



One Stop Ram Shop



INTERNATIONAL
NEWSLETTER No. 70
May 2008

WHAT A WONDERFUL SUMMER WE HAD

New Zealanders, who revel in the outdoor lifestyle, could not have hoped for a better summer. It has just been like those that we remember we always had when we were kids. Every day, warm and sunny.

The summer's effects on farming has been great for harvesting crops and greenfeed, but for much of the country, it has made growing grass somewhat of a challenge. This has been the case on our Takapau blocks, Burnside and Paratu. With a couple of dry summers, a dry winter, two difficult springs, these blocks are facing 24 month straight of less than favourable grass growth.

Tarata, being blessed with favourable summers, has been invaluable at taking the pressure off the Takapau blocks over the summer months. We were very fortunate that Tarata had a warm, dry winter last year that prolonged the grass growth. However rainfall for the first quarter of 2008 has been half that of 2007, which itself was a drier than normal year. With current pasture covers low, another dry, warm winter for Tarata would be excellent. The stock, as expected, have not performed as well as would normally be expected, but it never fails to impress the staff of OSRS how quickly they bounce back from adversity. The credit must go to Robin and the breeding and selection policies of the previous years.

The staff of the OSRS much be congratulated for their judgement, ability and commitment to bring the stock out the way they have during such a prolonged period of duress.

Peter Kettle (OSRS Operations Manager) 14 April 08



Haymaking on Burnside.

Dec, 2007.



Summer on Maire Hill.

Tarata, Dec 2007.



Finished. Fencing started 2004. 40 kms new or repaired now.



Final cheque for John Douglas, fencing contractor.
"The hardest fence I have ever done", Maire Hill summit, 2008.

MAYBE IT'S ELECTION YEAR!

Government is to provide a \$700 million boost to science and innovation.

Could a financial benefit come to farmers from this package? Little of value has come to farmers (real tangible stuff) from levy funds 'invested' in science since Meat and Wool NZ was formed. It will be the same scientists who will seek to use this money, on farmer's behalf.





Biosecurity lapse. Table grapes with live spiders.
Paratu. Jan, 08.



Extracted adult spider and spiderlets. Native to NZ, Tasmania and now Queensland.



Cactus flower. Baja Takapau.
Jan 2008.



Jonty and Matthew Hilson exploring Paratu's new wetland.
Jan, 2008.

BIOSECURITY LAPSE OR A COST OF GLOBALISATION OR AUSTRALIAN NASTY BITE?

8-8-08. Table grapes bought from a local supermarket were delicious.

I noticed a spider egg-sack clasping some of the inner fruit. I dissected it. Out came a comatose adult and 37 'dead' spiderlets which were activated by the warm side light. I identified the adult spider then preserved them all in alcohol.

12-1-08. I contacted the supermarket management who were very helpful. They offered more grapes, I declined. The grapes had come from an Australian sole supplier. Fumigation procedures obviously had been faulty, so the supermarket would complain to the Australian supplier.

14-1-08. MAF Biosecurity very promptly responded to my call. Apparently, they get heaps of livestock in produce and have a huge number of samples waiting identification. Takapau's 'new' spider joined the queue.

I was assured Californian growers had reacted promptly when Biosecurity NZ located Black Widow spiders in produce.

The Black Widow is the most poisonous spider known.

17-3-08. MAF Biosecurity confirmed the spider identification; Genus clubionidae (as I suggested), found in NZ and Tasmania. As the grapes had come from Queensland it was obviously a case of **contamination** in NZ.

Officially the end. Is it?

18-3-08. More questions of the supermarket.

Grapes are fumigated and chill-stored at one site for up to one month in Australia, then sent to NZ. Here they are (Inspected?) packaged and dispersed to various branches.

