

Pukekaka Farm Managers Report December 2014

Greetings

In late October we docked 7646 lambs born from 5053 mixed age ewes that went to the ram, that's just over 151% which is the best result we have had on Pukekaka to date and only the second time in my farming career to crack the 150%. Two weeks later we docked the lambs born from the hoggets, they did 36% which is disappointing and as I said in my last report, a result of the pneumonia that went through prior to mating. Also when they were lambing we had a few snow storms pass through making it hard for the small lambs to survive. Lambs born from hoggets are always smaller.

Calving has finished and we will be marking the calves in a week or so, calving looks to have gone alright but won't really know until we count them. Our bull buying criteria are working for us, we don't have to help many heifers calve anymore, eight years ago we would help about one quarter of the heifers calve, this year we had to help one.

We buy two or three bulls every year, each bull comes with its own EBV's (estimated breeding values), these measure birth weights, growth rates, structural soundness, milking ability, eye muscle area and many more things. We buy bulls with low to moderate birth weights, above average growth rates, good temperament and structurally sound as well as keeping an eye on all other traits that are measured, hard to buy the perfect bull without spending too much on them.

Two weeks ago Jack and I went to the Wairarapa to buy rams, they too have their own records to help you buy the rams you want, we bought fifteen Romneys. (our rams come from Derek Daniell's Wairere stud)

At present we are drenching all lambs for worms and dipping all sheep to keep the fly's away, this will take us six or seven days as long as the weather plays ball. Yesterday we got hailed on twice and then rained out, when the sheep are wet we can't dip them because the chemical isn't rainfast, and yes, it was the first day of summer. Casey and Sam are helping us which is keeping us up to date with the weather holding us up. Once we have finished we will mark the calves and put the bull out to the yearling heifers, wean the single bearing ewes and sell the better lambs just before Christmas.

Our daughter Anna is in London at present on a student exchange to finish her university studies, she is enjoying her time over there, maybe a little too much, she will return just before Christmas. Sam has just finished his exams for his final year at School, he is home at present still trying to figure out what to do for a career. James our youngest is just finishing year ten and is enjoying a lot of sport at the moment, he is playing school cricket as well as representative cricket and was playing sevens rugby in Auckland last weekend. This week he is canoeing the Wanganui River on school camp.

Hope you all have a great Christmas and an enjoyable break.

Kind Regards

Rob

Rob Stratton – Farm Manager