



LIMOUSIN

Carcass, Yield, Efficiency.



Spring 2012 Newsletter
www.limousin.co.nz

Welcome to Spring!

The warmer weather has finally arrived and with it some grass growth. From talking with members around the country calving seems to be going quite well although it has been very wet in many areas. It is an exciting (and nervous) time waiting to see new genetics on the ground.

In this newsletter we profile Don and Delma Robertson and their **Riverheights Stud** at Hinds in Mid-Canterbury. They have enjoyed considerable success over the years in both the show ring and carcass competitions, and more recently in the South Island Bull Trial.

There appears to be renewed interest in improving the genetic pool through embryo transfer. A number of breeders (and at least one non-member) have committed to importing embryos from Australia, North America and the UK. This can only be good for the breed over the next few years as these genetics become available to others.

The 2013 AGM will be held in Nelson over the last weekend in April (26-28 April). More details are included later in this newsletter. 2013 also represents the 40th anniversary of the NZ Limousin Society and the dinner on the Saturday evening will formally mark the occasion. Your Council is putting together a 40th Anniversary Magazine which will be released at the AGM.

When the going gets tough...

South Island Limousin breeders met in July at Alexandra (Central Otago) for their AGM and saw first-hand Limousin thriving in the most adverse conditions.

With an annual rainfall around 300mm Alexandra experiences hot, dry summers with long, cold winters. Of course this is similar to the climatic conditions of central France where the breed evolved. On the day of the AGM the maximum daytime temperature was a balmy -2°C. The area had experienced several days of hoar frost where the fog freezes and ice forms on everything. Beautiful but very cold!



A short drive from Alexandra is Little Valley Station. Commercial farmers, Lindon & Jenni Sanders farm this 11,000 hectare property running mainly Merinos along with 80 commercial Limousin breeding cows.

Of particular interest are their entrepreneurial skills in supplying wool

directly to an Italian mill. By meeting the manufacturer's specific demand for wool in a certain micron range, and being able to consistently supply it, the Sanders achieve very high returns per animal.



When they purchased the property outright in 1997 Limousin cows were already on the farm. Lindon & Jenni were impressed with their toughness and found them to be ideally suited to their tussock country.

Adopting a "if it's not broken don't fix it" approach they decided to keep the Limousin cows against the trend of neighbouring farmers who had moved to British breeds. With careful sire selection and culling, their commercial herd has evolved into one that would be the envy of many stud breeders. The temperament of the cows was outstanding (particularly given they are rarely brought off the hills) and their conformation was impressive.

The Sanders regularly top the autumn calf sale at Omakau and do not understand why more farmers don't follow suit.

Here was an outstanding example of Limousin cattle being efficient converters of low quality feed (i.e. tussock) within a hostile environment. They were in excellent condition, were obviously very fertile and

had no parasite burden. They appeared to be thriving!



Lindon and Jenni have recently joined the Society as commercial members. It is great to have them on board.

Daryl Bott's presence as NZ Chairperson and ALBS Director was much appreciated by members. He appeared shocked by the harshness of the Central Otago environment but was obviously impressed with how well Limousin cows coped with it. Not exactly Pukekohe paddocks! He was accorded some old fashioned South Island hospitality but the recovery took him a week!

For the record Judy Miller was re-elected Chairperson and Gary Kennett as Secretary/Treasurer.



Breeder Profile

Don and Delma Robertson farm near Hinds in Mid-Canterbury where they run their successful Riverheights Limousin stud.

During work hours they are both fully involved in their engineering business manufacturing and servicing a range of agricultural equipment. Some of the equipment is now exported to South America and Africa. They spend many weeks on the road at trade shows (& overseas) promoting their product range.




In their 'spare time' they enjoy country & western music & dancing. They have an extensive collection of vintage agricultural equipment including many International Harvester machines. Two large barns and a converted woolshed display these restored machines.

The woolshed has been fitted out with a dance floor and countless memorabilia. A few years ago they converted a garage into a fabulous country & western bar and many people have enjoyed their legendary hospitality although often with a sore head the following morning! Don has also spent the past few years building a very large

launch in a very big shed. Getting it out of the shed and to water will be an interesting logistical exercise! However in true Don-style he has recently purchased a large truck more than capable of towing it.

