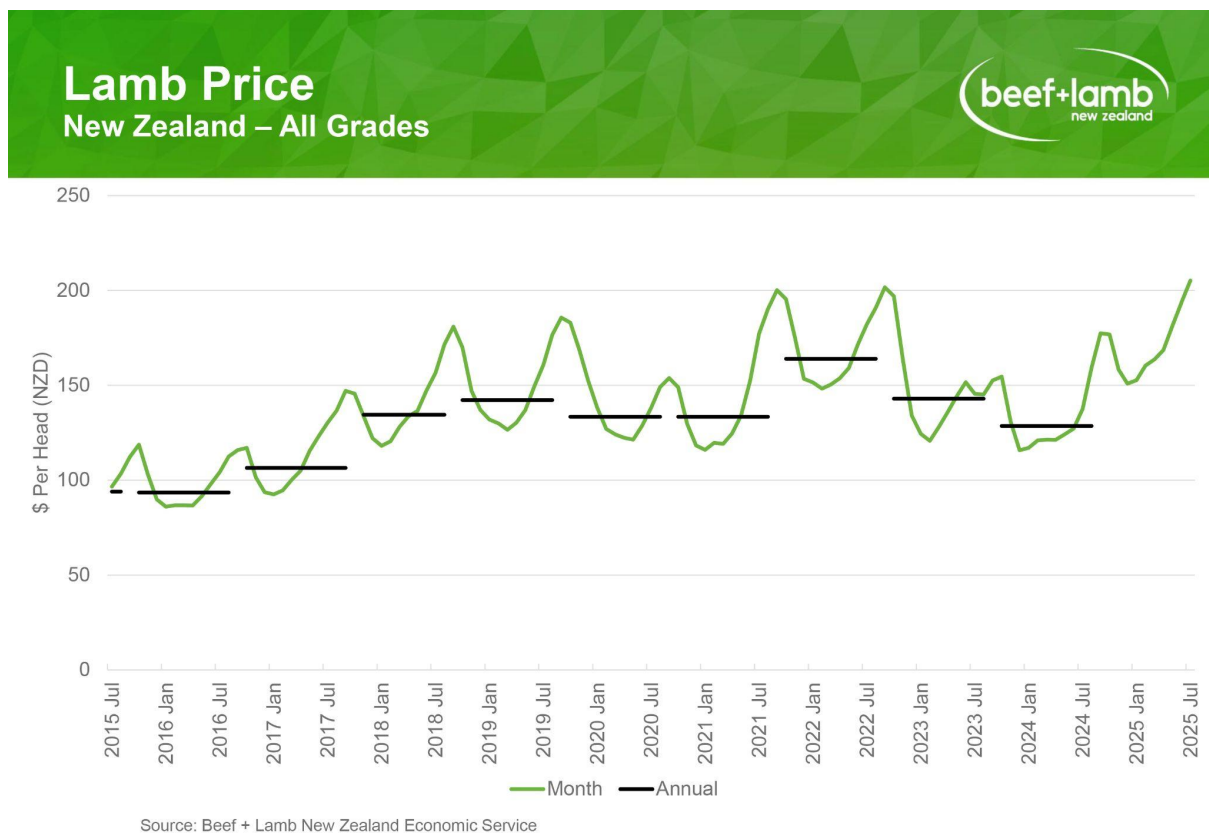




## Waimai Romney 2025

As Forrest Gump said “Life is like a box of chocolates; you never quite know what you are going to get.” This statement could be very much aligned to our sheep & beef industries as the contrast in fortunes over the last few years have been polar opposites! Today we have record product prices and lower interest rates and as an industry we need to enjoy the moment and hopefully our good fortunes continue for a sustained period of time. “New Zealand red meat prices are at record levels and are forecast to remain strong throughout the coming year, with tight global supply keeping demand high,” according to B+LNZ. “Consumers in our markets are paying more for beef & lamb, which is holding prices up, and despite lower export volumes, earnings for New Zealand’s core red meat exports are expected to be up by \$1.4 billion, to \$10.5 billion for the 2024-25 season ending September. This is exceptional news for our farmers after a couple of turbulent years, and underpins the sector's renewed levels of confidence, at its second highest level at any stage across the last decade. We need to “Enjoy the Moment.”



