



One Stop Ram Shop



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TWO TOOTH RAMS ARE STILL AVAILABLE AT OSRS.

Reasonable numbers of most genotypes are still available for purchase at one site on each Island. Anybody requiring rams is still sure of a good selection.

Farmers appreciated the great number of stabilised crossbred rams marketed this season. Pricing and selection based upon a SIL ranking has made farmer choice easier.

OSRS ram sales usually cease about May each season.

Staff and rams enjoyed a Xmas/New Year break after months of intensive activity for man and stock.

TMG is moving surplus ewe lambs between farms now.

Jeff and Sue Moss have slipped into the roll of OSRS South so easily. They visited HB in the spring for the Open day, selected stock, viewed stock and undertook a crash course in using records and learning office procedures.

They have done so very well. Both communicate well and check with OSRS regularly. The whole transition has been brilliant for everybody.

OSRS stayed in the deep south.

Come and **join us at Waimumu Fielddays 13-15th February 2008**. Our site is no 144, on Pink road. We will have sheep in pens, food and drinks for visitors. Please call, you'll be welcome.

On **Sat 16 Feb** OSRS plans to hold an **Openday** at Te Anau. Guy and Lucy Bellerby's farm, Gillespie Rd will be the venue; start time 1pm.



Bevan Haslett, read newsletter 65, and found he had won a trip to Australia. He was one day out for the 500,000 km turnover by RAM4U. 14 Sept, 2007.



Lucy, Robin, totally relaxed Dorper lamb and Charlotte. Christmas lambs, Dec 2007.

Butch Gordon, Mosgiel. His entry won a trip to Australia. "Dear Robin, I know you have silky grey hair, and I have reached the magic 500,00 kms, both are a sign of the aged, but please keep me as I haven't Rammed anyone 4U, so please let's try the million together. Your beloved Red Maxima RAM4U"



OSRS: The white hair is hereditary; nothing to do with age.

ROBIN HILSON	06 8558 335
JEFF MOSS	03 2468 308
DON BUCHANAN	07 8966 845
DAN WHEELER	0274 363 167
PETER KETTLE	0274 839 595

Finlay Weatherburn, is a candidate for the Southern ward in the February 2008 election for a seat on the Meat and Wool NZ Board. Finlay is an ideal candidate being a pastoralist, tree farmer, Federated Farmer (a strong voice in Wellington for many years representing Southland farmers), enthusiastic supporter of Meat Industry Action Group, social motorcyclist. Finlay has been active in all things of the community and farming politics.

Finlay beavers for fair solutions and makes correct, honest judgements.

A Southerner through and through he now wishes to contribute on your behalf to keep the changes happening.

Please vote for Finlay who has the experience and personal integrity to make a strong representative.

I thoroughly endorse Finlay.

Robin Hilson, OSRS.

SHEEPMEAT 2008.

There is no greater volume of sheepmeat on the world market; demand is as strong as ever. Sheepmeat is in short supply forever. Supermarkets double their money when selling it.

A combined Alliance/PPCS would not necessarily produce better returns; Richmond/PPCS did not.

"There are too many sellers in the market, and they were manipulated by supermarket buyers. Many fewer sellers would help but any sign of collusion would cost marketers dearly".

John Turner

Alliance Chairman. 16-10-07.

Waiau Monitor Farm Fieldday

Mike Petersen admitted "that here had not been enough innovative marketing of meat products". FW, 17-12-07
What does this mean? Meat is meat and can only be cut and wrapped in so many ways.

Milk is the same; with a fixed number of products. 'Added-value' adds little extra cash, according to food giant Nestlé.

John Aitkins.

Lean Meats Ltd

"Lamb has a good future because it's a specialist meat" He suggests a spread of lambing would give a more even flow of chilled lamb which is prevented by the concentrated NZ killing season.

Spread lambing is easy. OSRS has new lambs every 73 days. Reward farmers for 'out of season lambs' and they'll come.

John McCarthy. Ohakune. Ex Meat Board Director.

"All the quality assurance programmes, contractual initiatives and loyalty shown by farmers means little at present. Blatant supplier favouritism and excessive intercompany takeovers have taken their toll".

Historically farmers have acted responsibly. They have refined their product. M&WNZ have spent \$12 million annually, for market related investment. *Dom-Post.*

What has this \$12 m annual investment achieved?

