

Pukekaka Farm Managers Report 26-6-15

Greetings

The dry summers are becoming the norm now rather than the exception. Again we were forced into selling lambs much earlier than desirable, all gone by early March except for a handful of smaller ones. Because we had to sell earlier the average price we got (\$81) was a little less than budgeted, thankfully from the extra numbers that we docked we were up on budget over all.

The beef market has been kind to us this year. We averaged just over \$1,000 for our 15 month steers, \$960 for our cull cows and \$735 for the 15 month cull heifers. Wool continues to be steady, a little up and down through the year but slowly getting better and better every year. Wool contributes around 15% of our income, sheep meat just over 65% and beef around 20% so sheep remain the biggest contribution to our income at 80% with only 75% of our stock units being in sheep. We can't go all sheep though because the sheep income wouldn't be what it is without the cattle keeping the pasture quality right.

At present we are having some issues with BVD (Bovine viral diarrhoea), this is ever present but seems to go through our weaner cattle just after weaning. It causes ill thrift and in some cases they can fade away and die. We are looking at blood testing the whole herd to identify the carriers and cull them out and then start a vaccination programme. This will stop those affected cattle from losing weight and also stop them from dying from BVD.

Jack and I, once the busy stock work part of the season had finished, have been doing repairs and maintenance around the farm. Every year the farm looks a bit tidier as we fix or replace the older fences and the ones that have been broken by stock or slips. We also have finished concreting the pens in the sheep yards and put some metal in others so they are now an all-weather set of yards meaning we won't have to delay shearing or whatever we are doing to wait for the yards to dry out.

We are at present getting rather short of grass, this is because the Autumn rain didn't come till late giving us less time to build up our feed reserves for winter. Our crops have done well this season so all ewes will go onto crops in the next week or two and hopefully be there for four to six weeks giving the grass time to grow and get us through to lambing with some grass for them to lamb on.

We have put half of our mixed age cows in the bush and have the rest on haylage on what we call "Rocky point" down on the back flats. This should hopefully give the grass enough of a spell although it has been rather cold lately which is not helping grass to growth.

Hope you are all well and the winter is being kind to you.

Kind Regards

Rob

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