line of 20 steers there were 8 that were marble score 4 or better.

At Mount Linton our last unit of 45 steers achieved a 93% hit rate on the SFF Beef EQ programme and 2 of the 45 were thrown out of EQ because they had a marble score of 9!

We have started sorting through a few Yearling Bulls and they have come through the winter in great shape. The phenotype gets better every year as do the numbers. They will be carcass scanned in mid-September, they are i50K Genomically tested and will be semen morphology and motility tested in early October. We hope to have the catalogue out in early October and start selling in early November and I will be in touch with everyone in due course and look forward to catching up with all who are able to get here in November.

RENNYLEA M763

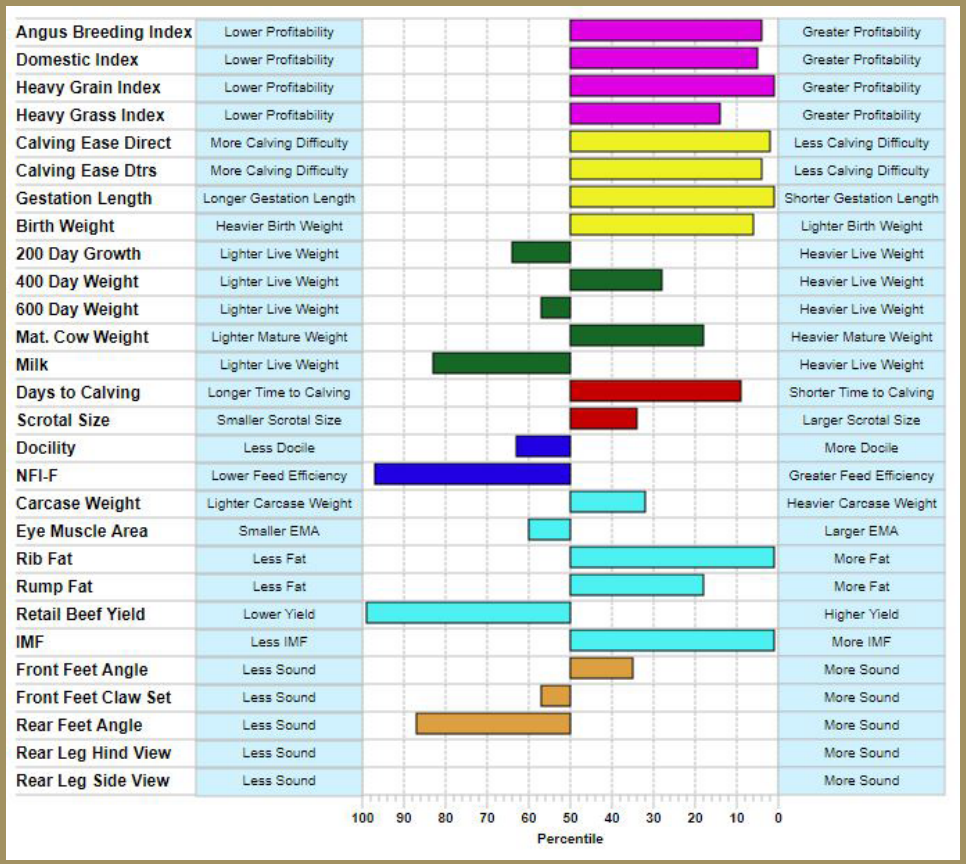
Rennylea M763 is a Matauri Reality son that we will be using in our AI programme this year. He ticks a lot of boxes for us. He is a very moderate frame score Bull and the higher Mature Cow Weight comes from his thickness rather than frame score so doesn't worry me at all. Check out his IMF EBV.

Mid August 2020 TransTasman Angus Cattle Evaluation

	Calving Ease				Growth					Fertility		Temp.	Feed Efficiency
	Calving Ease Dir	Calving Ease Dtrs	Gestation Length	Birth Weight	200 Day Growth	400 Day Weight	600 Day Weight	Mat Cow Weight	Milk	Days to Calving	Scrotal Size	Docility	NFI-F
EBV	+11.9	+9.0	-10.5	+1.7	+45	+92	+110	+116	+13	-7.5	+2.2	+2	+0.73
Acc	73%	64%	92%	92%	86%	85%	85%	80%	71%	58%	85%	83%	65%
Perc	2	4	1	6	64	28	57	18	83	9	34	63	97
Prog	38	0	19	50	37	20	10	0	0	0	13	37	0

	Carcase						Structural					Selection Index			
	Carcase Weight	Eye Muscle Area	Rib Fat	Rump Fat	Retail Beef Yield	IMF	Front Feet Angle	Front Feet Claw Set	Rear Feet Angle	Rear Leg Hind View	Rear Leg Side View	Angus Breeding Index	Domestic Index	Heavy Grain Index	Heavy Grass Index
EBV	+69	+5.1	+3.4	+0.8	-2.0	+5.4	+6	+0	-10	-	-	$151	$129	$192	$130
Acc	76%	75%	77%	76%	74%	73%	40%	42%	34%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Perc	32	60	1	18	99	1	35	57	87	-	-	4	5	1	14
Prog	0	20/0	20/0	20/0	0	20/0	7	7	7	7	7	-	-	-	-

