

MARLOW

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MARLOW HILL NEWSLETTER 2024

ONE YEAR OF STUD FARMING

It has been an interesting year, and I have learnt a lot about running a high-performance sheep stud. It was a pleasure meeting and engaging with clients over December with ram sales and some of you throughout the year at various events.

It has been a busy year for Rosa and me with getting our heads around a new farming system and chasing around after a toddler.

But we have enjoyed it and looking forward to the next season and feel like we are getting into the swing of the stud game.

We're on social media! Facebook: Marlow Genetics Instagram: marlow_genetics

Website: <https://marlowcoopworths.co.nz/>

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COMMUNITY

We have had an involved year in the local Hawkes Bay community with Rosa and I being involved many off-farm activities and events which we both get lots from. I'm part of Surfing for Farmers, the CHB A&P show prime lamb competition, a member of the steering committee for B&L's Farming for Profit, the newly appointed bar manager at the local aero club.

Rosa has been involved with the Rural Support Trust post the cyclone and helping at Vet Services, Waipukurau and involved with the local catchment group. She will also be busy when we have our second child in early December.



THE 2023 BORN RAM HOGGETS

This year's cohort are looking brilliant and were already over 70kg average at the end of September despite the no drench policy.

They came out of shearing well and were eye muscle scanned in September which feeds into the meat index on the selection sheets.

Shortly I'll be picking out 10 top potential sires to put through Ramguard for facial eczema resistance and testing at .6 and only use those that pass at nil response.

With recent selection sheets back from SIL there are some fantastic index rams in the team with more than half of the sale team currently in the top 5% for MW+M across all the recorded breeds in the country.

Marlow Genetics continues to be right at the top of the Sheep Improvement Ltd lists.

[Check out https://nprove.nz/#/home](https://nprove.nz/#/home)



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FACIAL ECZEMA

Last season we took part in Beef and Lamb's "We want your poo" study looking into the effects of facial eczema and its prevalence across the country. We saw counts starting to rise through the autumn, but the dry conditions slowed any serious counts.

We took FEC counts every two weeks for 6 months from the two teats and sent off to the lab. We are stepping up this year and going to be taking bloods and FEC samples every two weeks over the summer and autumn period from the same ewes. This is going to be a lot more work but feel it's for the greater good for our industry.

FE used to be a serious problem on this farm but Marlow Genetics twenty-year intensive breeding program against this scourge has really paid dividends.

Rarely an issue except in the younger bulls and allows one to sleep easily during autumn.

Because many of us live in a part of the country where it isn't an annual recurring problem, folk quickly forget how devastating, costly and stressful a bad challenge can be.

If you are going to farm sheep wherever you live, it is essential to have the protection that FE resistant sheep provide.

There will certainly be another bad FE season sooner than later!

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WORMS, WORMS, WORMS...

We are hearing a great deal about worms and drench leakage in the papers and at the local vets and it seems to be the biggest talking point now when you meet with a fellow farmer.

This issue isn't going to be go away and will get tougher.

A simple fix of changing cattle ratios isn't going to be it, not with cattle systems having leakage to triple as well and the advice to bring sheep in behind them to mop up their worms.

I bought a mob of dry dairy cows this year to act as a vacuum for worms grazing them hard in the lambing country pre-set stocking, looking at the ewes at tagging/ docking in these paddocks compared to where the cows didn't get too was a huge difference. Was it better feed quality or less parasite loading at lambing time? Probably both.

This year's ram hoggets had their last blanket drench in April since then with the use of the EID tags we have been following individual growth rates

and dropping out the poorer performing rams who are likely not coping with a worm burden. Thus, utilising resilience but continuing to rigorously breed for resistance.

We continue to let the ram hoggets run up a big worm loading in the autumn and then individually sample each one.

The range in FECs is 50 to 5000 giving great selection abilities and informing the FEC index on the selection sheets that you use when choosing rams.

