



Pukekaka Farm Managers

Report

Summer 2016

You may wonder why I always talk about the weather at the start of my reports, unfortunately it dictates how the farming year is going to go for us or in short it rules our life to some extent. This summer has not been too bad for us; it has got a bit dry at times but with regular rain coming every few weeks and some good rain in the last few days' things are looking OK. Some farms not too far away from here are very dry and mostly down to their wintering numbers now, so not so good for them.

We weaned all 8,000 lambs in early January and sold around 2,000 male lambs straight off their mothers, all bar 260 going to the works. We have killed another 1,000 since then so only have just over 1,000 male lambs to sell plus the surplus ewe lambs. We are at present averaging \$84 for them which is \$10 better than last year. The chicory on the back flats has been good, we are able to stock it at 50 lambs to the hectare and grow them at 300 grams per day, the lambs on new grasses are doing 200 and 250 grams per day at about one third the stocking rate so not as productive but a lot less expenses as well. I will sit down at the end of summer and work out if it is worthwhile or not, we have to take in to consideration the down time as well, at the end of March we have to drill grass into the chicory so there will be six weeks or more where we can't graze it.

All yearling cattle have been sold; the average for steers is \$140 better than last year and \$130 better for the heifers. The sad story comes with wool, last year we sold lambs wool for \$5.70 per kilo, this year we got offered \$2.22. Ewes wool was over \$4 last year and we were offered \$2.40 this year, this would be a big chunk out of our income if we sold it so are sitting on it at present to see what happens with the markets, the last two sales have gone up 3 to 5% each sale. The gains we have made in lamb sales may all be lost in wool income.

Next week we have another 550 lambs to send to the works, the last of our male lambs will go on to the chicory and we will go through the 4,000 ewe lambs to pick our replacements. All lambs we keep as replacements will be 37 kilos and over, everything under that will be sorted and marketed over the next six weeks or so.

The following week we will shear 1,500 two tooths and probably wean the cows and calves, so plenty to keep us busy for the next month or so. Not much else to talk about as most of the summer months are spent doing stock work, in April and May we will again start to catch up on general work around the farm.

Hope things are good with you all and the summer has been kind to you.

Kind Regards

Rob Stratton