Traits Observed: GL,BWT,200WT,400WT,600WT,SC,Scan(EMA,Rib,Rump,IMF),DOC,Genomics
Statistics: Number of Herds: **1**, Prog Analysed: **50**, Genomic Prog: **25**



Suftex and Mainstay

Gold Status Rams *Martha Broughton*

Spring is finally here, after a reasonably mild winter although it took a few weeks to finally get all my ewes shorn with a series of heavy frosts and rain it was a real battle trying to get the girls dry. It did feel great getting a bit of freedom out of lockdown, but we are now all heading into our yearly lambing lockdown, so no need to worry about most sheep farmers Dr Bloomfield we won't be going anywhere for a couple months.

Mount Linton Genetics has been rewarded for our 15 years of faecal egg testing of our lambs with achieving the WormFEC Gold status. The criteria for qualifying our maternal flock (2749) was over 8 years of testing, which is definitely not the most pleasant trait I or previous managers have had to record. At least 30% of all lambs weaned and/or 25 lambs per sire used need tested every year. The number of lambs weaned in 2020 was 702 and 496 of these were in the top 50% for DPF. The flock needs an average flock DPF above the 50th percentile, with an accuracy of at least 40%, our flocks average DPF is 191 which is in the top 35%. We also need to be genetically connected for WormFEC to other flocks within New Zealand.

The WormFEC Gold group aims to educate regarding sustainable drench management and encourage more breeders to begin recording the WormFEC trait. Drench resistance is a growing problem so finding new and better ways to manage parasites is critical. Globally, internal parasites are becoming increasingly resistant to drench actives and new drench actives are very costly to create so no new drench actives are on the horizon. On top of this consumers are demanding meat that has had less exposure to chemicals. Thus, breeding for parasite resistance is a logical response to this as it is a heritable trait, (~0.3, which is similar to the heritability of wool traits), so significant genetic progress can be made from selecting for parasite resistance. Reducing egg output is important: less eggs=less larvae on pasture. Less larvae on the pasture results in less parasite challenge and less drenching required. An example of the breeding opportunity of using a ram bred for resistance:

Average egg output of a resistance bred sire; 200epg

x

Average egg output Dam; 800epg

=

Average output lambs; 500epg

Future progeny will have a lower average FEC output (500epg), the genetic influence of the sire reduced the egg output by 300epg compared to the dam.

Individual rams can qualify for different levels of the gold status, 291 of our rams have qualified for stars, 38 of these achieved a five-star status, this status means the animal has a DPF over the 10th percentile and NZMW over the 50th percentile. In the latest NZGE run Mount Linton has 3 rams in the top 100 for FEC, 1915/17 has a DPF of 817 and is ranked 20th. 3459/16 has a DPF of 646 and is ranked 56th and 1140/17 has achieved a DPF of 560 and is ranked 86th.

Mount Linton has also been focusing on other health traits for many years. Body condition score and Dagg score have been recorded for 13 years. 7 Mount Linton sires are in the top 100 rams for body condition score in NZ. 3277/16 is our best sire with a DPBC 1059 and is ranked 5th. The BCS technique is a management tool for producers to lift animal performance; when feed demand is high or animals nutrient supply is limiting sheep will utilise their body reserves by mobilising their fat reserves, so by measuring the subcutaneous fat content along the animals backbone we can estimate the ability of that animal to survive under pressure.

The Duncraigen farm, located near Manapouri, which is owned by PAMU is having a field day on the 2nd of December to showcase the South Island Genetic Calibration flock, which is where we have been doing our meat-eating quality trial for the last few years, I will be there to answer any questions regarding Mount Linton Genetics' involvement.

Our aim is to produce high value well marbled lambs that survive, grow and yield. *@marbledmountlinton*

I hope everyone has had a reasonably smooth winter and are getting excited about getting those lambs on the ground. I'll be getting in contact with everyone from late November about ram orders for January.

EWE HOGGETS ENJOYING THE SWEDES WHEN THE SUN WAS OUT

MATING AUTUMN COLOURS

RAINBOW RAM LAMBS AFTER MATING AT THE STATION

RAM LAMBS BEING SORTED IN FEBRUARY

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Mount Linton Dog Trial

Friday 23rd April 2021
Saturday 24th April 2021
Held at Rock Hut, signposted from the Station

Mount Linton Station
Ohai, R.D.1 Otautau,
Southland, New Zealand

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

Ceri Lewis
GM / Cattle Genetics Manager
T: 0800 685 468
E: clewis@mountlinton.co.nz

Martha Broughton
Sheep Genetics Manager
M: 021 779 485
E: texels@mountlinton.co.nz

www.mountlinton.co.nz