



LIMOUSIN
Carcase, Yield, Efficiency.



Autumn 2012 Newsletter

www.limousin.co.nz

Welcome to Autumn!

We congratulate **Daryl Bott** on his election as our ALBS Director. We sincerely thank **Frank Rientjes** for his tireless efforts in raising the NZ profile amongst our Australian cousins.

We also congratulate **Peta Lean** and **Stephen Clearwater** who have been elected to the NZ Council for a two year term. Thank you to **Bob Neill** for his enthusiasm and passion for Limousin, and to **Stephen Clearwater** who steps down as President after four years.

Both new terms begin after the AGM.

In this newsletter we profile the **Clearwater's** herd in Southland. The 2011 AGM & Conference visited their farm and the consistent quality and even temperament of their stock was evident.

There are some great Limousin success stories out there. We need to share these with the greater farming public so that the benefits of using Limousin genetics are more widely known.

Ben More Graziers recently sent 10 young bulls to the Works, achieved an average hooked weight of 444kgs and grossed \$2000 + GST each. Not bad for cull bulls that had been allowed to grow out. The better ones had been sold for commercial and stud use!

Best wishes for a kind autumn.

Limousin NZ AGM

This year's Limousin NZ AGM will be held at The Grand Chancellor, cnr Kirkbride and Ascot Roads, Air Port Oaks, Mangere, Auckland. (approx. 3km from the airport).

Meeting start time 1.00pm 22 April 2012.

Limousin NZ Conference

As you know this year's conference is going to be held in Victoria, Australia. The group flies out immediately after the AGM. There has been a pleasing response. Along with visits to a number of leading studs, the NZ contingent will attend the Australian AGM and the National Show & Sale at Wodonga.

It will be a great opportunity to see some fantastic stud cattle, as well as to meet leading Australian breeders and build relationships.

Inquiries to **Daryl Bott** (09) 232 1468.

Welcomes

We welcome **Michelle & Andrew Dykstra** as new members. They operate a passionfruit orchard near Tauranga with the balance of the 95 acres available for grazing. Their foundations cows are predominantly from the Millhouse stud dispersal with 20 breeding cows and 11 R3 heifers.

We also welcome **Karl & Naomi Foster** from the winterless north (Kaitaia) who have also recently joined the society.

We wish them a long and successful association with Limousin.

Breeder Profile



Stephen & Belinda Clearwater farm near Dipton in Southland. Stephen has been the NZ President for the past four years and their commitment to the breed is evident by the commentary below. Their stud name is Black Creek.

“In the late 80s we decided we quite liked the look of Limousins and that there was something quite special about them. So we took a trip to Canterbury and bought our first bull from the James Benmore stud to put over our 20 assorted commercial cows. The progeny impressed us enough that in 1991 we went back and bought our first stud females from Benmore and Inverugie, and a bull from Avalon at Tuatapere. We continued to build up numbers purchasing females from the Benmore sales and also from a Pakuri Brook

dispersal sale. More recently we purchased several Snake Gully females.

The successful bulls purchased over the years have been Avalon Jagger (Kinburn Alacazam) and then Benmore Pablo in 1996 (Goldenview Revamp) from whom we bred Blackcreek Senior. We had two Snake Gully bulls Target and Ultra Sonic (Gagnant) from whom we bred Blackcreek Aaron who left extremely good females. In 2005 we bought Glencairn York (Ionesco) at the North Island Bull Trial Sale and we are currently using two of his progeny Blackcreek Echo and Glen. In 2008 we bought Snake Gully Brady (Jockey) in partnership with Judy Miller and Clark Scott and are using his son Iron. We also have a Patocle son Helm and a ROMN Justice son Hammond in use.



We are excited about Glencairn York being in the Australian Information Nucleus Project. It was quite a process to get semen off him and to Australia in time for the second group inseminations. It arrived on the day it was needed at the last minute after months of working through the process.

We are looking forward to seeing how his progeny perform over there. They have been very successful for us.

For the last four years we have been share farming Judy Miller and Clark Scott's Loch Head Stud. We have really enjoyed this partnership and I think both sides have gained from working together. In return for grazing their cows we get half the calves. With the replacement heifers we have turns at picking them. The proceeds from anything that is killed or sold (apart from the cows) is shared. So we have gained a number of females with different genetics. Jude and Clark have also had the use of our bulls plus Snake Gully Brady who we own together. It has kept their herd together. Recently they took them home to farm themselves.



Over the last three years the cows have been run on our two hill blocks. One is a few paddocks with tussock blocks above and the other is mainly limestone and tussock hill type country. This has been reasonably hard on the cattle with no easy country. In the past we have run these hill blocks in conjunction with the

540 acres of heavy flats but they were leased to a dairy farmer for three years. We got this back in September so the stock is very forward.