In 1984 Don and Delma moved to the West Coast and farmed for five years up the Arnold Valley, between Moana and Stillwater. While there they purchased their first Limousin cow (Ben More Olivia) in 1986. In keeping with the wild-west the purchase involved a rather unusual & unique transaction. Olivia 'cost' six yearling friesians, a wooden wool press, some wool shed grating and an angora rabbit. Their accountant wasn't too sure how to record the transaction in the 'books'!

On their return to Hinds in 1989 Don and Delma became very involved in showing over a seven year period particularly at the Canterbury A & P Shows. Their stud sire **Ben More Leader** was perhaps their most successful Limousin. Leader was purchased from a Ben More sale and once back home Don decided to halter train him. Leader went on to be awarded Supreme Champion Limousin over five consecutive years and at least twice going on to be 3rd in the prestigious Meat & Wool Cup.



On one trip back from the Show Don stopped at the Hinds Hotel for a celebratory drink with friends and took Leader into the bar with him! Don thought it only fair to include the 'star' in the celebrations. The

floor in the older part of the Hotel was a little suspect and only the carpet prevented Leader going through the boards! Interestingly, Leader is the sire of the well-known Folly Vital that has left some very nice progeny.



One of their Show cows, **Riverheights Nancy**, was another over that time that enjoyed success and also featured in the Meat & Wool Cup with a 3rd placing. **Riverheights Kay** (a **Ben More Olivia** daughter) was also shown for a few years. Don became a registered judge over this time and the training he received improved his skills in selecting cattle.



They also competed successfully in the Canterbury carcass competition over a number of years. In one year they won three out of the three classes available! Soon after that clean sweep the organisers changed the rules by introducing separate classes for British and European breeds. The Angus & Hereford people couldn't compete with the muscling qualities of Limousin!

Don and Delma have improved their herd through careful selection of dams and sires, rather than embarking on extensive AI programmes. Don has a very clear idea of the type of animal he wants to breed. He uses eye appraisal in the first instance rather than numbers or reputation. Most importantly he selects for depth of body with a strong, straight back. Their current herd of breeding cows is testament to Don's skilled eye for type.

Don says that there have been three very influential sires in the stud; the aforementioned **Ben More Leader**, **Ben More Yumi** and **Rototira Travis**. **Ben More Yumi**, with a strong Ionesco background, bred on well and one of his progeny (**Riverheights Berti**) has proved to be an outstanding sire. Two of Berti's progeny have made the top price at the South Island Bull Trial sale for the last two years (\$8000 and \$9000). **Rototira Travis** (s: Ashmara Graeme) was purchased from one of Murray & Pixie Rintoul's sales and was used as their main stud sire for five years.



Don and Delma have one of the more impressive Limousin studs in New Zealand. Visitors are always struck by the size & condition of the cows. Their weaning weights would be amongst some of the heaviest in the country. They are always welcoming to visitors so if you are travelling by please stop and say hi.

Limousin excel in South Island feedlot

It is rare to see Limousin cattle in a NZ feedlot situation. However Warrick James (Ben More) and Gary Kennett (Piwakawaka) visited the Southern Prime Ltd feedlot near Oxford, North Canterbury, in early August and were amazed at the outstanding performance of a line of Limousin heifers. Back in early June Warrick sold a dozen unjoined heifers through the Coalgate saleyards which were snapped up by the feedlot's co-managing director, Hugh Taylor.



The heifers performed exceptionally well during their 70 day feeding programme and had markedly more hind muscle than the other breeds. Although not the largest framed, the Limousin cattle clearly had higher yielding potential than the heavier boned animals. The heifers were due to be slaughtered the following week with the Limousin meat being specifically marketed to local restaurants, including the Christchurch Casino.

The success of the finishing operation depends on sourcing animals capable of converting the least amount of feed into the maximum amount of saleable product. Ideally the feedlot aims to produce a 300kg carcass at 15 months. Limousin can achieve this with the appropriate genetic selection (e.g. by focusing on a high 400 day growth EBV). Hugh's preferences are Limousin and Charolais cattle for finishing. He also believes that the performance of the animals in the

feedlot is directly related to their handling pre- and post-weaning.



