



One Stop Ram Shop



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30th Anniversary Newsletter

It is thirty years since One Stop Ram Shop initiated Shepac. New Sheep Breeds imported from Europe (1985) were farmed at Takapau (1987). Genetic change started when they were crossed with the most productive sheep from the three leading Group Breeding Schemes. Ewe productivity rose 85% over the decades from this small start. Practical farmers accepted the 'stabilised crossbreds' marketed by OSRS. By 2017 almost half the national ewe flock is crossbred with Finn and Texel genetics as part of the mix.



Agriculture Minister, John Falloon and Robin, 1987. 'T28' Texel ram at the Hilson, Quarantine station. Takapau, HB



Changing room, vehicle washdown site, operations centre just completed and gazetted. Takapau, Shepac Quarantine, May 1987.

Practical information farmers need to know:

David Meade farms OSRS Quarter Finn Texel ewes at picturesque Tadmor, Nelson. Surprisingly the area had quality feed over summer 2016 when the rest of NZ was frying. Winter was kind too. 357 ewes were tupped. Many were old, being 2010 born. Seven only died over winter.

Scan results were OK at 166%. Five were dry. 188 had twins and 15 had triplets; a typical result for this genotype.

Nelson farms do not have high scanning results. Finn genetics have helped flocks reach 'respectability' which was not happening with traditional breeds.

The triplet bearing ewes were farmed on their own, sharing their feed only with a few cattle.

At weaning, about day 110, three ewes (born 2011) had reared their lambs. Nine lambs; three rams (31-33.5 kg, liveweight) and six ewes (28.5-41.5 kg liveweight). Ewes were weighed.

Ewe A, weighed 65.5 kgs liveweight. Total weight of her lambs was **93.5kgs**

Ewe B, weighed 64.5 kgs liveweight. Total lamb weight was **94.5kgs**

Ewe C, weighed 71.5 kgs liveweight. Total lambs weight was **116kgs**

Mathew Barham was at OSRS when these weaning figures arrived for Clare Callow, our SIL bureau manager. Out came the calculator to establish the current NI value for the heaviest set of triplets. **116 kgs @ 45% yield = 52.2 kg carcass weight X \$5.20 (NI Schedule). Lambs were worth \$271.44**

"Send photos. I would be very interested to see how the money-makers look with their mother".

You be the judge! Each ewe with her lambs at weaning. *Right column*

These ewes are typical of the Finn Texel stabilised sheep farmed by OSRS for thirty years. Ordinary NZ sheep? **No they are not.** They look similar but they have totally different genetics. David Meade has exhibited their productivity spectacularly. He had the threat of worms, drought, facial eczema, aging, just like all neighbouring farmers. No 'special' treatment yet the productivity was **very special.**



Ewe A. 65.5kg and 93.5kgs of lambs



Ewe B. 64.5kg and 94.5kgs of lambs



Ewe C. 71.5kg and 116kgs of lambs

OSRS (HB) has ewes producing around 90 kgs of weaned lamb but never 116 kgs. If four similar ewes could wean 12 lambs grossing \$1000 in 2016, think what they could make if lambs were worth \$140 each? Answer; \$1680. 1000 of these ewes could at today's returns produce \$250000, but if the value was \$140 per lamb it would be \$4 20000.

Productivity pays.

A higher schedule price per kg of meat pays better.

Five Liners

- How many children are born per adult women in Bangladesh? Most answers are will be five. True 20 years ago. Answer; 2.3. Which is slightly higher than **New Zealand**.
- Global population growth is slowing rapidly. The divide between rich and poor is blurring. Humans are living much longer than just 50 years ago. More girls are getting education. From 1980 – 2013 a billion less humans lived in extreme poverty.
- Compounds associated with 17 diseases, including Parkinson's disease and bladder cancer, are exhaled on the breath. A breath test will aid interpretation of illness. This 'early warning system' will save lives.
- **Converting solar energy to renewable energy.** An artificial 'leaf' can split H₂O into hydrogen and oxygen. The Hydrogen is combined with carbon dioxide making fuel. Another method uses a catalyst to convert carbon dioxide to carbon monoxide which is combined with 'leaf' hydrogen; result syngas. **Solar energy 'leaf' capture is ten times more efficient than plant photosynthesis.**
- Much of the annual 300 million tonnes of plastic produced ends in the sea. Five gigantic whirlpools (gyres) are in existence. A 100 km floating barrier is planned to clean-up the North Pacific gyre. It will take 14 years. **It will take forever. Humans are the worst polluters.**
- Accurate numbers of refugees have been kept by the UN for decades. Numbers have remained constant at five million for 50 years. Most were displaced in the 1980s by wars which drove them into local countries. 4m Afghans crossed into Iran when USSR fought the Taliban. Numbers wanting to enter the EU are relatively **small** historically.
- **Food snobbery affects economics.** Consumption of exotic grains is 'proof' that globalisation 'works'. Rich Westerners eat more of poorer countries' cereals; sorghum, millet, quinoa and less wheat. Wealthy Asians eat wheat rather than rice. West Africans eat 25% more rice than in 2012. Poor people spent 79% of their income on food in 1990, now 54%. *Trump's trade barriers will create widespread hunger*
- Otago Regional Council has approved the release of a variant of RCD virus. A managed release will be monitored to have maxim impact. *Good news, as rabbit*

