

Farmer Comments

Southland/Otago, October 2010

*Weather. Nobody had experienced extreme coldness for such a prolonged period.*

*Auckland reports about farmers chasing premiums and the need to house their stock. Farmers were infuriated by urban stupidity.*

*Sheep losses. "Mine were ok; my neighbour's losses were much greater."*

*Don Nicolson's performance was appreciated and praised.*

*"Stabilized crossbred sheep survived better than traditional breeds and composites." Unsolicited comment.*

*Everybody hated picking up dead stock but "felt better" for having done so.*

*Federated Farmers efforts to reach out and contact every 'possible' stricken farmer was appreciated.*

*Farmers talked of bank "pressure". Lamb losses were catastrophic and many expected they would be forced to sell land because they could not increase the mortgage.*

*Numerous women acknowledged the role of mothers and mothers-in-law who stayed on the farm after the school holidays. When the storm struck, they cooked, washed and entertained children.*

*Everybody asked about "RAM 4U". Some, especially lovely people, asked after Robin.*

Discussion Frequency

100%

80%

100%

50%

15%

50%

25%

100%

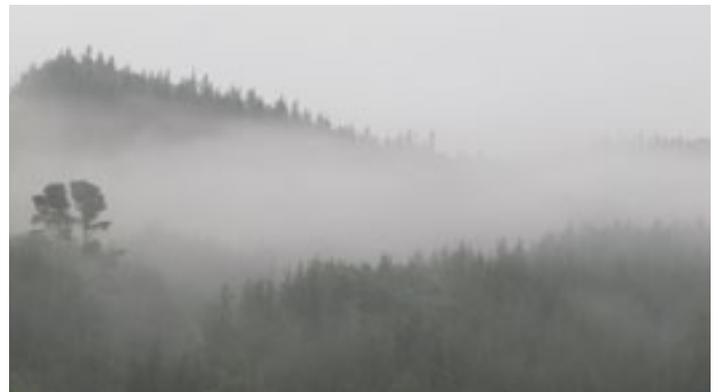
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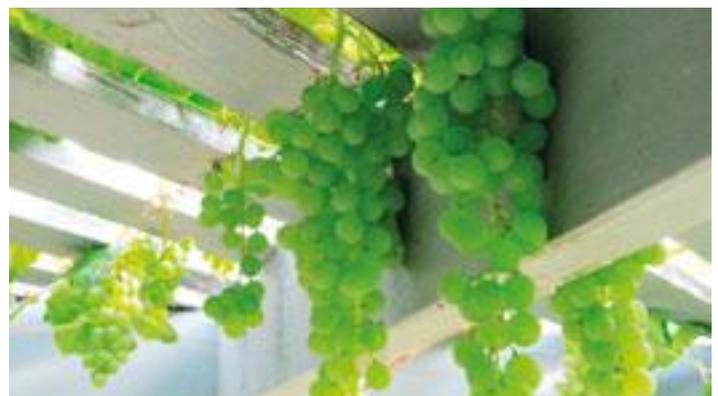


Marigolds and monarch butterflies. Many different insects enjoy the colourful flowers. Paratu, Jan 2011



Highland mist? No.

Tarata in low cloud.



First bunches of edible grapes at Paratu.

March 2011



Both hills of Tarata covered in snow.

August 2011.



'Tell tale' tracks with signs of belly contact by tractors desperate to reach starving stock. Many animals could not be reached. Ongarue, Sept 2010

Spring observations

Many rural SI people wave to RAM 4U.

Nationwide there is two 100 km/h speeds:

*That which RAM 4U is going and that which everybody else is going.*

Silly statements that appeared in the media

- a. Petersen (B&L chair) said "farmers need to improve their productivity".  
*Like doctors, accountants, dentists?*
- b. Southland farmers should house their sheep.
- c. Farmers were wrong to chase early season premiums. Farmers lambing dates were too early. Farmers needed to be more considerate to their sheep.