Frank Gordon

Industry veteran, Hawke's Bay.

1. PPCS/Alliance merger. Experts picked benefits from the PPCS/Richmond merger. Result. Exodus of clients, plant closures, suppliers having to buy PPCS shares.
2. Who controls sheepmeat price? Supermarkets. They have the chequebook and decide price.
3. Suggestions for young farmers.
 - a/ Destroy your computer; it doesn't keep stock alive.
 - b/ Sack your consultant, he sucks the lifeblood of the farm.
 - c/ Work 16-18 hrs/day until you use your hands less and head more.
4. We've been through lows before. This year beef and lamb prices will be better. Companies are aware of shortages and will have to pay accordingly. NZ FW.

Stuart Weston

AFFCO, CEO.

"1.7 million fewer lambs in the NI signals fierce competition"

RN, 4-12-07.



Burnside grazed 500 lambs from "The Glen" on a greenfeed crop for one month. 400 are ready for killing.



Free moving, sexy Dorper sires. Out mating with ewes every 73 days all year round at OSRS



October born Dorper lambs.

Burnside, 2007.



November born Dorpers.

Burnside, 2007.



Dorper and Finn shorn ewe lambs on clover.

Burnside, Dec, 2007.

Steve Edge has died. Little River. 21-12-07.
This remarkable man, who had tremendous knowledge of our industry, will be missed.

Only rarely does one person stand up for an industry so persistently over a long period. Never thwarted by irrational thinking, never covered by poor legislation he coaxed and cajoled others to assist whilst seeking a fair-deal for farmers.

Almost always right, Steve was not appreciated by successive Meat and Wool Boards who spitefully criticised him. Boards never recognised his value; farmers did.

The huge costs of restructuring the Boards and altering their articles were born by farmers who sought change and got it, at an 'urban' price. If Boards had taken heed of this dogmatic man they could have created a better structure and some leadership for farmers.

Steve was inspirational to thinking farmers. Steve's influence went far beyond his beloved Canterbury. He was an incredible man.

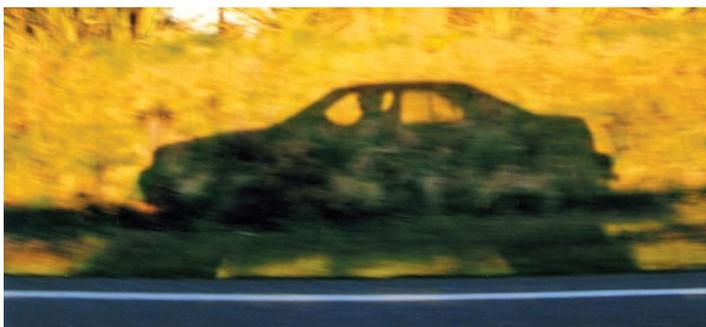
Steve, thanks for the example you set for others.



Steve Edge, he will be missed.



So old. This trusty 125 Honda has been everywhere for decades. Still going well. The paper on the carrier says One Stop Ram Shop so mechanics don't loose it amongst newer models.



Shadows. Southland, last light. 'Boy' Racer.

THE EAST COAST DROUGHT.

Hawke's Bay/Gisborne/Wairarapa do get droughts but few have been as nasty as that which has just finished.

Spring 2006 was typical El Nino, cool overcast days and cold easterly winds with little sunshine. A similar pattern for 2007 got farmers very nervous until November when La Nina took over. Warm (sometimes hot) weather has prevailed with intermittent rain so feed is abundant.

During the autumn/winter of 2007 many East Coast stock were killed. Sheep and cattle numbers are low. Weaning percentages are down. There are 1.5 million fewer lambs on the East Coast. Many farmers do not have hoggets.

A MAF Economic Impact Report indicated an income reduction of \$701 million over the next three years, for the affected region.

Lambs have grown particularly well at OSRS. Burnside has 400 bales wrapped. 500 lambs from 'The Glen' are on green-feed crops. Buckets of mushrooms were gathered over Xmas.

Tarata which carries 5000 breeding ewes will wean in excess of 150%. Colin Burlace (Tarata manager) coped without obvious grass for months and yet had negligible cow and ewe losses (record lows). Having been on top of the grass for so long, now with ideal growing conditions clover has bolted and is everywhere.