The feedlot was established about 15 years ago. Approximately 1000 Wagyu and other commercial cattle are finished annually. Each year one third of the property, 125ha, is direct drilled in barley that is then harvested for silage for feeding on the feedlot. Yields of the silage average 8t DM/ha. They also winter up to 500 dairy cows every year although this is on kale rather than in the feedlot.

Innovation is obviously part of the Taylor psyche. Hugh and Diane Taylor also have a successful Romney stud (Gleneyre). They have also hosted the South Island Romney three-year long progeny test programme for a number of years. This evaluates 35 rams on the basis of saleable meat yield.

Hugh's greatest challenge is securing a consistent supply of store animals. He would like to increase the number of Limousin going through the feedlot. If you are interested in supplying Southern Prime please contact Warrick James for further information.

Footnote:

Hugh was very pleased with the Limousin performance given the short time they were at the feedlot. The heifers killed out with carcass yield in the range of 57%-58% (very good in comparison with the other animals) but weight gain was lower. Hugh sees this as an acceptable tradeoff. Breeders targeting the feedlot market and selecting genetics for higher 400 day weights could improve both statistics.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT (August 2012)

I don't think I am too far off the mark by saying we are all looking forward to the longer, warmer spring days. I am not sure about your area, but here, in and around Auckland we have had so much rain, I am sure I have seen it running uphill!

May and June saw three successful bull sales with top prices at Snake Gully reaching \$12,000, South Island Bull Trial Sale \$9,000, and the North Island Bull Trial sale \$8000. As those bull sales pass, planning is well underway for the 2012/2013 trials with the majority of South Island bulls already on farm.

I was fortunate to recently attend the South Island AGM in Alexandra and mingle with the Southern people. They were fabulous hosts and I can confirm a good time was had by all. It did take a week to recover from the trip however – it must have been the jet lag!

A highlight for me was a farm visit not too far out of Alexandra where we visited a 27,000 acre property which farmed approx 4,000 Merinos and approx 80 Commercial Limousin cows. The weather was very cold and icy with the cattle being fed hay on rough tussock country. To my surprise the cows were in very good condition. The farm sells almost all of the calves at weaning and has regular clients who go to the sale just to buy the draft of limo weaners from this property. Bulls are bought in from Rob and Jean Johnston's Glencairn Stud. It was good to see the purchasers of the weaner drafts on the farm visit. They had been invited to see where their cattle had come from and why they shifted so well.

Planning is well underway for the 2013 NZ AGM in the Nelson region. It will also double as the Society's 40th anniversary and a special magazine is being put together to mark 40 years of NZ Limousin. If you have any old photos, articles, etc please make them available to us.

I have had reports of good prices being realised, for good forward killable cattle and I think there is, and will be a shortage of well bred, beef store cattle, right down to weaner age this spring and summer so for those of you who have such animals, good selling.

I have received a renewed AQIS permit allowing me to send hair samples to Australia for proto testing. The cost is around \$33 if I send a number of samples off together. All members should be using proto free sires so please send me a hair sample now. All that is needed is approx 20–30 hairs from the base of the tail **including the hair follicle end**. The sample needs to be approx. 75mm long (3").

On behalf of all past and current members I wish to thank Amanda Seddon for her valuable contribution to NZ Limousin over almost 25 years. We wish her well in her future endeavours.

I hope your calving is going well if you have started. My own experience this year has been interesting. The AI programme went well but my first 14 calves born from the program have all been heifers!

Kind Regards,

Daryl Bott.

Chairman NZ LBBS.

DORE LIMOUSIN – 1989–2012

Amanda Seddon recently decided to disperse her DORE herd and move on from Limousin breeding. In this article she reflects on her 23 years involvement in the breed.

Having had 23 very interesting years involved with the Limousin breed since receiving a Full French two-year old heifer purchased from David and Joan Linton's Framoire Stud as a 21st birthday gift, I have sadly made the decision to disperse the Dore Limousin herd and concentrate on other commitments. I have been asked to give a memoir of my time with the breed and will also take this opportunity to thank the Society and its members for the fun times had and achievements gained. I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting some wonderful people and revelled in my time spent discussing Limousins and the beef industry in general.

