



# One Stop Ram Shop

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7.38pm. As the sun sinks the ripening roadside grasses light up to give North Canterbury landscape hues found nowhere else in NZ.

Omihi, Feb 2010



Dennis Meade, a wise practical farmer, provides a "shop window" for OSRS stock at Matariki, Nelson.

Jan, 2010

Texel Marketing Group (TMG) and OSRS plan activities very seriously.

Chris Southgate (TMG) and Robin Hilson (TMG & OSRS) have spent weeks offshore checking processing facilities, establishing supply chains and exploring huge genetic projects.

Many "opportunities" investigated were not developed because they did not put money in farmer's pockets (although they did so for TMG).

*Few projects have been written about in newsletters. Supplying special lambs to Richmond and Lakeview did meet TMG objectives and paid farmers handsome premiums.*

TMG is experienced at these tasks, is thorough and good at making "things" happen but we will never commit our farmers until we are totally ready.

Exporting meat and wool using personal capital is an experience known by few farmers. It is tough business, TMG/OSRS knows.



Jeff and Sue Moss have bought an attractive farm at Balclutha. Warm and naturally sheltered it was part of the original Tellford. The massive concrete dip in the background had been used by the district for many years.

Feb 2010



Nelsonians at play. Gaudy parachutes wiz skiers all about the turbulent estuary waters at Tahunanui.

Nelson, Feb 2010

Robin Hilson	Waipukurau	06 855 8335	robin@onestopramshop.co.nz
Peter Kettle	Takapau	027 483 9595	kitandcharlie@xtra.co.nz
Chris Southgate	Dannevirke	027 484 6576	cwsouthgate@xtra.co.nz
Dennis Meade	Nelson	03 522 4112	meade@clear.net.nz
Dan Wheeler	Rangiora	027 436 5167	danielwheeler@xtra.co.nz
Guy Bellerby	Te Anau	027 223 8022	bellerbys@hyper.net.nz
Jeff Moss	Otara	03 246 8308	





*An example of wwoofer driving.*

*Tarata, 19 Aug 2010*

### Wwoofers

Wwoofers are good for OSRS. Hundreds have visited OSRS over the years. Each left a memory. Sometimes, stories come rushing back as we recount them for the benefit of new wwoofers.

**Sanna** was a Dutch vet student who visited OSRS twice. Tall, very lean, beautiful and with a wonderful, probing intellect. She was like many Europeans, an extraordinary driver of a farm ute which had been designated the “wwoofer mobile”.

Trusting in technology, as any student should, she tested the capability of that machine to its utmost, especially the brakes. Speed was the essence of her NZ visits, tasks must be done at a frantic pace so she could cram more into the day.

Given a whole 200 hectares of hill country to “do” a lambing beat she quickly developed into the perfect mother – every lamb was motherless. For years the Finn Texel ewes had lambed, parked the new lambs on the birth site, fed them, then wandered off looking for the first green blades of spring. The pleased lambs, relaxed, snoozed and patiently waited their mother’s return. Sanna knew each of these hundreds of lambs had been abandoned. She created an orphanage (a very new thing for OSRS).

She could not be stopped from pinching lambs even though lambs returned to their paddocks immediately found their yelling mothers.

Rather than letting this disruption continue we altered her task to that of feeding the calving cows and shifting the breaks. Hay was being fed off the ute to the cows as part of this routine. Bales (small ones) were taken out of a nearby barn.

Access to the barn was excellent, it just required some careful driving so the ute brushed the hay for easy loading. Then stack a load, back out and then trundle off to the lowing cattle. Sanna did the job regularly at GREAT pace.

Once she excelled herself. She accelerated out of the barn, foot hard down on the accelerator. Flat- stick in reverse she collided with a power pole way out in the paddock – something she’d driven around dozens of times.

However this time she drove the “wwoofer mobile” so fast and accurately into the very beefy, huge eucalypt pole that she made an impression in the wooden deck

which was just about the full circumference of that pole. The contorted steel pushed a number of the deck boards into the cab smashing the rear window and causing considerable damage to the steel-work. Both Sanna and her passenger had whiplash.