Farm shelter in the NI was of little use. SI shelter became dangerous as soils churned into ensnaring mud. Lambs died for many reasons, but gangrene of the scrotum at Boggyburn, was the most unusual.

By October, many country areas smelt of anaerobic soil, dead sheep, dead cattle. Even the sweet smelling willows and poplars in Southland and Otago could not disguise the smell of death.

Farmers selling off lifestyle blocks are learning that each block makes a new neighbour who suddenly has all kinds of rights. They growl about 'normal' farm activities like topdressing, cultivation, bleating sheep; too much noise. No worries about their motorbikes, chainsaws, donkeys, peacocks, five motorcars, yapping dogs and cattle without water.



OSRS September lamb losses; some days 100% of those born died. KC, Manawatu, Taihape, Wanganui, Taranaki, HB, Gisborne lost 1.5 million lambs as did Otago and Southland.



One dry, safe, well-fed lamb.

Ermedale



Dorper sired lambs at Hawarden.

James Costello, Oct 2010



New Year with family & friends.

Canoeing at Parapara



Car stuck, people stranded, dogs not stranded, dogs happy. Southland people drive along rivers, beaches, mountains, hills; in fact everywhere possible.

Oreti river



Lake Wakatipu. The previous day had been too windy to go outside.

Glenorchy, Oct 2010



Bra fence. A prolonged dry spell had seen communities resort to unusual methods to capture elusive rain.

Southern Westland, Oct 2010



Cold fronts moved across the countryside hourly. Here the Hokonui Hills are about to disappear. Gore



Alan and Kelvin Chittock checking Finn Texel rams bought from OSRS years ago. Waikoiko, Oct 2010



Robert Patterson classing merino wool (12 to 16 microns) for Ann Neilson and Dave at Lowburn Station. Cromwell, Oct 2010



Stabilised 3/8 Finn 3/8 Texel 1/4 Romneys produced the largest lamb crop, highest yielding carcasses, most valuable lambs ever, for Peter Chamberlain. Norwood, Burnham



Deer, pigs, goats skins (270) all arranged on a fence. Macraes Flat, Central Otago.



Ingenious 'mothering-up' pens. OSRS ewes don't need this treatment. South Otago



Spetacular Papanui Inlet. Texel Suffolk rams are used successfully across Perendales. Alan and Sandra Clearwater, Otago Peninsula



OSRS Texel Suffolk (irrigating?) at Ranfurly. James and Debbie Paterson, Glimmerburn.



Even boats get mired in Westland. Fox, Oct 2010



Dennis and Robin selecting rams for clients. Matariki, Nelson.



Wise rams sheltering at Browns. Rain was pelting down without respite. It was very cold.



Typical weather in spring, heavy, sleety rain. Wipers on, wipers off. Picton



Hogget lambing at Ti Tipua. Stabilised 3/8 Finn, 3/8 Texel, 1/4 Romneys are robust, fecund, high yielding; long lived; a highly productive breed. Finlay Weatherburn



Accident number 42; this one was fatal. OSRS would like to see these accidents stop. Fixing fences is inconvenient and time consuming. Burnside, April 2011



Planting of the eroding Kakaho stream banks is now obvious at 'The Glen'. Joy Gray's effort rewards Whitby residents also. Pauatahanui, Oct 2010

They Said...

"Rangitata Island district's best lamb producer has 2900 lambs to sell, but actually only needs 100 cows added to his herd to be better off".

*Russell Brodie, Rangitata Island*

"167% scan, 157% tailed. Ewe losses negligible. Super sheep, few dags". Flock; 3/8 Finn 3/8 Texel, 1/4 Romney.

*Dick Bragen, Kowai Bush, Springfield*

"I do enjoy the newsletter and your observations; like a paddock full of haylage plastic (not a good look). After reading it, I give them to a retired farmer down the road and he really enjoys them too."

