

MARLOW GENETICS

November 2020 Newsletter



STEVE WYN-HARRIS
06-8558265
0272223284
SWYN@XTRA.CO.NZ

Where to start when looking back over the last 12 months? The photo above tells a big part of that story. I drove into Waipukurau on the first day of Level Four lockdown (26th March) to do my radio show, The Cockies Hour. Allowed to do so as broadcasting like farming was an essential industry. Didn't see any vehicles on the 19km drive into town and other than a postal car at the far end of the street, Ruataniwha Street was completely deserted.

Compounding the bizarre nature of that time was that we and our new business partners had signed a sale and purchase agreement at the end of February to buy the radio station, Central FM. Take over was April Fool's Day and 50% of the business left for awhile as all but the rural advertisers had no reason to advertise.

However, Covid-19, the lockdowns and various levels showed that something as simple as local community radio has never been so relevant so we survived and are now back on sound footing.



The Drought

The other feature of 2020 was of course the drought. Everyone reading this was affected as its reach was so widespread but it was particularly tough for those areas that are usually considered summer safe.

There was widespread support for farmers by the rural and urban sectors, practical but also looking after folk's wellbeing which was fantastic to see and certainly made a positive difference.

I'd had an aggressive marketing policy given the record prices being paid before Christmas so was well through selling much of my trading stock as the drought bit.

I decided not to tup the ewe hoggets, shut down the two year old bulls which I'm killing now, didn't buy yearling bulls until late June, put on nitrogen late May, sacrificed the winter brassicas to finish the last of the lambs and overdrilled those paddocks with oats in early July. This latter decision worked very well with the newly bought yearling bulls needed to top grass until these crops were ready in early September when I'm usually winding up the last of the wires. That didn't happen until mid October!

Here and most other places benefitted from the kindest winter I've ever experienced and the recovery was phenomenal.

Despite no supplements and just holding their condition at best, my stud and commercial ewes scanned 195% and then with the best lambing weather I've had, finished with a very pleasing 165% ewes to the ram/lambs docked.

SIL News

B+LNZ Genetics which operates Sheep Improvement Ltd (SIL) has just released it's new tool nProve. B+LNZ G's core objective is to help commercial farmers make the most profitable breeding decisions for their particular farm management system.

The tag line of this new tool is "Discover genetics fit for your purpose."

It allows commercial breeders to easily find genetics that match their own breeding priorities. Farmers are also able to check out how their own ram breeder is going against industry in the genetics they are supplying.

I'm very pleased to be able to report that Marlow (712) is number one on nProve. Have a look for yourselves at; nprove.nz

This must be frustrating for the ram selling businesses with the big marketing budgets!

So, the genetics we share are independently rated as the best available in the country at this time.

Facial Eczema Breeding Program

I started doing the Ramguard test 16 years after having used FE tolerant rams for a few years before that. Since 2010, all stud sires used have passed with a nil reaction to a .6 dose rate which is similar to getting an instant intake of several hundred thousand spores.

All stud ewes are sired by rams that passed at .6 so the sale rams are getting this tolerance from both parents.

This is not the case with studs who have suddenly gone out and bought an FE tolerant ram and are selling the progeny as FE tolerant. They are not as they are just beginning this journey.

I've just been talked into dosing the rams at .62 by Ramguard to try and force a few fails to improve the breeding values for this important trait.

Marlow remains the only sheep stud in Hawkes Bay to be FE Gold.

Those clients who have been with Marlow for many years sleep a lot easier in the autumns than most of our neighbours.



The 2th rams

I'm very pleased with how they have recovered from the drought. They are as well grown 2ths as I've had. They didn't get any supplements but did benefit from cleaning up the brassica crops before they were oversown in early winter and benefitted from the kind winter and good pasture levels subsequently.

They are shortly going to have the annual B.Ovis test for accreditation.

Here's a shot of some of my 9 week old terminal lambs out of my commercial MA Coopworth ewes having their drench and despite the high lambing %, I hope to get something like 50-60% off to the works towards the end of November.

I'll be busy over the next few weeks weaning, sending lambs to the works, shearing, mouthing, killing bulls and all the other stuff that you will also be doing.

I'm getting some new inquiry for rams so will be contacting you shortly to see what your requirements are for this season. Or else feel free to email me back.

Then, I'll be in touch early December to arrange a visit from you to come and select your rams.

Once again, thank you very much for your ongoing patronage and I'll see you in a few weeks.

Steve