Eventually she returned and explained the accident. We all laughed but also marvelled, how could a 40 cm impression of a power pole be made in the deck of a ute.

What speed was Sanna driving?

Don’t try to repeat this driving test. Everyone understands why OSRS has a “wwoofer mobile”.



*Metre deep young brown forest soils at the summit of Maire Hill. Grass grows all year. Rainfall 1200 mm. Summer safe.*

*Tarata 2010.*



*For fifteen years, only Finn Texel rams were used on a “hot” facial eczema farm at Whatawhata. Now, OSRS has these ewes mated to high resistant rams in HB.*



*Descending wool prices have seen corriedale ewes in McKenzie country mated with terminal sires. Now the ewes do neither the wool nor meat job well.*

*McKenzie Basin, Jan 2010*



*A curious ewe watched RAM 4U.*

*North Hakataramea, Feb 2010*

## Anatomy of an outstanding hogget scanning result...

Following is an outstanding hogget scanning result in 2010 for OSRS genetics in a small scale commercial situation.

With a rolling 145% lambing result, only half of the ewes are mated to breed replacement numbers. All these hoggets are sired by  $\frac{1}{4}$  Finn  $\frac{1}{4}$  Texel  $\frac{1}{2}$  Perendale OSRS rams, out of dams of similar breeding. They are all born as twins or triplets.

What happened in summer apart from rain in January? They were shorn in mid February and vaccinated with Toxovax and Campyvax (sensitiser) in late February.

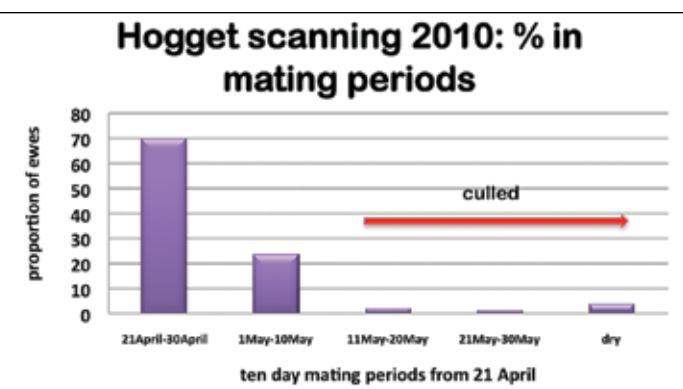
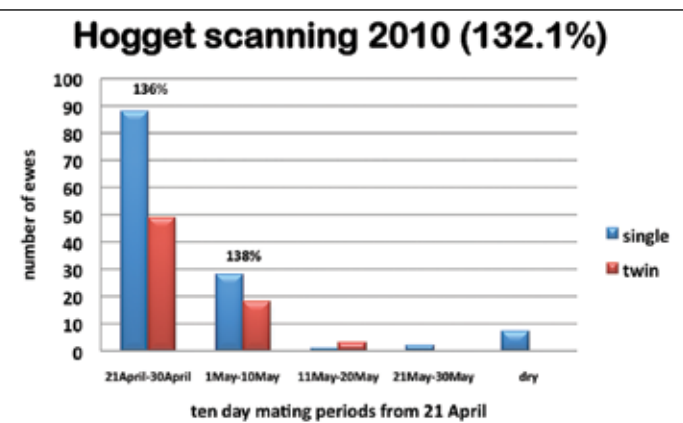
Vasectomised teasers joined on 7 March for 45 days, immediately after finishing with the MA ewes. The teasers came out on 21 April and entire OSRS Texel Suffolks went in at 1:40, having just finished with the MA ewes themselves. Joining was relatively early so the rams were left in for 40 days. The entire rams went to work straight away...

While the hoggets joined at 42.0 kg, autumn was dry and HB grass was full of rust. As a result they were only 44.0 kg by scanning time.

However, they scanned really well at 132.1% and with only 3.6% dry! Foetal aging allowed a handful of later mated ewes to be culled, which shortened up the lambing period considerably (potentially about three weeks only). This should also mean early docking and allow the hoggets to be grazing lucerne with lambs at foot by mid October.

