



One Stop Ram Shop

INTERNATIONAL
NEWSLETTER No. 62
August 2007

THE SHEEPMEAT SCENE IS A COMPLETE SHAMBLES

Meat processors blamed everyone (but themselves)
or Australians (for having a drought)
or other processors ('they' undersold sheepmeat)
or the dollar (which was not at 80c US)
or farmers (for not being loyal suppliers)

Processors are the marketers; they fail or succeed by their success at marketing. For 2005-2007 they failed abysmally, they miscalculated badly and their suppliers will bear the cost. Farmers have been shockingly let down. Now a major industry with sound prospects world-wide is facing the possibility of declining product as suppliers seriously look at alternative land uses. Farmers have been let down by their representatives; directors of meat cooperatives and meat processors. By November 2006 these directors should have known the issues and could have spoken out publicly. Not a squeak was heard! Early NI prices held up but soon it was 2005-6 over again. Meat and Wool NZ (MWNZ) keep trade representatives at the pulse of marketing. These emissaries were reactionary and did not alert farmers to the developing situation. Even if processors were being coy, MWNZ had no need to keep quiet.

Did these people not know what was happening or did they just see the same shelf price for sheep meat?

Frantic sheepmeat marketers were selling product 26% cheaper. (Economic Service, Feb 2007.)

So the season passed. For many a drought was thrown in for good measure. Autumn erupted into a series of meetings and public grizzles but few solutions. Farmers have stirred and changes are now possible.

*'It is vital that the foot is not taken off the throat'.
Advisor*

ACTIONS REQUIRED

First. Farmers must vote out meat company directors who just talk the company talk. Directors are farmers and not company people. It is not their job to be popular. They must ask the direct questions about sheepmeat marketing and report their findings back to fellow farmers.

Second. MWNZ must be proactive in the market place. The Board needs to be independent of the processors (difficult when there are meat industry representatives on the board) and independent of the NZ Government in power.

All this 'aren't your levies working for you'? blurb, means nought. MWNZ needs to get involved and criticize lax marketers.

Directors not wanting to get more involved in the market place should be replaced. This is the only place where MWNZ could improve the returns to the NZ sheep farmers. Find out the facts at the market-place and report back to farmers quickly, honestly.

Third. Combined efforts by MWNZ, company directors and farmers to create joint marketing boards is needed. Managing supply and demand together could still allow specialist marketers e.g. (Lean Meats Ltd) to do their thing with niche markets.

It is in everybody's interest to work together, now.



*What the Golden Orb spider saw. David Wyne-Lewis (owner), Steve Nicholls ('Today'-photographer), Joy Gray (with obscured camera flash).
Waipukurau, March 2007.*

*As the giant Australian Golden Orb spider sucks the juices from the entangled bee the tiny male makes his move and mates with her. Later he becomes a meal. The **first photograph** of this species **mating** in NZ. Biosecurity and pornography lapse? Her web was a metre by a metre and she measured 9cms by 5cms
OSRS, March 07.*



US Lamb Prices. 65c NZ to US\$.

Walmart.	30 May, Las Vegas.
Loin chops,	\$55/kg.
Ralph's.	14 June, Venice Beach. L A.
Lamb rib chops,	\$55/kg.
United Markets.	11 Aug, San Rafael, San Francisco.
Lamb rib chops,	\$51/kg.
Rack of lamb,	\$49/kg.
NZ Lamb tenderloin,	\$57/kg.

OSRS comment. Prices in US supermarkets are unchanged since June 2006 when Lamb Chops at Belson's (LA), were selling at a staggering \$91/kg.

2006-2007, WHAT A SEASON

OSRS went into El Nino mode (drought) in October 2006. All the signs were apparent on the SI trip; overcast cool days, constant westerlies. A strategy meeting with staff decided how to get the best results through to tugging. A plan was made and stuck to.

Burnside. Strong NW winds made it impossible to grow hay or supplementary crops. One crop sown early was already up and looked just OK. Rams sold well and went to their new owners punctually. Many clients brought transport. Thanks. Finishing stock became increasingly difficult. Ewe body weights were average but they tugged well and scanned well. Rainfall 2007, 125 mls for the five months, then rain every day. There is grass for lambing, but not much. Ram hoggets were excellent shearing but lighter than usual.