That OSRS was able to keep the stock performance up was a tribute to the staff and early decision making by everybody. The crossbreed flocks were outstanding and proof to ourselves that selection policies are right.

This was the mother of all droughts.

AA NZ tested a biofuel Holden Epica with 13000kms on the clock, engine 2500 cc. (Issue 74 'Directions')

On 98 petrol it used 8.86 litre/100km (31.8 mpg)

On EIO (10% ethanol. 90% petrol) it used 9.36 litre/100 km (30.1 mpg)

Fewer emissions and 3c/litre cheaper using EIO. Distance covered for both tests, 436 kms.

Robin tested RAM4U Nissan, 510000 kms on the clock, engine 3500 cc.

On 91 petrol it used 9.84 litre/100 km (27.8 mpg)

Distance covered for this test, 17609 kms.

Why is the Epica not hugely more economical than a 1991 Maxima with a 1000 more cc's?

Comment: RAM4U carried at least twice the load of the Holden. It was loaded with lemons, a travelling office and dust.

To save earth, it is best not to buy new cars.



Stabilised 3/8 Finn 3/8 Texel 1/4 Perendale rams. Muscular, productive, grunty sheep. Paratu, Nov, 2007.

THEY SAID - - -

Murray Schofield.

Stewart Island.

"What's a sheep like that doing down here?" exclaimed an impressed NI farm relative upon seeing the only island ram; a Finn-Texel from OSRS.

"All the ewes live for ages on the rough pasture, and stay worm free. Probably the rhodo trimmings clean them out".

Peter Davis.

Bluff.

"that b - - - - - thinks and has just said (in the newsletter) as I feel. But, I'm not prepared to get off my butt and say something. Yes, you say it just the way we (farmers) all feel".

Geoff Brown.

Gorge Rd, Southland.

"Those sheep of yours have really proved their worth. I bought some ewes (bigger than ours) from a 'stud' and they have been terrible; no mothering instinct, a huge scan (190%) but totally, totally dumb.

Your sheep have attitude. They always stay cleaner (than other breeds); they hardly ever have a dag. They scan well; the lambs survive, the ewes are longer living.

Sheep might not make much money but yours make much more than opposition breeds.

And they produce quality, tasty meat. I got **13th** (out of 52) at the lamb Oscars."

OSRS is scientific and practical.

Peter Bourke.

Owen River, Murchison.

"To keep on top of the ragwort we run 200 pet sheep with our cattle and deer. As I get older and my ability to bend over deserts me, the maintenance of these sheep and the removal of their worthless by-product (wool) is losing its appeal.

Using various breeds I've attempted to create a shedding, semi-bald sheep to solve the problem. Boy, do they look ugly! This year I used Dorper rams sourced from the bearer of lemons in his aging red car. I didn't know whether it was the rams, the part Wiltshire ewes with their watered down No 1 Ram Shop Finn/Texel origins, or the mild winter, but those ewes achieved 166% lambing. Then from 35 ewe lambs I got 45 more lambs. Now I've got too many sheep and their progeny shouldering their way through

the cattle and deer, desperately seeking this years' elusive spring growth.

Conclusion? Stop using No1 Ram Shop genetics or buy more land".

Doug Avery.

Grassmere, Marlborough.

He who knows all about droughts.

"I went past OSRS when the drought was on. Stock in HB were disastrous and yours were the only ones which looked good, and they looked great.

OSRS made early decisions. Wintered stock were only down by 250 fattening cattle and a few hoggets.

Joy did take all the staff to the 'End of drought celebration', Staff deserve all the credit.

Viv Barker.

Stanley Brook, Nelson.

"Robin, watch out for that piece of tin.

"I'm OK"

"I'm not worried about you. I don't want to harm RAM4U." *A spring gale was blowing.*

Peter Matthews.

Otoka, Waipukurau.

Texel Suffolk over PDx Romney ewes. Lambing started 12 Aug. 1st draft, 222, 19 Nov averaged 18.9kg, CW. Killed under contract by CMP. Value \$72.65 (ex GST)

Dennis Mitchell.

'Eland', Napier-Taupo SH.

'Eland', 35 kms from Napier has been farmed by Dennis since 1973.

How did stabilised ewes cope with the drought?

