



# One Stop Ram Shop



INTERNATIONAL  
NEWSLETTER No. 106  
October 2015

## PREDICTIONS OCT 2015

- Sheep-meat shortages.
- Return to serious hogget mating.
- Realisation that old vasectomised rams make lousy teasers.
- More OSRS clients choosing to use a greater percentage of Texel and Finn genetics in their maternal breed.
- NZ's livestock farming expertise being sought by 'Old World' countries.
- Higher prices for sheepmeat for farmers for the whole 2015-16 season.
- SFF with an equity partner; the end.
- El Nino mania.



Texel Suffolk ewe.

Paratu. August 2015



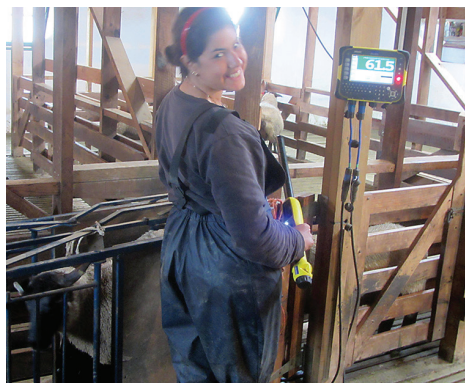
Finn Texel ewes.



Quarter Finn Texel ewes ( $\frac{1}{4}F \frac{1}{4}T \frac{1}{2}R\&P$ ) Sept 2015.



Three eighth Finn Texel ( $\frac{3}{8}F \frac{3}{8}T \frac{1}{4}R\&P$ ) Sept 2015.



Look 61.5kgs and only 100 day old. Pleased Lais.



Finn Texel ram lamb at weaning.

Dec 2014.



Three eighth Finn Texel lambs.

Weaning



Shorn. Texel Suffolk ewe lambs.

Jan 2015



Lais's family in Brazil reading OSRS newsletters.

June 2015.



Morning mists at Paratu. Finn Texel ewes. May 2015.





Amir, Farhad, Eamon O'Shaughnessy (Ambassador), Robin, Joy at NZ Embassy in Tehran. August 2015.



Hill country Iranian flock.



Checking an odd French sheep; Rose Dolcet. A 'Texel' type, meat breed.



Meeting at the Animal Science Research Institute. Sari. Aug 2015.



Caspian rice already planted.



Interview for Channel One, Iranian TV. Sari.



Fertile soils grow three crops annually. Weeds and Sorghum compete. Caspian.



Warm welcome for visitors.



Many young Iranian women speak English. Farmer's daughter spoke excellently. Jouybar Rd.



Not a spider or scorpion. 9cm predatory 'creature'.



Family transport. Room for one more. Babol.



Irrigated, ancient soils are fertile.



3000m mountains. Groundwater is disappearing. Deserts have expanded. Besharatan,



12 lamb chops per person. Excellent food. Farhad and Amir.



Plastic is everywhere. Irresponsible. Tehran.





Arak meeting. Chaired by Politician Rajaei, with all leading provincial agricultural officials. 7 Aug 2015



Rajaei, Minister for Agriculture (visitor to OSRS), interviewed by Iranian TV about meeting's importance.



Dr Rokni meeting. Livestock production officials, private farmers and OSRS. 8 Aug 2015. Tehran.



Signing Memorandum of Understanding. Dr Rezaei, (Director. Animal Science Research Institute) and Robin. 9 August 2015.



Irrigation water is pumped and wasted. Reported from this site, Newsletter 104. 2014. Aug 2015.



Sheep typically 'clean-up' after crop harvesting. Aug 2015.

## QUOTES

"Agricultural research in NZ is a shambles and it appears from feedback that many agree with my assertion" Doug Edmeades (also Clive Dalton, Jock Allison) . "Your job is to make money for the CRI not to inform the farmer". Doug was told in 1997.

He left Ruakura.

"Just wanted to let you know I'm really happy with that ram you sent up a while ago.

Ross A. South Auckland.

"Happy to help. Chris and Emma will look after your party". Craig Hickson (Progressive meats, Hastings). Response to a request to show the head of Iranian livestock his processing plant.