numbers have exploded.

- Do any farmers have enough time to read all rural papers which arrive each week? There are interesting articles, many 'identical', many depressing, and way too many.



Small jumping spider feeding on a blowfly.

- The author enjoys **spiders. Well, there are plenty to enjoy, about 25 million tonnes worldwide.** Spiders consume 400-800 million tonnes of food annually so they rank alongside whales and humans as the greatest predators on earth. Each group eats 400 million tonnes of other animals per year. *Life on earth would be grim without Arachnids when one considers what they consume.*
- **'Once were workers!'** 150000 Kiwis are un-employed; many Kiwis are lazy. 213 bakers, 600 café managers, 130 hotel managers, 683 retail managers got permanent residency in 2016. They were 'skilled' workers. Kiwis should have filled these positions? 200,000 work visas were issued. Kiwis didn't want work. *After Duncan Garner, OSRS has employed plenty of these people. Most were lazy and not interested in learning. They killed our enthusiasm to help less fortunate people. They lied, they stole, they had no moral fibre or honesty; unemployable.*
- Goodbye to the 'nuclear' family. 'Growing Up in NZ', a decade long study of families, has found only 25% of 15 year old children live with both biological parents.
- **NZ's population change.** 1900; 1 million Kiwis, 1950; 2m, 2000; 4m, 2050; 8 million? 80000 extra people every year until 2050. Infrastructure, schools, hospitals, prisons, sewage is not ready. **OSRS has never accepted an economist's view that growth is good. There is a time to rest, stop and do what is best for a country. Disregard theory. NZ needs not this influx.**
- It's official, New Zealand is a continent: **Zealandia.** Closest neighbour Australia is only 25kms west in the far north. Australia

could become the West Island. With a North, South and East Island (Chathams) nobody would be rude about tiny NZ again. If global temperatures decline, the poles expand and seas retreat the 94% of Zealandia underwater, will become land. New arrivals could have jobs involved in expanding the infrastructure on 4.6 million square kilometres of 'new' Zealandia (1/2 the size of USA).

- King Salmon sold 1200 tonnes to luxury restaurants. Worldwide 70 million tonnes of farmed fish and 90 million tonnes of wild fish are available annually. King Salmon, stay in top-end markets or fail. **An identical situation for lamb.**
- Meat Exporters are relishing the prospect of selling sheep-meat to Iran again. The Republic wants protein and sheep-meat is a favoured source. A huge issue remains about how deals will be financed. Spooked banks are wary of American regulators. European business with Iran has stalled for this reason. **OSRS knows the situation.**
- Producing films in Wellington provides many jobs for the industry of **"illusion"**. "It has a kind of outdoorsy vibe..." Enthused actor, Scarlett Johansson. Paramount Pictures got a grant from Government. \$85 million was spent in Wellington. Victoria Street became Hong Kong. Shooting, explosions and racing actors bought the 'everyday' world to Wellington.
- 'Life force' means; *'the vital principle, or animating force within living beings'* **There is no such thing.** The Minister of Science is to give \$100,000 to improve the 'life force' of Canterbury rivers and life supporting capacity of Canterbury groundwater. *Concentrate on the latter, forget the 'life force' it's rubbish.* *Bob Brockie, Dom-Post*
- **Whanganui River is legal person.** "Pretty nutty" said Minister Finlayson. **Yes it is.** Can it own land, vote, or be charged with murder if someone drowns in it? A \$30m fund to enhance the "health and well-being" of the river was established. *Economist*
- Denmark and New Zealand have the least corruption. First equal among 176 countries. *Transparency International, 2017*
- **Economist Country of the Year.** The aim is to reward improvement.' Special note to Switzerland, Japan and New Zealand, which were just lovely a decade ago, need not apply'. Another incredible compliment for New Zealand.
- Brexit. Britain's negotiators could