The 2006/07 season proved one of the most difficult years to farm in the last 30 years. Spring failed and we lived off scraps of rainfall over the summer months. The autumn rains failed completely until finally breaking on the 10th June when of course, it was winter and too late to grow any significant feed.

Decisions had to be made throughout the season about forward selling stock, culling the ewe flock and cow herd, providing feed supplements and finally (and reluctantly) selling my ewe hogget's.

I have been delighted at the performance of my ewes, **stabilised 1/4 Finn 1/4 Texel 1/2 Romney** through this difficult season. Running straight Romney's back in the droughts of the 80's lambing percentage dropped to around 50%. In a year every bit as bad, my ewes have maintained a 100% lambing. They hung on for months on end; ewe deaths were very light. With weaning and shearing now complete, the ewes are recovering well despite another slow spring and minimal feed available.

Greg Bennett.

Taihape.

3/4 Texel 1/4 Finn ewes and rams. September born lambs, LW 35.67kg. Killed by AFFCO at Imlay on 3 December. 17.1kg CW, a yield of 48%. Value \$66.55 (ex GST)

Dr Paul Kenyon.

Massey University.

"Lambing a hogget does not impact on lifetime performance".

OSRS proved this a decade ago.



Tim Anderson Parnasus, Blair Gallagher Mt Somers and Robin at OSRS. Both experienced SI ram breeders, bought rams. They have been friends for decades. Nov, 2007.



Wayne Anderson, Lone Star, selecting terminal rams for D'Urville, Parata and Quartz Range. Performance man. Nelson



Stephen Harris, independent agent, works conscientiously for his clients in Taihape. Nov, 2007.



David Powell and Dean Boros, TeKuiti.



Long-time Northland client Sid Edwards drove down to select stabilised 1/4 Finn 1/4 Texel 1/2 Romneys. He has been using this breed for fifteen years very successfully. Nov, 2007.



Each Nelson farmer had different objectives; each chose rams to achieve that objective. David Hobson, 1/4 Finn, 1/4 Texel, 1/2 Perendale. Gavin Petterson, Texels and 3/8 Finn Texels. Len Winn, 1/4 Finn, 1/4 Texel, 1/2 Romney.



Joanna, Simon, Matthew Loft. Mike Wood and Robin. Selecting rams for their King Country farms.



David Darby, Porangahau. Finn Texel Romneys have proved superior to other breeds for David. Here with stabilised 1/4 Finn 1/4 Texel 1/2 Perendales he will use to replace the Romney component of his flock.



Craig Percy, Pukenui Station manager, Takapau, with high ranking 1/4 Finn 1/4 Texel 1/2 Perendale rams.



Anna Hardwick-Smith selecting a 1/4 Finn 1/4 Texel 1/2 Romney for her Mangamingi farm, Taranaki.

FIVE LINERS.

- HB Vet Services were proactive with drought stricken farmers. They saw the problems and gave pertinent advice far beyond their requirement.
We are grateful for their commitment to the welfare of farmed animals and farmers.
- Good news. Landcare have released an American green beetle which voraciously feeds upon Californian thistle leaves. Reducing plant vitality slows the spread of thistles.
More biological control agents please. Ragwort is eaten to pieces in HB since the re-release of Cinnabar moth in 1992.
- Since 1994 2.5 million ha, have been lost to farming. This represents 20% of all arable, grazing, fallow land. 750,000ha is in lifestyle blocks.
RN, 4-12-07.
- Steve Braunias (reporter) wrote of Colin Mead's lambs, quoting shearers. "Texel-Suffolk cross, brown faced, bred for meat. No fat, real lean meat. He breeds the best lambs, always gets top dollar".
Wise Colin. OSRS Texel-Suffolk rams go to all NZ and are a major prime sire.
- Research at Chicago University has shown that if you don't eat too much; or too little; have four children by 30 and work the land, you have a good chance of living to 100. Telegraph.
It will take more than a 100 years to finish the projects that Robin has lined up.
- Acute gastrointestinal illness costs NZ 5.2 million workdays annually, i.e.guts ache. NZFSA conducted the study and now wants to find if it is food borne or contracted between people, animals or water.
*Is it not just **throwing a sickie?***
- Shonky Winston Peters excelled himself presenting the cheque to Starship that NZ First owed the taxpayer.
As a lawyer, how would he have reacted if clients gave cheques owed him, to charity?
- What bad examples politicians can be. Helen Clark, Prime Minister texting while the Queen was speaking. Phillida Bunkle, former Government Minister charged with shoplifting. Trevor Mallard Government Minister, charged with brawling.
- 'Outrageous Fortune' is drama, costly drama. Six directors film two episodes each. 150 people, of which 50 are actors are involved in each \$500,000 episode. Listener.
- Rich economies pay most tax. Sweden is taxed 50% of GDP, Finland and Norway over 40%. NZ at 34% is one of the lowest in the OECD. High taxes stifle initiative.
- NZ has 44,335 public servants. Full-time staff has risen 35% since 2002; mainly in the IRD and correction areas.