"Rams look really good. Thanks. David James. Murchison.

"Thanks Robin. Sorry we missed your call. The handsome boys arrived safe and sound. Barry and Karen. North Canterbury.

"Colin, they are the best line of rams I've ever been offered. That's a compliment to the two of you". Dave Halliburton Kotemaori, HB

"Hi Robin. Perendale Texel lambs have grown very well this year. Look

forward to seeing you next time you are down here.

Trevor Smith. Haldane, Southland.

"Just wanted to say thank you for the young bloke that arrived yesterday afternoon. He was sad to leave his mates but rapt with the grass up to his pizzle when he got home" Texel.

Brian & Hennie. Takaka.

"We went there with Romneys and they just lined up to die.

Arthur Masters. Mangapapa, Taranaki. Farms quarter Finn Texels.

The rams just don't wear out. They really last.

John McPhee. Hawke's Bay.

"Since going back to Romney (at an agent's insistence) my lambing percentage has gone completely".

"I still get your newsletter; I enjoy them and always pass them on to dad. How's the car going? Still got it?".

Wairoa comment 21/8/15

"Robin you are something far there on the other side of the world, promoting our Finnish Landrace sheep, Finnsheep. You deserve a gold metal. Admiring."

Marga-Leena Puntila, scientist, Finland



"Only one of your rams (above) had a dag when we drenched them last week" Richard Drake. Tangiteroria.

This is significant for Northland where sheep grow lot of dags.



Shed in Finland: cost €100,000. Subsidy €45,000. Subsidies distort.



Modern Art. An unfenced pool, drowned Pinocchio. Guggenheim. NY.





South Island born ram lambs on arrival. Paratu.



Dorpers, Texel Suffolks, Finn Texels. Jan 2015.



Selecting ram lambs to go to HB. Dave & Jan Riddell.



Quarter Finn Texel ewes at Fairlie. Philip, Anne Munro.



OSRS quarter FT ewes, lambs. Philip Munro.



Selection time. Philip will use electronic tagging soon.



Lais at 'The Glen'. Large lambs docked Sept. 2014  
Ram lambs went to HB in December. Wellington.



Developed hills. Fenced, drained and becoming pasture. Jeff Moss, Clinton. Otago.



Hoggets lambing. Plenty of lambs from large hoggets. Jeff Moss. Oct 2014.

## MEAT INDUSTRY EXCELLENCE (MIE)

MIE alerted farmers to the parlous state of the sheep industry. They have suggested a pathway; offered a future. Largely self-funded, they need farmer's financial support. No farmer lobby group has achieved so much.

Retired Chairman John McCarthy galvanised farmers with his drive and dedication. His own efforts to improve farm profitability have covered decades, not just the short time of MIE.

Thankyou John.

New Chairman Peter McDonald is equally determined. He too knows the changes that are needed. Immediately, he has come face to face with a major issue. SFF is apparently 'talking' to an equity partner. MIE wants consolidation of the industry in NZ not offshore partnerships.

Peter explained the position of MIE lucidly on TV news.

OSRS newsletter 105 has listed current prices for sheep products in US and EU.

"What's Changed?" in this OSRS newsletter gives an opinion of the industry.

Both pieces of information are pertinent when a secure future is so elusive.

Support MIE before our industry is 'whipped away' from beneath our feet. Offshore ownership (Equity) will influence balance sheets to secure profits for 'real' owners.

**Reducing payments for stock from farmers is so easy. That's next.**

## FLOCKS ASSOCIATED WITH OSRS.

David Riddell in Winton had a very poor autumn. Winter has been cold and wet. Texel Suffolk ewes scanned 200% and lambed well. Losses have been caused by harsh southerlies. Spring is coming.

Jeff Moss at Clinton also struggled finishing stock in autumn. Crops were slow. Ewe condition remained satisfactory. Snow came too often. Tussock hill country again provided welcome shelter. Late lambing suits the grass growth.