*Peter McKellow, Greta Valley*

12 bales of AA hogget, 32.5 m, 84% yield, no vegetable matter, bright, 405 c/kg greasy. Finn/Texel/Perendale

*Nigel Clark, Lonestar Paturau, Oct.*

"Facial eczema is the biggest problem for sheep in the NI."

*Gerald Bull, Ngaruawhia, Sept.*

Soon to be so for all NZ too.

"What I like about the stabilized 1/4 Finn 1/4 Texel 1/2 Romney is their sense. I have lots of narrow guts, which would guarantee a smother with Romneys, but these sheep stop and just trickle across. They are possibly too intelligent; they turn up where they are not meant too.

I've had a 25% weaning increase in 5 years. All I have got to deal with is fencing. Floods and weather is simply out of my control."

*Alister Pearson, Paturau*

"We have big, bold sheep", Marie Masters.

Shearer's comment: "They are looking at you, they are looking at you right in the eyes. They look like those sheep in the movie (Black Sheep) that eat people."

*Marie Masters, Mt Dampier, Taranaki*



*3/8 Finn 3/8 Texel, 1/4 Romney ewes with lambs*

"These sheep are a pleasure to farm, they are so easy to handle. We shepherd and they are great mothers, totally relaxed. All drafts (to Alliance) are 80% in the premium grade; most drafts are 90% plus".

Ewes were **skipping** with their lambs.

**Yes, skipping.**

*Gavin Petterson, Hamama, Takaka, Oct.*

"I pass the Newsletter on to my daughter. It is the best farming 'paper' that comes through the mail. It's so different, direct, candid. I love it."

*Farm Manager, King Country*

Dorper/Wiltshire/Perendale works lambs averaged 18.2 kg CW (2009-2010), mostly gone by April.

*Robbie Graham, Oparau*

Clinton Rugby Club lamb competition, Feb 2009. A Romney x Texel Suffolk lamb, weighing 75 kg won the \$200 prize. The lamb was spring born, 2008.

*Keith Munro, Waipahi*

"Pasture to plate" lamb competition at Amberley attracted 28 entries. Judging, 'on the hoof', ranked all lambs 1 to 28. They were killed by Harris Meat and judged again. Entries were tasted by a panel of five at NW Café – Amberley. Keith Stackhouse (Omihi) entered a Finn Texel lamb which was placed third.

"There was nothing we could do and that was the hardest part." (with reference to September storms).

*Tony Buckingham, Waimahaka, Oct 2010.*

Ewe hoggets (Rom Finn Texel), 'probably' 45 kg LW.

Mated to dorper rams, 01/05/10.

Total 339. 13 dry, 174 single, 152 twins ie 141%

Lambs tailed 408, 120%. No lambing beat. Rolling, north-facing hills. Three hoggets died.

Doug & Linda McNaughton, 'Rakaiati', Dannevirke  
*Dorper X lambs are born easily, survive and have a red meat yield similar to texels. (after John Aitken; Lean Meats)*

Stabilised 1/4 Finn 1/4 Texel 1/2 Romney ewes are crossed with Texel Suffolk rams. Lambing started 20 July 2010. Lambs were picked at the end of October for Hellabys. LW 30.5 – 44 kg gave a 17.2 kg CW average. Awful winter, dry spring, best draft ever.

*Sid Edwards, Northland*

Hi Robin, an early bit of feedback on the latest NL "loved it and am going to take a day off work to read it all!!!" Cheers.

*(Farming professional)*

We find the best ewe for our climate and management is the 1/4 Finn 1/4 Texel 1/2 Romney. It may not have as much wool but the lambing percentage is 40% better than straight Romney or Coopworth we used to have.

*Ken Elliot, Middlemarch, Sept.*

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

970 scanned ewes; 4 dry; 151 singles, 200% +.

Weather: wet, coldest (in Harold's memory)

136% tailed "a really great survival".