# WAIMAI *Romney*

Brett Stuart and Simon Quilty, principals and owners of US-based Global AgriTrends, said that during more than 20 years providing market intelligence, they had never seen “a more extraordinary time,” in the international industry. “On every front, when it comes to global markets, I truly think we are in a period now where the highs of the market are likely to be next year. It will probably be the sheepmeat sector that will be the first to peak, followed by beef in the latter part of the next year.” Their expectation was that New Zealand steer prices would rise a further 15 per cent and New Zealand prime lamb would achieve \$10/\$11 by mid- 2026. There is no doubt this confidence gives farmers the reason to be very optimistic, but also every reason to keep planning carefully, benchmarking performance and keep investing in areas that will carry their businesses forward into the future.



Hopefully Waimai Romney and our rams are going to provide the genetic traits to carry your businesses into the future. Some traits affect the health of your sheep and their offspring, and therefore your productivity and profitability of your flock (eczema tolerance and worm resistance) while other traits are purely production traits (growth, fertility, survivability), which drive flock performance. We look forward over the coming months to work through those traits that you desire for your individual farm and the environment you live in. Over 80% of your flock's genetic progress is contributed by the sire which makes it a crucial opportunity for you to improve your animals performance.



I believe it is up to each farm manager to do what is best for their livestock by selecting genetics that are productive, profitable and have good animal welfare outcomes. Every farmer has that choice!

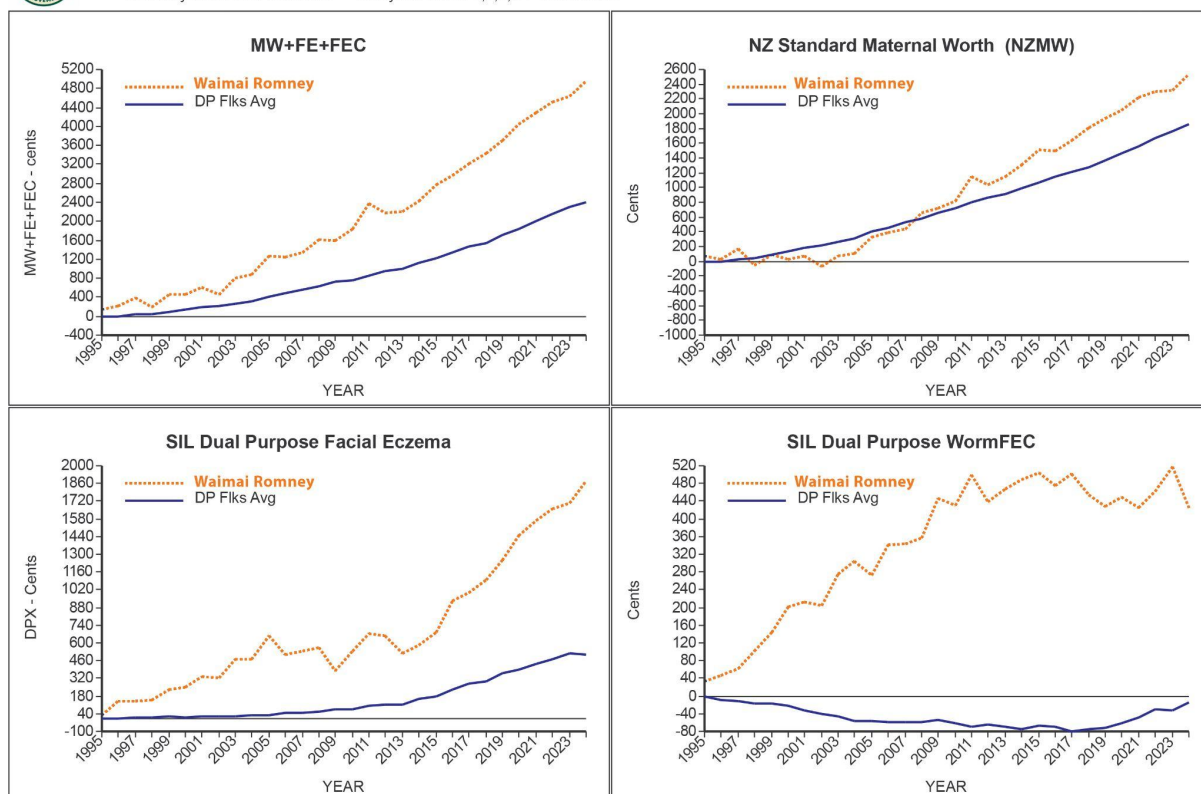
We have just selected the Romney Sires we will be using at Waimai this coming year, having selected our 2024 born rams for our team. High Production traits, and hence high New Zealand Maternal Worth (NZMW) rams continue to drive our sire selection, without losing focus on eczema tolerance and worm resistance. It is the combination of these traits, which we believe, are the traits that are most desired by sheep farmers throughout the country. Combined with low dag score and bare breech, we are striving to breed **Low Input High Profit Genetics**. It is really pleasing to see so many of these Sires being industry trait leaders for a variety of genetic traits which are crucial for a productive & profitable sheep industry. How well sheep perform is due to their genetic makeup and the environment they are farmed in. As each lamb possesses the genes of its parents, you can ensure they are more productive, profitable and better breeders themselves by selecting rams with the best genetic makeup.