Note also that the cull hoggets netted \$100 in July.

Good sheep genetics, good management and just a bit of good luck?



## Big name for a small volcano in Iceland

What a name (Eyjafjallajökull), what a volcano. The closure of airspace over Europe, caused by the ash clouds is a reminder of the power of natural forces.

Volcanos, earthquakes and tsunamis are all part of our NZ history. As the plates float up and down on the same molten mass which is spewing out in Iceland, NZ changes shape. Gisborne has been moving all year to the east, 100mm in January, normally it moves west.

Whilst NZ is proud to be "nuclear-free" all these movements, eruptions and tectonic changes are the result of radioactive activity just below the surface of sea and land. Nuclear activities have shaped NZ and the nuclear hotspots within NZ are some of the most dangerous on Earth.

*NZ is nuclear-free of only man-made nuclear energy certainly not of natural nuclear energy.*

Those wonderful, stimulating, unbiased scientists who identified closely with farmers seem to have gone, few remain. Their contribution to NZ farming has been considerable. Typically they were accessible, respected farmer's views, were articulate, motivational and enthusiastic. They loved farm visits and cajoled farmer's thought processes.

*An example: Prof. Hugh Blair spoke to a crowd of farmers at a One Stop Ram Shop Open Day held at Mossburn and Te Anau, November, 2000. Southern farmers were enthralled by his presentation, how questions were answered and the quality of the material he gave farmers. It was brilliant, stimulating and rewarding for farmers, everyone benefited.*

"Independent research is a thing of the past, so anyone with a good idea cannot get it "officially tested" despite politicians screaming for good new Kiwi ideas. The Crown Research Institutes (CRI) would be the last place I'd go with an idea. They'd send you broke testing it and probably pinch your intellectual property." Dr Clive Dalton, former agricultural scientist, farmers' friend. Rural Network

"Scientists don't talk to farmers now unless cleared through head office..., they aren't allowed to. When AgResearch has a commercial joint venture, such as with PGGW, they were no longer independent.... For example, AgResearch will only talk about their own grass cultivars which are commercialised through PGGW, or cultivars PGGW has bred itself. They aren't allowed to talk about cultivars which may be superior." Dr Jock Allison, ex director of Invermay and Ag., Research. SF April, 2010



*Bill English was vague about the locality of his Dipton "home" when queried by newsmidia. Perhaps this Dipton homestead is it? Dipton, Southland, Nov 2009*



## Quotes

Cornwall Park (Auckland), Texel sired lambs were entered in the Golden Lamb Competition; they were first equal for tenderness. The pleased farmer manager, Peter Maxwell was "surprised".

*Peter should not be surprised, Texel meat is tender.*

"Great rams. 2009 was the first year we have got fat lambs away in November. Good meaty lambs that weighed out well."

Martin Munro, Warkworth Jan, 2010.

A group of Uruguayan processors, agents and farmers visited in April. An interpreter translated all conversations. Catalogues and newsletters were given them. Photos of RAM 4U were noticed. As Robin climbed into the car for the farm drive one said perfectly in English: "55555" (the car's odometer reading).

"I'm just back after two months away in UK and I had 200 letters stacked up. You should be pleased because I read your newsletters first."

Dan Wheeler, Rangiora.

"It (OSRS newsletter) is more widely read than the paper I write for."

Reporter at Waimumu.

"I have never bought a ram from you but I love reading your newsletters; perhaps I should?"

*The quality of the rams are **superior** to the quality of OSRS newsletters.*

"Wow it's you. I was just thinking about you (RAM 4U actually). How is the red car? I have not seen you for two years and thought I'd offended you or something." Balclutha Motellier.

*Everyone asks about the car but not Robin.*

"Reward performance. Relationship deals are flawed because they are "good buddy deals" with a ceiling for returns. Processors need grumpy directors, not popular ones who achieve zilch. Farmer's **only power** is the power to supply."

Rich Cameron, Lovell's Flat.