I established the Dore Limousin Stud in 1989 after being involved with my parent's, Barry and Trish Youle, Bayfield Stud. I heard a fellow Limousin breeder mention how they had seen these golden cattle grazing in the fields in France. I looked up the French word for 'gold' and that is how I derived the name for the Stud. My founding heifer, Framoire Charmeuse CP123, an embryo transplant by Helix, later that season won champion senior female at the Manawatu Show, and reserve champion female and winner of the Allbreeds two-year heifer at the Feilding A&P Show. She became influential within the herd with her son, **Dore McCoy**, siring the Stud's entrant and winner of the 1997–98 Limousin Bull Trial.

The greatest impact on my herd's evolution and my own direction within the breed was the experience I had and the wealth of knowledge I gained while living and working for several Limousin breeders in Alberta, Canada for two and a half months in 1990. I learnt herdsmanship and grooming skills while helping out at numerous shows and in particular working with Lorne and Flossie Bodell's LBC Stud where 13 head were taken to the Calgary Stampede. I remember travelling through the night from Edmonton, with the cattle all tied up in long trailers similar to horse floats, and on arrival at 3am, having to wash the cattle ready for showing later that morning. With so many cattle on display over the duration of that week long show I had the opportunity to hone my eye for quality. My Canadian trip not only helped with showing and judging stock but gave me an insight into the profits to be gained by calving two-year olds as it was perfectly achievable for the Limousin breed, thus I implemented that as a policy of the Dore herd. I was also introduced to the early development of polled genetics and knew this would be a thing of the future so focused my breeding program around that as well.

Dore Midas, whose sire's bloodline I became aware of while visiting Canada, was exclusively sort by the Absoloms of the Hawkes Bay, to be used in one of their Rissington Cattle Company trials due to his highest Direct Calving Ease EBV in the country at the time. Along with **Dore McCoy**, these two bulls were extensively used over my 80 head Limousin x commercial herd comprising of a majority of Bayfield stock, while the registered herd also had a Framoire influence. In the latter years top price bull, **Snake Gully Yorker** was

purchased from Danny and Bethany O'Shea's 2005 sale and at the same time **Snake Gully Zing** was bought out of the paddock as a yearling. Both these bulls continued successfully my aim of producing easy calving, high milking, polled, quiet cattle, while simultaneously maintaining high growth rates. Around this time a number of Snake Gully females were also added to the Dore herd.

I am not sure whether it was because of the steep terrain and the commercial regime the Dore Stud was run under or because of the quality genetics I sort, but the herd's stock was always known for their excellent weight gains. We were able to ask top cents per kilogram for our weaners each year and the cull cows always killed out at high percentages. Testament to the breeding program was taking out the finalist place for Best of Breed European in the 2005 Steak of Origin competition. Hook and Hoof competitions are where I believe the future of the Limousin Breed in New Zealand lies. The Society should vigorously promote and publicise anything to do with carcass competitions because we know the Limousin will feature prominently. This is where you can capture the public's eye again. I am also strongly in support of the Bull Trials. By being able to compare animals under the same conditions you can ascertain whether certain bloodlines are suitable for New Zealand's beef industry and obtain a measure on how your own breeding program is developing.

I owe much thanks to Beverley Sanft, (a past President of the Limousin Society,) and Sheila Coombs for encouraging me within the breed society and for putting up with my insistence. The Limousin Beef Breeders' Society of New Zealand had difficulty in

deciding how they were going to accept black and polled animals into the Herd Book, and had encountered mistaken AI matings with other breeds. On my return from Canada, having seen how the North Americans recorded their cattle, I was instrumental in persuading the Council of the time to adopt the same blood percentage system to register our cattle, as opposed to the old graded up system. It meant that only one Herd Book was necessary as the blood percentage was the truest indication of how much Limousin was in any one animal. The Australians decided to convert at the same time after Alex McDonald attended New Zealand's AGM and was also convinced.

In the same era, Bev nominated me as a Judge. I had the honour, but more like the pleasure, of judging at several shows around the country and in 2006 accepted the appointment of a Royal Agricultural Interbreed Beef Judge.

With my background being involved in art, I was fortunate enough to win two photo competitions held within the Society, and was subsequently asked by Ambreed if the photo of the two mature bulls playing in the snow could grace the cover of their 1994 Beef Sires catalog.

