

TEXEL MARKETING GROUP

INTERNATIONAL
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November 2004

LINKING FARMER PRODUCERS WITH END USERS

"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 achieved before in domestic herbivores worldwide. This "contained" population has no room for greater numbers. From a pretty ordinary productive base new ovine genetics have allowed sheep to 'do' totally different things and 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 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 change. For decades OSRS had been quite impressed with local production and with its own 'stud' sheep. But OSRS production had plateaued. One Stop Ram Shop ran crossbreeding trials and took the results to farmers everywhere. Exotic sheep crossed with local sheep lifted production to a new level.

The record sheep lambing percentage of 124% is under threat again this year. The national percentage will move steadily up. Production increases from Finn X sheep are now obvious. Finn and Texel sheep that OSRS introduced throughout the country have survival abilities which are 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 their potential.

There was virtually **no** scientific input into this change. There was very little practical input except for observations made in the quarantine years by Sheepac. After quarantine the practical advantages of these crosses were tested by commercial

companies (e.g. Richmonds) and results of large trials were given to farmers. The documented efficiency of these sheep appeared in TMG newsletters and at OSRS field days. Later, scientists started to research what was **already** written.

Even now 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.**



*Finn-Texel ewes at 560 metres above sea level. Survival has been excellent inspite of storms, constant chill and little feed.
Tarata October 2004*



Deep tractor tracks, water and forlorn duck eggs. Cultivated paddocks are smelly and sour.

Heriot, South Otago, 20 October 2004



**All the team at One Stop Ram Shop wish you
a Merry Christmas prosperous New Year
and plenty of high energy grass.**

HELLO FROM SOUTHLAND

What a year!

This season has been a ripper all over. We had a nice dry summer, almost a drought by our standards, feed was looking short when the rain came in February and it continued to look short as our summer plummeted into winter, where cold winds and waterlogged soil failed to encourage growth. Well, it's been the same all over and you don't want to hear it all from another frustrated farmer.

Amongst all this we decided to pack up and move farms! The weather conspired against us to make it difficult to do normal farming without building new sheds to store all our gear. Finally with the help of our great staff Duncan and Ben, several wonderful wwoofers Edam, Urea and Dor, all from Israel, and the guidance of our local builders Ricky and Flo, we managed to get two sheds to 'iron-on' stage, one week before shifting day! The rest was a mad rush from there, Colin frantically sorting gear into moving, selling and rubbish piles, and all our helpers frantically gathering all the piles and delivering them to one shed or other! So much for the orderly move where everything would be ready to receive it's correct bits! What a mess, and a worry, as at that stage we had no way of locking anything up, all our gear was in a great heap on muddy, wet floors with water sometimes flowing through as the spouting wasn't up!

As our house wasn't progressing as fast as planned (not even started) we were very grateful to be able to move into a farmhouse just down the road from our new place. Power has always been a problem and it was planned to have it sorted as soon as possible. Of course, that's easier said than done, and after many long discussions with the powers that be, they finally arrived the same day as the builders started the house. Well, I always said it would all happen at once! End result, no power for the builders and as you could guess the day the concrete trucks arrived to pour the slab, was the same day the power people wanted



Moving from Blair road. Everything goes, even Ben who missed the school bus.

to put in the poles which followed the narrow, windy road. I put up signs to warn the drivers, shut my eyes and hoped for no close calls! Miraculously all went well and despite numerous near misses previously, we had none that day. Between builders, concrete trucks, power guys, tractor servicemen, various sales reps, electricians and our own people we had 33 people over our farm that day!

Well, now we have a house racing up (it would go even faster if the wind would stop a bit), the sheds are starting to look orderly and the farm is starting to look like green as the grass is growing.

Lambing is over and tailing underway. Despite all the horror stories about the lambing weather, we have had excellent survival. The lighter than usual lambs are good and healthy. For once coastal storms have not been our downfall. Unfortunately the story is not so good inland where reports of hundreds of dead lambs and mud-blackened pasture are true.

