



Waimai Romney 2023

As I write our Spring newsletter I can't help but feel a bit of uncertainty about the oncoming season and remind myself to focus on those things I can influence, be proactive and surround myself with positive people!! As Bill English said at a recent conference, one positive thing you can do over the next few months is get out and vote. We need positive people to run our country, who have business acumen and understand the drivers that will deliver profitable and sustainable business, both in our rural communities and our cities. New Zealand needs our farming businesses to be successful to get this country out of the massive hole it finds itself in today. As Wayne Langford from Federated Farmers said "the cure for NZ's economic woes is more farming, not less".

There has been a lot of debate over the last few years about Global Warming and emissions pricing, in particular methane. To be honest, it all gets very confusing and I don't know where things will land.

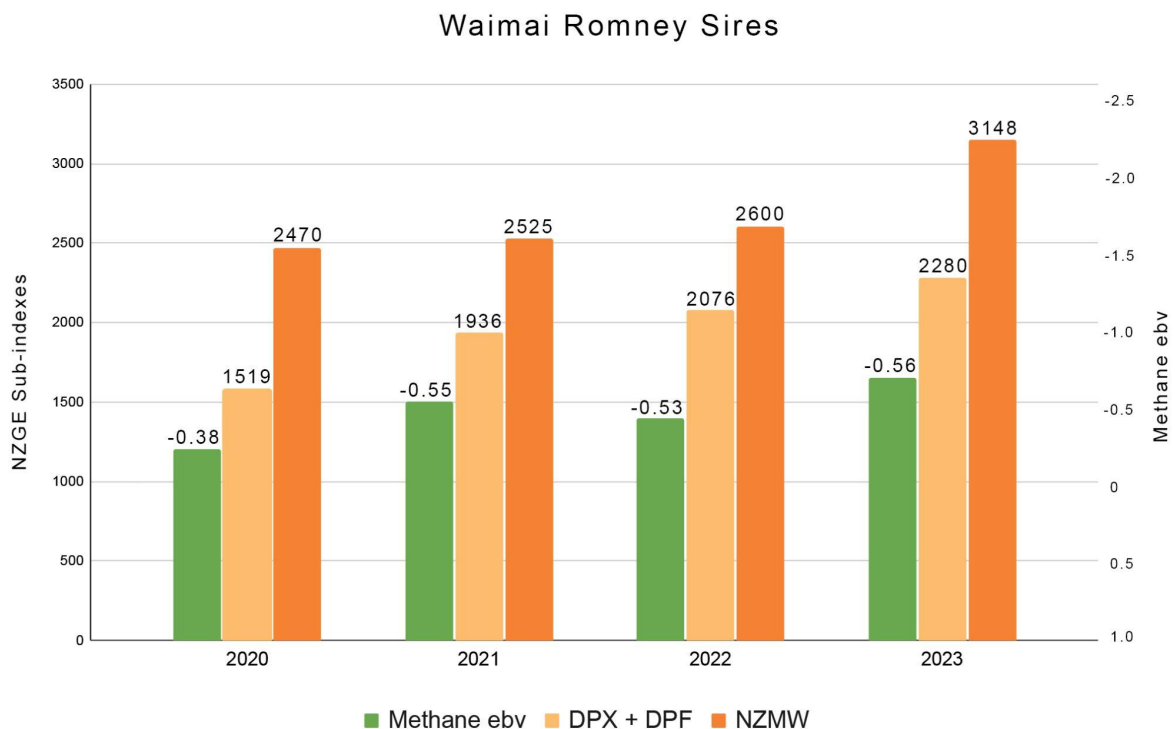
What I do know is; we need good science, to make good decisions; viable tools to help reduce emissions; the ability to use all our carbon sequestration on our farms; and a sensible system to incentivise and reward change as opposed to taxes and reduced stocking rates that all lead to leakage to less carbon efficient countries.