learn from NZ's experience. 'Brentry' in 1973, disrupted NZ's trading. Britain took 50% of NZ exports, just as EU does for Britain at present. NZ made **trade packs** with Australia, China and APEC. APEC in 2017 takes 72% of NZ exports, Britain 3% only.

○ NZ's Temporary Agricultural Work Visa Scheme for people of Tonga and Vanuatu was assessed by the World Bank. It delivers huge benefits as earnings mostly reach home. It was "among the most effective development policies evaluated."

○ Hordes of rich foreigners see NZ as a safe-haven. 3% of all properties sold in 2016 went to overseas investors; mostly at the expensive end. Year on year, NZ had the highest % gain in property value for the world.

OECD/Economist

Boltholes are sanctuaries for precious people. They come with their fears and prejudices. If 1% of Americans bought NZ boltholes and gained citizenship, our population would grow by 60%.

○ US; 2016, US\$16 billion was spent on pets. As members of the family, pets get stem cell therapy, hip replacements and expensive medical procedures.

○ Foreign firms' investments in US were 'souring' well before Trump's protectionism utterances. A wave of mergers made large companies larger and out of reach of foreign investors. Further disadvantaged by 'red tape', litigation and lobbying, many had long gone.

○ 43% (1.3 million) of NZ's tourists are Aussies. 1.7% of New Zealanders are Aussie born and 2.4% of Aussies are NZ born. Government, military and economic bonds are strong.

○ Australian gamblers lose US\$18.3 billion each year; the greatest per head loss worldwide. There is one 'pokie' machine for every 114 persons. *Pokie's are addictive*



New home. Punga from Arthur Masters, Mangapapa. Conservation planting is important at OSRS. Dec 2016

They said

"Yes it has been interesting improving our sheep. Incorporating the new breeds (1991) to get better performance. From below 100% lambing up to 144% this year. Lamb carcass weights up from 13.5 kg in the nineties to over 18 kg CW now. Improvements resulting in less ewes run for the same number of lambs born and for more kg's of meat. FE still bugs us but less than in the past. It's been great trips down to pick rams. Sadly things come to an end. Farming is like rugby, can't play forever. Lastly big thankyou's for everything. Sid and Joyce Edwards, Okaihau, Northland **Farmer clients become close friends with whom to share many mutual interests**

"Very kind of you to send the OSRS newsletters to me – ages ago now. Always very interesting, especially any about Finnsheep. The article about the girl from Finland and their farm is in my journal now. I've kept a journal since I was 30 and that's 100 years ago! We love our Finnsheep "Honey", we lost "Cherub" but have her twin girls. At present we're trying for lambs in Autumn instead of winter. Haven't seen much action from the ram yet! (neighbour's Suffolk) We didn't have lambs in spring. You could always send us a ram – free of course! An old retired boy. Bet you haven't had a card like this before. All the best. Happy thoughts". Colleen, Northland. You have some great times overseas! **I get quite a few cards just like this. Colleen has been offered Henry!**

Just an update on my lambing %. My own ewes, by the original ram from you, lambed 226% and weaned 213%. The ewes that came from you, lambed 195% and weaned 153%. I need advice for future breeding. Peter, Cambridge

"Every farm should have some Finn (genetics) in their ewes" Peter Sorenson, Pongaroa. **15 years with Finn genetics has changed Peter's outstanding traditional ewes to outstanding productive ewes. Year in, year out they perform in spite of some horrible seasons**

Newsletter came and I saw RAM4U had died at 675092 kms. I rushed outside to check the Toyota Hilux. It was 1800 kms behind. So, I jumped in and drove around everywhere until I was in front.....then the clutch packed up. It's off the road but the damage is not terminal. Philip Smith, Rangiwhia. **Both vehicles were in serious competition for decades. Both hated hospital.**

"Looking at the rams in the daylight (Finn Texel and Texel Suffolks) a nice group, thanks Robin. The Finn Texels, nice upstanding and very similar, well picked." Peter Hawkins, Owhanga, King Country

"Robin, you know the quarter Finn Texel we bought 10 years ago? It's still going strong". John Jolly, Eketahuna

"The rams I bought from you (Texel Suffolk, 2013) have performed well and I have been very pleased with them. They have lasted well and all but one have got more in them".