I will miss my involvement with the breed and wish you all every success within New Zealand's beef environment. Special notes of appreciation go to Erik and Lyn Van der Velden, Stephen and Belinda Clearwater and Tim and Teri Grant for their purchases of my girls and to Peta Lean for her purchase of **Dore Dawson**. May the golden cattle flourish.

Amanda Seddon
Ph (06) 328 5841

South Island Bull Trial Update

The 5th South Island Bull Trial officially commenced last Tuesday (4 Sept) with 14 bulls on entry from six breeders. The organising committee welcomes Tim Grant as a new participating breeder this year.

Whilst entry numbers are down a little on previous years, the quality of yearling bulls is already evident. The genetic diversity is also pleasing. Top weight was a hefty 487kg with an average 346kg.

We are again fortunate to have the trial managed by Brian O'Connell at Dunsandel. He is a very skilled and experienced stockman who knows how to bring these animals on well.

The confirmed sale date is Monday 20 May, 2013.

Warrick James (Convenor)

Congrats to Judy and Clark!

Congratulations to Judy Miller and Clark Scott on the birth of their second beautiful daughter Lilah on 20 August 2012 [Lilah McLeod Scott]. Judy reports that it was a little easier second time round!

Congratulations and best wishes from us all.



LIMOUSIN ASSURED PROGRAM

All members should be part of the Limousin Assurance Programme. It is easy to join, there is no cost, and for most of us who docility score there is no extra work involved.

Only six NZ members are part of this programme. The NZ Management Committee challenges you to sign up. Participants in the bull trials should certainly consider doing so; wouldn't it be great if every bull catalogued was from a *Limousin Assured* member!

The programme has the following objectives:

1. To differentiate Limousin members from commercial breeders who sell unregistered bulls.
2. To provide members with a uniform method of providing information, assurance and warranties to potential buyers.

The basic requirements for members to participate in the Limousin Assurance Programme are:

- all seedstock animals offered for sale are registered or recorded with the ALBS and transferred on request by the purchaser.
- each drop of calves are docility scored using the ALBS docility scoring system and the scores are submitted to ALBS.
- A prescribed docility warranty is provided for all bulls and females.

Limousin sweeps the floor...

NZ Limousin breeders Rob & Jean Johnstone (Glencairn) were awarded the Alan Dodd Trophy for the champion carcass in the 2012 annual Otago-Southland beef carcass competition.

The competition, which attracted 32 entries, was held at the Alliance Group's Matura plant in Southland during June. Rob & Jean enjoyed a clean sweep in the intermediate export sections of the competition (271 to 320kg) with their Limousin heifer entries placed 1st, 2nd and 3rd in both the hoof and hook judging. They also won champion and reserve champion carcass.



Carcass competition convener Barry Gray and Alan Dodd Trophy winner Jean Johnstone among entries in the competition.

Limousin continued its dominance of this class with Tim Grant (Temoananui) placed 4th and 5th with two Limousin heifers in the hook judging.

In the junior export competition (220 to 270kg) Limousin starred again with Colin

& Jennifer Phillips (Fern Hill) placed 1st & 2nd in the hook judging.

Limousin also featured prominently in the senior export judging (over 321kg). Commercial breeders, WG & SH Muir, placed 1st in the hoof judging with a Limousin x Montbeliande steer with Stephen & Belinda Clearwater (Black Creek) placed 2nd & 3rd with two Limousin steers.

Remarkably the top six places in the senior hook judging went to Limousin cattle. Commercial breeder, Evan Ferris, placed 1st with a Limousin steer, Bob & Grace Neill (Springcreek) placed 2nd, 3rd and 4th with a heifer and two steers, and Stephen & Belinda Clearwater placed 5th & 6th.

There appears to be renewed interest amongst breeders (especially those down south) in entering carcass competitions. The dominance by Limousin in the Otago-Southland competition follows-up the breed's success at the 2012 Hoof & Hook NZ Future Beef competition held during May. At this competition Tim & Katy Button placed 1st in the hoof judging of the lightweight steer class and Bob & Grace Neill placed 1st in the hook judging of the same class. Tim & Katy Button went on to be awarded champion lightweight steer.

