



**PROVEN UNDER
PRESSURE!**

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SPRING 2016

What Winter?

Ceri Lewis



"The new double decker"

Other than two weeks in July when we had a couple of decent snow falls, our winter was a non event this year and probably just as well given the season leading up to it. We consistently grow 11-12 T dry matter over the year and last season we grew 8. We threw a fair bit of Nitrogen at the pastures to try and stimulate some growth but it just didn't happen. I certainly underestimated the effect of the Clover root Weevil, the absence of clover in the pasture had a significant impact on animal performance but the most significant effect was the lack of N in the system. We feel we are really due a break and hope the clover will be back in the spring.

Our grass growth in April and May was like late spring and we grew double what we usually do in June and it was the first time since I can remember that we didn't have a significant snow event while the ram was out (which we have found to be a great contraceptive!) As a result of that and a real focus on monitoring and feeding the 2th's particularly the bottom 20%; we have achieved our best scanning result and are in great shape to carry this through to a great lambing.

We have traditionally lambd our 2ths on the Down country partially to be able to keep an eye on them and partially to be able to priority feed them on the higher ME pastures. Now that we have better quality pastures and higher

fertility on our hill country through our hill development programme we decided to do some experimenting last spring and lambd some 2ths on the hill country and left them to it; we also had a few paddocks on the Downs that we left un shepherded and did the usual once a day look round with the rest. When we compared the tailing tallies there was very little difference between all three which has given us the confidence to lamb the 2ths on the hill which will give us the opportunity to lamb all the terminal ewes on the Downs. We have scanned all the first cycle ewes out and plan on weaning the lambs at 70 days onto the red clover and getting as many as we can away before Christmas.

The dry mild weather this winter has given us the opportunity to really push the cattle along on the Fodder Beet. Having several Block Manager's looking after different mobs creates some healthy competition and we had one mob that achieved 2.05kgs/day during one period, then when the snow came it dropped back to 600gms/day. We found the cattle were eating a lot more during the snow for a third of the liveweight gain which obviously has a significant impact on the profitability of the crop. As at the end of August we have killed 750 cattle off the Fodder Beet with about 300 to go and have just finished transitioning our yearling steers.

From the GM

It's late August and we are having a magic spell of weather, it's a great time of year as lambing and calving are about to start and it's always good to see the break fencing gear being put away for another year. The team have just been away for a weekend's activities in Queenstown with our social club, some activities more vigorous than others!

We are planning on having a Fieldday at Mount Linton on the 24th February next year, the last time we had a Fieldday was in 2006 and much has happened since then so we thought it was time to have another one. We will be in touch nearer the time with some more details and an invitation. We had over 600 people in 2006 and are hoping for a similar turnout this time.

The national sheep flock has again decreased, this year by 3% but the beef herd has increased by 2.8% nationally, no doubt a reflection of returns in both sectors. It is very hard to budget with any accuracy with world events that we have no control over and it looks like lamb returns might be challenging again this year.

We have another 100ha going into Red Clover this year and if all goes to plan we will be looking to trade some lambs over the summer. We have found in the past that buying lambs from outside our genetic base has been a frustrating exercise as they constantly need drenching and don't have the constitution or yield potential of our own sheep. If there are any of our clients in the Southern South Island with store lambs for sale we would love to hear from you.

Ceri

Ceri Lewis
Mount Linton General Manager

www.mountlinton.co.nz

Suftex, Texel, Mainstay



Big Emphasis on getting Target Weights

Dave Warburton

The Station has had a great year with scanning, with a big emphasis on getting 2ths to target weights to lift scanning performance.

The 2ths this year did 166% (without triplets) which was an 11% increase on last year.

The MA ewes scanned 177% (without triplets), which is a 3% increase on last year.

A great effort and a reminder of what focus and measurement can achieve.

My scanning performance was also very satisfactory, 203% in MA ewes, 185 % in 2ths and 127% in hogget's (all scanned for triplets). Hogget's were particularly pleasing in a 25 day mating period and an average weight of 40kg going to the ram.