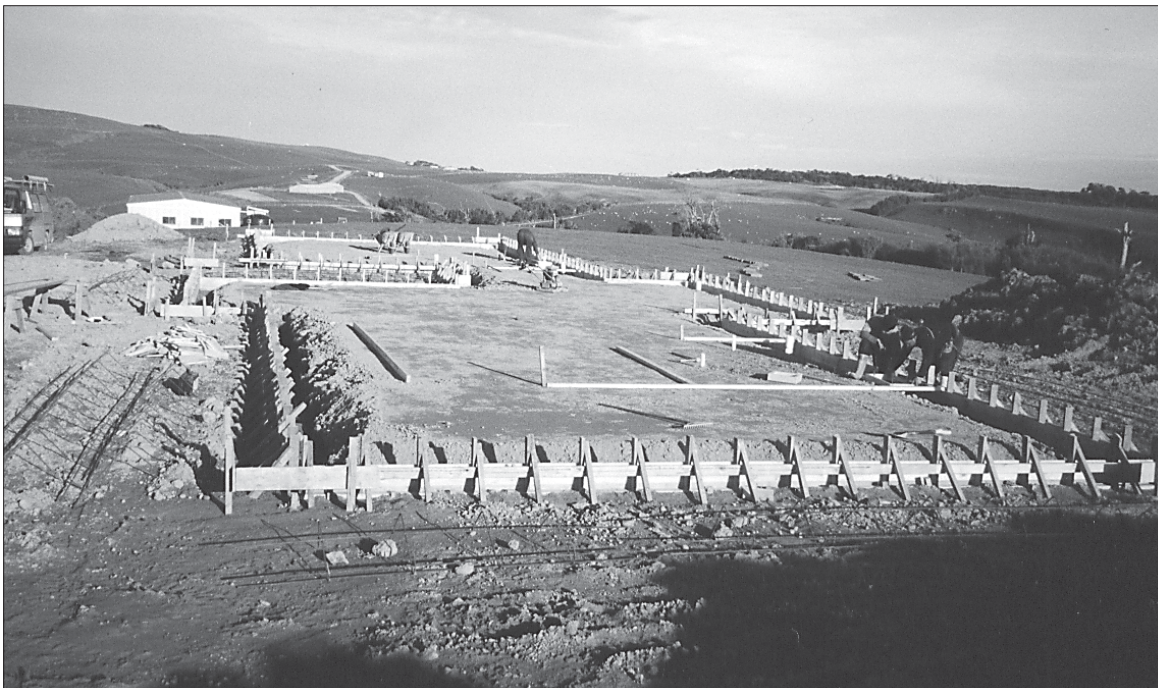
Today there is a howling norwesterly wind blowing, the builders have been weathering it since they started three weeks ago and are starting to take on the distinctive lean that all those who live on Slope Point develop. Tomorrow I'll turn them round so the Slope does not become a permanent fixture.

We are working hard to have our facilities up and running by the ram selling season (January). However, they may not be finished for the selling season so please bring your hammer. (We'll provide the nails!)

We hope everyone is surviving this monumentally horrible year and that summer will have some tender kindness for us all.

Keep smiling.

Colin and Dot



Homestead starting. Workshop and woolshed are to the east; either side of Pope Road.



Colin and Dot McDonalds farm. Wet, cold, muddy.



Slope Point snow. Very exciting for kids.



New shed. Where concrete ends; mud begins.



Old MacDonald's farm. A place for everything.



Alan McDonald, at home with the perfect toy.

FARMING MULTIPLES FOR BEST SURVIVAL

OSRS suggests triplet bearing ewes be farmed together. Twinners all together also. Multiples should lamb on the hills. Singles farm on the flats. Spread Finn-Texel triplet bearing ewes; leave them alone. These ewes will feed **any** lamb as long as there is grass around; they multiple suckle. Enter the paddock to pick up a cast ewe, a dead ewe, to assist a ewe, pick up dead lambs or to pinch a lamb.

But stay away, it is best. Just look over the fence.



Robin declined a South Canterbury birthday party. This parcel of birthday 'goodies' was placed in Ram4U and enjoyed from Culverden to Lewis Pass. Thankyou, the Murphy family.