Justin Lee, Akitio, SHB

Last summer I gave the ewes pea straw in mid-January. Haylage of good quality was fed until June. The percentage was 8% higher and losses were few. 142% docked.

Rex McKay, Gladstone.

Supplementary feeding ewes is unusual for Rex. It paid off. Rex has 3/8 Finn Texel and Texel Suffolk.

Congratulations

- 1, Bary Gray's Owaka farm story. An interesting read in the NZ Farmer.
- 2, Philip and Robyn Holt's East Coast Balance Environmental Supreme Award. A reward for generations of thoughtful land enhancement and generous community sharing.
- 3, Robert Gardayne's Award as the Lamb Producer of the Decade. He is a perfectionist.
- 4, John McCarthy's article, NZ Farmers Weekly, Feb 2017. A past MIE chairman, expressed perfectly **the horrible truth** that farmers ignore but have the right to change if they had courage. The **'real'** red-meat sheep story is all about **decline**, something not slowed by farmer organisations.
- 5, Nathan Stratford's first place in the team shearing and third in the individual title at the World Shearing Championship, Invercargill.
- 6, Peter Morris, Waikoikoi. Winner of the Gore A&P Best Lamb Trophy.
- 7, Two finalists in the Ahuwhenua Trophy, Pukepoto Trust, Ongarue and Puketawa Station (Ron and Buzz King) North Wairarapa. *Well done.*

Federated Farmers should listen to members and adopt a **proactive** position rather than just being 'nice' and collaborating. The stance on climate change is puerile. There is a need to identify the man-made culprits which contribute to warming (pollution) by use of robust science. This elementary work has not been conducted scientifically. NZ's farmed animals **do not** produce a third of this countries' greenhouse emissions. Earth's climate changes are mostly a response to solar activity. *Just wait another 15000 years and the Sahara will become very wet again; as it has a number of times in cyclic response to solar activity.*

Use science to identify polluters. Pollution can kill humans faster than

climate change.

Federated Farmers should listen to practical farmers like Neil Henderson of Te Karaka.

Federated Farmers needs a united response to criticisms. Let robust science dismember criticisms, especially false 'Greenie' scare-mongering. It is time to be reasonable, firm. Critics are nasty to farmers and ignore their own urban water fouling.

Urban and Rural people all have a responsibility to keep NZ waters clean. Recently a person owning a house full of NZ paintings told the author he did not want the Porirua City paying rates for clearance of

gorse and protection of the Kakaho stream from livestock (both of which he wanted). Gorse clearance is too expensive for struggling farms around the Pauatahanui Inlet. "Stream pollution from animal's feet was the farm's fault". *Serious Inlet pollution comes from the toxic heavy metals spewing onto tarmac from vehicle exhausts then, washing off into the Inlet. Humans don't see inconvenient truth. Auckland pollutes. Sixty overflow outlets discharge raw sewage into Waitemata Harbour more than fifty times a year. "The science is clear. NZ's freshwaters are under stress because of what we do in and around them"*

Prof. Sir Peter Gluckman

Ram breeder sends ewes away

New Zealand Farmer 17/3/17

Takapau ram breeder Robin Hilson loves the look on people's faces when he tells them a portion of his ewe flock has been sent to breed on different properties around the country.

There are 11 farms from Southland to Hawke's Bay with his ewes, including Hilson's One Stop Ram Shop home block, Paratu, on the Takapau Plains.

"The ram business is our main enterprise but in the past few years I've started doing something I wanted to do years ago," Hilson says.

"Samples of my breeding ewes around the country prove how they manage in different environments. I've loved the exchange of ideas from all these landowners and it has turned into a wonderful comparison of what they can do and what we can't do... and vice versa.

"One of the things I have learnt so far is that the East Coast has a huge range of lurgies that literally put pressure



Robin Hilson from One Stop Ram Shop with Finnish student Silja Alamikkotervo at Takapau, CHB.

on our animals all the way through – parasites, facial eczema, salmonella – and that exposure is an advantage to our breeding programmes. East Coast stock do well anywhere," he says.

