

Pukekaka Sheep and Beef Farm

Farm Managers Report

12 October 2013

In 25 years of farming in the Taihape area I have never experienced a winter that has been as good as we have had. With the warm temperatures and enough rain to make the grass grow but not get too wet and muddy. Come the start of lambing and calving we set stocked all sheep and cattle onto more grass than we have ever done before at this time of year, this should mean better growth rates for all stock through the spring as long as we can keep the quality in the grass.

Because of the excellent grass growth through winter we were able to buy in 1,500 stock units, 350 ewes, 600 hogget's and 91 cattle to fill the gap the drought made last year with having to sell capital stock. We will sell all the bought in stock from December through to March and hopefully making reasonable margins out of them to help fill the deficit left from the dry.

Back in late July we scanned our own ewes, the mixed age were 156% and the 2 tooth 149%, this is 154% overall, however this is down 20% on last year. This is the direct result of not being able to feed breeding stock well enough prior to and during mating. Two weeks later we scanned the hogget's, with 1200 less and were able to look after them a little better and they scanned 111% down 1% on last year which is a pleasing result.

We are lambing at present, the weather is not as kind as it has been but still warmer than average for this time of year. Lamb survival will be better than usual but not as good as the early ewes that lambed. Calving has just started. The mixed age cows are going well but the first calving heifers are having some issues, the calves are coming out looking a little under nourished which may be the direct result of the heifers being under fed early in pregnancy. We have had to feed a few of the calves for a day or two to get them up and going.

Last month we had a digger on the farm to clean out some dams that struggled to keep up in the dry and do some much needed repairs and maintenance on tracks and culverts. As well as this we bulldozed some fence lines so we could extend the stock lane out towards the back flats. Casey and I along with the help of Sam and James while they are home for holidays have been fencing and have nearly finish the 900 meters of extended laneway.

Two weeks ago we docked 507 lambs from the 350 ewes that we bought in, lamb survival was very good and in two weeks we start docking the remainder. This will take seven of us four days to complete, there will be less lambs this year but hopefully they will be bigger from all the grass we have at present. All going well we will have the result from this when we see some of you at this year's AGM.

Look forward to seeing you then.

Kind Regards

Rob