



## Summer 2015 Newsletter

[www.limousin.co.nz](http://www.limousin.co.nz)

### Welcome!

Happy New Year!

It is encouraging to hear and read about the success Limousin has been enjoying in recent livestock sales. Although beef schedules were at historically high levels pre-Christmas, buyers were willing to pay a premium for Limousin infused stock. Exceptional returns were made for cull cows up north while prime cattle in the south achieved record top prices.

Also positive was the success on the showing circuit with a Limousin cow and calf taking out the All Breeds at the Canterbury A & P Show and going on to be 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Meat & Wool Cup.

The inaugural on-line female sale has just finished and we thank Peta Lean for undertaking this new initiative. Although there were only three weeks of auctions, there was clearly a genuine interest from people from outside the Limousin group for high quality seedstock. It sounds like we will be getting a new member from this initiative.

On-line selling is now a common method of selling livestock (e.g. PGG Wrightsons) and a couple of breeders have had success with Trade-Me recently. It is an effective way of promoting the breed to a wider audience and potentially attracting new members.



Have you seen this symbol used when selling animals? Why not become a member of the Limousin Assured Programme? It's easy.



We welcome on board as an associate member Sarah O'Connell from Dunsandel. Sarah works as an extension officer for Beef & Lamb New Zealand and has previously worked in rural banking. She has also worked for the Ben More stud so has plenty of experience working with Limousin. Sarah came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 2014 Tasman Regional Finals of Young Farmer of the Year and administers the rural ambassador portfolio for the Royal Agricultural Society's National Youth Council. Sarah has an Angus stud and is a successful exhibitor most recently winning supreme champion at Ellesmere A& P Show. She regularly uses a Limousin as cover for the AI. Two weeks' ago Sarah successfully completed the Coast to Coast in a mother/daughter team coming fourth! It is fabulous to have a young, involved and successful rural-minded woman showing an interest in the breed.

Finally, the NZ AGM and Conference will be held at Lincoln this year (16-18 May) and a flyer is attached. It promises to be a great weekend with an interesting and varied programme. There will be a tour of Christchurch and the rebuild, visits to three studs including a structural workshop, an evening dinner at Lincoln University, and finishing at the South Island Bull Sale. Please book accommodation early as space is limited due to demand from people having their homes EQC repaired.

## Piwakawaka Limousin

Marilyn Montgomery and Gary Kennett established their Piwakawaka Limousin stud in 2006 on their lifestyle property near Lincoln. They were first introduced to Limousin by Warren Millar who leased them a yearling bull to service some cross-bred heifers. The resulting progeny were exceptional and their interest in Limousin grew from that.

Their foundation cows were primarily from the Silverstream and Topaki studs with more recent bloodlines coming from the Ben More, Snake Gully and Glencairn studs.



Grayleen Burgomaster (polled) was purchased in 2009 and used for a couple of years as their cover bull.

In the first few years they dabbled with some ET work with varying success although one IVF heifer calf (Piwakawaka Erin) has grown out to be an exceptional cow. In 2009 Gary did an AI course in Australia and now does all the AI work in spring. In 2013 he trained as an embryo transfer technician in Mississippi although has never practised here.

In 2008 Marilyn and Gary travelled to Italy for the International Limousin Conference and found the whole experience quite exhilarating.

In 2010 they moved to a new property less suited to cattle grazing. Warrick and Cece James were also moving properties at about the same time. They extended an invitation to move the stud up

to their new property at Flagpole (near Darfield) and run the animals with the Ben More stud. The grazing environment at Flagpole is similar to the Limoges area of France with hot, dry summers and very cold winters. The Limousin cattle have thrived at Flagpole! This arrangement has worked out very well and allowed an opportunity for genetics to be shared.

Marilyn and Gary will continue to keep their stud size small in number at around 16-18 breeding cows but focus on quality. The majority of the cows and heifers are bred to AI in Nov/Dec with varying cover bulls to suit.

They have used a variety of AI sires but perhaps the three most influential sires include ROMN Justice (outstanding temperament), Mandayen Vision (muscle, frame and milk), and Mandayen Guardian (short gestation).

