

New Zealand

RED DEVON

Cattle Breeders Association

175 Years
of
Red Devons

News Letter 🌸 August 2015
www.reddevoncattle.co.nz



www.reddevoncattle.co.nz

President's comments.

Hello everyone,

As usual the weather seems to dominate the start of my message to you all. This year the unpredictable weather has been unrelenting. Winter, what can I say, throughout New Zealand we have seen rain, floods, snow and winds, yet in some areas they have missed the desperately needed rain. To those who are battling my thoughts are with you. Please stay safe. If you are struggling remember the rural sector has many support networks, please ask for help.

Earlier this month we had a Council meeting where we focussed on how we can add value to our members; promotion going forward and spent time monitoring our progress against our strategic plan. We also spent a lot of time monitoring our costs against our budget to make sure we do not overspend.

The team are planning another herd visit weekend in west Waikato. This will be during the summer months. Louise and Helena are organising the weekend. We are keen to know if there are any specific topics you would like us to include into the weekend.

I hope you have seen all of the great articles over the last few months. My congratulations to the breeders and owners of the cattle for showcasing the breed. Congratulations too to Lee Askew with her success in the Farmers Market competition.

A reminder that next year the World conference is being held in the UK. These tours are a fantastic opportunity to mix and mingle and see so many herds. I believe there are a number of people who are considering attending. More information will be sent out in September. We will pass this information on to you all.

Karen Schumacher

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Front Cover: Braelands Redgril Polled 1983, Photo by Eileen Porter
MonaVale Redgril was imported by Ramsey Brothers Taupo

Important Dates to Remember

31 st January	Calf entry sheets cut off
30 th April	Membership Subscriptions Invoiced
April-May	AGM
30 th June	ADL's sent out
30 th July	ADL's Returned no later than
10 th August	Calf Entries sent out
30 th September	Annual animals fees cows invoiced
31 st December	Balance Date; end of financial year
2nd of every month	Group Run Cut off for the performance recording reports

Expenses of our Association.

Over the last few months in our newsletters, my emails to you all and at the AGM I have set out the costings of the Association. I would like to clarify that you do not get charged for any of your calves at birth; this includes both commercial and registered cattle. All female cattle are charged once they are 2 year old.

A reminder of what was sent out to you late last year.

PBBNZ have advised us that their charges will be increasing from 1st January 2015. We have not had any increases for the last five years and we have been fortunate they have met all the general cost increases to date. Combined with this ABRI have had a significant increase in their charge out rate. It has been a challenge to set our charges to ensure we are not in a loss situation. The way ABRI charges our Assn changed in October 2011 when they moved to providing monthly performance information. We have decided to meet this cost as an Association and would encourage all members to performance record. You will be charged a royalty for each animal. This now aligns us with all the other breed societies and will also streamline our charging time. It is the same fee structure across all status of cattle – that is including Registered; Commercial and Not Registered. The fee structure now includes all female two year an older. Two year olds are at a reduced fee, and all female cattle 3 years and older on the register have a set fee.

In summary, we are charged a set overhead fee to meet our contribution of the fixed costs which is based on the number of female cattle on our books who are two years and older.

- This year the set fee is \$6206.00;
plus
- We are charged \$50 per hour for any work done for us for our accounts, registry and administration;
plus
- We are charged a fee from ABRI for Breedplan and for the performance recording. This year the Assn has met the overall charge with members only paying the royalty fee. We are paying for the monthly group performance recording report. We encourage you to weigh your cattle and record it.

What this means for the Association.

Our budgeted expenses for the year are:

- PBB and ABRI \$21,342.00
- Administration, promo \$9,002.00

Our budgeted income for the year is:

- Membership fees \$6,750.00
- Sundry income \$1,250.00
- Cattle fees \$22,501.00

A surplus of \$156.00

Project being undertaken by the council of the Red Devon Cattle Breeders' Association

Membership

If you Google "*average age of NZ farmers*", you will quickly find that the average age of NZ beef farmers is 58 years. We have an ageing population and it is getting older by the day.

The Council are seeking ways to attract new members and especially younger members. Of course, "younger" could mean anyone aged less than 58. There is no "silver bullet" for achieving this. We would welcome ideas from members as to how we can maintain and strengthen our membership.

Please send your thoughts to our Newsletter Editor at: nzreddevons@gmail.com

Beef Progeny Test Programme

This programme comes from Beef and Lamb NZ Genetics. It involves the AI of 2200 cows and heifers using semen sourced internationally and locally. It is being run over two years on five large properties. The vast majority of the animals are Angus or Hereford. The manager of one of the test properties described the programme like this.

"From this test I want to know whether money spent on decent genetics pays off."

Dr. Jason Archer who manages the programme explained that the programme is highly relevant to the future of the NZ beef sector and therefore to NZ. The project is about demonstrating that improving genetics will improve farm profitability. It is about commercial objectives;

ie. **Improving business profitability.**

All cattle breeders stand to learn indirectly from the programme.

From time to time the Programme Leaders intend to run Fielddays and the like to inform breeders of progress. This is an opportunity for us to assess the work first hand and to hear from the genetic experts as well as the breeders taking part.

At some point and after reviewing results from the testing, the Red Devon Council may choose to assess how best to use the learnings from the programme.

Kill Sheets

Kill sheets are a valuable source of data about our cattle. Different Meat-works use different Kill Sheets. Council would like to get a selection of Kill Sheets so that some analysis can be done on the range of data available, what it means and how members can then use the information on the Kill Sheet.

For experienced breeders this is "old hat" but today a portion of our members have lifestyle properties and run small herds. This exercise is to share collective insights amongst all members.

