

## Waimai Romney 2022

As we write this newsletter for 2022 it feels as though we can almost see the grass growing, with the first bit of sun we have seen for a while warming things up. Hopefully that is the same situation where you are after a very trying spring with too much rain and bugged all sun and warmth.

2022 has been a busy year with lots of progress on and off the farm. Our children are off doing their thing with both Sophie and George at Lincoln and Angus in his Year 12 year at Hamilton Boys. Sophie is just about to complete a Bachelor in Agri Business and Food Marketing majoring in Supply Chain while George is finishing his first year studying Land and Property Management. All three are combining their studies with as much sport as possible and making the most of their opportunities. Our family celebrated a special birthday in early September when Mum/Helen/Margie turned 80 years young. She had a weekend full of surprise parties and family which was a fabulous celebration and thoroughly enjoyed by all. She continues to be an inspiration to us all



***(Goose eggs beginnings of Helens fruit cakes)***

The world is still out of control, but it was really pleasing to read that total meat exports for the June 2021/2022 year were worth just under \$11 billion to the New Zealand economy, an increase in value of 20% compared to last year. This is an amazing result by our industry and clearly shows that our meat processing and export companies are maximising as much value as they can for the NZ economy and our farmers, under very trying circumstances. Shirma Karapeeva (Meat Industry Association), comments that “consumers are increasingly valuing our natural low-impact farming systems and our farmers deserve a lot of credit for this.”

and still runs her block on the farm, while also upgrading to a side by side from

her 4-wheeler after having a hip replacement earlier in the year. Good to go for another 10 years!! Progress has arrived in the Waimai Valley in the form of a cell phone tower, so Alastair is available 24/7 on his cell phone which I’m not sure if he is enjoying!



# WAIMAI *Romney*

Ann and Alastair had a very enjoyable visit to MerinoNZ Headquarters in Christchurch where Nathan Arthur, Commercial manager of the wool team hosted us. We were very impressed, not only with the office and showroom, but also with the quality of the brand partners MerinoNZ is working with. As a business we are looking to join their ZQ



program which is dedicated to the long-term sustainability of NZ strong wool through establishing strong relationships with high value industry partners. Contracts are set at agreed sustainable price points, protecting growers, the supply chain and brand partners from market volatility at Auction. Nathan was at pains to point out that the brand partners were under no illusions that strong wool farmers needed markedly improved sustainable wool prices to enable them to make considered investment decisions, and that farmers wanted to be rewarded for their values and ethical farming systems.

In December last year we were thrilled to hear that the work of AgResearch scientists to successfully breed low methane emitting sheep, as a tool to combat climate change, had been recognised with the Supreme Award at the 2021 Science New Zealand Awards. Well done! This team, lead by Dr Suzanne Rowe, has proven that breeding for this low methane genetic trait, the scientists have been able to demonstrate that after three generations the lowest emitting sheep produce close to 13% less methane than the highest emitters. The lean methane sheep are also producing more lean meat growth, carcass yield and wool production. By selecting rams with a negative eBv (estimated breeding value) sheep farmers are increasing the proportion of low methane genetics in their flock. The expectation is that for every -1 in your CH4Bv (methane breeding value), the ram is passing on genetics for -1gram of methane per day, with the average ewe producing 23grams per day of methane. If you only used rams with -1gramBv you could expect to see a reduction of methane in your flock of between 1-2% per year which will be significant as it accumulates over time. Our

# WAIMAI *Romney*

2021 ram team at Waimai Romney had an average CH4Bv of -0.53 with the top ram having an CH4Bv of -1.44!! Dr Rowes aim is that this is a auditable trail in the future, to be set against the ETS when it is implemented. Dr Frank Mitloehner, professor and air quality specialist at UC Davis explains it very concisely. “Methane losses are energy losses and sheep farmers need to work on how to minimise losses, not only to be green, but to extract greater production from the same GHG outputs.”

At Waimai Romney we continue to push hard at selecting Low Input Sheep. We believe these are sheep that can handle New Zealand’s wide range of climatic conditions and environmental issues with as little “human” input as possible, while growing the best food and fibre NZ can produce. Our 2021 born rams we are looking to use in the stud next year have the highest NZMW (New Zealand Maternal Worth) we have ever had, averaging 3083, with both DPCR (Dual Purpose Capped Reproduction) and DPG (Dual Purpose Growth) up 9% on average. The pleasing thing is this is on top of DPB (Dual Purpose Breech) been up 33% and DPD (Dual Purpose Dag) up a whopping 49%. Hopefully this gives our clients confidence that while Waimai Romney talks about a “low input sheep,” we are actually selecting animals that genetically will help us achieve this. To quote Deloitte chair Thomas Pippos “Delivering impactful and positive change is much harder than aspiring to do so.”



Interestingly this quote was in reference to his thoughts on our current Prime Minister!!

We continue to be excited by our CharaBlack terminal sheep and believe the opportunities for premiums to be received for quality marbled lamb are not too far away. In Australia this year some Kinross Station Hampshire Down lamb cutlets sold for \$99.90/kg (Aus) at Victor Churchill Fine Family butcher shop in Queen Street, Woollahra! Over several years Tom Bull has been selecting sheep with high levels of intramuscular fat (IMF) or marbling. “Integrating lamb eating quality genetics with consistent feeding and high-end retailing has enabled cutlets to sell for almost \$100/kg in Australia’s oldest continually run butcher shop in Sydney.” We continue to support the PML (Progressive

Meat Ltd) progeny trial, identifying IMF, and also sent 4 CharaBlacks to the South Island Genomic Calibration (SIGC) project that is looking at developing a genomics tool that allows terminal sire breeders to predict which terminal sire rams are likely to produce offspring with better quality meat. We are definitely making progress as 57% of our CharaBlack rams scanned 5 for IMF (highest level) compared to 29% last year. We were also thrilled with the results of this year’s PML progeny trail with Waimai CharaBlacks having 4 of the top 6 rams for marbling (IMF). The top ram was from





***(CharaBlacks Hoggets off to South Island)***

Scott Linklater Charollais stud who we share genetics with. It gives us a lot of confidence that we are producing genetics that hopefully soon will add more value to our client's sheep systems.

Hopefully this newsletter gives you confidence that at Waimai Romney we are working on genetics that will make sheep farming easier and more

profitable. Our whole focus is on Breeding Profitable Low Input Sheep, to improve the profitability and sustainability of our clients' businesses. We don't take this responsibility lightly and will leave no stone unturned in achieving this. As indicated last year our private treaty ram prices, that have remained unchained for the last 3 years, will be going up by \$200, to cover escalating costs that unfortunately we are all facing. We are having our **Open Day on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October** with the **Annual Sale starting at 1pm Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November.**

Take care and we look forward to catching up soon

Regards

Alastair, Ann and Helen