*An awful lot of **servants**. Service must be good, the pay certainly is.*

- A South African girl went missing in Auckland. She was found at a friends place. Under the Privacy Act, Police could not tell the parents where she stayed
Barmy!
- NZ and Australia have the best survival rates for heart attacks, only 5-6 % died within 30 days if the person was hospitalized. Survival for cervical and bowel cancer was above average; asthma, strokes and breast cancer was below. OECD report.
- A Hong Kong café for pets and owners.
Dogs get puppiccino.
Cats get cattuccino.
Sheep should get sheepuccino!
- If affluent western countries did not use recreational hard drugs the \$US 80 billion policing programmes could stop. \$US 80 billion could restructure producer nations.
- Drugs are publicity. Notice how young rising (or falling) stars get arrested for alcohol/drug abuse. Once convicted they have a holiday in a medical centre; and a good chance to learn their scripts.
- "Ships kill 60,000 people per year." Ship fuel emissions cause lung and heart deaths.
Pollution is the polluter's responsibility. Are shippers going to notice this research?



Grass covering young natives planted winter 2007 is good protection for young plants. Paratu. Jan, 2008.



Winter planted. Released lancewood. Jan 2008.



Doug Avery, Marlborough, and Peter on their knees. Doug is guiding OSRS and Richard Hilson as they establish lucerne in quantity at Takapau. Dec, 2007.

CLIMATE CHANGE.

Dr Muriel Newman. NZ Centre of Political Research.

In the past 100 years the atmosphere has heated only .7% whilst 30% more CO₂ has been added. Science has shown the temperature rose after 1975 and cooled after 1998. Climate changes are geologically well documented and are natural; i.e. heating and cooling **before** humans arrived. Greenhouse gases, of which water vapour is the major component, supposedly trap sun's heat and cause the atmosphere to heat up. *Not proven.*

"Remain conservation-minded and reduce pollution. CO₂ is not a pollutant (OSRS Newsletter 60) it is the basis of all food on earth". FW, 3-12-07.

Bryan Leyland. Int., Climate Science Coalition.

- There was no global warming during the twentieth century.
Hadley Centre. UK.
- Tuvalu sea levels are not rising. Australia monitors.
- From 1979-2000 the Arctic ice sheet was at its lowest recorded level. Since, it has re-frozen back to normal levels.
- Antarctic ice is at a record area/size.

"The only evidence of global warming is with computer models and we know they are junk"

Dom Post, 6-12-07.

(OSRS: Science cannot measure emission levels for a sheep and beef farm. Harry Clark, Ag Research Scientist)

Nigel Lawson. Ex Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Climate has changed but the science of change is uncertain and there is no evidence that CO₂ needs to be reduced.

If Governments feel there is a need to reduce CO₂ then tax the emitters (as they tax cigarettes), all the believers in global warming would be happy. Many people are suspicious of the climate change propaganda but, to question it would commit career suicide. Lawson a retiree, can do so easily; so he does. The trend towards carbon trading is like a medieval church system of indulgences, "it's a complete scam – but everybody is happy". Listener, 15-12-07.

Transpower is selling 228000 carbon credits for years 2008-2012, to nuclear and gas giant Electrabel so they can continue polluting in Europe.

Through tax and SOE dividends, Government will collect \$5.6 billion from trading carbon between 2010-2015. 60% of the planet's carbon emissions come from the builtup environment.

People used to laugh when encountering the oddball wearing a sandwich board stating "the end of the world is nigh". Now they give him a Nobel Prize.

Dom Post, 12-12-07.