Tarata. Here the season's rough edge was softer. Lambs weaned well but like all stock, they were difficult to finish. Colin Burlace (Mgr) brought the cows and ewes through to good autumn weights. Two toothies were lighter as the lack of spring had hindered their development. OSRS relies on spring to 'bring out' hoggets but this year was too tough. Scanning was excellent, just about the best ever. MA Ewes 175.48%, 1.3% drys, in the top 5% of HB Vet Services scan results. Kilometers of new fencing saw the end of rank pasture. Colin was even able to take some Burnside young stock and make hay.

The Glen. Ross Berry (Mgr) had a glorious season with grass only recently becoming short. Exposed to Cook Strait and the west, The Glen does not have many years so kind. Here also the kilometers of new and repair fencing is showing its value. Great old knarled macrocarpas have been felled and cut into farm timber and firewood. All buildings are repaired and painted. Shelter plantings are thriving. The Glen is a picture. Many lambs were sold at weaning. Those lambs and cattle which were finished did so to good weights.

Most cattle breeding is at Tarata with replacement heifers grown at The Glen, where large cattle are a worry as they slip down hillsides and die. Steers are all finished at Burnside. The policy is flexible and open to regular reviews. OSRS is lucky to be able to make the best use of three very different environments. Both The Glen and Tarata carried extra cattle and sheep for a beleaguered Burnside.

That OSRS got through such a terrible season without a great decrease in stock numbers is a reflection of a number of factors.

First. The October strategy meeting when all agreed we were into a drought and prepared for the worst.

Second. Years of experience by the staff was critical when the pressure really came on. Yes, there was some flapping but at all times the stock got first consideration. Decisions were followed through. All staff are stockmen, good stockmen too and this produced the pleasing tugging results.

Third. The years of new and repair fencing has made so many paddocks. Repairs are a major task. OSRS maintains 25 sets of permanent drafting yards.

OSRS has become a very pleasant place for stockmen and their stock. Lots of shelter, crystal clear tumbling streams, lovely scenery and sometimes some pretty odd mates, eg. kuni kuni pigs. Actually OSRS is a pretty relaxed, productive place altogether.

Come and see for yourself-anytime!



Christmas socializing at the Tarata homestead of Peter and Kathy Kettle. Back. Peter Kettle, Walter Cresswell, Colin Burlace, Ron & Gayle Falconer, Matt (Belgium), Kathy Kettle. Front. Rod Swindell (Canadian), Emily Miles (English), Joy Gray, Robin Hilson, Photographer, Eva Storkenova (Czech).



Tarata rhododendrons flowering vigorously. Transplanted two years ago, few have died. Twenty truck loads were shifted. Paratu, Nov 06.



Matt (Belgian) with Texel-Suffolk lambs. No 'tail end' lambs. Burnside, Dec 06.



Genial John Little (US - Wwoofer) has returned seven times to OSRS. He will have raspberries from this cage next visit. Robin will join John fishing and sailing in Alaska next June.

FARMING DOWN SOUTH.

What is particularly galling 'down south' is the revelation that Alliance has been paying above schedule regularly to get lambs, ewes and cattle from larger clients for years.

Farmers wish to be loyal but it is becoming very difficult when regular clients are treated with little respect; they certainly never get special consideration of space and price.

So, after much pressure for change, Alliance launched their new loyalty programme at a series of shareholders meetings. \$3.50/kg for lambs will be guaranteed farmers supplying 100% of their stock to Alliance.

However, **No** director got to his feet at the meetings to say that he would be joining the scheme and would commit 100% of his stock to Alliance.

I assume that none are prepared to do so. This shows their true colours. Obviously, no director has 'faith' in the programme.

Finlay Weatherburn, Gore.

ONE STOP RAM SHOP EWES.



Stabilised 3/8 Finn 3/8 Texel 1/4 Romney.



Stabilised 1/4 Finn 1/4 Texel 1/2 Romney.



Stabilised 1/4 Finn 1/4 Texel 1/2 Perendale.



Borgar Tessem and Bjorn Brattebo, Norwegian sheep farmers visited. Numerous northern hemisphere people spend winter on NZ farms, as these do. 15 March 07.



Annually, OSRS provides lambs for the popular Takapau Hotel Shearing competition.



Reflections. Wanganui River at Kirikau, King Country.

April 07.



Weka. Without predator control their future looks bleak.

Totara Flat, Reefton. Jan 07.