"Silja has been doing the computer work for the Sheep Improvement Limited (SIL) recording. Putting data into the computer has been time-consuming because of the different timeframes of the different properties."

In the South Island, Hilson's ewes can be found in Southland, South Canterbury, Marlborough and Nelson. In the North Island, they are on four properties around Takapau, two in Waipawa and at his partner Joy's farm, The Glen, at Pauatahanui, Wellington.

Hilson's return for the arrangement is his choice of ram lambs at weaning.

"The main objective of the whole process is to fill the picture we want in terms of ram selling. Fertility, growth rates and survival are still key recording traits, so we measure those against the other breeds and against their immediate siblings once they're back here. All progeny are fully recorded."

He says results from the farm at Tapawera, near Nelson, have been revealing. Ewes sent in 2013 were stabilised quarter finn, quarter texel, half Perendale. Last season triplet bearing ewes were separated after scanning.

"At weaning, about day 110, two ewes weaned a total of 93 and 94kg

of lambs. Ewes weighed 64.5 and 65.5kgs each. Wonderful effort. A third ewe weighing 71.5kg weaned 116kgs of lamb. We have never approached this level of production in Hawke's Bay. All nine lambs were killable," he says.

"The ewes themselves were not even huge sheep but it's what they've done that's huge. They've reared nine killable lambs with no special treatment. I'm not saying all sheep could do this, but it reveals their potential as a genetic package. This is the type of information we want for the whole industry to move forward. To get this information we need farmers who want to cooperate, as they do for One Stop Ram Shop."

Hilson changed his own breeding ideals back in the 1987. He had a perendale stud when scientists approached him about the finn and texel sheep imported from Europe.

"MAF's growing quarantine flocks had nowhere to live."

He put together a joint venture between 43 farmers, the Ministry of Agriculture and NZ Sheepac Ltd and built a quarantine station on his farm. He says he found the finns were hardy, lived longer and were prolific breeders with facial eczema tolerance. Texels were tough and sported big, meaty back ends. The texel and finn were crossed with New Zealand breeds and performance-recorded. "Crossbreds out-performed New Zealand purebreds in quarantine."

Hilson launched One Stop Ram Shop – a crossbreeding regime on his farm that now offers a variety of rams including finn, texel, dorper purebreds, stabilised finn-texel crossbreds with fixed proportions of finn, texel and New Zealand genetics. Texel-suffolk is a stabilised genotype. Rams are used NZ wide.

Hilson is on the road for months at a time visiting the farmers around the country who buy his rams and he's also taken that travel further afield to South America and Iran. He was part of a meeting arranged by the



Silja still smiling after learning to shear these rams at the One Stop Ram Shop.

Kate Taylor, author, photographer.

Middle East Business Council with the Iranian Foreign Minister last year after several visits to Iran since 2012.

Finn sheep and Finn shepherds

Not only does the One Stop Ram Shop offer a variety of sheep breeds, but there's usually a variety of nationalities there as well.

Hundreds of students and woofers have been through its gates but none have impressed host Robin Hilson as much as Finnish teenager Silja Alamikkotervo.

"She has been the most outstanding of the lot," he says.

"People contribute in different ways but her skill levels are outstanding. She's conscientious, patient and has fantastic stock sense. She was originally only coming for three or four months but fitted in so well we put her on the payroll."

Since arriving in Hawke's Bay last May, Silja (pronounced Celia) has been working as a general shepherd on the Takapau property. She has joined the Ashley Clinton-Norsewood Young Farmers Club and travels around the country with Hilson visiting ram clients and properties grazing One Stop Ram Shop ewes. She loves New Zealand's

dog trials and is training young heading dog, Meg. She has learnt to shear and did a great job on rams earlier this month before travelling to the Golden Shears to see how the professionals do it.

"We shear them standing up at home but I wanted to learn how to do it the correct way. I was trying to learn on You Tube but all the people were right-handed and I am not.

"It was a great and very entertaining event. I just love watching shearing... it's amazing how fast those top shearers can do it and the quality of shearing and animal handling still remains good as well."

Silja is studying animal science at Helsinki University about 750km south of her family farm in Tervola in Southern Lapland, 80km south of the Arctic Circle (latitude 66deg north).

Ninety hectares of flat land is used for grazing and cropping (silage and barley and oats for winter stock food). Silja's mother runs the farm, which isn't unusual in Finland, while family members help with cultivation, sowing and harvesting. Silja could drive a tractor when she was just six or seven years old.