Philip Munro was so dry that hay paddocks were given to stock. Nuts were needed in winter just to hold ewe

condition. It was tricky juggling. Cows are OK and fit enough. Snow was frequent along with cold winds. Losses are not reflecting the climatic difficulties. It has been hard work.

David Meade in Tadmor. Winter was easier than for most areas, being quite warm. Grass grew a little. Ewes had reasonable body condition, but scanning was only average. The ewes sent from Hawkes Bay are not yet producing to their potential. Home-grown Finn/Texel/Perendales did 180%.

Paul Crump in Havelock had a dry





Crops for dry summer. Drilling after spray.  
23rd Oct 2014.



Emerging seedlings.  
7th Nov 2014. Paratu Hawke's Bay.



Brassica 'Spitfire'.  
24th Nov 2014.



Mature Spitfire green feed.  
19th Feb 2015.



Plantain ready for first lambs.  
19th Feb 2015.

autumn. Rains have been heavy but at times they've been very cold. Ewes scanned well but had less condition than previously. Lambing was easy in spite of storms. Spring has arrived and days are getting warmer.

Ross Berry at Pauatahanui has not had it easy. Autumn was poor and the cold winter one of the worst he has had in Wellington. Storms and overcast days stopped all grass growth. Texel Suffolk and Texels scanned well. Survival is usually good. Spring is thinking about coming.

## FARM NOTES FROM HB

Last spring was cool and ordinary. Cull lambs killed before Christmas looked 'shelly' but still yielded almost 50%. They were weaned in November.

Reasonable (unexpected) rain in January did nothing for grass growth. Rain was welcomed in February, 42 mm, but again it caused none of the usual grass response. This atypical situation occurred throughout NZ so was a 'quirk' of the season.

A crop of 'spitfire' (picture) was useful with extra OSRS ram lambs arriving from the ten flocks in NI and SI. They grew structurally but did not fatten.

Finishing lambs on plantain was easy in this strange season. Colin managed the plantain well. More will be sown this spring. In spite of the cold it grew over winter also.

Winter has been one of the coldest for years. It has been wet not because of the quantity of rain, but because there

has been only limited sunshine. Winters have often been better.

We now farm for the unexpected. There have been many "unexpecteds" in 2015. At present, all stock look well, but the grass remains short. The OSRS farm is very wet.

## BREED SELECTION

Farmers don't often change maternal sheep breeds. Change, if made, is after careful consideration, talks with neighbours, mates and advisors. Once finalized, it remains for years.

Not so with terminal sires. Without much thought other than to 'try' yet another type of ram. The 'perfect ram' will produce killable, high-yielding lambs in the minimum time.

Perhaps the not too subtle, annual reduction of schedule payments by processors drives this mentality?

Maternal breed lambs are allowed to grow at 'reasonable' rates. Terminals have to grow while spring premiums remain or fail in the farmer's eyes.

There are exceptional terminal sires available but the ewe needs to be well fed, if the lamb is to express its genetic potential.

Most terminal sire breeding flocks in NZ are less than 100 ewes. Genetic progress is limited. Size matters.

Rams bred from flocks numbering hundreds with SIL performance recording are best.

Terminal and maternal sires should be

selected using equal diligence.

For twenty years growth rate and survival have been the main OSRS traits. Upto 1450 Texel Suffolk ewes have been tupped at OSRS. 900 were tupped in 2015.

## CONGRATULATIONS

Geoff and Gaye Lamb, Tokanui for their success in the Glammies.

Houlston Brothers at 'So Big', Mossburn. They were finalists in the Southland Ballance Environmental Awards.

Alastair, Daniel, Tracy Ormond, Waipukurau. The family won the East Coast Ballance Environmental Award.

Peter & Marion Black, Ermedale, for all the deserved plaudits they are receiving. Sheep people.

Keith Munro, Waipahi. Best yielding swede crop in the 2015 Clinton Brassica competition.

Keith Stackhouse, prime lamb winner at the Amberley Show, North Canterbury. 1st taste, 2nd hoof, 2nd carcass. . . 1st overall. 30 entries.