OUR LABOUR GOVERNMENT

Labour is on a very slippery road. The majority of voters want a change of government. Foreign speculators (e.g. Warren Buffet) have forced up the value of the NZ \$ because NZ is politically stable, has primary products wanted world-wide (like Australian metals and Canadian energy) and a very high cash interest rate. While the Reserve Bank's intervention to hold down inflation was laudable it is the Labour Government which is the main driver to spending. Core spending has risen a whopping \$20 billion since 2000. Many wage earners are now in the top tax bracket so the tax take is huge! This big spend has not produced less crime or more hospital operations but has led to another 27 rugby fields of floor space for bureaucrats and exerts strong inflationary pressure. A vehicle fleet of 20,000 serves this horde.

*It is easy to spend **other people's money (OPM)***

Nobody can show this Labour spend has worked to benefit NZ.

THE FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

allocates \$450 million annually. This year \$41.5 million not allocated. Marian Hobbs (Govt) asked what it was doing with the 'spare' cash.

Reply: Short term projects could be used to 'soak up' the surplus funds. (Dom-Post, 19-5-07.)

*How bizarre. **OPM** again. Funds don't have to be spent. Projects **must** be worthwhile.*

HIGH COUNTRY TENURE

This undignified saga continues. OSRS has farmer clients involved and it is not a very pleasant process. Firstly the tenure review which created so much uncertainty and now a review, of the walking access. Labour wish to improve public access and to protect special landscapes.

*The problem is that NZ has so many **special** landscapes. Walking access through OSRS is always available to Helen Clark as long as she will gives me access to walk through her garden.*

'One of the areas of conservation I'm most proud of is the acquisition of land in the high country for conservation in perpetuity'.

Helen Clark, Speech to Forest and Bird.

'Reviews in perpetuity'. The high country will never be the same. Polite, considerate kiwis always had access.

GLOBALIZATION

Big companies win big contracts. The Transmission Gully Motorway is a large project. Global contractors will win the tender, then subcontract NZ companies to do the job. Profits go offshore.

NZ contractors should be given the task and they'll do it cheaper.

SUBSIDIES

Government subsidizes tourism, new business ventures and sport, never farming, the heart of the economy.

Pledging \$34 million to Team NZ after their second ignominious failure is a gamble with other peoples money (**OPM** again) To ask every NZ person for \$8.50 (their share of \$34 m) would only get a fraction of the promised sum. WINZ should become

the Team NZ sponsor. 228 Kiwis were in syndicates; 50% of the crews were New Zealanders.

Great job opportunities for the unemployed?

Boat building is a \$1.6 billion industry employing 10,000.



The Labour Government's own road.

Matariki, Nelson.



WC.

King Country.



Organic Lamb Steaks, \$34.99/kg.

Nelson, Feb 07.



Texel Suffolk Rams.

OSRS



San Juanico Bay. Every morning is cooled by a dense Pacific mist. From mid-morning to 3pm the heat is searing, skies clear. Suddenly a sea breeze (often a gale) arises which goes as the land cools.



Constitution, a two hour drive from Scorpion Bay, is about the size of Hastings. Building materials are sourced here. Robin bought dozens of sand tolerant plants.



NZ presents for Alastair. Fishing line, books (Gareth Morgan, Patricia Grace), papers, Hayes chain wire strainers.
Constitution, Baja, 23 May 07.



Fencing posts, salt treated, were dug out of sand. Booger and Yo Yo watched for snakes and scorpions.

IMMERSED IN MEXICAN CULTURE AT SAN JUANICO-SCORPION BAY, BAJA. MAY-JUNE 2007.

It is very hard to say thank-you in Spanish. The word is 'gracious', pronounced 'grassyarses'.

This village of 900 fisher-folk clasps a protuberance which holds back the Pacific from the dry, stoney Baja deserts. Sheltered from the ocean and its power is a huge bay ideal as a base for fishermen and small sailing craft. Consistant breakers, 1.25 metres high make this a 'spot' for surfers world-wide. Pacific mists cool the land and supply some moisture to hardy cacti. Afternoon breezes make this village habitable in summer, when most of Baja is too hot. Wildlife abounds both in the sea and on the land for those with keen eyes.

Alastair and Ursula had visited the village often and decided to buy a house (crib) and section in Nov 2006. Scorpion Bay is 24 driving hours from LA; their home town. This distance is protection of sorts against the inevitable development which will change the outdoor utopia forever.