"My parents finished university and started farming in 1995 and I was born in 1996 so I have seen the farm grow from just three ewes and a ram to now 150 ewes and 20 sire rams. That's a normal-sized farm in Finland. But being small is normal because all those animals have to be housed inside for eight months a year. We're also subsidised through the EU so there are many rules and regulations for farmers in Finland."

Temperatures in Tervola range from an average -15 degrees Celsius in winter with extremes of -30C to a summer average of 15C with extremes of 30C. There are 24 hours of daylight at the height of summer and 24 hours of darkness in deep winter with snow lying for about five months.

The 150 registered finn ewes are mated in three flocks – 70 white, 40 black and 40 brown – with coloured wool scoured and the skins sold locally. Family members use machines to knit items such as scarves, socks and pants, which are sold across Finland in different markets and through their farm's website

(www.vanhalanlammastila.fi).

"It's amazing how in NZ you have markets even for the belly wool and dags. Your whole wool industry is so different to us in Finland. In Finland even selling the good wool isn't always easy and no way would there be markets for the belly wool or dags. Because of the difficulties to get wool sold in Finland, farmers often do like we do: get the wool spun into yarn and then sell it by themselves as yarns and knitted products. That way you can get much better profit. It is often the same with the skins as well. You get them professionally scoured and then sell them by yourself to make better profit. When the farms in Finland are only small, it's possible to market all the wool and skins by yourself."

Silja has learnt English at school since she was eight or nine years old (it is compulsory alongside Finnish and Swedish). She is expected to do work experience as part of her university studies.

"Normally that is four months of work in Finland but I thought it was a good opportunity to travel. The first option was the UK but then I thought of New Zealand. I knew it had a lot of sheep, which I love to work with, and I had seen the Lord of the Rings movies and knew people who had visited.

"I have really enjoyed learning about New Zealand farming and teaching people more about Finland as well."

Silja returns home in May.



Silja teaching her young pup Meg to work.



*Having caught a fly the ant chewed its wings off.
Swan plant, Paratu*



8th February, 2017.

Is Sheep Improvement Limited still of value to One Stop Ram Shop Limited?

Abreeder's view. ".....sheepbreeding is definitely going into using modern techniques. It's still fundamentally breeders selecting physically sound, good quality animals and adding to the information we can get from our production recording and increasingly from actual DNA tests." Peter Black, Southland. (Otago Southland Farmer, 20/1/17) also the view of most ram breeders

One Stop Ram Shop (OSRS) and performance recording. The history;

OSRS performance and pedigree recording started with the National Flock Recording Scheme (NFRS) in 1967 which lasted until 1975. A streamlined and more practical NFRS version became Sheeplan until 1987. Breeders and scientists had met regularly to plan more improvements which led to Animalplan in 1988, and ultimately Sheep Improvement Limited (SIL).

OSRS played a very active role with the development of these schemes and frequent were the trips to Ruakura where Prof. A.L. Rae rubbed shoulders with farmers bursting with ideas to make genetic progress.

SIL did have many wobbly years. Producer Boards owned SIL but did not see it as their business. Funding came from breeders by way of fees and the Wool and Meat Board. Commercial livestock farmers benefited. Large-scale recording became possible.

SIL never became self-funding. Producer Board contributions, SIL client breeder 'Royalties' and a Government partnership contributions finance B&LNZ genetics.

2006-2015 period, OSRS paid SIL

fees of \$41,304 for 55486 lambs recorded

Actually, SIL fees are only a tiny fraction of total recording costs.

Publicly OSRS extolled the virtues of SIL and founding bureau, Animal Breeding Trust, for years to International and NZ audiences.

2017; all has changed. SIL's worth to performance recording enthusiasts is being questioned. Fees increase. The company (B&LNZ genetics/SIL) appears to have forgotten whom it serves.

Points of concern; 1, SIL is a simple system which users understand.

It aids breeders to make genetic gains with traits important to their clients and themselves. Each flock can have priority objectives. SIL is rapidly becoming complicated. 'Connectedness' wanted by scientists, would ultimately allow all flocks (and breeders) to be rated. For many flocks connectedness has no economic benefits. They continue to make cumulative genetic gain of 1-2% annually, pursuing their own priority objectives. *No one breed will suit all farmers or localities.*

2, Growing duplication of services.

OSRS has contributed to Breeding Trials (Poukawa), Central Progeny Trials (twice) and Terminal Sire Trials.