Marlow has been chasing this trait very hard in recent years with great gains as can be seen from the latest genetic trend line.

Like FE, worms challenges will only get worse and FEC resistant genes are the only sustainable option left to us.

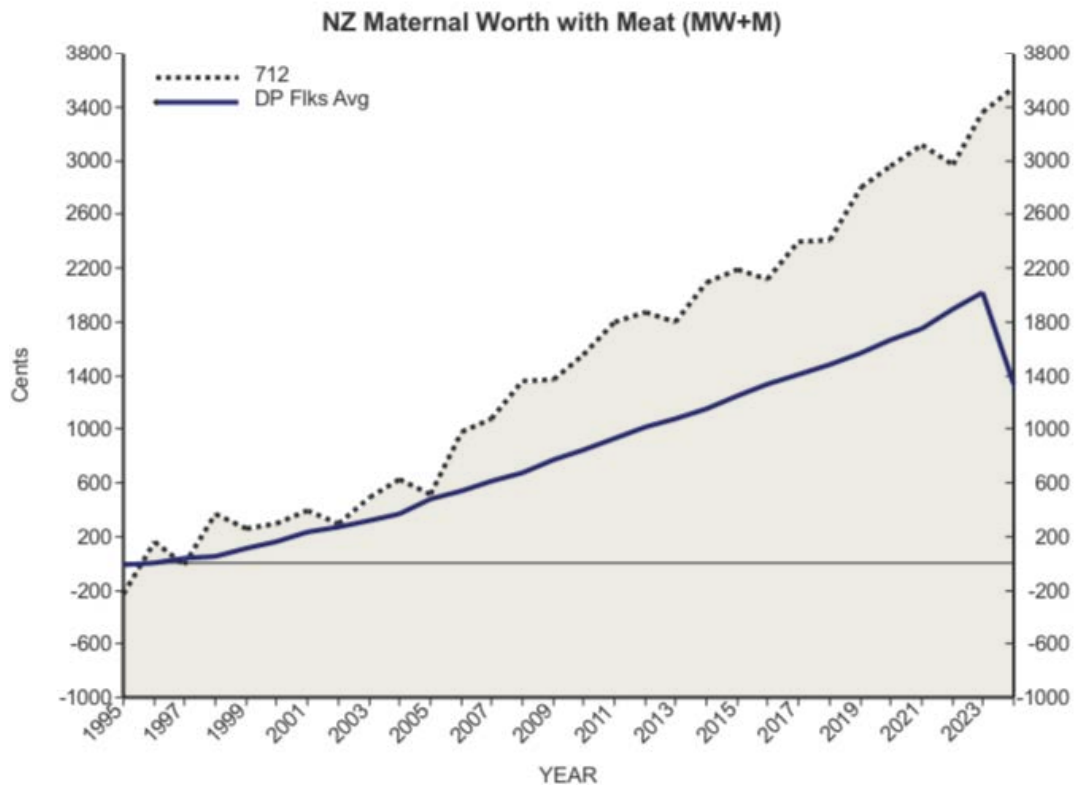
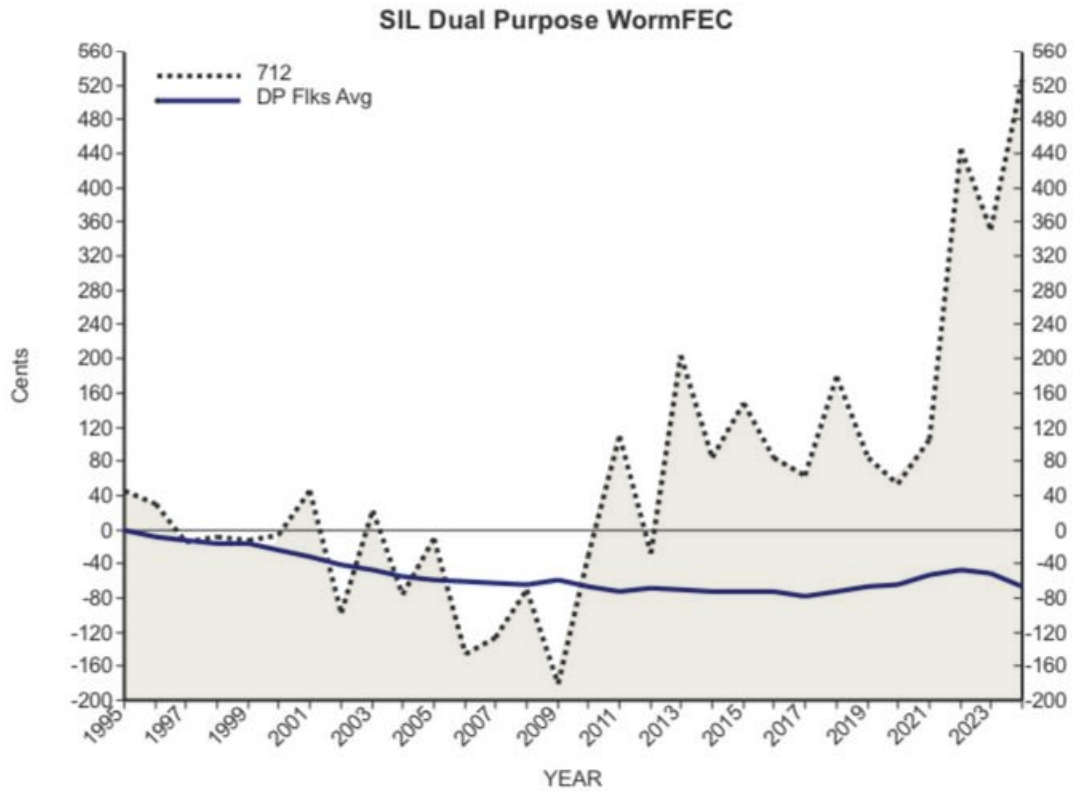
No stud mixed age or two tooth ewes have been drenched for the past 12 months in what has been a huge worm challenge season.