*Harold and Jill Jennings, Tokanui, Nov.*

"First, thank you for choosing such a fine ram. He looks great and his record sheet is very impressive. I certainly look forward to seeing his progeny in 2011. Our ram hoggets from your 2007 ram are the best ever. Dragging them out to shear them was something of a battle (I won, just) and they were taller than me on their tippy toes".

*A.O., Napier*

A person came to the ram selling venue and asked for

Robin. "There are three horses all standing in a row back there (pointing out a lifestyle block) and something is wrong. You know all about livestock. Would you go and help them; they are stressed!"  
I did nothing, would you? Three miniature horses standing in a row looking crook?

"All the Texel Suffolk sired lambs were ready in January. Hardly any of the Texels or Suffolks are ready so only they are left behind. Texel Suffolks have done really well."

*Isabella Anderson, Cadrona, Oct.*

"I'm really happy with the ewes, they are doing well." Flock; 3/8 Finn 3/8 Texel 1/4 Romney.

*Peter Doncaster, Waipahi, Oct.*

"I cut the ram photos out of the newsletters and stuck them on the wall to help me decide what to buy."

*Colin Knarston, Southland*

"In two years I've had only one bearing and lost no hoggets, nothing died, they are all alive and having lambs. In all the years of lambing hoggets the last two have been the best I've had. Flock; 1/4 Finn 1/4 Texel 1/2 Perendale."

*Jeff Moss, Otago*

"For the first time in 54 years of lambing I have not wanted to get up in the morning."

*Peter Black, Ermedale, Oct.*

"It's still going! Amazing." (RAM 4U)

*Balclutha Motelier*

*He then talked about the weather as well as any farmer.*

2010 Spring quotes (Anonymous)

"There's another 1/2 million dollars on the mortgage."

"I've lost 25% of my income."

"Look, I've got a live lamb."

A farmer was asked by his wife "Will this storm put us off our farm?" A repeat of similar issues in 1989.

*Southland*

"Lambs are jumping out of their skins." Otago, Oct.

***Not so anywhere else in the SI.***

"I just could not cope, the washing and housework piled up and only now (after 10 days) I am getting back to normal. My mother saved us – she came for the school holidays and stayed on." *Tokenui*

NZ's Inland Revenue Department makes lots of mistakes.

Peter Kettle has become Peter Kettle.

Kathy Kettle is now Kathy Kettle.

Colin Burlace is Cloin Burlace.

It will take months before they'll make corrections.

They do spell Dayanne Martins Almeida correctly;  
.....**for now!**

I drove into Kahurangi National Park from Wanganui Inlet by way of a road which ended at the popular Kaituna walking track. Here, I meet some trampers, we exchanged pleasantries, then I left. 30 minutes later at Pakawau where I was parked, booking my passage back home, we met again.

"Are you the ram breeder from Waipukurau?"

"Yes."

"I recognized the car; it has done a huge mileage hasn't it?" (to the passengers) "It's coming up to 600,000kms. I'm from Southland (Mandeville) and I get your newsletter."

Later as I drove past Onekaka (near Takaka) the car behind started flashing lights, so I pulled over. I was stopped by a Bainham couple, Joanne and David Haldane, who had recognized the car. Joanne had said to David "That's Robin's car, he probably has been calling at our farm; let's catch him". They succeeded! We arranged a Xmas/NY barbecue at Parapara where Joy and I were spending Xmas. (See photo)

Farmers should blame themselves, not their sheep, for low scanning results in 2011.

Scanning has produced some unpleasant results this season. Percentages have been well down in ewes with good body condition and plenty of feed during tupping.

Subclinical facial eczema has been widespread. However the real reason has been a return to traditional genetics and resulting lowering of fertility.

OSRS warned farmers that this would happen. Well, now it has. A dash of Finn will keep the percentage at a desired level, help facial eczema tolerance and add longevity. All this and with no visible Finn genetics in the ewes.