Over the past few months we have sold all four of our blocks including our house with 20 acres around it to four different people and bought a new farm near Lumsden. Apart from the stud we will be grazing up to 1200 dairy heifers at different times of the year. We are pleased to find somewhere and looking forward to having one block and no roads to worry about.

We have three sons aged 26, 22 and 20 and a four year old grandson and one year old granddaughter. All the boys are interested in farming one way or another including Blake, our four year old grandson. Each of the boys has a couple of cows in their own right.

As far as cattle breeds go Limousin has something extra. It's hard to describe but most of you know what I mean. We have gained a lot of enjoyment out of the stud and the way we get to meet so many people throughout NZ and internationally."



North Island Bull Trial 2011/12 Update

The sale date is confirmed for Tuesday 5 June, 1pm. Viewing from 11am. The sale will be held on-farm at Glenlea Stud, Morrinsville.

At the most recent weighing (24 Feb) the 23 bulls averaged 546kg with a top weight of 664kg. They are looking good!

Inquiries to Daryl Bott (09) 232 1468.



South Island Bull Trial 2011/12 Update

The sale date is confirmed for Monday 21 May, 1pm. Viewing from 11am. The sale will be held on-farm at Dunsandel.

At the most recent weighing (5 Mar) which was well attended by participating breeders the 17 bulls averaged 582kg with a top weight of 738kg. Loads of muscle!

Inquiries to Gary Kennett (03) 329 6380.



Snake Gully 18th Annual Bull Sale

The sale date is confirmed for Tuesday 12 June, 1pm at the Maungakaremea Salesyards. Lunch will be provided.

The sale will include about 18 R2 bulls with a good mix of proven and new genetics, some exclusive to Snake Gully. Some females may be offered.

Inquiries to Dannie & Bethley O'Shea (09) 434 7826 or Natalie Roberts (09) 437 7944.



NZ Website

A reminder about the NZ website (www.limousin.co.nz) which includes updates, a "for sale" section and current information. The website is a useful vehicle for you to contribute ideas and information so please make use of it.

If you have any articles, photos or experiences of interest please contact Gary at gmkenett@paradise.net.nz or phone (03) 329 6380.

Semen

Semen is available for sale from Glencairn York and Springcreek Ace at \$25 + GST per straw. Details on the website.

NZ Director's Report

Frank Rientjes reports from the most recent ALBS Board meeting:

Financial: ALBS remains in a very sound financial position. The Information Nucleus Project is our biggest financial risk but I am pleased to report that currently everything is running to budget and prices are good for the first groups to go to slaughter.

AGM: The 2012 ALBS AGM will be at Wodonga during the National Show and Sale. It is great that NZ members are putting together a trip to Australia that will take in this event as well as provide some visiting time to breeders in Australia. I commend Gary Kennett and Daryl Bott for their efforts in putting this together and I am sure that with Alex McDonald's help organising at the other end this will be an interesting and worthwhile trip for those who choose to participate.

Junior Membership: The NZ Junior membership stands at four. Your directors have a commitment to growing this number as it is the future of the breed. Please consider enrolling your children and encourage their participation.

Limousin Assurance Program training tools: The Board has approved expenditure on a DVD which will help members understand and use the LAP programme. The DVD will be posted on the website on completion.

Information Nucleus Project: There is a lot happening on the project at this time. The heifers from Cycle 1 were slaughtered in December 2011 and the steers are due to leave the feedlot for the works in early March. At slaughter standard carcass measurements are taken and meat samples are collected for testing for eating quality traits. Calves are on the ground for the second cycle and the AI programme for the third crop is progressing. We had an issue with a co-operator herd withdrawing from Cycle 3. However this herd has now been replaced and final AI will be completed in May. The project is running well.

Genomic testing: The Board is committed to working with various groups involved in genetic evaluation and improvement. We have committed to testing on the CRC/MLA 50k programme as well as other genomics programmes.

Protoporphyrin: I reported to the Board the issues encountered and the positive response and reaction from NZ members in dealing not only with the two positive tests but also actions moving forward to protect the NZ herd integrity. The Board was impressed with the manner in which this has been dealt with.

DNA Testing: Some DNA tests are not 100% reliable (e.g. the horn/poll test). Members who are doing DNA testing should ensure that they understand the accuracy of results particularly where they are using this information for sales purposes.

Regional Grants and support: The 2012 budget includes regional grants at the same level as in previous years. Limousin NZ will again have these extra funds for local promotional work.

Protoporphyrin

At least 150 animals have been tested for protoporphyria since Spring. Breeders are to be congratulated on their positive response. Of these 98% have been found to be proto free (PN).