Two different organisations phoned to enquire of OSRS's 'interest' in 2017 trials. A written reply had acknowledged OSRS's willingness a month earlier. This phoning was unprofessional.

Neither organisation keeps ram contributors 'in the picture', as information from CPT or Terminal Sire trials is gathered throughout the year.

3, NZ Maternal Worth and NZ Terminal Worth.

'Now there is one estimate of genetic merit across all flocks, there is the opportunity to have standard indexes available for commercial farmers at ram selection' B&LNZ Genetics

Is this **scientifically proven**, correct? Do ram breeders really want this?

Do their farmer clients need this?

4, FlockFinder, RamFinder. 'Locate the genetics you want'.

OSRS has for 30 years sold rams which have their genetic makeup as their names. They are **stabilised** crossbreeds, unaltered in makeup for **30** years. Stabilised 'breeds'; NOT composites. Within FlockFinder or RamFinder, a search shows four OSRS flocks called Finn Texel. Only **one** is Finn Texel. The other three have different proportions of Finn, Texel and NZ genetics. These proportions are important to the commercial farmer and OSRS.

Years of asking SIL staff to list the correct name/description of OSRS flocks has been ignored.

The former CEO agreed to changes, but did nothing. All OSRS names are simple, accurate descriptions.

SIL accepts; Ranger, Meatmaker, Lamb Supreme, Focus Prime. Names that could be sheep, telescopic sights, synthetic meat or even a wildlife officer. These names give NO indication of the animal's genetic makeup, nor is there any need to. **OSRS markets consistent genetics within each ram genotype.** *SIL staff were arrogant, misleading and promoting inaccurate information. It is not possible to 'locate the genetics you want' when looking up Robin Hilson on these apps.*

5, B&LNZgenetics/SIL has no place in marketing individual genetics or ram breeders. Comparing breeders and their stock publicly, will destroy SIL. Ram breeding is best in the hands of breeders who attend the finer details of farmer requirements. Farmer breeders are practical and thorough. Breeder's clients know what genetics they need for their properties.

2017; B&LNZgenetics/SIL appears to know what genetics are best for farmers. **It doesn't**

6, One Stop Ram Shop endorses the letter Jim Berney (President, NZ Sheepbreeders Association) wrote Chris Kelly, Sam McIvor, James Parson, Graham Alder, (people of Beef and Lamb). Many of the concerns written of in that letter (25th, November) are shared by OSRS. **A detailed reply is long over-due.**

Conclusion: If B&LNZgenetics/SIL cannot respond to the 'wants' of farmer breeders, why would they stay? It has become a costly, self-centred enterprise, ignoring breeder's marketing experience.

Many are considering alternatives. SIL is no longer unique. Performance recording with SIL and its precursors has been enjoyable.

What went wrong? Robin Hilson

An engineer/farmer friend Peter Holdsworth in the 1980s was fascinated by the possibility of invisible fences. We mulled over ideas for hours. What would be required? Electrical pulses were to be the fence. Virtual fences are now possible. An audio message warns erring stock. A mild electric signal follows as final warning. Dairy cows have adapted well in Australia. *4000 OSRS sheep with collars to respond to GPS virtual fences will look dashing. Rams would accept the mild shock willingly, to get through the fence and reach ewes.* **Peter has been awarded an honorary doctorate from Canterbury University for his work with pultrusion technology (fibre-glass).**

LOTS OF WHYS

Why does NZ, which produces plenty of manure and compost, import the stuff?

Why does urban pollution get ignored and rural pollution become every bodies' concern?

Why is it necessary to keep food prices low when all the costs of producing it climb annually?

Why do farmers grizzle (including OSRS) at the wool price when it is an 'out-of-date' fibre?

Why is there no cure for Facial Eczema after research spanning decades and millions spent?

Why aren't Landcorp farms balloted to qualified, enthusiastic young farmers?

Why are sheepmeat returns not higher? Only 1.2 million tonnes are traded. **It's rare!**

Why doesn't Trump visit top city Wellington and OSRS and learn all foreigners are not terrorists?

Why does anybody get upset about hacking? Everyone knows airwaves are not private!

Why does the simple game of rugby have complicated rules that no-one can comprehend?

Why do rural papers accept biased articles from vested interests when evidence-based science is needed?

Why does transparency go when spending other people's money(OPM)? Wellington; Shelly Bay developments.