They currently have calves on the ground to Wulfs Xtractor, Vision, RUNL Stetson, and DV Enterprise. This season they have also used CF Jim Dandie and Froghollow X-Man.

Their two main herd sires are Glencairn Gentle Giant (jointly owned by Ben More and purchased at the 2013 South Island Bull Sale) and Piwakawaka Jump Start.



A Mandayen Guardian son that sold well at the 2012 South Island bull sale.

They have tended to move towards polled bloodlines and have found their best success using polled AI sires over quality FF cows. They

have some blacks in the mix but aren't aggressively pursuing this option. Their main focus is on producing moderately framed, functional cattle that are a pleasure to handle.

Gary feels that there could be more emphasis among breeders in improving maternal qualities. These include more milk (improves weaning weights), increased scrotal size (decreases age of puberty in heifers), and shorter gestation (aiming to get this 5-7 days shorter over time).

They understand the perils of single trait chasing. A wise breeder once advised them to breed back to the middle (i.e. avoid extremes) and there is merit in that.

Both are ruthless on temperament and have aggressively culled animals not showing good docility. The breed should be very proud of the improvements made in temperament over the last 10 years or more. They will only sell animals for breeding that they would be happy using themselves.

Marilyn and Gary regularly show cattle at the Canterbury A&P Show and also exhibit on occasions at Malvern and Oxford Shows. They work closely with the Ben More team in the preparation of animals.



A yearling heifer (s: Vision) at the 2012 Oxford Show

They won the All Breeds class with an outstanding cow and calf combination last November and went on to be placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Meat & Wool Cup. The line-up of Limousin

cattle in the Grand Parade was impressive with animals from three studs, Piwakawaka, Ben More and Pinedale (John & Jean Mawle), being paraded. It has been quite a few years since so many Limousin were on display in New Zealand.



Piwakawaka Erin with bull calf-at-foot (s: Vision) after winning All Breeds at 2014 Canterbury A&P Show.

Marilyn has perhaps the better eye for structure given her horse background and has shown an interest in judging in the future. Gary enjoys the genetics side of breeding and the data behind it. Both enjoy working with cattle and meeting people with a similar interest. They have forged lifetime friendships from this.



Limousin cattle (11 animals) being paraded in the 2014 Canterbury A&P Grand Parade.

Both believe the Limousin breed has an important role to play in the future beef industry in this country. They feel breeders need to remain true-to-type but be willing to evolve as market demands change. Limousin needs to provide a point-of-difference with a demonstrative economic benefit before the traditional British breeders will be willing to change their breeding programmes. There are some signs that things are changing.

## From the Chair

If it is not the cold and wet affecting grass growth, it is the dry and heat contributing to a shortage of feed.

I do feel for those of you who are adversely affected by this summer's beach holiday weather, and I hope the autumn will be kinder to you.

Spring and early summer stock sales have realised some very good returns compared to previous years on the back of a strengthened NZ dollar, and to date, those prices have remained stable.

I am encouraged to see the result and reward of those breeders who have invested in new and influential blood lines. The South Island Bull Trial is hosting such genetics along with some excellent home bred blood lines and as I follow the monthly reports and comment on the bulls, my interest grows. It really goes without saying, the need to continue to promote the breed in this way is an integral part of our APG's (area promotion groups) marketing and promotion Strategy.



The APG's NILBG and the SILBG, continue to work toward promotion and awareness through the elite bull trial and sale process. However, it is very important to remain focused on the goals and processes when delivering a product such as our elite Limousin seed stock. Maintaining a criteria of selection and quality should be uppermost throughout the bull trial and sale process.

On a positive note, I have been privileged to have been invited to judge during the A&P show

circuit this season throughout the country, in both Breed classes and All Breeds classes. The standard of animals presented across all of the breeds has been extremely high and those who exhibit certainly expose their product to the wider farming community and general public for scrutiny. Limousin have held their own and represented the breed and fellow breeders with distinction. For that, I congratulate them all.

