

Welcome to Avalon Genetics Spring newsletter. We had 3 storms come through during lambing this season which took the cream off the lambing. The late spring has been very wet in Otago and every one is behind and any talk of drought has been shelved at this stage.



TOPICS TO BE COVERED:

- 1 Cost of Farming
- 2 WormFEC Gold
- 3 Synthetic Meats
- 4 Dorian Garrick
- 5 Drench Resistance
- 7 Ram Sales

COST OF FARMING

The Common dominator in farming is risking costs and while the shearing needed a lift in rates to keep shearers in the industry, it has lifted shearing costs to the \$5/hd mark.

With crutching costs at or over \$2/hd our decision 30 years ago to select sheep that needed less drenching and dagging are paying off.

The combined cost of drenching, dagging and docking and some properties is now around \$6.50/hd and rising.

When you consider the number of progeny one ram can produce over 5 years, including the ewes he mated, a \$1000.00 investment may cost you another \$9600.00 in drenching, dagging and docking costs. This is why we are selecting so hard down the multi disease resistant low dag score and short tails track.



Allan and James releasing dung beetles in 2017



This is a new initiative to highlight these breeders who are leading the breeding of productive sheep with high worm resistance.

Out of 37 flocks only 10 have made the cut and Avalon has two of these. We are the only Perendale Flock in the South Island and one of two in New Zealand. Also we have the only Texel flock in New Zealand that is now WormFEC Gold. The Ultimates are just below the qualifying level and we think they will qualify next year.

There is only one other stud in New Zealand who is achieving high performance under a low drench regime and we have now used a ram from this flock to see how they perform. This flock is not a WormFEC Gold flock but we believe they are closest to what we are already achieving.

SYNTHETIC MEATS



In the last year's newsletter, we highlighted the arrival of the Impossible Burger into the market and the fact that none of the farming organisations seemed too worried about this. Who would have thought 6 months down the track that our own national carrier Air NZ would decide to give them the best publicity they could imagine by offering the fake meat burger on business flights to the US. Don't be fooled by these companies, this is another "You will never replace wool" debates. These people want the top end of the market and they don't have to have a great product, they just need to have a better story and have more money to tell the consumer this.





Dorian Garrick

Back in October I had a visit from Dorian Garrick the Chief Scientist at Massey University. He also works extensively overseas advising on genetic evaluation in the beef, pork and chicken industries. He said a national focus on the current single index for sheep the Maternal Index inadequately rewards flocks that emphasise selection on disease resistance traits. New Zealand has many different farming environments and one index can't cover them all.

A single selection index won't allow the best sheep to be selected in many situations. Our sheep are disadvantaged in the Maternal Worth Index because the computer can't make allowances for the disease pressure, we put our sheep under and it automatically discounts their genetic value. We continue to base our objective measurement on our within flock reports, which reflects how outside sire perform with minimal drenching



Replacement hoggets at over 5000 epg in late February

DRENCH RESISTANCE

There is some worrying trends in the world of drench resistance. Techion announced in the Sainsbury Report that 37% of New Zealand farmers were using an ineffective drench back in 2016. They calculated the cost of using an ineffective drench on a average farm to be \$74974 pa.

PGG Wrightsons has found that farmers they did drench tests for this year, 52% had triple drench resistance.

There is already resistance discovered to the four family combination drench in New Zealand goats.

Techion. Some Important Facts:

- Generally farmers won't recognise they have a problem in poor growth rates until there is around 60% failure to a drench family
- 95% at the larval challenge is on the pasture and only 5% in the sheep so drenching only kills a small proportion of the population
- The cost of Volvix Plus is over \$1 for a lamb and \$2.00 for a ewe dose, for many farmers this is only option
- Introducing worm resistant genetics is the only sustainable option to protect your flock in the medium to long term

RAM SALES



This year we intend to sell rams in the second week of December. There will still be an opportunity to buy rams in January, if this doesn't suit.

Prices for the top 30% will remain at \$1,250.00 and the next 70% will now be at \$900.00. This year we will have a small selection of hardy Suffock Texel rams priced at \$700.00.

Please send back or email your ram orders by November 30th.



All the best for the season.

*Regards,
Allan & Sonia*