"Action on climate is justified not because the science is certain, but precisely because it is **not**." Economist

Poor science is a characteristic of climate change arguments. Worldwide, governments are hesitating imposing climate related laws because of growing uncertainty about climate data and the causes of change.

*Research funding to remove emotion and produce climate facts should remain a priority.*

Solar activity **is** the principal driver for climate change.

*Encourage science and prove this statement.*

To keep in touch with this topic, contact **Neil Henderson**, farmer of Gisborne at:

**doonhill@farmside.co.nz.**

## Selling New Zealand Farmland

If you believe in a free market then you can buy a business and land anywhere and "they" can buy your business and land also. Many Kiwis own offshore businesses but is it acceptable to have foreigners owning NZ farmland?

NZ is unique because there is only one business and that is growing and harvesting primary produce. Limited

opportunities for business already keeps 20% of NZ's population overseas.

A huge landgrab by wealthy countries to secure access to primary product, food security and raw materials has arrived in NZ.

*2-4% of the world's gross national product is used to feed humans.*

"Foreigners have capital and kiwis don't. The only way we can buy farms is by borrowing."

Keith Woodford, Lincoln University.

Already offshore interests have 70-80% ownership of the wine industry, about 72% of the pine forests.

Beijing's 11th five-year plan (2006) called for aggressive external investment.

Dom-Post 06/04/10

*Now this investment is huge and worldwide.*

"Perhaps in NZ we need starting point that says NZ land is for New Zealanders."

Woodford.

Rural NZ agrees; urban NZ is ambivalent.

## North American notes

The Mexican Government helps disadvantaged Mexicans, examples: disabled people are employed at airports assisting passengers; beds are given families; subsidised food staples; families given an extra room; cheap medical visits and generic medicines; workers have strong legal rights; demonstrations are legitimate and accepted. 1400 electrical workers and their gear arrived in Baja the day after the May hurricane.

Government assists major farm projects (e.g. irrigation), then retains partial ownership on generous terms for the landowner.

Tourism is huge with 16 million visitors annually; not 2010, there were few tourists anywhere. Sinking historic sites are repaired and improved. Smog has been greatly reduced; heavy industry relocated. Central Mexico City is free of cars on Sunday and is a walking, cycling Mecca. Weekday traffic flows, being aided by kerbside police who move foot traffic fast. Drivers are excellent, they do not honk horns or ding other vehicles.

Baja motorcycling was the toughest Robin has done on his own. Surf casting is rewarding. Housebuilding is fun (for a visitor) as construction and materials differ from those in NZ. Best results are achieved if the owner has building experience. Maestros (skilled tradesmen) earn \$3-400 per six day week, unskilled \$150.

San Juanico is 24/7 surfing. Everybody knows what is brewing around NZ. Huge swells roll up from southern storms and provide summer surf while the rest of North America has only ripples.

Mexicans are proud of their culture and flock to museums and archaeological sites. 4000 years has taught them patience so they are equipped to handle a recession. Those north of the border may be equally patient in a few thousand years.

*Note: there is no sign of the recession easing in US.*





1. Leaning spires and sinking buildings of Mexico City.



2. Traffic moves easily as do pedestrians. No honking, few dings. Mexico City



3. Armed Police are everywhere. They drink coke and talk on cellphones. Mexico City



4. Long, languid, lingering, sensuous kisses...



5. ...with ferocious tongue jousting is common. Mexico City



6. Nobody gawks, except Kiwis. Cholula.



7. Sun Pyramid. Magnificent, stark, huge; steep. Only 1000 (tiny) tourists visible, there are usually queues everywhere. Teotihuacan.



8. Moon Pyramid. Sacrificial victims, minus hearts got thrown down. Easier than climbing down as we did. Teotihuacan.



9. Popocatepetl erupts continually but does provide versatile soils which have been cultivated for 4000 years at 2500m a.s.l.



10. Intensive agriculture is impressive. Small, sheltered paddocks, soils with good texture. Maize is grown where ever possible.