Why doesn't the sheep industry acknowledge that the clever use of 1987 new genetics by farmers led to the massive increase in sheep productivity in the absence of any contribution from science research? Climate change did help too

Why can't Environment Plans be applied to all business's? Dentists produce with mercury and antibiotic waste. Lawyers produce masses of hot air.

Why does the US spend US\$ 1854 , and Australia US\$ 982 per citizen on defence?

Why does Wellington city rank first as having the 'best quality of life'? **Why? Because it does!**



Pohutukawa flowering. Adding colour to the World's best city. Wellington. Jan, 2017



Lake Tekapo. One tourist for every Kiwi.



Lake Opuha. Tourist attraction. Ponding winter's surplus water for all to benefit. Fairlie Basin

The Sierra Club (Like NZ Forest and Bird) and the U.S. Forest Service were presenting an alternative to the Wyoming ranchers for controlling the coyote population. It seems that after years of the ranchers shooting or trapping the predators, the Sierra Club had a "more humane" solution to this issue. They were proposing for the animals to be captured alive. Males would be castrated then released. ***This was actually proposed by the Club and Forest Service?***

Ranchers thought about the amazing idea for a few brief minutes. Finally, an old fellow wearing a large cowboy hat stood up. He tipped the hat back. "Son, I don't think you understand our problem. These coyotes ain't fuckin' our sheep; they're eatin' 'em.

Visitors to One Stop Ram Shop

Early March a group of six Iranians visited. Chris Southgate had already met a number when in Iran (October) on OSRS business. Chris and Robin took them to farms, farm-supply shops and Alliance's meat plant at Levin. It was a hectic few days. The Iranians were friendly, business-like and inquisitive. People they met enjoyed them. OSRS sheep, woolshed and facilities were a highlight.

John Little, the American retired school teacher, visited for the 17th time in March. For three weeks he did many of the jobs Robin should have done ages ago. Ross wanted a 'lock-up' shed at The Glen. Now he has one. To build it, John mined the vast supply of recycled wood at OSRS. The door was from the Grand Picture Theatre in the Cathedral Square, Christchurch, pulled down forty years ago. Ross is happy, Colin is happy (the 'Lumber' has gone), John is happy 'cos he loves 'projects'.

Finnish student Silja, went home in May after a wonderful year at OSRS. She visited clients, farms with OSRS flocks, spent days with Jeff and Sue Moss, participated in ram selling, shore sheep, trained dogs, never stopped. Tramped the Ruahines, swam at Plimmerton on a freezing spring day, was an active Young Farmer, drove to all parts of NZ, went to the Golden Shears. Her patience was tried teaching Colin to use the TruTest Computer and Robin the skills needed to move 'things' about for writing and publishing. She is competent and **loves sheep**. **OSRS was the right farm for Silja**. Robin will visit her home in Lapland late July.

In May, a business partner from Brazil will be spending time at OSRS. It will be a chance to finalise plans developed last August in Brazil. Joy and Robin met academics, business men, farmers, technicians and students; many of whom will be involved with the project. A number of the senior people in the enterprise will be visiting OSRS this year.



Iranians from Mashhad (NE by Turkmenistan), Silja from Lapland, John Little from Alaska, Joy and Robin from NZ. March 2017. Friendly associations remove political prejudices.



John Little's shed for 'The Glen.' Silja cleaning shed spouting



Recycled timber no longer needed. Burnt.



Silja's burnt farm tractor. Battery ignited? Tervola in winter. Feb 2017



Iranian visitors stopped eating to read OSRS newsletters. "Robin you have been to Iran?" Frequently!



Silja the left handed shearer. OSRS Feb 2017



"Robin, you've called the fire brigade?" Richard rang from SH2. "No, it's safe." Sad to see recycled wood going. None for you in my will. But don't worry; the cacti are still for you."

OSRS moves sheep between clients.

Each year lamb and ewe sales are arranged. 300 of Lloyd Mapp's, Marlborough capital stock, Quarter Finn Texel ewes were sold to Paul and Keith Stackhouse at Waipara, North Canterbury. These outstanding ewes tailed 180% this season. They have gone to farmers committed to Finn Texels. The sale was arranged in November 2016. Other sales of ewes and lambs took place in Southland and Hawke's Bay.



Lloyd Mapp's excellent Quarter Finn Texel ewes, Jan 2017. Marlborough

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