

NZ MINIATURE HEREFORD

BREEDERS' GROUP

NEWSLETTER



March – 2015

The beginning of the New Year is now weeks/months away with Summer drifting into Autumn. It is just as well there was decent rainfall during December, for many of us, so that the drought conditions were slightly lessened. Not so for those in the South Island where fires broke out. Here's hoping our Southern members were not victims of these horrible conditions. Since starting this the West Coasters have been deluged with the liquid matter.

For those in drought prone areas there is a good article in the February issue of "Hooked on Herefords" regarding **Early Weaning of Beef Calves**. It is worth considering. Experimenting with my own herd last year I found that taking the calves from the cows a bit earlier and putting them onto supplementary feed which included calf pellets, chaffage and molasses they never looked back. A system worth repeating.

Last winter a group of interested MH breeders got together at Natalie and Steve Fletcher's place north of Wairakei to discuss ways in which we could promote our cattle for the meat market. Recently a privately owned abattoir was established at Hikurangi in Northland and after talking to the owners on the phone I was invited to visit the premises to discuss the possibility of marketing minis through this venue. Included in this newsletter is a story from the Northern Advocate published on Thursday, 19th February which tells how the business came into being. If similar outlets could be established in the different regions of New Zealand this would see the smaller beef breeds become more sought after. At present there are not the numbers in each individual breed to guarantee a required supply but by combining them, along with cross-breeds among them it could be achieved. In the June 2014 'Affco Express', excerpts from a small paragraph titled "Heavy Prime Cattle – How Much Is Too Much?" read:

"Meat portion sizes are reducing worldwide.....customers demand smaller primal cuts that can be cut into portions suitable for smaller servings.....no-one wants to buy a rump steak that is larger than your plate!"

As I pointed out to the Oxville Farms owners, preparation costs can be reduced in that cuts from our small beef cattle are already a suitable size for plates.



BIG PLANS: Neil Anderson and Leah Stone inside the abattoir.

PHOTOS/JOHN STON

Butchery sets standard

By Mike Barrington

Neil Anderson and Leah Stone have set up a boutique abattoir and butchery on their Hikurangi farm, killing and processing sheep and goats for sale at farmers' markets at Whangarei, Paihia and Kerikeri.

The couple believe they could be the first farmers in New Zealand to hire a meat inspector to supervise slaughtering in the abattoir, which has the capacity to handle up to 60 sheep and goats daily, with room for expansion into cattle later.

Meat from their Oxville Farms business began being sold from a refrigerated trailer at Northland markets about three weeks ago. A second trailer will now target Auckland markets and Mr Anderson and Ms Stone also aim to supply meat to city restaurants and hotels.

Neil Anderson, 43, bought the 160ha farm in Marua Rd in 1999 when he was working as captain of a super yacht. His father Dave Anderson, formerly an engineer, dairy farmer and sawmiller in Fiji, moved to live near the farm and Neil joined him in 2013.

Ms Stone shifted to New Zealand two



STRESS-FREE: Livestock, including cattle and sheep, can now be processed at a Marua Rd abattoir near Hikurangi.

years ago from Fiji, where she had managed her family's fish processing business.

She said Oxville Farms was at first intended as a butchery processing lambs grown there and killed at Affco Moerewa, but the meat works wouldn't accept the low hook numbers they wanted slaughtered.

As a result, they decided to construct their own small abattoir, which was accomplished at reasonable cost through doing a lot of the building themselves.

Retired meat inspector Bruce Bartell

was contracted to work alongside two butchers and three packaging staff when the facility was launched last month, killing 30 lambs and 10 goats. Another qualified meat inspector is expected to replace Mr Bartell soon.

Dave Anderson said he had expected the goat meat to be sold to customers of Indian extraction and was surprised most of it was bought by pakeha.

"It's a very non-fat healthy meat," he said, commenting on the universal popularity of goat curry.

Neil Anderson said the meat was selling well, with customers appreciating it being fresh rather than frozen, and locally grown not imported.

"Also, the animals we kill are not stressed from spending hours on a truck or in meat works' yards and that factor improves its taste," he said.

■ People wanting to process animal products need to develop a risk management programme (RMP) which they must register with the Ministry for Primary Industries. Once the RMP has been verified by the ministry, the meat produced enters the regulated marketing chain and is no longer classified as home kill.

Since the visit to this abattoir and reading the above news item a group of us up north here has been busy putting together information about our different small beef breeds for Oxville Farms. To date we have keen interest from Miniature Hereford, Lowline, Dexter and White Galloway breeders along with a couple of commercial breeders who have Miniature Herefords. I also have crossbred MH x Dairy cattle which are suitable and other breeders have crossbreeds using the smaller animals so it looks like we will be able to provide the necessary supply.

Janet Poole.

Housekeeping.

Registration of calves for this season due in by **30 April, 2015** – remember you cannot name an animal with the Stud name of another breeder.

Animal Disposal List

You should all have received your documents for this - it is due in by **June 1st, 2015** and there will be a rebate of \$2.00 per female if received by the due date.