The only South Island farmer who had enough grass to mow.
John Smales, 14 October, Milton

FIVE LINERS

- Rural New Zealand is booming. New houses are being built, fences repaired, new fences erected, verandahs built and buildings painted.
- Windpower is 'in'. River generation potential is still there but hydro-dams are not acceptable. Wildlife needs to move between all stretches of the river. Modern technology could create fish ladders besides dams.
- If you want to get rid of all that old gear out of your sheds, **give it away**. OSRS gave a Ute away, TEA24 tractor (to Hamilton), International 414 (to Waipukurau), a BTD6 crawler (to Waipukurau), farm trailer (to Norsewood), Kuhn haymower (to Taranaki) and a J2 Bedford truck (to Waipukurau). The sheds are empty. No money changed hands. A Toyota Dyna Truck could go too! *Any takers?*
- Dairy farm conversions back to sheep farm are continuing. In South Otago alone, three dairy farms have recently been purchased by sheep farmers.
- The extra million sheep in New Zealand are now quite visible.
- There is a huge decline in the number of possum roadkills nationally.
- South Island driving is deteriorating. Drive at the speed limit and be passed by everyone.
- Transit NZ should employ vintage cars to slow traffic because they really do so. One vehicle in South Canterbury led 30 cars. It was even leading a Police car with flashing lights. But still it just crawled south.
- Shelter on Farms. Eucalypts have sustained awful damage this year. Poplars, Willows and Conifers have marched down slippery hillsides throughout all the rain damaged areas. Pinus Radiata and Leyland Cyprus are the two best shelter trees country-wide. Go native. There is always one native that will enable you to have low maintenance shelter, e.g. flax, cabbage tree, broadleaf.
- South Island people obviously have trouble with their **right ears**. Hundreds of people aged between 15 and 25 can be seen holding their right hand up to their right ears.
- Spending levy money. \$36 million is to be spent this year. Why not use this money on a PR exercise and show farmers as the best custodians of the land. Farmers do look after the land. A programme should be designed by farmers only.
- No farmer asked knows of any 'farmer-good' activities financed by levies which gave him financial gain. Please could anybody inform OSRS/TMG if they know of one example of a financial benefit coming directly to the farmer.

Colin McDonald, Southland	(03) 246-8475
Robert Carter, Taumarunui	(07) 896-7020
Robin Hilson, Waipukurau	(06) 855-8335
Chris Southgate, Dannevirke	(06) 374-2740



Spring, Central Otago. Stock and pastures looked their best. John and Judy Hamilton, Becks. 13 October



Visitor preparation. Ivan washing down. This is a frequent task. Burnside, September 2004



Bright-eyed Massey students. Bigger classes reflect growing rural job opportunities. Burnside, 30 September 2004



Swiss Visit. Vet Rish Cantiene just 'wanted to see sheep'. OSRS showed him sixteen breeds. Rish tails all his clients lambs ie 800 annually. Burnside, 30 September 2004.

A thought: why isn't there mouse flavoured cat food.

"They (the farmers) should be ashamed of themselves for exploiting a tragedy like that for political purposes."

Jim Sutton, Minister of Agriculture

Sutton was referring to the murder of Jack Nicholas and saying that farmers were using this politically. What a spiteful statement which shows the Minister totally lacks an understanding of the hurt that this murder has caused the rural sector. The Minister is insensitive to make such a comment.



A grass tennis court is a pen for a Finn Texel ewe with triplets. More courts will be needed soon.

Pam and Paul Crump, Okarimio, October 2004



Ingenious slinky bin. Lambs cannot escape.

Collis Road, Southland



Put the aerosol away if you farm Finn Texels. Alan Murray has used one can only, in the last three years. This is the can.

Crookston, South Otago, 20 October 2004.

PREDICTIONS

- Within a decade Finn-Texels will be the dominant New Zealand sheep breed.
- A record lambing.
- OSRS will market Nissan Maximas.