*Where did the adult jump onto the grapes? The male spider spun the egg sac, mated then stayed inside with the spiderlets: a **three to four week process**. Chilling will delay egg development.*

CONCLUSION

- 1) Contamination occurred in Australia.
- 2) The genus is now on the Australian mainland.
- 3) Fumigation failed.
- 4) Only 'trained eyes' would have seen these stowaways.
- 5) NZ Public are the 'inspectors' of imported fruit.
- 6) Biosecurity inspection failed.

Finally: To accept globalisation is to accept other countries' products and **livestock**. Biosecurity is just a PR exercise, superficially effective at airports. **Black Widows, like Red Backs, are probably well established here now.**

FIVE LINERS

Only 10% of fish caught world wide are used for human consumption, the rest go into animal food and aquaculture.

Internet vulnerability. All links between Europe, Middle East and South Asia were lost when undersea cables were damaged by shipping.

Initially terrorists were blamed.

A wider choice of mates reduces reproduction rate.
Urbanisation leads to falling fertility. True.

Economist. 9-1-08.

There is a mad world-wide rush to exhume bodies. A recently beautified person (last 20 years) has been dug up in Italy by a Bishop for religious reasons.

Executed people at Pentridge (Melbourne) are being exhumed and identified, among them Ned Kelly. Ned was no hero, just a petty, nasty murderer.

Leave people buried, it's what they expected.

Good news. Recycling old bodies (not human) produces 50% of the world's steel. Metals recycled are worth \$196 billion annually.

NZ landfill charges are to increase because smaller waste volumes cannot cover fixed costs. eg. Hastings.

Genetically modified crops (GMO) are grown on 114 million hectares globally. They provide higher yields even as they require less water, energy, fertiliser.

Genetic modification is transforming agriculture.

Choice, an Australian consumer advocate test-tasted roasted chicken from organic, free range, corn feed and factory sources.

Conclusion: No difference. Judges agreed that chicken meat had lost taste over the years.

Sheepmeat has become tastier and does not need additives to 'spice' it up like chicken.

US. There are fewer than 1 million farmers in US. Between 1995 and 2005, US\$165 billion was paid in subsidies. 73% went to 10% of the farmers.

UK. Pheasant shooting can cost NZ\$2400 per gun per day. It has become the sport of Bond Traders and Hedge Fund Managers.

Monetary downturn may see fewer sportsmen out.

Denmark. Wartime pregnancies result in more female offspring. Why?

Stress is the factor. Mothers miscarry more male embryos. Maybe this is an adaptation. It is sound evolution. *Danish Research. Economist.*

Women in rich countries (with no stress) produce more sons.
This they do.



This colourful spider did not frighten RAM4U.

Te Anau.



Impressive ¼ Finn ¼ Texel ½ Perendale ewe lambs at Argyle Station, Waikai. Southland, Jan.



Signfest. Stoney Creek, Mawheraiti. West Coast, Jan, 2008.



Heather and Greg Davis chuckling over newsletters, Balfour.



Dorper ewes.

Feb, 2008.



Richard Hilson (Vet Services HB) put cids into ewes to be artificially inseminated.

Feb, 2008.



Richard Lee (Vet Services HB) inseminated dorper ewes with high performance semen from Australia.

March, 2008.



OSRS Dorper hoggets. Reared in drought conditions.



Joe and Shaun Fouhy (Pahiatua) with their Texel-Suffolk rams.
Paratu, Feb, 2008.



Te Apiti wind farm. Windless

Feb, 2008.



A Taihape call for help.

Utiku, 28, Feb 2008.



Manawatu Gorge. Lots of rocks and tiny river. 28, Feb, 2008.

Robin Hilson, Hawke's Bay	(06) 855-8335
Chris Southgate, Dannevirke	(06) 374-2740
Don Buchanan, Taumarumui	(07) 896-6845
Dan Wheeler, Rangiora	027 436-3167
Blair Gallagher, Mt Somers	(03) 313-9819
Guy Bellerby, Te Anau	(03) 249-8220
Jeff Moss, Tokanui	(03) 246-8308