Hypotrichosis Ruling

Remember that ALL bulls (of any age, including calves) **sold for transfer** must be correctly sire verified in conjunction with having a DNA profile and must be tested and declared FREE of hypotrichosis. Two other conditions can be tested free if wished at the same time i.e. diluter gene and idiopathic epilepsy.

NAIT

There is a **June 30, 2015** deadline for ALL cattle (and deer if you have them) to be **tagged with NAIT compliant tags and activated by being registered on the NAIT database**. Failure to do this could result in a referral to the Ministry of Primary Industries which has the power to issue infringement fines of up to \$150.00 per animal.

Notices from NZHA

As recommended by Graham Hunkin earlier on please remember to read anything that comes from NZHA as it may be relevant to NZMHBG concerns. If you have read the February issue of "Hooked on Herefords" the President, in his notes remarks that the recent voting for constitutional amendments is, as far as he is aware, the first time that ALL members have been given the opportunity to indicate a preference pertaining to several NZHA constitutional matters.

FOR SALE

Gladwyn Heights. Contact Sharon O'Brien if you are interested in these cattle by Ph: (07) 542 0061 or Email: sharonobrien@kinect.co.nz.



Gladwyn Heights Oscar d.o.b. 14/9/13 Est. FS 0 -1



Gladwyn Heights Oben d.o.b. 11/10/13 Est. FS 0-1



Gladwyn Heights Nathan d.o.b. 20/9/12 Est. FS 0-1

Also available are four females:

Gladwyn Heights Millie d.o.b. 25/9/11 Est. FS 1. Also has a heifer calf still at foot born May 2014 for sale.

Gladwyn Heights Mia d.o.b. 1/10/11 Est. FS 0. Also has a heifer calf still at foot born June 2014 for sale.

Many of you have smaller holdings but are still faced with the usual farming matters. One of these is making sure your pasture is in good order so that your animals will become or stay in good order themselves. Barry Houston, of Mount Marua Miniature Herefords, makes use of another of the animals he breeds to help pasture recover and maintain its quality as he explains in this article.

Green Beans and Pasture

The longer than usual dry spell and the weather being warmer than we are used to in the Upper Hutt area caused my worm bins to dry out – something I have not previously experienced. I add green beans (alpaca poo) to the bins about once a fortnight and on one occasion found that one of the bins had dried up and a number of others were very dry. I covered them with wet newspaper and kept watering them every other day for two weeks. As they began to recover I added light layers of green beans every few days. Fortunately they have now recovered and are doing well.



Contributions from these alpacas go into this worm bin

I have been progressively emptying the worm castings over my paddocks. One paddock had been scraped in preparation for a building site but that project did not proceed. The removal of the topsoil left basically clay so I have been using the worm castings to help build up a layer of topsoil into which I have thrown mixtures of seeds for pasture recommended for alpacas. While the fine weather has been greatly appreciated by most folks it has had a very detrimental effect on my over-sowing project as the worm castings dried out and could not do their work. Hopefully things will come on during the Autumn.

As I had thrown worm castings over quite a few of my paddocks I took some photographs of one paddock last year, for my own edification, just to see if they had made any difference. In this photo the brown area between the two green patches was the area which did not receive any castings.



Pasture treated with green bean worm castings Miniature Highland, Sirocco, thriving on green bean grass

Having seen the benefit I have since treated the brown area with castings and it is now flourishing. It is interesting that when either the alpacas or cattle go into the paddocks which have been “fertilised” in this way then oversown they go and graze those places first. A lesson well learned is to ensure your worms are kept moist and if necessary water them. Wet newspaper is very good as a top cover but it must be kept damp.

Barry Houston.

THE AGM IS TO BE HELD IN FEILDING THIS YEAR FROM FRIDAY, MAY 22ND TO SUNDAY, MAY 24TH. COUNCIL WILL BE CONTACTING MEMBERS WITH FURTHER DETAILS NEARER TO THE DATE. THE CURRENT PLAN IS TO ASK FOR A BLOCK BOOKING AT THE RACEWAY MOTEL WHERE WE CAN ALSO HAVE OUR SATURDAY NIGHT DINNER. THIS SHOULD REDUCE OVERALL COSTS.

If members could contact Janet Poole (Ph: (09) 439 2420 Mobile: 027 393 0049 Email: riverlets@gmail.com), Dimi Cooper (Ph: (06) 376 5351 Email: bruce_dimi@inspire.net.nz) or Debs Hamilton (Ph: (06) 3282799 Mobile: 0278258344 Email: twokidstwoponies@icloud.com) as to whether they will be attending the meeting and/or require accommodation so that numbers can be calculated for this as well as catering it would be appreciated. Thank you

MINIATURE MOMENTS



I said, "*Follow me, dammit!*"

Some of you will know that Carole Steele recently underwent a double by-pass operation after suffering a heart attack. She is now home and we wish her all the best for a speedy recovery.

Any information, articles or photos that you would like to put forward for the Newsletter please email, phone or post to:

Janet Poole – Email: riverlets@gmail.com

Telephone: (09) 439 2420

Post: 738 Oparakau Road, R.D.2, Matakohe, Northland. 0594.

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