At Waimai Romney we are trying to provide a tool to mitigate these emissions, by producing low methane rams. As a ram breeder I am only too aware of the time it takes to embed different genetic traits into our, and your, breeding programmes and can't help to think that if I did nothing, would that be beneficial to my clients? The answer is.. I don't know where all this methane rhetoric will fall, but if i can produce low methane rams, while still maintaining all Waimai Romney's production traits, growth, survival and reproduction as well as disease traits, eczema tolerance and parasite resistance, to quote a friend of Dad's " what's the worst that can happen?"

Over the last four years of selecting sires for the Waimai Romney flock, our NZMW (NZ Maternal Worth) has actually gone up from 2470 to 3148 as well as our DPX (Dual Purpose Eczema) plus DPF (Dual Purpose parasite resistance) from 1519 to 2280 which is really pleasing and shows "you might be able to have your cake and eat it!!!!"





At Waimai Romney we are really excited about the development of the MEQ probe that has been developed in Australia and now has been given AUS-MEAT accreditation. The MEQ Probe is a world-first for the red meat industry as it enables estimation of IMF% in lamb in hot uncut carcasses at the chain speed. For lamb this provides quality grading and branding opportunities that have not previously existed.



The global \$700 billion red meat industry lacks timely, objective and actionable data and this lack of data impacts profits and customer satisfaction. Demands from the customer continue to evolve as the red meat industry evolves. As each problem is solved, consumer expectations grow. Today safety and availability have largely been solved by the industry, and the consumer is now focused on Quality, Nutrition and Sustainability. The MEQ probe helps to deliver on this promise. I believe our Waimai CharaBlacks genetics are well placed to deliver on this consumer demand. Consumers can taste the difference between an average and great lamb. What the consumers are tasting is the change in IMF, which determines eating quality.



IMF 2.5%

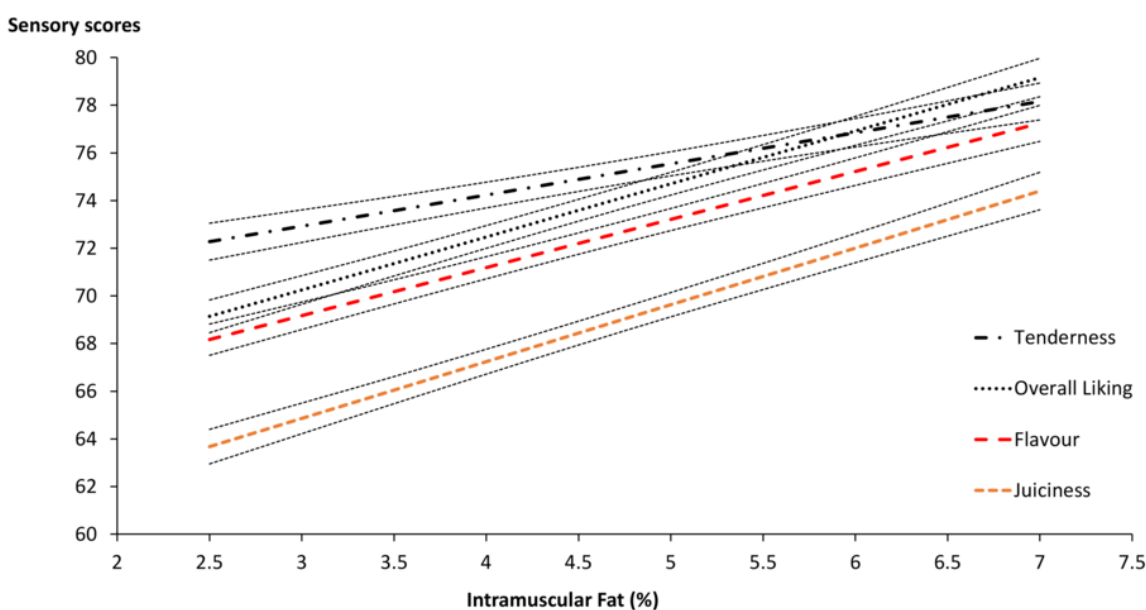


IMF 5.5%



MEQ probe chief executive officer Remo Carbone said "in a time where Australia is facing very changeable weather conditions and compromised food security, it is good to know that the company's technology has gone some way in increasing earnings for farmers and helped provide a way for the lamb industry to confirm and demonstrate quality." The exciting thing is that the MEQ probe has arrived in NZ and hopefully in the not too distant future will result in Waimai CharaBlack progeny receiving premiums for our clients.