***Finn genetics increase production and guarantee repeatability.***

Although only one person has died in the 42 crashes involving OSRS fences the social cost must be huge. 'The Glen', (associated OSRS), is on Grays Rd, Pauatahanui. There have been 102 crashes between 2006 and 2010 on this road. \$20 million is the social cost. (Dom-Post, July 2011)

*New Zealand drivers are impatient, stupid and unskilled.*

**Jeff and Sue Moss have moved.**

**Their new Clinton farm is at 3726 Old Coach Rd, (03 415 7077). They now farm 780ha. in South Otago.**

**OSRS will operate from the new farm.**



RAM 4U's sister/brother. "Two owners, nothing done to it. So economical". 334,000 kms  
Te Kuiti, Sept



This Maxima was pristine inside and out and had 223896 kms on the odometer.  
Nelson, Jan 2011



"It is my father's car and he wouldn't change it for anything. Very sound. Doesn't use much fuel eh?" 379000 kms. Wellington, April 2011



Dinosaurus rex, raurimuii. This masterpiece is 'intimberdating'.  
Raurimu, Sept 2010



Peter and Ann Nevins use Texel Suffolk rams. Mountain views and green pastures are a feature at beautiful Tokorimu.



"Why are you out on your quad in this shocking rain?" "I was waiting for you." Colin Boddie did not know I was in Te Kuiti.



Marie Masters and Arthur have transformed their Mangapapa farm into a highly productive unit with Texel Perendales. Mt Dampier



Forty two pigs on a fence-line. Pests no more, but quite smelly.  
North Taranaki



Hillsides turned into mud and in some places just flowed away. This 'porridge' was dangerous. Rangiwahia, Sept 2010



Funnel web spiders utilize Kirikau telephone poles in great numbers.



A soaking wet emaciated, desperate Raglan possum, distressed and starving. Sept 2010



Sunset over damp Kawhia. More rain coming. Everybody was 'sick' of the rain. Sept 2010



Logging. Pines planted for shelter built-up the soil depth by 5 to 10 cms.



3600 tonnes of timber sold at a loss for OSRS. Can a farm woodlot ever be profitable?  
Tarata, Nov 2010



Tree harvesting leaves a mess. A digger stacked dry slash which was demolished by fire.  
Tarata, March 2011



Red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning. Many spectacular sunrises and wet days. Paratu, July 2011



John Little (USA, Wwoofer) visited for the tenth time. Martha loved the hammer rubs. Paratu, Jan 2011



Central Hawke's Bay is 'LAMB Country'. Signage on SH2. CHB grows excellent lambs. July 2011



Conspicuously marked cave wetas thrive in Golden Bay's deserted gold-field tunnels.



Not a white pointer. Thirty sharks caught were all released. Xmas fishing, Parapara 2010



OSRS BBQ. Joanne and David Haldane, Robin, Jane Petterson, Alister Pearson, Joy, Gavin Petterson at Parapara Beach. Dec 2010



All heads down. Lambs, recently weaned, in new grass. Tarata, Jan 2011



Young 'stud' sires enjoying their first quality pasture. Paratu, Dec 2010



Finn ewe with her lambs. Burnside, Nov 2010



I.C.U. (I see ewe). Finnsheep are curious. Paratu, March 2011



Winter ewe rotation on Tarata. July 2011



Winter grass on Maire Hill. Tarata, July 2011



Kids birthdays are special. Lucy's party, Feb 8. Fun day; friends, food, fine weather and a swim at the beach. Happy grandad. Nelson



Winter rotation. Ewes graze each paddock for two days. LHS paddocks are noticeably greener in spite of cold weather. Paratu, July 2011



Dayanne's Brazilian football skills were evident in the Central HB women's competition.

Cull Ram hoggets killed at Silver Fern Farms (SFF),  
Takapau 25 May 2011

Breed	Tally	Average LW	Weight Range	CW	CW/ LW = Yield	Meat Value per head
Dorper	34	49.7 kg	38-69 kg	22.3 kg	44.86%	\$161.70
Perendale Texel	27	45.9 kg	39-55 kg	20.4 kg	44.40%	\$148.22
Texel Suffolk	98	48.4 kg	36-67 kg	20.9 kg	43.20%	\$151.51

A number of each breed were X-ray scanned by SFF to gain data on red meat yield. An 'ideal' carcass has 36% of the total red meat in the forequarter, 28% in the loin and 36% in the legs; this is the template for evaluation. SFF can identify and measure red meat yield. This information will allow SFF to pay premiums to producers whose stock 'score' well.