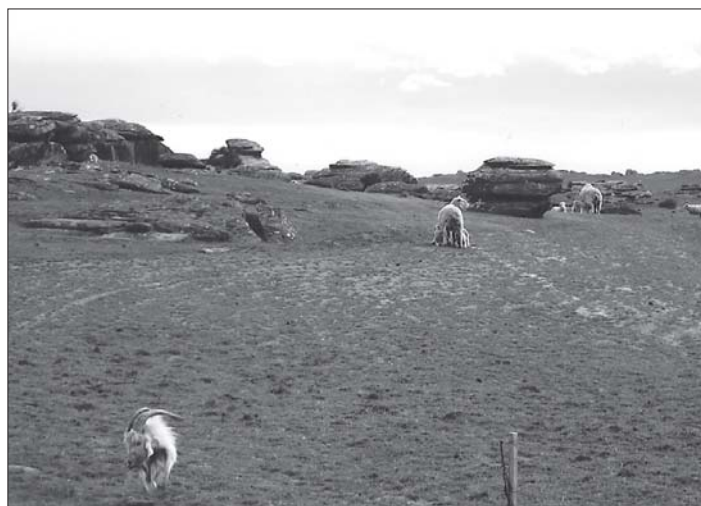
TMG is putting together a ledger of requirements for clients wishing to purchase and to sell sheep. If you do have stock that you want to be traded in this way please contact us as soon as possible. Large numbers of Finn X Texel breeding stock are required.

One person sent in a card for the sale of some Finn Romney lambs in December. We have no idea who it is, please let us know if that was you.



Culled.

Murchison, October 2004



Billygoat Gruff. End of the tale.

Middlemarch, October 2004

NEW ZEALAND'S INTEREST RATES ARE THE HIGHEST IN THE WORLD

NZ 6%, Australia 5.25%, United States 1.5% and Japan just 1%. Why? This is because New Zealanders borrow extensively. Kiwis just don't save enough to lend to each other. Foreign lenders demand a high return from New Zealand because it is small and remote with a relatively narrow farm-based economy. One economist put it thus, "who would you prefer to lend to in your neighbourhood, the farmer with some sheep or someone with a much bigger ranch with animals, gold and coal mines to boot." Even though our interest rates are painfully high we still have a government that is dedicated to taking a lot back from us as tax. Tax-take has jumped almost 40% since Labour took office. Labour has collected an extra \$34 billion.

Much of the growth that One Stop Ram Shop is experiencing is based on the thoroughness of our practical advice and the amount of experience amassed over the 200 years of shepherding by the staff. We are very proud of this. The service we are offering with crossbreeding, is no panacea if the home stock are not up to scratch. We make sure that a farm is headed in the right direction and establish a sound breeding programme.

One Stop Ram Shop has a range of rams with definite amounts of Finn and Texel. The NZ Whiteface also varies. A ram best suited to the environmental requirements and the expectations of the farmer is selected from these composites.

No one ram breed covers all the New Zealand environments. Romneys were tried but didn't succeed, hence Perendale and Coopworth evolved.

OSRS has a range of rams now that will succeed in every environment.



Refuse fence. Gumboots only. A calf had been seen sucking the udder of Buttercup "Going for it". Arno, Waimate, October 2004.

S.I.L. will be ranking 1 million sheep. Numerous city people (pers.com) got excited. Numerous rural people were interested but they appreciated that it was not unusual to rank stock. But for practical reasons the ranking will never have an application for most. If the top sheep was Southland born it would die in Northland because it would have no resistance to facial eczema. Rankings are an important tool for selection. Many requirements of markets which give a financial gain are for traits that have no breeding values at all and therefore would not appear on a ranking list, (e.g. muscularity and flavour in Texel meat).



Posing. Photogenic 3/4 Texel 1/4 Finn rams at Mt Stocker. John and Carol McKenzie, Middlemarch

A MOVE BACK TO TRADITIONAL NEW ZEALAND SHEEP

The cost to the farmer would be:

- A lower lambing percentage.
- Fewer surplus stock to be sold.
- Survival would decline.
- More food would be required per ewe.
- One less lambing per ewe in a lifetime.
- Bearings would reappear.
- Shorter lifespan for the main ewe flock.
- Less resistance to parasites.

Overall, a move to traditional New Zealand sheep would be **less money** for the farmer.



All in one year; floods, gales, snow, chills. Paratu haybarn blown apart. Now demolished. OSRS, October 2004.

WEIRD WEATHER

Most of the country had a pretty good autumn. There were some exceptional scanning results. Since late winter everything deteriorated. Paddocks are sour; paddocks are wet. Cultivated paddocks near Tapanui smell horrible. The intensity of the storms have been such as to kill lambs even in the most sheltered paddocks. Stock have died throughout all New Zealand.