It was Gary Kennett and Marilyn Montgomery's senior cow with calf which took out top honours in a very strong All Breeds competition at the Christchurch Show winning the Supreme award. Comment and feedback from fellow competitors and cattle breeders alike in the public arena confirmed the exhibit as being a worthy and true winner.

Membership remains stable, and as we sometimes lose membership new members seem to come along and take their place. While we as individuals continue to be successful in our own breeding and farming models, we must always be aware of the need to nurture and encourage new members. The strength of our membership is the success and strength of the breed in our region.

Best Regards,

Daryl Bott [Chairman LBBNZ]



Grandad's little helper with the 'girls'

## North Island Limousin Breeders' Inc

It was a privilege to have been appointed Chair of the North Island Group at the last AGM. Many thanks to Robert Hunt (Huntlands) for taking on the role of Secretary and Marion Wickens (ex Sentosa) the role of Treasurer for the coming year. I appreciate their support going forward. Marion and Kevin Wickens have sold their property and stud it is particularly pleasing to have retained their skills and wisdom within the group. Aaran Pascoe has picked up the Sentosa Stud name.

Plans are underway to revitalise the North Island Limousin Breeders Group. By spreading the meetings further across the North Island it is hoped to include more members in decision-making and activities. Meetings are planned to cover the North Island throughout the year and with an early indication of the times and venues it allows members, old and new, to make arrangements for the longer journeys.

The 21<sup>st</sup> North Island Bull Trial is well underway at the Limax property in Waikato (Bucklands Road). Our experienced Convenor Allan McKenzie has plans for Sale Day well in hand. Allan is keen that we celebrate the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday of the sale.

The new inaugural Female Online Sale took place during the first three weeks of February 2015. Generic Limousin advertisements were placed in the New Zealand Farmer two weeks prior to each weekly sale, directing readers to our New Zealand Website: [www.limousinnz.co.nz](http://www.limousinnz.co.nz) Pedigrees of the sale entries were available and the catalogue for each heifer was online for the week in which the sale occurred. While it is disappointing to only have six heifers on offer, it achieved the goal of getting more Limousin females into the marketplace. It was hoped there might be mature cows and cows with calves afoot on offer – maybe next year.

Our meeting schedule for the year was set at the last North Island Limousin Breeders' meeting and everyone is welcome, particularly any new or returning members.

I look forward to 2015 with enthusiasm and anticipation.

Peta Lean

Date	Venue (Stud)	Issues
April 19?	Limax or Kivlean, Matamata or Cambridge	<b>Structure Workshop</b> – Limousin and Other breeds person to assess current bulls  Review of Female Sale  Getting ready for the Bull Trial Sale
2 June		Bull Trial Sale at Bucklands Rd, Waikato
July 12	Mangatarā, Dannevirke	<b>Review of Bull Trial and Sale</b>  2016 National AGM Planning  Advertising  Guest Speaker
End September	Caberfeidh, Wellsford	Open for suggestions
November	AGM- Pukekohe	

## North Island Bull Trial

The 2015 crop of bulls are heavier on average than last year's group. Growing conditions have been good and the bulls are blooming. The mob of 13 apricot registered bulls has settled into the routine of yarding and weighing very well. Richard and Diana Maxwell (Limax Enterprises) are pleased with the progress of the bulls so far.

The average weight of the bulls at the mid-January weigh was 582kg with weights ranging from 468 to 722kg. Two Huntlands bulls came

into the trial as the heaviest bulls and are still the heaviest bulls, followed by the Kivlean bull. Huntlands Gideon (s: Mandayen Guardian) is 96 kg heavier than the next heaviest Huntlands bull.



On average the bulls have gained 152kg since weighing started in mid-October. While a Ngarimu bull gained the most weight last month, two Sentosa bulls have the greatest weight gain over the three months with one of the Sentosa bulls gaining 2kg per day. The Kivlean bull has the third highest weight gain. The Sentosa Stud is now owned by Aaran Pascoe who has taken over the Sentosa name.