Champion 1/4 Finn, 1/4 Perendale, 1/2 Texel.

OSRS exported to Australia, scoured wool for spinners (Maureen Sheppard) and Finn semen for the Finn Sheep Society of Australia.



## FIVE LINERS

○ World. Globalisation added 2 billion more workers in 1980s. Wealth distribution between wealthy and poor countries has improved. Within a country, the low-skilled are losing.

○ World. US\$1.07 trillion is spent on luxuries each year). Cruises 1.2 b, Private Jets 23.7 b, Wine 72.3 b, Luxury cars 437.8 b. Personal Luxury 278.1 b. USA spends 81 b on personal luxuries.

○ World. Human eyeballs have become egg-shaped and shortsighted. 1 billion people have this condition because children spend time glued to TV, laptops, cell phones and computer games. Three hours outside per day prevents myopia. 90% of Chinese and Japanese high school students are myopic.

○ Camera traps in Sri Lanka, Peru and Italy usually photograph rodents and toads. All disappeared, eight days before an earthquake. Ionosphere evidence proved massive ion release before earthquakes. Many species are irritated by released ions and flee. This 'pre earthquake' animal reaction was documented by Greeks BC.

○ Hooked. 80 % of smartphone owners check their phones within 15 minutes of waking. That typical user does so 150 times per day. Apps monopolise people attention.

○ Sheep numbers 2006 were 1 billion. China (174m), Australia (100m), India (58m), USSR (55m), Iran (53m), Sudan (43m), NZ (30m), Pakistan (27m), Turkey (25m), Spain (24m), UK (24M), RSA (22m). There are one billion cattle.

○ As China urbanises, paddy fields of central China are abandoned. Large swathes of 'potential' grazing land reverts. So to with abandoned fishing villages of the Shengsi archipelago.

○ China's tobacco companies are government owned. 7% of Central Govt. finances come from tobacco. Five million farmers produce three million tonnes/year. Prediction: Govt. will ban smoking.

○ US. Dylann Roof shot churchgoers at Charleston. He left one alive "to share his emotions". Four people were shot in Manhattan only blocks away from Kiwis visiting New York.

○ Massacres started in Boston on

March 5, 1770 when English soldiers shot five protestors. Americans have been shooting ever since. 89 people die each day from gun violence. Since John Kennedy's murder over a million Americans have died by gun violence.

○ US. (USA Today) 117,538,000 households dump \$640 of food. Value \$75 billion. Consumers want fresh food. Dumped food used 35% of water and 31% of the area of US cropland.

○ US. Farmed salmon can be fed protein made from methane. Bacteria metabolise methane in reactors. Five million tonnes of meal is produced annually from fish. Bacteria produced protein could lower pressure on world fish stocks.

○ US. The polka dot fracking pattern of the US mid west (picture) has made the US the world's number one oil producer. 91.4 million barrels a day are extracted worldwide.

○ NY. Of five people walking on a pavement, four would be on the phone while the fifth would be reaching in his pocket for a phone. June, 2015.

○ US. Even the statue of Liberty has gone modern. The extended arm holds a cleverly disguised camera; she is taking a 'selfie'. In her left hand is a 'tablet'. Oh, so 21st century she is! (Picture pg 2).

○ UK. Lower farm-gate prices for milk down (23%) lamb (18%) beef (15%), wheat (25%) are hurting farmers. 1/3 of farm income comes from subsidies. Farming accounts for 0.7 % of the British GDP.

○ UK. Flushable wipes combine with cooking fat in sewers to make huge 'fatbergs'. These cost Thames Water annually \$26 million to remove. 578 billion wipes are produced per year.

**Use them, don't flush them.**

○ UK. In-vitro-fertilisation (IVF) is healthier than natural fertilisation because of genetic screening. So by 2050 sex will be for fun, not procreation?

○ Human eggs and sperm are frozen, after genetic screening. It will be a 'lifestyle' decision when to become pregnant. Parents with young families in 15 visited countries are noticeably older. 2015.

○ The Southern Alps have grown five to seven millimeters each year since 2000. Ruahine Mountain uplift is even faster.