The Council would like to invite you to share this information to help assistance all members of the association in improving the Red Devon Breed If you have Kill Sheets, could you blank out any sensitive information on them and then send the sheets to

The Editor. PO Box 251, Rongotea 4865 or E mail: nzreddevons@gmail.com

Future Generation

Generation Angus is the youth development branch of Angus NZ. One of its flagship events is the FMG Cattleman Weekend. This targets the 18 plus age group and has a focus on personal development and improving skills.

The next event is planned to be held over a weekend in the Wairarapa in early 2016 and will take the form of a Beef Cattle Assessment School and involve multiple breeds, store cattle, prime cattle and breeding cattle of both sexes.

Angus NZ have generously opened the event to all breed associations. Some financial contribution would be required. The overall attendance is limited to 30 so people.

This is a great opportunity for Red Devon Breeders. If you have a "youngish" person who you would like to nominate to attend the FMG Cattleman Event then please pass details to our Newsletter Editor.

Bulls and semen sales

What are you doing for bulls this season? Do you need to buy / exchange / sell Bulls. Please let us know. We have found members are starting to ask already about availability of bulls and semen. We would like to keep our web site up to date and to be able to help our members and the wider farming community.

Our web site and occasional emails

We realise that our newsletters are only every few months. In an effort to keep you up to date we have been sending you regular emails. These have given you a snap shot of Council business, advising of any media articles, and recently we have found some great **YouTube** video clips..... We would love to have more. So members as you start your calving please head out with your camera or mobile phone and film a short video clip. We want to walk the talk about the temperament of our cattle... You know the type of thing going into the paddock just after calving a get a short video clip anything really so we can use [social media](#).

We have also found some interesting (all be it a bit long) video clips explaining Breedplan. Have a look on our web site it has a wealth of [information](#) on it and is updating regularly.

Council

Three good things

I thought I would share what has made life easier for us since moving to our hill country block.

First must be signing up to satellite broadband. We had broadband at our last place and we were told by various locals that both phone lines and broadband were very poor in the new locality. I spent a lot of time investigating options. We were with Farmside, but decided to pay the break fee and switch to Wireless Nation as they provided a good service in difficult areas. This turned out to be an excellent choice, our broadband service was actually better than at our last place, plus we signed up for a VoIP phone, which meant we could take our old number with us.

Number two must be getting a Kubota side by side, I personally never like the quad bike and felt unsafe. After test driving one, it became a must have. Seating up to three people across the front, easy to operate (for me not being at all mechanically minded or car friendly), hydraulic lifting tray carrying masses of stuff, plus lots of small places to store emergency stuff and even a rear high mounted light for using in paddocks at night to check on calving. This has proved a great investment, so much so that John has all but abandoned his quad and keeps kidnapping by Kubota!

Lastly there is no cell reception here unless we run to a hill top, where on a fine day we can get two or maybe three bars. After a few times of driving all the way back to base to communicate messages we bought a set of GME shortwave radios. These are great and enable us to do so much more. One example was repairing the electric fences, which meant John could radio back to me to turn off the power and then just ask for it back on, instead of driving all the way back.

The herd has settled in well and we have now added some more heifers and a new bull from Te Maewa to diversify our lines, whilst keeping Devand Genesis who is a 'chip off the old block'.

Gayle & John Couch



Winter round up from Manu Stud

Hi all,

Here is a roundup of what's been happening on our Stud as we head into the final depths of winter 2015. For those of you who don't know who we are, we farm Red Devon's on approximately 23hec in central Taranaki. 20 mins drive north east of Stratford. We are into our 9th Calving season now after joining the association in 2006.



Our goal is to produce Bulls for the predominately Dairy industry and with some into the Beef and sheep farming fraternity as well, we have been achieving this to date and with a Breeding herd of approximately 15 Cows hope to supply a number of Bulls each year going forward.

Having said that always taking into account the Weather variants each season makes it ever challenging to have the sweet spot when it comes to numbers, we like to keep a few Heifers also to have as possible replacements and to offer to new Breeders coming into the association. So it's quite a juggling match here most of the time with our land size. But as you know, Red Devon's are fantastic to manage and come through each season no problems.

Our biggest challenge so far this season has been the devastating rain event of 19-21st June in which a large region of the North Island was severely affected. For our area we received upwards of 300mls plus



of rain (our rain gauge overflowed) there is many slips on farms surrounding us. Our 10km drive out to civilisation was blocked, luckily for only 24hrs by approx. 15 slips. The worst damage on our farm was on the cliff faces, we had a very close call of losing our water pump shed with a large subsidence, and the shed was hanging on by the mains cable. So we have got off fairly lightly though it will take the areas affected a long time to recover from this event.



The Devon's came through with extra Hay and frequent moves to help alleviate any pugging, the lovely thick Red coats certainly help them to stay calm, warm and wait it out.

Bull buying season will be upon us soon, usually in September the phone starts ringing for us, it was a nice surprise recently to have a call from a Chap wanting to secure 2 Yearling Bulls for the coming season, he has been using Red Devon's for some time so knew what he wanted and happily came out for a look, his reasons for using Red Devon's over his Dairy cows, Temperament and Size and of course the Dairy x Red Devon has a good market.



Steve and I have just completed a 2 year project to covenant an area of our property, this has been challenging but very rewarding to do, knowing the area covenanted will be protected in perpetuity, a small legacy we can leave to our property, and the prospect of more native bird song as we plant more bird food trees is something to really look forward too.

Here's hoping the rest of winter passes without too many more weather Bombs for everyone.

Regards to you all Jill and Steve Dirksen

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as at **August 2015**

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