After the wash out of the December inspection day, inspection finally took place mid-January. A small number of bulls have a watch on their structure and docility. The North Island Limousin Breeders Group are keen to maintain the high standards of docility and structure which have been developed over the last 20 years of the trial. Scanning is booked in for April, along with an independent structural assessment prior to sale.

Planning is well underway for the 21<sup>st</sup> Bull Trial sale with Convenor, Allan McKenzie working on the catalogue for the June 2 sale at the Bucklands Rd property in the Waikato. The catalogue will be available on the NZ website well in time for prospective buyers to study the bulls on offer prior to the June sale.

The links to the pedigrees of the bulls on offer can be found on the bottom of the introductory article on the NZ Website [www.limosinnz.co.nz](http://www.limosinnz.co.nz)

Peta Lean

## Limousin Shines at Canterbury Park

The annual “on the hoof” cattle competition was run the week before the Canterbury A&P at Canterbury Park sale yards in Christchurch. The steers and heifers were judged “on the hoof” on the Monday evening with all entrants put “under the hammer” the next day. Trophies were presented to the best steer/heifer, the best pairs, and the supreme winner.

Entries were strong across a number of breeds, including other exotic breeds, with Limousin coming out on top.

A two year old Limousin steer weighing 630kg and entered by local farmer Tony Partridge won the overall supreme award. It sold for a record price of \$3.19/kgLW (\$2010 gross).

In the pairs section two Limousin heifers averaging 565kg and entered by local farmer John McDrury also cleaned up. They sold for \$3.13/kgLW which again got the crowd excited. Both heifers were bred by Warrick James (Ben More Graziers).

Warrick also sold a stunning 610kg heifer for a very respectable \$3.09/kgLW and another heifer weighing 555kg sold by John McDrury went for \$3.08/kgLW.

In all the top five prices paid at the sale were for Limousin cattle. Other prime steers went for \$2.65 to \$3.00 and heifers \$2.50 to \$2.97. It was clear that a premium was on offer for Limousin genetics.

Note: There is quite a disparity between the North and South Island beef schedules. The North Island schedule is traditional higher than that of the South.

## Cull Cow makes top money

Beef schedules rose to historical highs late last year on the back of a high NZD and good demand from North American markets.

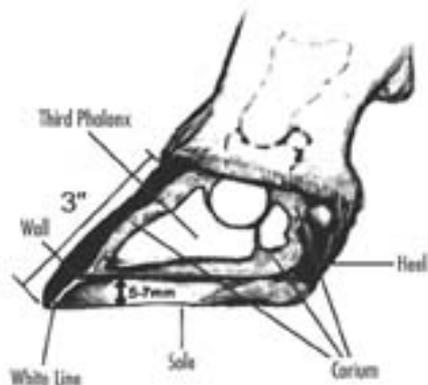
Natalie Roberts (Snake Gully) sent a four year old cull cow to the works before Christmas. She weighed 726kgs live weight and made \$2226.59 net after deductions. That works out at an incredible \$3.06/kgLW. Natalie was very pleased and is now looking at her other cows in a different light!

## The Influence of Nutrition on Hoof Growth and Cracking

The vast majority of research into cow lameness has been carried out on dairy cows. However some of the results are applicable to the beef industry too.

Hoof health is affected by many different nutrients. Trace minerals such as zinc, copper, and manganese are important in sound hooves. Vitamins A, D and biotin play a role in hoof development. Fatty acids also play a role in maintaining a waterproof barrier in the hoof. Finally calcium and phosphorus benefit hoof and

Bone integrity. Since all these ingredients play a role, there isn't one 'silver bullet' that will solve hoof crack problems if all the needed nutrients aren't available.



Hoof cracking is most common in older cows due to a loss of the ability to keep the hoof hydrated. A deficiency of copper or zinc appears to be related to this condition. Our forages tend to be low in zinc and copper.

What is interesting for us as breeders in that trace element requirements have been shown to differ between breeds. For example, Simmental, Maine Anjou, Limousin and Charolais appear to need as much as 1.5 times more copper as other common breeds.