OSRS cull ram hoggets had low shoulder meat volume (*ideal for lambing*), average loins (*below average 'loins'*



Ram hoggets culled (refer script) for weak loins, inferior growth rates or *any dags*. April 2011

*culled*) and ideal legs (*which would have attracted premiums*).

A processor's ewe, with huge meaty shoulders, would be a disaster at lambing time. X-ray technology is another which farmers may use along with common sense. It will help to increase returns for higher yielding carcasses (with Texel and Dorper) something OSRS has been seeking since 1987.

## I'm not going back to the One Stop Ram Shop

The last time David Norgrove left a big job he went on to become a farmhand in New Zealand, but he says now will be different...

Byline: JEFF PRESTRIDGE (abridged)

WHEN David Norgrove brings down the curtain at the end of 2010 on his six years as head of The Pensions Regulator - the watchdog for work-based schemes - there will be no need for him to take time out and recuperate like the last time he left a high-profile position.

Norgrove's merry mood of today contrasts starkly with the dark days of early 2004 when he quit as director of clothing at Marks & Spencer following an awful 2003 Christmas for the retail giant.

His response to accusations that he did not understand clothing - especially women's - was to head off to New Zealand for six weeks, leaving wife Jenny behind, and work as a farmhand at the The One Stop Ram Shop, which provides rams for breeding.

'I was responsible for ear-tagging rams and weighing them,' he says, smiling broadly as he sits in a small office in The Pensions Regulator's headquarters in Brighton. 'When I wasn't doing all that, I was given a Ute [a 4x4] and some tools and just told to get on with mending miles and miles of fences. It was a wonderfully cathartic experience.'

Alongside The Pensions Regulator, the Pension Protection Fund, funded by a levy on employers, was born to protect workers' pensions if their employer went bust. The two now work in tandem so that while the regulator's main responsibility is to ensure that scheme members' benefits are protected through an 'educate, enable and enforce' approach, it also has a duty to protect the PPF from claims. It's a fine balancing act and so far Norgrove seems to have got it right.

'If I think back to 2005 when I took over, friends thought I was mad to do it and it would be the end of any reputation I had,' he says.

'Pensions at the time were seen as a pretty insoluble problem. Deficits were huge and a lot of people thought

the regulator would fall on its face, and me with it.'

He certainly had the credentials for the job, having remained chairman of trustees of the M&S pension fund after leaving the company and then famously facing off Sir Philip Green when the Arcadia boss came after the group.

Norgrove said Green's bid jeopardised the solvency of the pension scheme. Green was told to come up with extra cash, which he didn't. He then refused Norgrove access to his accounts and when Green asked to meet, Norgrove refused. Green withdrew. 'I saw Green a month after it was all over at a party,' Norgrove recalls. 'He was pretty angry. I smiled and eventually he stalked off.'

Norgrove can play tough. He has removed trustees when they've failed to carry out their duties, appointed independent trustees, demanded that companies pay specific sums of money into schemes where avoidance is suspected and on five occasions raided premises and seized computers.

Mindful of the fact that from 1985 to 1988 he was Private Secretary to Margaret Thatcher, is being head of The Pensions Regulator his biggest achievement to date? 'I think it is,' he says. 'I've created an organisation that is capable of negotiating with some of the country's biggest employers, financial advisers, actuaries and accountants, and doing deals on behalf of pension fund members.'

Mail on Sunday, London, England 12-12-2010

David Norgrove was available to help plan a future for wool. Neither David Carter nor Jeff Grant's committee were interested. How arrogant!