*Maire Hill in only half million years will be higher than Mt Cook.*

○ New Zealand has four times as many earthworms as found in English soils. Best NZ soils have 10 million per hectare. Upon one hectare of Martinborough soil, 800 kgs of sheep graze while 3000 kgs of worms burrow beneath.

○ NZ. German Wasps cause \$1 million in health damage, \$1.4 m for traffic accidents, \$9 m for beehive losses, \$60 m pollination damage, \$60 m loss of honey-dew from beech forests. A tiny wasp predator is reducing German Wasp populations.

○ NZ. Leading export earners in billions: dairy (11.9b), meat (5.5b), tourism (5.2b), logs (3.2b), education (2.5b) crude oil (2.2b).

## WHAT HAS CHANGED?

*Although I am pleased SFF is writing off debt I feel bitter that it is at my expense.*

*SFF should never have taken over Richmond.*

*SFF intends to get an equity partner. What difference between a partner and owing money to banks? Both take my profits. I pay both by receiving less for my stock. Processing Companies have too many obligations! They have to satisfy staff, shareholders and farmers Add banks and equity partners to the fixed outgoings and it becomes impossible to see sheep-meat returns increasing.*

*What has changed in the last Thirty years, or twenty or even ten?*

*Many reports have been written with only the last by MIE being significant. Ewe productivity increased and helped sheep farmers survive. This 'on farm' lift was the result of climate change (warmer and more grass) and new crossbreed genetics; not better prices. What does the processing industry have to offer that gives a sheep-farmer confidence?*





Bra rubbish fence.

Cadrona. Feb 2015



Dog 'tired'. Lais's weary dog.

Paratu.



Cold August morning. Sexy Finn Texel rams breathing fire!



Texel Suffolk rams like the new OSRS sign.



Sheep showed little interest in the election.



Wwoofer John Little from USA. 17th visit. Always welcome. Retired school teacher?



Mouse trail up and down a bedroom window.

## History: OSRS Newsletter No. 50, Nov 2004.

**"Having completed a three week trip around the South Island, I now have no doubt that New Zealand sheep farming is showing one of the largest (if not the largest) production increases of large herbivores ever witnessed."**

Robin Hilson

Soon the whole animal production world is going to start noticing what is happening in the New Zealand sheep industry.

Worldwide there have been explosions of populations as animals have met or been introduced to unlimited environments. New Zealand sheep have a limited environment. The sheep habitat has been pressured by dairying and tree plantations for decades. Yet, within a very short time span, 15 years, the productivity of sheep has doubled. This has never been done before in domestic herbivores worldwide. This contained population has no room for greater numbers. From a pretty ordinary productive base new ovine genetics that have allowed sheep to 'do' totally different things reach record levels of production.

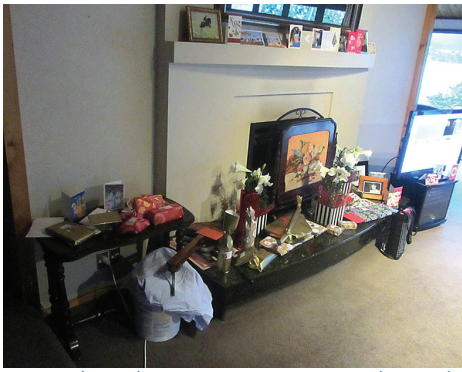
**It all started at One Stop Ram Shop.**

Plenty of scientists will claim to be part of the dramatic change, they will all talk about new pastures, they will talk about new genetics. Pasture genetics are way behind those of the sheep genetics. The sheep genetics themselves are only part of it. It is the **cross breeding** that has triggered the change. For decades OSRS had been quite impressed with local production and with our own 'stud' sheep. But OSRS production had plateaued. Exotic sheep crossed with local sheep lifted production to a new

level. Results of that crossbreeding were broadcast extensively. One Stop Ram Shop ran trials and **took** the results to farmers everywhere. The record sheep lambing percentage is 124%. This percentage is under threat again this year. The national percentage will move steadily up. Production increases from Finn X sheep are starting to appear. Finn and Texel sheep that OSRS has introduced throughout the country have survival abilities which are only now fully appreciated. These composite sheep are better than our homebred NZ Whitefaces. Finn Texel sheep make more money. Finn Texel sheep have not yet reached anywhere near their potential.