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SHEPHERD STEVE

Jason asked me to add a little on what Jane and I have been up too since he and Rosa came into our family farming business last year.

I had no difficulty in simply stepping into the role of a shepherd under the manager's direction.

The benefits being that I no longer had that process of running a business and worked thirty hours a week instead of fifty!

I managed to catch leptospirosis during the 2023 lambing and wouldn't recommend that to anyone. No doubt a result of the very wet winter and lambing following Cyclone Gabrielle.

Being a one-man owner operator of a business has always made getting away difficult as you know.

So, we took the opportunity of Jason and Rosa's arrival of what I could dress up as a sabbatical but was actually a great break.

At the end of April, we flew on a one-way ticket to Ho Chi Minh City with just a seven kg carry on bag each. Jane wasn't enthusiastic about the destination, nor the luggage limit however not only did Vietnam remain our favorite country visited, Jane is now the greatest proponent of travelling light.

We eventually washed up in Amsterdam where our middle son lives and works with his partner Britt who later on in our trip became his fiancé.

Portugal and Spain were wonderful to visit and subsequently we made our way to Eastern Europe that was still behind the wall when I was last in Europe over forty years ago.

I can recommend the value of a Eurail pass (ours was two months and fifteen travel days) which took us from Gibraltar to Warsaw, through the Channel Tunnel, up to the top of Scotland and back down to Southern England.

Five months after we left, we returned home to meet our youngest son's first child and pleased to be back.

All fifteen countries had similar problems as we have here. Inflation, excessive costs, rising energy prices, housing shortages, wealth inequalities and the like. But also, illegal immigration which because of our distance from anywhere, we are fortunate not to suffer from.

It was an interesting look around this planet and reinforced that despite the challenges we have in this country, we wouldn't want to live anywhere else. We are very fortunate.

Any questions please don't hesitate to ring either myself or Steve

Jason – 0277109426 / Steve – 0272223284

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