Alastair, truck, goodies and two dogs arrived to take up residency in February 2007, not speaking any Spanish. Although often making mistakes, by May he could order building materials and get what he required. Now he is a Mexican, American, Kiwi!

Fishermen know hardship. All their nets were recently lost (a major economic catastrophe) only to be found intact two weeks later. There is no spare cash to replace major items easily. This is an El Nino year so their target fish keep to the cooler depths and safety. There are many days when the catch barely covers the fuel cost. Six to ten, three person boats fish whenever possible. 30 tonnes is their record one day catch.

Fishing is self-regulated with quotas only for crayfish, halibut (flounder) and abalone (up to 2.2kgs of meat per shell). Fishing cooperatives pay vigilantes for 24 hour surveillance of all fishing activity.

If caught with illegal catch it is imprisonment with no right of appeal; an effective deterrent. Fishermen get panicky if seals, porpoises or crayfish are caught in nets. They are freed immediately.

Fencing the house section was 'different'. Driftwood posts (which sometimes sprouted) and palm strainers were rammed into holes dug in sand and solid volcanic rock. Hi-tensile barb was strained carefully. 5000 tyos (light battens) were tied onto the wire and then cut to a uniform height. 'Hey presto', shelter from the Pacific westerlies. Also gained, some privacy.

A spring provides village water. Half the village gets 600 litres per house every second day. The trouble is, that the pump frequently breaks down. Amazed neighbours saw the Kiwis develop a garden of cacti, vegetables, flowers, palms, avocados, apples etc; they themselves didn't have gardens.

So life centered around watering carefully to ensure there was enough for plants and humans. Provided with water, the soil can grow anything, and cuttings taken either died or were 'leafing up' in two weeks. Soil lacks texture and organic matter but is obviously fertile. Fruit would be harvested everyday of the year with careful planning.

Mexicans are friendly warm people, steeped in Catholicism, who work very hard. Family is all important. Fishermen visit ranching cousins every week or two. By their mid-teens girls are ready for marriage. Children are adored by everyone. People don't have many assets, extravagances are few. Family bonds are strong and long-lasting.

San Juanico fishermen have huge upper-body strength which made the Hilsons feel puny. Wives are helpful, smiley, generous and meticulous about the house. It is quite a feat to keep houses clean in a dusty, windy village. Every Mexican women thought the two odd kiwi males needed feeding; no one understood 'No food thanks', even in Spanish. Everybody fed us food based on fish, beef and goat meat with local flavours from tree berries, shrub leaves and cacti flowers; tacos of maize or wheat and assorted vegetables. No one goes hungry. Good food.

A cattle beast is bought in from a local ranch, tethered for two days prior to slaughter; no food or water. It is bled to death, and lows as its life snuffs out. Once butchered, villagers turn up and purchase their requirements. Everything is sold by mid-day.

A call to breakfast at 10am was nervously answered by the kiwis. Sure enough, barbequed cattle beast was given us. The meat seemed to bellow sadly. Some deep breaths, a small gag, a thought or two of sympathy, a realization that beef was a village high-light, and we started eating. It was delicious.

This was some of the best beef we had tasted, yet its preparation had broken every rule ever written in developed countries.

At the festival time people gamble, dance and drink heavily. Cock fights are common. The meanest, most belligerent birds imaginable fight to the death. Owners of these birds have to be careful handling the roosters who challenge everyone.

Police and Army undertake social services. It is the police who have the major influence in the towns, whose every aspect of social life they influence. They are honest and respected. It is their role to tell everyone that the water station has broken down again. They tell parents that Sarah (15) is making eyes at Cesare (15). They pressure undesirables and chase them away. They take poaching, banditry and drug trafficking very seriously.

Three glorious weeks working long days fencing and gardening. Plenty of new tastes. Fascinating plants and animals. Motorcycling amongst snatchy cacti. A world away from NZ but with some of the world's most wonderful people. A physical, stimulating place apart. Time flashed past.

Visit Baja, it's so empty yet so full of living plants and animals.



One piece strainer and stay. Ex Pacific ocean.



Strainer and stay in place. Alastair fixed palm fans (300) to the homestead roof addition he had built.

Fence. Palm strainers (US \$ 35 each) and hardwood posts (which frequently sprouted). Strenuous digging in sand and volcanic rock.



Fence. Ready to strain. When watered this Baja sand can grow anything. Fence posts even sprout branches.