There was virtually no scientific input at all into this original expansion. There was very little practical input other than observations made in the quarantine years by Sheepac. After the quarantine years the practical advantages of these crosses were tested by commercial companies (e.g. Richmonds) and results of large trials which were given to farmers. The documented efficiency of these sheep appeared in One Stop Ram Shop/TMG newsletters and at field days. Much later scientists started to research what was **already** written. Even now the scientific input into the commercial possibilities of these sheep is minimal. Meat companies will not explore new branding avenues when all their efforts will be in trying to get a bigger slice of the sheepmeat cake. They don't have to differentiate between sheepmeat products when they cannot get enough to supply clamouring customers. Sheepmeat is a health food for the rich. **Sheepmeat is in short supply worldwide forever.**





Can Father Christmas squeeze past? The Bachs, Wellington.



Tim, Charlotte, Lucy and Jane leaving Wairarapa for Pennecarow. Cycling family. Christmas 2014.



Wasps and flies gorging on cactus pulp. March 2015

## 2014-15 RAM SALES

Sales were buoyant. Many genotypes sold out totally. A major trend by established clients to an increased percentage of both Finn and Texel, continued.

This first appeared ten years ago and has never stopped. A number of flocks of 3/8 Texel, 3/8 Finn, 1/4 NZ, year after year are the most productive in their locality. Neighbours are noticing.

**Soon there will be flocks which have no NZ genetics, just Finn and Texel.**



Finn ewes at Topping. Richard Hilson & Karen Middelburg. March 2015.



Finn Texel ewes.

Poratu. August 2015.



Texel Suffolk ewes.

OSRS. April 2015.



A large skin area, woolless, is sought for all OSRS rams.

North Island ram sales will start Wednesday 25th November 2015.

South Island sales soon into December.

OSRS will again have an exhibit at **Waimumu Southern Field-days**, February 2016. We are in the same excellent corner site as in 2014 but its number has altered to be 139. February 10-12, 2016.

Join us. Lovely sheep, food, tea, coffee and a little gossip. Come and see us. Our exhibit will be bright and breezy with no politics (maybe just a little).



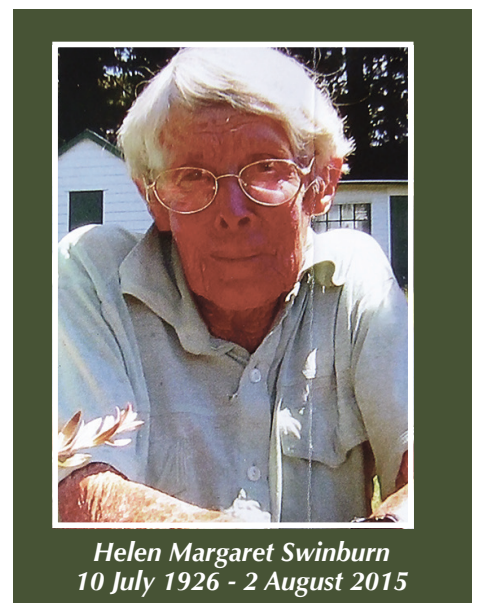
Stripgrazing, Caroline Valley. Finn Texels. Peter McDonald October 2014, Southland



Excellent prime Texel Suffolk sired lambs on lucerne. James Forbes. Waipara. North Canterbury.



Eamon & Wendy MacLean, Finn Texels. Motueka. October 2014. Nelson.



**Helen Margaret Swinburn**  
10 July 1926 - 2 August 2015

Helen has gone.

Generous to all people, generous to her stock; Helen was an outstanding farmer. Inquisitive, humble, curious, she was always asking questions. She never stopped planting trees and improving the ecosystem that she influenced. Helen will never be forgotten by the many friends and relations. She was a most wonderful person.