Now the tricky part that last month of feeding prior to lambing is critical to setting up vigorous lambs at birth with plenty of brown fat and good colostrum and milk production – all driven by ewe condition.

Facial Eczema Ravages the North Island

This year was not the year that the North Island appreciated the Texel! Facial Eczema ravaged the North Island including many regions not previously known for the disease. The Texel being particularly sensitive took a hammering, including our Suftex rams. The lambs were fine, majority are slaughtered before the danger period begins, but the rams were a risk over mating. There is little known about FE and ram fertility and libido. One can assume it is bad, but we don't know when the effects of the disease start causing a problem, it may be as early as 20,000 spores/gram or up to 100,000 spores/gram. Being a Vet this is of interest to me and I would like to see the Sheep and Beef Vet Society look at this further and develop some best practice guidelines about managing rams through these situations.

There are no terminal sire breeders working at a genetic solution to this problem, it is a very long term decision to go down this route with benefits unlikely to be noticed for 10+ years. It is also an expensive and wasteful process of culling and often also euthanizing affected individuals. We canvassed a few clients to determine whether they were interested in us as a ram breeder developing a genetic solution to this disease. The overwhelming answer was NO. We have a successful formula of meat, growth and survival at the moment which is kicking goals. The farmers preferred to try and be more proactive about managing the rams through the danger period, than paying more for FE tolerant rams.

With the higher wastage of rams in the North Island this year, and larger than normal orders to cover this, we would like to know asap if you require a quantity of rams significantly different from the past. We will service our existing clients first before we offer the waiting list, so please communicate with me your requirements asap.

Having just returned from a couple of days visiting clients in Canterbury, I can definitely appreciate the challenges the climate has caused on farming business and mental wellbeing. With the low stocking rates, in these areas, a rebuild is hopefully going to take place at some stage. There has been a growing enquiry of people looking for replacement ewe hogget's based on Mount Linton maternal genetics. There are also several clients now producing surplus ewe hogget's that would like to sell these as future breeding replacements.

We are happy to pass on these details to our client lists, via email only, for those seeking our bloodlines and also those offering for sale. This would be a complementary service.

When getting in touch we would want to advertise the following information:

Number in line,

Average liveweight,

Any other weight details you may have – range, minimum etc,

Shearing date.

When they are available.

We would pass on contact details and then leave it up to interested parties to inspect the stock and negotiate the price.

On a final note we were pleasantly surprised to be a finalist and go on to win the Award for top proven terminal sire ram in NZ at the Sheep Industry Awards in Masterton. This is now the 2nd time we have won this award in the last 3 years. We were also a finalist this year for lamb survival in the terminal sire category.

Hope spring is kind and mild for your lambing

Feel free to visit, email or ring anytime

Cheers

Dave



Mixed Age Cows wintering on the hill country.

Angus



BREEDING OBJECTIVE:

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

Secrets of our Success

Ceri Lewis

I found a couple of very interesting Bulls on my trip to Australia in the autumn which I intended to use in our AI programme this year. Unfortunately one of the bulls was in the team Te Mania Australia programme and we were unable to get him collected as he was being used over cows and the other bull, a Rennyalea sire developed an infection which affected his semen quality and although he has now recovered it looks like it will be too late for this year's programme. The good news is we will have them both in plenty of time for next year.

EBV's

Meanwhile we have plenty of semen from the same three main sires as we used last year including H840 who has an IMF EBV of 5.7 against a breed average of 1.5, and K163 who has an EMA of 18.3 (breed average is 4.4)

I have spoken at a few industry events over the winter, people have been interested in the secrets of our success in achieving so highly on the SFF Beef EQ programme. Last year our biggest reason for failing to meet the Master Grade was Meat colour and pH level and I found by scanning their tags that the cattle that were loaded onto the top deck of the truck were significantly higher in pH than the ones on the bottom deck. Ultimately if they didn't want to climb the ramp they would have

to be persuaded and that was obviously upsetting them. We built a double deck load out ramp during the summer and this has completely fixed the problem, I can load 45 cattle in under twenty minutes with just myself and the driver. We usually kill our cattle at Finegand in Balclutha which is two hours away but for the last month they have been going to Belfast in Christchurch which is a good eight hours and still no problem with pH or meat colour. Nationally, 60% of cattle fail on marbling which has not been an issue for us in the past.