Many South Island farms have recorded their highest tailing percentages ever. Most, (and this really is the majority), are within cooey of the highest percentages they have ever had. Only a few have really bad results.

The feature of the farm visits has been the outstanding survival by the Finn Texels which has opened up a whole mass of options. More lamb trading, fewer ewes and better lambs being taken through to heavier weights. November; feed has arrived. It has taken a long time but the quality is there. Pasture is supercharged.



Dorset x Border ewes were mated to top OSRS TexelXSuffolk rams. Well fed and thriving.

Derek and Sue Marr, Otaio, October 21, 2004

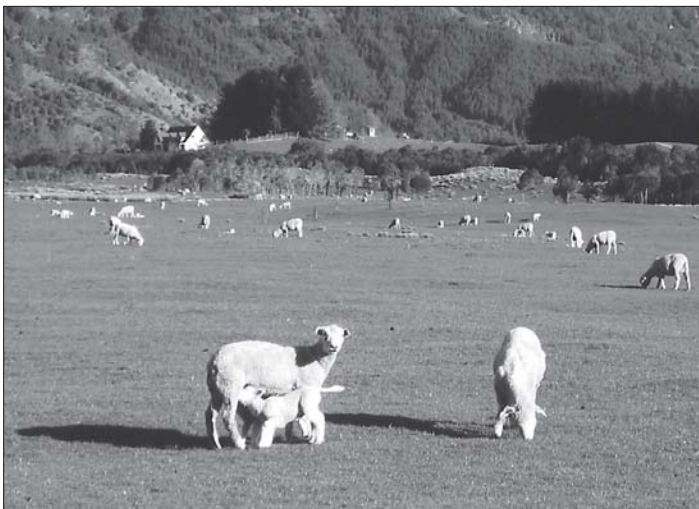
QUOTES

- "The hoggets are at the point now that our two-tooths were a decade ago", Howard Boyd (Mossburn). *The repeatability of sheep performance is allowing large numbers of lambs to be reliably budgeted for. Ultimately this is going to allow fewer ewes to be farmed for any given number of lambs.*
- "Whatever happened to global warming?", John Douglas (Mossburn), on the road one freezing morning in the sunshine.
- "As one putters around ones green pastures on a beautiful spring day, one has time to ponder one of nature's challenges. Which has the most difficulty in satisfying their family's appetites, a ewe with quadruplets or a hogget with triplets. Whatever the answer, all seven suckers were looking fine. Sorry to have missed you last week."

Duncan Johnstone (Whatawhata)

- "I had to see some sheep, but I did think it was a shop of sorts. A sheep shop?", Rish Cantieni, a Swiss vet who 'dropped' into One Stop Ram Shop.
- "There will be an overseas trip after all. Some farmers are 15% up on last years results."

BNZ Rural Manager from North Southland



Finn Texel ewe hoggets lambing.

David, Carol and Campbell Sanders, Maruia. October 2004



Quad recreational vehicle providing recreation. Minding stock prior to trucking out.

Mossburn, October 2004.



Super-rich are attracted to such isolated beauty. Every purchase they make leaves fewer such gems for New Zealanders.

Cornish Head, Waikouaiti, October 2004

If I was a multi-millionaire the chances are that I have made my money by exploiting people or exploiting non-renewable resources. I may have caused pollution while accumulating my fortune. If I came to New Zealand and bought land, it would be part of my portfolio of acquisitions. I would have no allegiance to New Zealand, only allegiance is to my portfolio (my possessions). I may become a Kiwi. This is unlikely because my family would want to stay in the country of origin. I may become a philanthropist and give my "possessions" to the country. I would do this only because I was offered a tax break.

To acquire my possessions, (farm at the lake or the highland station or coastal kilometres) I need an OK from the Government. This would be achieved by allowing any Kiwi access along a designated double-fenced walking track well away from my mansion. Having fenced the Kiwis onto the track I could then deny access elsewhere. My privacy complete, no prying eyes, no curious Kiwis, no Government interference and just the occasional gift to a beaurecrat. Now quietly I can no start planning to..., which is really why I came to this out of the way part of South Pacific, nobody will suspect anything.....



Carol and Bevan Haslett are the Mainlands' most southern OSRS farmers. OSRS does have rams on Stewart Island.