11. The colours of Latin America, vibrant, crazy and very appealing. Puebla.



12. A pink antique shop, cum hotel, cum restaurant. Puebla



13. Buildings are old, well designed with distinct unique features which gives individual character. Puebla



14. This Franciscan church was built on a pyramid which has eight kilometers of archeological tunneling beneath. Cholula



15. Churches maybe almost vulgar with their ornateness. All pyramids have crowning churches and competing loyal congregations.





16. The state crushed the power of the catholic church then took over the maintenance of its buildings. 30 churches around here. Cholula



17. Mexico is a country of statues; huge and small, old and modern; they are distinctly Mexican. Puebla



18. Garment shops only. Whole streets sell only one product be it jewellery, food, shoes etc. Puebla



19. Stalls provide shade for children sleeping. Mexico City



20. 100 trucks are involved building the new SH1 on Baja. When completed the trip to US will be four hours shorter. Insurgents



21. Ignominious end for a plastic fantastic toy soldier. It lies unloved on a roof; totally forgotten. San Juanico



22. NZ radishes. 75hrs to emerge, 4 weeks to consumption. Packet said 6 weeks to maturity. Plants grow fast in Baja if given water.



23. Alastair's nursery of Mexican plants. Overhead automatic watering; lots of black widow spiders and creepy things.



24. Greening desert. Water is gravity feed into drip feed lines. Each plant has some rich earthworm poo under the roots.



25. Office building getting finishing touches. Oregon beams and high ceiling will keep the room cool.



26. Alastair's home. Built in a traditional Mexican style with a tile roof, brick cladding and plastered stucco walls. 6am



27. Aerial view of the building and nursery.



28. Mexicans move tiles by working together; they are swift and efficient. "Many hands make light work" is true.



29. A breakfast feast (at 10am) to celebrate finishing a major task. Crabs and kide were deep-fried to perfection. Eating is serious business.



30. Sunrise. Cardon cactus is possibly 200 years old, they can reach 20 metres and live 600 years.





31. Sunrise. El Mequital arroyo flows into the Pacific. Hidden soft spots are impossible for a motorbike to traverse.



32. Halibut, cod and stingray Robin caught surf casting. Excellent eating. A cold ocean caused poor fishing. San Juanico



33. Desert sunshine creates odd shadows. This Kiwi desert man is not in rain gear.



34. Underpants cacti.



35. Sock cacti. 210 kms motorcycling in deserts. Lots of wildlife, odd plants, awkward terrain and frightening surprises.



36. "Tyred" cardon cacti. "Tyred" cacti are often found near the highway.



37. Seal get caught in nylon nets. Worried fishermen cut them straight out. Carcasses are monitored by researchers.



38. Baja coyotes are small, common and yap with alarm. Coyotes lure town dogs into the desert and kill them. Prime predators.



39. Pelicans are ungainly on land but elegant in flight as they utilize every air current, and stream along. Their numbers are increasing rapidly.



40. This 4cm hunting wasp preys on tarantulas. Spiders are stunned, buried and eaten by the wasps offspring.



41. A sting is "like having a 10cm nail driven into your arm" said an army officer upon finding Robin's cache of scorpions.



42. Sheep look like goats, but are worth more. Restaurants grind sheepmeat into a paste with no commendable taste. Constitucion



43. This procession of communicants and relations marched through the village. San Juanico Day, 29 June, 2010.



44. Cockfighting. Spurs are lethal, crowds impassive. Handlers suck blood from the exhausted birds mouths, then blow in beer (salts) and its all on again.



45. Tiny vegetable gardens use road verges. Heavy metals from car exhausts are not an issue here. La Paz, Baja, July 2010



One Stop Ram Shop ewes, aged 16 months.



*Texel*



*Finn - Texel*



*Stabilised, 1/4 Finn 1/4 Texel 1/2 Romney*



*Stabilised, 1/4 Finn 1/4 Texel 1/2 Perendale*



*Stabilised, 3/8 Finn 3/8 Texel 1/4 Romney*



*Stabilised, 3/4 Texel 1/4 Finn*



*Dorper*



*Texel - Suffolk*