We had 5 CharaBlack sires in the South Island Genomic Calibration Progeny Test sited at PAMU Doncaigan Farm in Te Anau. The focus of this progeny trial is to identify genetics that produce high quality meat with a focus on IMF (Intramuscular Fat). Our 5 Waimai CharaBlack sires were ranked in the top 25 for Terminal Sire Meat Quality, out of 130 sires, with Waimai CharaBlack 97/21 ranked 2nd. We also had two rams in the Progressive Meats First to Market Programme and had the 2 top Terminal Rams in this trial. With 96/21 (full brother to 97/21) the top Terminal Ram. We have used Waimai CharaBlack 97/21 extensively in the stud this year, also with a top NZTW of 2602 which is really pleasing, as we don't want to substitute meat quality at the expense of other production traits. As the Australians are already paying a sizable premium for high IMF lamb, I don't believe it will be long before your meat company pays a premium!!! Maybe you should ask them to??





Wool is still a problem child and I appreciate we are all losing patience with the imminent recovery in prices!! At Waimai Romney we are trying to work really hard to change wool's fortunes by engaging with industry participants Bremworth and Merino New Zealand to understand how we can grow the value of NZ strong wool for our clients. It was positive to see a Merino NZ contract with Best Wool Europe for 2/S strong wool at 20-25% above the auction market and the announcement from Bremworth of a 10 year supply contract, co-creating a wool growers club that looks to get better return for farmers. I believe contracts are the only way farmers are going to get confidence that wool has a future.

It was fantastic after more than 3 years for strong wool advocate Amy Blaikie's petition to finally see its day in parliament in June of this year. The petition requested that all publicly funded buildings and Kiwi build homes be built or refurbished with NZ wool carpets and insulation. Considering Government agencies are meant to be required to consider wider social, economic, and environmental outcomes to be leveraged from government spend, it is galling the recent decision by the government to carpet 800 NZ Schools with American-owned synthetic carpets. In 2019 America produced 14.6 billion square feet of carpets and rugs with 89% of discarded synthetic carpet ending up in landfills. Synthetic carpets alone constitute more than 3.5% of all materials placed in US landfills. All non biodegradable! 6.5% of discarded carpet is burned which causes more greenhouse gasses than coal!! Currently just 5% of carpet waste is recycled in America and this is what will end up in our NZ schools. This is a great example of Greenwashing and this decision by our NZ government is a complete disgrace!! We need to put pressure on our political leaders, of what ever persuasion, to reverse this environmental disaster and support strong wool farmers of NZ.

We are really pleased here at Waimai Romney to have given the John Reeves Memorial Scholarship for 2023 to Rosemary Taggart, a Lincoln student in her final year of an Honours Degree in Agricultural Science. Her honours project is called "Finding Food in New Places - Wool Keratin as a novel protein source". This project is potentially an exciting new opportunity for NZ strong wool, as it looks to increase the value of strong wool through alternative uses, which hopefully will reignite the industry.



Waimai Romney is having an [Open Day](#) on the [12 October](#), where we will have some guest speakers who are the leading lights in looking at tools to reduce methane.

Dr John McEwen has been one of NZ's lead scientists focused on sheep genetics and genomics and now leads a team at Dunedin's Invermay Research Centre looking to genetically breed sheep with lower methane levels. Mark Aspin is the chair of the "Pastoral Greenhouse Gas Research Consortium" which is looking to provide NZ Farmers with the knowledge and tools to mitigate GHG emissions from the agricultural sector.

[Speakers start at 1pm](#) and hopefully they will provide an opportunity for our farming community to be informed about the future of low methane sheep genetics in their breeding programmes.

I appreciate this is going to be a challenging year for NZ sheep and beef farmers, but hopefully the efforts we are putting into genetics and growing the value proposition for all our clients in their business will add value throughout the coming year.

We look forward to catching up with you all over the next couple of months.

Take care

Alastair, Ann and Helen

