



Pukekaka Farm Managers Report

Autumn/Winter 2017

This last autumn and winter has been one of the best we have had in a while, with regular rain from February along with a warmer winter has given us good grass growth right through to now. We are now in a good position with ewes and hoggets on more grass than usual.

The rain in February came with more demand for stock in the sale yards; we averaged \$97 for all surplus ewe lambs that we sold, this is \$10 more than what we received for the male lambs that went to the works earlier in the season. We were able to put more grass into the hoggets and ewes prior to mating; the hoggets went to the ram at an average of 45kgs, 2kgs better than the year before, they scanned 121%, our best result for hoggets. The 2 toothies went to the ram at 62kgs, up 5kgs from the year before and scanned 175%. The ewes were 72kgs, up 5kgs and scanned 180%. All is looking positive for a good docking percentage this year.

In late July we had 70cm of snow fall over two nights, because there was no wind at the time it settled on the power lines and trees and when it got too heavy, things started breaking. We had no power for eight days and no land line phone for 10 days, with the cell phone towers down for the first two days as well. We hooked the farm gravity fed water system up to the house, then wired the hot water cylinder up to the generator along with a few other necessities, which included the TV and internet modem, so life wasn't too bad. The access around the farm was limited, with snow too deep for the motorbikes so we were in the tractor or walking. We fed out to as much stock as we could, but we were very limited as it was too dangerous to take the tractor many places, so we walked around the farm opening gates where necessary for the stock to find their own food. Unfortunately, some were hungry for a few days before the snow melted enough for them to get to the grass. We lost 15 ewes and 6 cattle through that period, considering the extreme conditions this wasn't too bad, some farms in the higher country had big losses of cattle.

Since the storm we have been doing stock work so haven't had time to fix the damage the snow made. We have fixed the gutters on the covered yards where the weight of the snow had snapped the snow straps and bent the gutters way out of shape. Now that the ewes and hoggets have been capsuled and set stocked we can turn our attention to the rest of it, which includes cutting trees off fences and tracks, fixing fences, along with straightening out more gutters.



The snow melting along with the huge amount of rain we have had since, has made things very wet on the farm, the motorbikes and tractor have left ruts in a lot of tracks that will need attention when it dries out. Most stock have been on winter crops or haylage over this period so pugging damage to pasture has been kept to a minimum. Thankfully not many slips have come down; there was one on the airstrip track which stopped us from taking vehicles up there for ten days until we got it cleared by a digger. We are please to say the last five days have been really nice so things are starting to dry out.

We start lambing on the 20th of September and calving on the 1st of October, hopefully the good weather continues and the good scanning results translate into good docking percentages.

Kind Regards

Rob