## Genetic Trends **Waimai Romney**

GE Analysis #42723 12/9/2025 Analysis Flocks: 1,2,7,8 + 1469 others

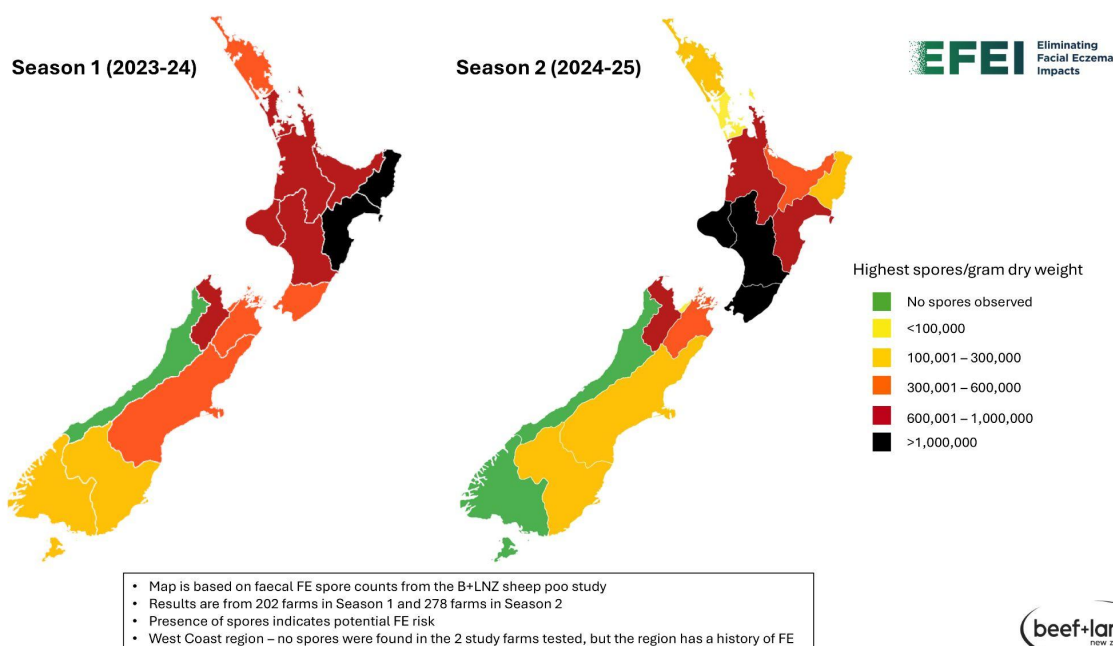
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DPF (Dual Purpose FEC) relates to animals that have been selected to have “resistance” to worm challenges. Breeding for “resistance” means selecting for animals with a low faecal egg count (FEC). These sheep that have been selected for resistance to worms based on a low FEC generally produce fewer worms that are smaller and lay less eggs. They also contaminate pastures less, with lambs generally requiring less drenches in their first year and ewes having a lower peri-parturient rise over lambing. While the heritability of FEC is reasonably low at 0.20, over time these genes will become a crucial tool in helping drench resistance in our nation's sheep flock. In 2017, less than 7% of drench tests showed triple drench resistance. In 2022 this had exploded to 33%, and that is why it is imperative that farmers use high performance resistant genetics as a tool to minimise the threat of drench resistance.