Given that this is the first programme outside the Wagyu programme that pays a premium for marbling and we have some of the highest hit rates in the country, we have had a significant inquiry for our Bulls over the last six months. I have heard on the grapevine that SFF are considering increasing the premium for the Beef EQ programme which will send a strong message to the beef industry, as I have said before, we have to get out of the commodity market and into the niche. We made \$68,000 last year in premiums from the Beef EQ programme.

Our yearling Bulls have wintered well and we will be carcass scanning them and semen testing them this month and will have our yearling catalogue out in October and start selling in November. I will be in touch with you all once the catalogue is out.

Rennyalea G420 EBV's

August 2016 Angus Australia BREEDPLAN

	Calving Ease Dir (%)	Calving Ease Dtrs (%)	Gestation Length (days)	Birth Wt. (kg)	200 Day Wt. (kg)	400 Day Wt. (kg)	600 Day Wt. (kg)	Mat. Cow Wt. (kg)	Milk (kg)	Scrotal Size (cm)	Days to Calving (days)	Carcase Wt. (kg)	Eye Muscle Area (sq.cm)	Rib Fat (mm)	Rump Fat (mm)	Retail Beef Yield (%)	IMF (%)	NFI-P (kg/day)	NFI-F (kg/day)	Docility (Trial)	Angus Pure Index	Self Replacing Index
EBV	+4.8	+5.1	-6.5	+2.4	+47	+95	+119	+89	+20	+1.7	-9.5	+70	+7.6	+2.8	+2.5	-1.5	+3.8	+0.4	+0.66	-8	\$ 234	\$194
Acc	70%	60%	92%	92%	88%	88%	89%	81%	67%	89%	59%	76%	77%	77%	78%	73%	72%	63%	63%	87%		
Breed Avg. EBVs for 2014 Born Calves																						
EBV	-0.1	-0.1	-3.5	+4.3	+41	+75	+98	+86	+14	+1.6	-3.6	+54	+4.4	0	0	+0.3	+1.5	+0.09	+0.15	+4		

TE MANIA KATHMANDU K352 EBV's

August 2016 Angus Australia BREEDPLAN

	Calving Ease Dir (%)	Calving Ease Dtrs (%)	Gestation Length (days)	Birth Wt. (kg)	200 Day Wt. (kg)	400 Day Wt. (kg)	600 Day Wt. (kg)	Mat. Cow Wt. (kg)	Milk (kg)	Scrotal Size (cm)	Days to Calving (days)	Carcase Wt. (kg)	Eye Muscle Area (sq.cm)	Rib Fat (mm)	Rump Fat (mm)	Retail Beef Yield (%)	IMF (%)	NFI-P (kg/day)	NFI-F (kg/day)	Docility (Trial)	Angus Pure Index	Self Replacing Index
EBV	+4.9	+3.1	-7.4	+1.8	+47	+91	+118	+95	+27	+2.6	-7.8	+62	+8.2	+1	+1.3	-0.6	+3.7	+0.36	+0.61	+7	\$221	\$181
Acc	58%	57%	85%	78%	73%	73%	70%	69%	61%	76%	44%	65%	65%	63%	65%	60%	63%	52%	53%	61%		
Breed Avg EBV's 2014 Born Calves																						
EBV	-0.3	-0.1	-3.3	+4.4	+40	+74	+96	+86	+14	+1.6	-3.5	+54	+4.1	-0.1	-0.1	+0.3	+1.5	+0.07	+0.13	+3		



SENDER:
Mount Linton Station
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Mount Linton Dog Trial

Friday 25th November and Saturday 26th November | Held at Rock Hut, signposted from the Station

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