Helen Swinburn, Hinerua, Onga Onga, with a Texel Suffolk ram. Environmentalist, animal lover, great friend.

FARM VISITS ARE VITAL TO OSRS/TMG.

It is relaxing to socialize while viewing stock and discussing options. These talks prepare farmers for changes in performance; what to expect and when, for precocious sexuality of the sheep, their longevity and carcase performance. Everything talked about is tied to TMG's marketing initiatives. The practical exchange of ideas is rewarding for OSRS.

How else could farmers learn about the Red Nissan, RAM4U if it did not visit?

SPIDERMAN AT OSRS.

Since becoming a spokesman on behalf of spiders last autumn when Australian Golden Orb spiders were found locally and he was photographed with one, Robin is interviewed regularly by reporters. He is approached to identify all sorts of insects. Recently a reporter from the Auckland Herald rang and to ask questions about White-Tailed spiders, this developed into a detailed interview.

Fortunately, Robin does like questions about the environment and its inhabitants and is qualified to speak.

CHANGING LAND USE.

It has always happened.

Great NZ podocarp forests became dairy and sheep farms between 1880-1940. NZ radiata pine forests are being converted to dairy and sheep farms again in 2006-2008.

It will happen again.

Dairy conversions are good for Southland and Hawke's Bay which have loads of ideal dairy country. Climate change has helped southern areas which lost dairying to sheep in the 1950's. Changes bring the provinces prosperity, as long as the farmland stays in local ownership.

If masses of urban money drives the change; it will not be invested for long.

Fear not Southland, sheep will have their day again-----soon.

COULD A MARKETER RUN YOUR FARM?

A marketer is not qualified to do so!

Farmers know what marketers **should be doing** with sheepmeat overseas.

Is a farmer qualified to give advice?

Few farmers have had marketing experience. Even fewer have exported farm product and marketed it themselves and taken the risks marketers face daily.

OSRS/TMG has exported meat and wool and knows the issues. It is not easy.

Once the produce leaves a farm it changes ownership. Past the farm gate farmer's influence is minimal. A farmer director of a meat processing company may have some influence. M&WNZ directors do not have any.

If farmers have strong views they should become political and get elected to meat processor boards.

Once a director, the farmer is a salaried company man, whose views quieten as he understands the issues.

A company wants to be successful and improve its financial position. It would like to pay a dividend to shareholders and reward suppliers.

These three objectives can never be achieved with meat processing. One sector always misses out.

Only 18 months ago 70% of dairy farmers had a loss year. Fontera had the same products then, as now, but demand has escalated. Payouts have increased. The industry is buoyant again.

For now!

Fontera produces quantity; quality on time. Added value only adds 3% to Fontera returns.

When the demand increases any marketer succeeds; only the best succeed in down times. Could you, a farmer, market sheepmeat better than the specialist?

SUCCESSION.

Richard Hilson and wife Karen farm as the Jedburgh Partnership on the old Tangarakau Farm/OSRS, SH 50.

Richard's Grandparents, who bought the farm in the 1940's, would be delighted that beloved 'Tangarakau' is still in the family, Robin is too.

OSRS has outgrown the SH 50 venue, but it will be strange not operating there as it has been the home of numerous fielddays and 1000's of ram sales. Rams were first sold in the 1950's. OSRS has run 2-300 fielddays in the last two decades alone.

The Paratu (SH 2) selling centre is now quite adequate, only needing an outside covered area. All future selections will take place at Paratu.



Mike Chapman has been at OSRS for almost a year now. Previously he had been stock manager of a CHB finishing enterprise for Derek Daniells. Most of Mike's time is spent at Tarata. A cheerful, experienced team member enjoying Takapau.



Peter and Kathy Kettle's home on Tarata.



Freshly weaned Texel Suffolk lambs awaiting weighing (Averaged 37.8 kg) Burnside, Dec 2007.



Marianne Aitken Asburton. Activist on behalf of farmers and a farmer. Talking sheep not politics. OSRS. Nov, 2007.



OSRS and TMG are now sporting new logos as the old ones were passé. We have farmed the new sheep for 21 years, and felt it was time for something different. A lot of work goes into a subtle change.

Since Susan Higginson first completed Robin's signs sixteen years ago, signage has just got better and better. Susan is amazingly skilled.