Over the last couple of years Waimai Romney has been involved in the B+LNZ Sheep Poo study, which is trying to better understand where the Facial Eczema (FE) fungus, sporidesmin, is located around New Zealand, what the spore counts look like, and how we can predict risk. Since 2023, over 300 farms across NZ have collected faecal samples from October to May. These samples help track FE fungal spore counts and contribute to a national spore risk map and data to build a FE predictive model. Traditionally thought to be a problem confined to the North Island, the study has revealed that the sporidesmin fungi linked to FE are present from Northland all the way down to Otago!! FE risk isn't just seasonal or regional. B+LNZ have seen spore activity stretch into May and June, with it not being limited by geography. Like winter...Eczema is coming!! It is fantastic to see the DPX for Waimai sires continue to increase as we endeavour to be one of NZ's leading genetic providers for eczema tolerant genetics. The below map makes interesting reading.





In November last year an interesting article came out from AgResearch, with the title “Breeding for low methane a winning approach for productivity and the environment.” Research has shown that you can breed livestock for lower methane emissions while also improving productivity at a greater rate than what the industry is currently achieving. This is very much in line with what we are achieving here at Waimai Romney, with 2023 born ewe lambs with - (negative) methane having a NZMW (New Zealand Maternal Worth) of 2612, and ewe lambs with +(positive) methane having a NZMW of 2383. This is a 9% difference in production, and just shows that selecting for a low methane trait doesn't have to come at the expense of key genetic traits for productivity. Dr Frank Mitloehner, Director of the CLEAR Centre at the University of California, Davis, emphasised that methane should be treated differently from carbon dioxide, that includes using the best metrics that we have to accurately measure the warming impacts of our emissions such as GWP\*. “Countries like New Zealand, with efficient farming systems already in place, have a significant opportunity to lead the way in climate-smart food production.” Mitloehner’s message aligns with our position, that methane should be accurately measured, that our domestic targets are too high and should be amended in line with the principle of no additional warming, and there is no need for a price on agricultural emissions, rather a “carrot,” should be used to manage emissions. We also don't want to see any more productive sheep and beef farms converted into forestry.

It has been very encouraging seeing the genetic work we have done over the last 5 years to select rams with Low Dag score starting to come through in our 2025/26 ram team, with over half the sires having positive (good) DPG (Dual Purpose Dags) scores. We believe that it is very important that all farmers, as much as possible, cull ewes with high dags into a “B” flock, and only breed from ewes with low dag scores. Combined this with **Waimai Romney Low Input Genetics**, will ultimately lead to lower incidences of dagging going forward on your farms. Less dags, less work!!

It's taken a while, but I believe we are starting to see some real “green shoots,” as it relates to the wool industry and wool prices!! It was very encouraging at the National Fieldays to see a more collaborative approach to the wool industry, with industry representatives getting out of their “silos” and listening to what farmers had to say. Wool Research Organisation of NZ (WRONZ), Wool Impact and Campaign for Wool have agreed to work together to create “an enduring industry model for wool.”