The easiest way to reduce the natural incidence of proto amongst our stud cattle is to use non-carrier sires. It is of lesser concern in cross-breeding programmes.

If you would like to have your herd sire(s) or cows tested you should send a hair sample in a normal envelope clearly marked with the identification number of the animal to **Daryl Bott**. Daryl's postal address is Waiau Pa Rd, RD4 Pukekohe 2679. The cost is AUD\$35.

SCROTAL SIZE IN THE LIMOUSIN BREED

The following article is adapted from information on the ALBS website.

Scrotal Size and Age of Puberty

The relationship between scrotal size in bulls and the age of puberty in heifers is well established. The sisters and daughters of bulls with larger testicles tend to reach puberty earlier. In simple terms scrotal circumference in bulls and puberty in females are essentially the same trait.

Therefore heifers will generally reach puberty at a younger age if sired by bulls with larger scrotal size. This is particularly important if yearling heifers are being mated.

How do Limousins Compare?

The following table is from some USA research in the 1980s. It shows how Limousins compare with other breeds for age at puberty and average scrotal size. It shows that Limousin has the smallest scrotal size and the latest age of puberty of the breeds shown, and that breeds with larger scrotal size also have earlier age of puberty. Note that selective breeding since the 1980s has increased the average scrotal size of Limousin.

| | Heifer age at puberty | S.C. yearling bull |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Gelbvieh | 341 | 34.8 |
| Angus | 372 | 32.8 |
| Simmental | 390 | 30.7 |
| Hereford | 390 | 30.7 |
| Charolais | 398 | 30.5 |
| Limousin | 398 | 30.2 |
| Average | 368 | 32.3 |

Scrotal size and fertility.

For a bull to be fertile the "rule of thumb" is that he should have a minimum scrotal size of 32cm. This is based on research that shows that the incidence of poor semen in bulls with more than 32cm scrotal size is very low but increases in bulls below 32cm. However, bulls with less than 32cm can still be fertile.

How heritable is scrotal size?

Scrotal size is a highly inheritable trait (around 50%) so the average scrotal size of the breed can be changed quite quickly with selective breeding. This in turn will decrease the age at puberty of the daughters.

The effect of shape on the measurement.

Testicle shape in Limousin is not significantly different from the other breeds and should not be used as an excuse for keeping a bull with a small scrotal circumference.

Can young bulls with small testicles have large testicles at an older age?

With very few exceptions bulls with below average scrotal size at a young age will have below average testicles at older ages and at maturity.

The effect of nutrition

Nutrition can have a major effect on scrotal size. Under good nutrition, scrotal size increases by about one cm per month between 10 and 14 months of age. Under poor nutrition the growth may be very slow. This means that the bulls simply take longer to reach their maximum scrotal size.

Under good nutrition, Limousin bulls are likely to reach close to their maximum

scrotal size by two years of age. Good nutrition would be reflected by a weight of 600kg or more at two years.

Do we need EBVs for Scrotal size?

The advantage of EBVs is that they take out the effect of nutrition and allow direct comparison of sires used in different herds.

One cm difference in scrotal size EBV is equivalent to about 15 days earlier average age at puberty in daughters.

EBVs for scrotal size for many sires are published in the Limousin Sire and Dam Summary. EBVs for the female fertility trait Days to Calving are also published. As a general rule sires with positive EBVs for scrotal size breed daughters with negative (favourable) EBVs for Days to Calving.

YARD WEANING LINKED TO GROWTH

The Autumn 2010 newsletter included an article that made reference to the Australian experience of yard weaning and how this had been adopted in NZ.

“Research carried out by the Beef CRC and Meat & Livestock Australia showed simple techniques, like yard weaning calves, can not only increase their weight gain but also decrease animal sicknesses and make the cattle easier to handle.”

“We really got a wake-up call when members of our BPP visited Australia earlier this year and witnessed first-hand the impact that yard weaning can have on temperament, health and growth rate,” Mr Wauchop said.

Some Limousin breeders have been quick to adopt this practice and report pleasing results. One member left his 80 weaned calves in the yards for about a week and worked them every day. This involved moving them from pen to pen to get the calves used to going through gates quietly and away from pressure, using a dog to move them, putting them up the race a few times, and walking quietly through the pens several times per day. As a result the calves have been noticeably quieter in the paddock and easier to handle. This improved temperament seems to last over the lifetime of the yard-weaned cattle.

A further benefit of yard-weaning appears to be faster growth rates. In a recent on-farm trial calves were docility tested using a 1-5 scale for flight times. The quietest calves with score 1 had average weight gains almost 12% greater than the group average.

Now is the time to consider whether yard-weaning is an option for you. A slight change in management practice could lead to long-term benefits.