Hoof & Hook competitions showcase the superior carcass qualities of Limousin. The challenge is out to other breeders to become involved in these competitions.

Please contact Bob Neill if you are interested in further information (03) 434 6618.

40th Anniversary and 2013 AGM

The inaugural meeting of the NZ Limousin Cattle Breeders' Society Inc. was held in Palmerston North on Tuesday 6 March 1973. Therefore next year represents our 40th anniversary as a breed society.

We intend celebrating this occasion in conjunction with the 2013 AGM in Nelson.

Your Management Committee is planning on publishing a 40th Anniversary Magazine. Any contributions, photos, old magazines and articles, etc would be warmly appreciated. Please contact Gary Kennett (03) 329 6380.

The draft schedule for the 2013 AGM and Conference is as follows:

Thursday **25 April** (Anzac Day) – travel to Nelson with evening natter and noggin.

Friday **26 April** – visit recently established Limousin Stud in Rai Valley; visit winery.

Saturday **27 April** – Travel Abel Tasman National Park by launch from Kaiteriteri up to Totaranui; lunch at winery; AGM at 4pm in Nelson; formal dinner in evening to celebrate 40 years with invited guests.

Proto testing

Congratulations to the many breeders who have already proto tested animals for proto. The most efficient way to reduce the incidence of proto carriers amongst your progeny is to ensure that your stud sire is proto normal (PN/PF).

LBBNZ can arrange for your sire's tail hair sample to be tested through an Australian laboratory. Costs can be reduced by grouping together samples from a number

of breeders to take advantage of quantity discounts.

Please send hair samples in a suitably labelled envelope to Daryl Bott, Waiiau Pa Road, RD 4, Pukekohe 2679. Ph (09) 232 1468.

DNA typing of sires

A friendly reminder that progeny can only be registered from sires that have a DNA number on file. This involves the simple process of taking a tail hair sample and sending it to the lab at Queensland University.

You can also request a F94L test to be done at the same time. From this you will know if your sire carries both copies or not.

Ideally your stud sire will be DNA typed and tested proto free/normal ahead of use, and carry both copies of F94L.

Please contact the ALBS office for kits or one of your LBBNZ members for further information.

How to avoid late fees

The ALBS office is being more consistent this year between NZ and Australia in the way they are charging late registration fees.

A few NZ breeders have been caught out thinking that they would 'enjoy' the same leniency as in the past. Late fees can be quite significant so please be prompt with your calf registrations this season!

To avoid late fees the calves need to be registered prior to nine months of age. If the calf is between 9 and 12 months the penalty is AUD\$11.00 and if the calf is over 12 months the penalty is AUD\$22.00.

NZ Website

The NZ website (www.limousin.co.nz) is being regularly updated. A recent addition is a 'technical' section that includes a number of interesting articles.

Please remember that you are welcome to advertise stock in the "for sale" section.

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

Te Moana Nui website

Tim Grant & Teri Cookson (Temoananui Limousin) have established their own stud website (www.tmnlimousin.co.nz) and it is well worth a look. They are embarking on an extensive AI and ET programme with the stated objective of holding their own on-farm bull sale within three years.

They recently paid \$12,000 for Snake Gully Forge (s: Wilodge Tonka).



NZ Limousin need people like Tim & Teri who are prepared to invest in quality genetics in order to move the breed forward.

NEW AI SIRE

Lindsay Jones has announced that he will be importing semen for **Wulfs Xcellior** this Spring. **Xcellior** is a red homozygous polled bull ex USA with a lower birth weight, calving ease and good EMA.



Lindsay will also have extra stock of **ROMN Tow Truck**, **ROMN Tuff Enuff** and **Mandayen Vision Y329**. Inquiries to Lindsay Jones on 0274528603 or Allen Donald on 0274787173.

Semex NZ has semen available for new sires **JBAK Montana** and **ROMN Xcessive Force**. It also has semen available for **PLND Senator**, **Posthaven Polled Urban Cowboy** and **Wulfs Lowell**. Inquiries to Marty Crafar (06) 388 1998.

Semen is also available for **Springcreek Ace** (Bob Neill) and **Glencairn York** (Stephen & Belinda Clearwater).

LBBNZ Management Committee

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