**Copper:** Copper has an important role in strengthening horn and connective tissue of the foot. Cattle suffering from a subclinical copper deficiency are more susceptible to heel cracks, foot rot and sole abscesses. Availability of

copper is greatly diminished by high levels of sulfur, molybdenum, zinc and iron.

**Zinc** activates enzymes and is a component of metalloenzymes. Deficiency signs include skin dermatitis (parakeratosis), lesions, failure of wound healing, and reduced reproductive performance.

What can we do to improve hoof health in beef cattle?

The most prudent approach would be to understand your local situation better through testing (bloods and soil). Work with your local vet who should have a sound understanding of local conditions.

Good management will usually involve copper boluses or injections as part of their trace element programme and/or supplementing with MultiMin + Cu. MultiMin includes Zn.

A word of warning though – trace elements like copper are highly toxic if over administered. Copper is added to a number of other animal products so check first.

Adapted from an article by Matt Friend 2005

Footnote: The writer administers a 30g Cu bolus to all older stock and 20g Cu bolus to weaners around June. They also get a long-acting selenium injection at the same time. There has been a significant improvement in coat colour, general well-being, and fertility since this programme was initiated five years' ago.

### Proto testing & DNA typing

A reminder that a single hair sample can now be used to test for parentage, DNA type, proto status, polledness, colour, etc through University of Queensland.

Kits are available from the ALBS office. You will not be charged unless they are used so it is advisable to order a few extra.

Send samples in a suitably labelled envelope to Daryl Bott, Waiau Pa Road, RD 4, Pukekohe 2679. Ph (09) 232 1468.

## **SOUTH ISLAND BULL TRIAL**

There are eight registered South Island breeders involved this year's South Island Bull Trial. This is the 7<sup>th</sup> continuous year it has been run.

At this stage the bulls range in age from 16 to 18 months and are starting to gain some serious size and maturity. Four bulls have been culled since the beginning of the trial to ensure that only the best go forward for cataloguing.

At the last weigh-in (3 February) the average weight was 616kg with two bulls weighing in at an incredible 750kg and 742kg. It is clear that superior genetics are starting to show through as they have all been on the same feed management regime since August and most have completed their compensatory growth.

The group have put on an impressive 294kgs since the first weight-in (3 Sept) and even with a serious drought in Canterbury managed a pleasing 1.2kg/day average during January.

The bulls include full French, pure, four blacks and a range of polled. There are three ET calves and a couple from AI (s: Vision and Stetson). It is a wonderful mix of 'old' and 'new'! Amongst the group are some genuine future stud sires as well as many excellent commercial sires.

Over the next month the group will be independently inspected, scanned for fats (including IMF) and eye muscle, and be fertility tested to ensure everything is in good working order!

DNA test have been completed with all bulls carrying both copies of F94L "double muscle" gene, and all are proto free. One polled bull tested homozygous polled (i.e. all progeny will be polled).

This group of bulls is a real credit to the breeders involved and we hope they attract the buyer interest they deserve.

Sale Day is Monday 18 May (1pm) and PGG Wrightson are the auctioneers. Please contact one of us if you would like a copy of a catalogue.

As has happened in the past there will be an invitational female sale following the bull sale. At this stage we have about six quality heifers registered for the sale. There will also be some semen packages available.

We thank Merial and Virbac for their ongoing support for the South Island Bull Trial. If you have an opportunity to use any of their products or are speaking to one of their reps please let them know that their involvement is appreciated.

Warrick James (Convenor) 03 318 2352

Gary Kennett (Secretary) 03 329 6380

## **2015 AGM**

This year's AGM and Conference will be based at Lincoln 16 -18 May. A flyer with the programme is attached. Registrations have been encouraging with 12 North Island breeders confirming their attendance as well as five from Australia! There will be a good contingent from the South island so it should be a very enjoyable weekend.

An interesting and diverse programme is proposed that will include a tour around Christchurch to see how far the re-build has come, visit to three studs, a structural assessment workshop, dinner at Lincoln University, and attendance at the South Island Bull Sale.