Palms are harvested for fencing and roofing materials. Fans for roofs. Tyos, the main rib of the fronds, for light battens. Nothing is ever wasted.

Jose de Gracia, 28 May 07.



5000 tyos (foreground) were wired onto fence barb wires to give privacy and wind shelter. Palm fronds (background) were nailed onto the rafters for roofing. Slow work for kiwis 'supervised' by everyone. Scorpions lurked under these piles.



Scorpions. A blurry photo because the **photographer was nervous**. Mexicans treat scorpions with **great** respect at San Juanico or Scorpion Bay.

Yellow scorpions are **very** poisonous.



Bottle cacti. Hubs, rims, plastic bottles, etc adorn highway cacti. Plastic shopping bags blow few metres before being spiked. Mexico is only now getting tidy.

What happens in an arid landscape when communities are too poor to dispose of rubbish?



This beautiful, very cross **rattle snake** blended in with beach rubbish.



Cardon cacti-notice board. When it rains this arid landscape transforms into a green vegetation mass studded by gaudy, vivid flowers.



Jumping Cholla cacti leap onto everything, even boots. Typical sandy, gritty, volcanic Baja desert.



A beast is slaughtered every week for local consumption. It died at 8am. Breakfast 10am included beef. **It was delicious.** (see text).

5 LINERS

- 1 million Kiwis live and work overseas. *NZ needs these skilled people home.*
- Ryan Nelson earns \$8 million each year as captain of the English soccer team Blackburn Rovers. Ryan, NZ's best paid sportsman, is given NZ lamb meals by the club chef, whenever possible.
- New diseases (eg HIV/Aids, ebola) are emerging at a rate of one per year. Drug resistance is jeopardising control of infectious diseases. 2.1b airline passengers (per year) spread diseases **fast**. (Reuters)
Scary. More people; more disease; more flights; more epidemics.
- Sheep from Australia and UK were sold as fashion accessories in Japan for \$1810 each. They were sold as poodles. Owners found their **poodles** wouldn't bark or eat pet food. (AAP)
- In 2005 Australia and US signed a Free Trade Agreement. Since then the imbalance has grown by 35% to \$14.9 billion per year. *Australia is the clear loser.*
- Australian wine exports were 800 million litres and worth \$3.3 billion (\$4.13/ltr)
140 litres of water is needed to produce one litre of wine. Export wine used plenty of water as did wine consumed in Australia.
- USA, 33 % of males over 55 are retired.
This is good for the health industry.
By 2030, 324000 US citizens will be 100+years
Even better for the health business.
- US hedge fund managers can make heaps of money. The top 25 managers averaged **\$647** million each whilst the top three of this group earnt over **\$1.25** billion each. (LA Times, 30-4-07)
- Okinawans, Adventists, and Sardinians have the highest human longevity. They have many features in common; family is first, none smoke, they are active every day, they are socially engaged, eat fresh fruit, vegetables and whole grain breads.
Eating NZ Lamb could help them to live longer.
- Norway has most millionaires per capita; 55000 out of a population of 4.7 million.
- A 'non-stick' shirt is now available in UK. Red wine, coffee, tea – just roll off without marking.
Same for wool, please.
- PC Madness. Camarthen, UK. Mother's Day cards are outlawed to avoid upsetting motherless kids.
Father's Day cards next?
- PC Madness. Somerset Police (UK) have been told that when a Muslim home is **raided**, show reverence, (i.e. take shoes off,) and wait for prayers to be concluded.
- PC Madness. France. An organization which has fed homeless people for decades has been banned. Pork soup was offered to Jews and Muslims, who were discriminated against because of their religion.
Now everyone goes hungry.



ROBIN HILSON	06 8558 335
COLIN MCDONALD	03 2468 475
DON BUCHANAN	07 8966 845
DAN WHEELER	0274 363 167
PETER KETTLE	0274 839 595



Gordon Wright (Exporter), Raul Zerteche (Mexican Vet), Peter Kettle. OSRS Dorpers and Texels for possible export to Paratu. Feb 07.



'Organic Bedding Event'. Shop assistants did not know the meaning of 'organic'. Venice Beach, Los Angeles. 16 June, 07.



OSRS Rule; pickup something wherever you go. Eventually you'll not even find wire to tie a gate. **It works!**

OSRS, SPRING OPENDAYS

OSRS West,	Friday	2nd November 2007
OSRS	Tuesday	6th November 2007
OSRS South	Friday	9th November 2007