# WAIMAI *Romney*

These include the need for strong leadership, for a New Zealand story, to support brands, diverse selling methods, government support, and a funding mechanism to support wool's future. The announcement in June that Bremworth had won a multimillion-dollar Kainga Ora contract to supply wool carpet for new build and retrofitted public housing was a wonderful result after a long road of wool sector lobbying and advocacy at a Government level.

Craig Woolford, CEO of Bremworth, said “the win has far-reaching implications for public sector procurement, the rural community and the broader property development industry. “This isn't just a commercial contract, it's a signal to the entire construction sector that wool carpet meets the durability, safety and sustainability standards expected of any high-traffic housing environment. It's proof that when put on a level playing field, NZ-made natural fibres can not only compete, but they can win!”

Richard Young, Chair of Wools of NZ(WNZ), said “in the past year, ending 30 March, strong wool returns rose \$1kg, reaching \$3.50kg, almost double the 2021 price, and with WNZ recently offering growers strong wool

contracts of \$5kg clean, farmers can feel some confidence that wool is starting to add value to sheep farmers bottom line! While wool weight is no longer recorded at Waimai Romney, we are very focused on producing a bright, white wool of medium micron, with no wool breaks. This is to ensure the quality of ours and our clients wool, with colour at the forefront of improved pricing, along with low VM (vegetable matter) and length.





Tom and I are both really excited about the CharaBlack rams we will be marketing this year. They continue to impress with their wedge shaped structure, good feet, and thickness over the top, which has been reflected in some magnificent EMA scanning results during the winter. CharaBlack 248/24 had our highest EMA reading of 31.8cm<sup>2</sup>, which measures the cross-sectional area of the longissimus dorsi muscle (also called the ribeye) between the 12th and 13th ribs, and is used as an objective measure of muscling in sheep. This ram also had an IMF (Intramuscular Fat) score of 5, which is the highest IMF score. Needless to say we will be keeping this ram in our stud, to produce high muscled juice tender lamb! We are also keeping two other 2024 born CharaBlacks, 72/24 who also has an exceptional EMA of 29cm<sup>2</sup>, was used as a ram lamb, and is ranked 5th overall for NZTW+MQ+IMF (2167) and 1446/24 who is the highest growth ram of his year (1440) and ranked 2nd overall for NZTW+MQ+IMF. It is these combinations of genetics, Growth, EMA, and Eating Quality that we believe the industry needs, to deliver the “taste sensation,” that our discerning lamb customers demand.

It is interesting that Alliance Group and Progressive Meat Ltd (PML) both have MEQ (Meat Eating Quality) probes in some of their plants throughout NZ to analyse intramuscular fat (IMF) in lamb, which is a key indicator of tenderness, juiciness, and flavour. Providing farmers with immediate objective feedback about the quality of their animals, supports them to make more informed decisions about breeding, feeding and livestock management.



**Alliance Group launches world-leading AI-driven meat quality insights for farmers**



It is really encouraging to see this year's lamb and beef prices projected to be at their highest level in the last 10 years. This combined with low interest rates is really positive for our industry. Enjoy them, as we are never sure what chocolates we are going to get in the coming years!!

We will be having our **Open Day on Thursday 16th October** where we would love to see everyone. It will be between **10am - 4pm**. Jason Archer, B+LNZ Head of Genetics, will share some current work supporting the NZ sheep industry and discuss evolving global perspectives and approaches on methane in livestock systems. Additionally, Jason will introduce a new tool in development to help farmers make informed breeding decisions and track genetic progress in their flock for all traits. This presentation is scheduled to start at **12.30pm** over lunch.

Our **Waimai Romney Sale** is going to be on **Thursday 6th November at 1pm**, with private treaty rams to be sold the following weeks. We look forward to seeing you all over the ram selling season. Please take the time to fill out the enclosed order form to make sure we meet all your genetic requirements. Take care and look after each other.

Kind regards

Alastair, Ann, Helen and Tom

