

Waimai Romney 2016

The spring at Waimai can only be described as fantastic, with warm dry days over lambing and just enough rain to keep the grass growing. The winter was the complete opposite. Bloody awful! We had weeks and weeks of constant rain, and our clay and ash soils became completely water logged, with our cattle making a lot of mess, and causing a great deal of stress, not to mention a lack of grass. It reinforced once again the value of having sheep on our NZ hill country, and how environmentally sustainable sheep are in a wet winter like we have just experienced. With the proposed new rules under the Healthy Rivers: Plan for Change being put forward for the Waikato, our farming practices are only going to come under more scrutiny and we will have to adapt to these new regulations, and also make sure we are part of the process making these new rules.

The last season has been a huge challenge for many farmers with the "silent assassin," eczema raising it's ugly head throughout the North Island and northern coastal regions of the South Island. For the first time in years, we saw some eczema at Waimai. While it was disappointing to see, it reinforces what an inspired decision it was of John's to start eczema testing some 30 years ago, and how this decision has benefitted the greater farming community. We scanned at 169% this year and with tagging nearly finished in the MA stud ewes, we should tag just over 1200 lambs from 800 ewes mated. This just shows the resilience of the Waimai Romney ewes, considering the huge eczema challenge they faced this year.

We have had some notable performances over the last 12 months at Waimai Romney, with Waimai 53/12 regaining the number 1 sire spot. This ram was ranked 1 for DPR (Dual Purpose Reproduction) and 3 for DPG (Dual purpose Growth) in his year group, but it is his dam who is quite exceptional. She produced another stud ram last year Waimai 248/14, but more impressive is that she has produced an amazing 18 lambs in 6 years! A ram born the same year, Waimai 337/12 was involved in the NZ Romney Association Meat Yield Trial, involving 17 of the best rams throughout New Zealand. These rams were AI to some commercial ewes, with all progeny recorded and then processed at Alliance Meat Plants in both the North & South Island. After processing information was evaluated Waimai 337/12 was ranked 6th overall for meat yield. We were thrilled with this result and gives us confidence that we are on the right track, EMA scanning all our rams and selecting sires of moderate size and good constitution, who are packed with 'meat and growth.

We are all really looking forward to seeing you over the ram selling season, and hope the spring continues to be kind. We have had a lot of interest in Waimai rams this year, due to the work we are doing with ecze.ma, and want to make sure that we cater for our existing clients first, so please take time to fill out the number of rams you require, and send it back, and we will endeavor to provide them for you.

Kind regards

Alastair & John Reeves

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Climate Change – FE Predictions ~ Accurate

- If 3°C climate warming
- In 2016 the climate change prediction map:
 - Underestimate for the NI (around Taupo affected)
 - Accurate top of SI & West Coast
- 2016 characterised by:
 - Increased geographical regions, including at altitude



Di Menna ME, Smith BL, Miles CO 2009

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