Slope Point, October 2004

ROBERTS CORNER

In the words of that most famous Australians, Dame Edna Everage, the doyen of all things Aussie, the most beautiful Australian ever, "Hello Possums".

Well, in fact we have no possums at all here in the King Country and that is good for conservation, one of the values that Robin Hilson and I share as well as being unashamed sheep nutters.

Suzanne and I are pleased to be part of the One Stop Ram Shop team, and I'm also looking forward to contributing to the newsletter regularly, especially to put forward some alternative views to those expressed by Robin at times.

You see, he and I are really good mates but we don't always agree and that is healthy.

Take his attitude towards his dog Ra for example. Readers may think that Ra can open doors, beer cans, drive the RAM4U car and send faxes, all this from Robins fertile imagination.

The truth is those long looks from Ra are just that, long looks. They are not a sign of intelligence, it's just that Robin interprets them that way!

At some stage we will have to break it to Robin but not now as he is too busy filling the order books for rams.

There has been a flurry of activity here in Kirikau getting ready for the open day and sorting out which rams will go where.

We are looking forward to seeing as many farmers as possible on Saturday the 13th of November for our first open day. (Visitors came from King Country, Waikato, Taranaki, Northland, Taupo.)

To get to Kirikau take SH43 from Taumarunui for 13 km to the Te Maire bridge and left onto Paparoa Road. Another 13 km of beautiful scenery will get you to Kirikau, go left up Kirikau Valley Road to 151 on the right and there we will be, with an astonishing variety of rams and information.

You may get to meet Ra, however be prepared to meet a truly famous and intelligent dog, Seamus, the star of the book, Hairy McClary from Donaldsons Dairy!

Robert Carter, One Stop Ram Shop West



The OSRS ram catalogue has enabled farmers to see the results of Finn-Texel breeding programmes clearly.

Matariki, Nelson 6 October 2004

WIN A TRIP OVERSEAS

You can do so by sending in entries to the competition which is now running.

1) When will RAM4U reach 500,000 kilometres? Currently it has 423,000 kilometres on the odometer.

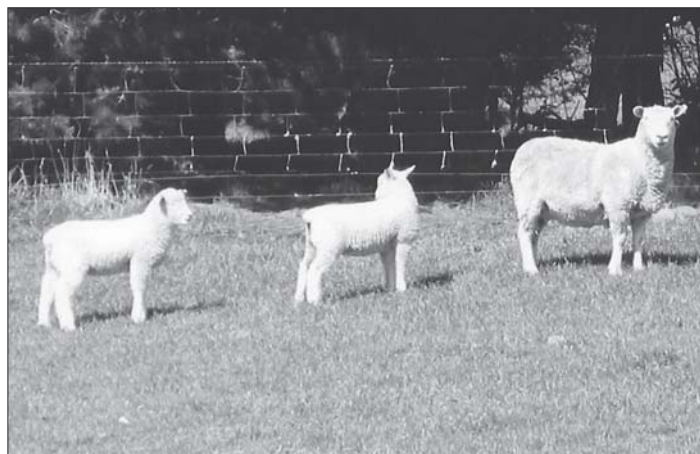
2) What will Robin do with RAM4U at that date?

Send your entries to OSRS and we will file them away. But make sure your name is on the entry.



Well woolled, attentive Finn-Texel hoggets lambing with minimal attention.

Howard and Helen Boyd, Mossburn



Last Picture. Low maintenance, tough, productive sheep. 3/8 Finn, 3/8 Texel, 1/4 Romney ewes will be farmed everywhere.

Howard and Helen Boyd, Mossburn. 18 October 2004

RAM SELECTION 2004/2005

Places are reserved for past clients automatically. One Stop Ram Shop will be starting to sell in late November 2004. A successful open day was held on 9 November at Burnside, State Highway Two, Takapau. Farmers came from Coromandel to Te Anau.

One Stop Ram Shop West in the King Country had an open day on 13 November and will be starting to sell rams in December 2004.

One Stop Ram Shop South ram selection will take place in January 2005.

All clients will be posted a selection date. North Island dates are being sent out now and the South Island dates will be posted in December. If you don't receive one please contact One Stop Ram Shop.