

*New Zealand*

# RED DEVON

*Cattle Breeders Association*

News Letter 🌸 April 2012

[www.reddevoncattle.co.nz](http://www.reddevoncattle.co.nz)



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## President's Comments

Hello,

What an incredible grass growing season we've had. The best I can remember in the 22 years I've been farming here. On top of that sheep and beef prices have also been excellent, though prices have eased on the traditional autumn kill. The beef price should climb again as we get into the winter. Certainly purchasers at the weaner fairs are paying up to \$3 a kilo liveweight for the better traditional cattle. They must be confident of the higher prices returning.

It is good to see New Zealand having such a strong group (ten people) travelling to the next Devon World Conference, in Brazil, in May. These get together along with the Cattle, Bulldust, Breedplan and the Devon Websites, are the strands that hold the Devon community together. Being the minnows of the Devon world this outside contact is particularly important for us, allowing us to find and source new genetics and ideas, it also allows our own pasture based genetics a shop window. Just a mention about the importance of our herdbook. This is one of the main reasons our Association exists. A big thank you to those who set it up originally pre 1990. The herdbook records the pedigrees of our cattle and has been built up at some cost by members over the last 20 plus years. It is our most valuable asset and gives as far as possible a guarantee, to a purchaser of our cattle. If every animal was DNA tested then it would be a 100% guarantee but DNA testing would probably double our costs.

Finally the 2012 AGM is in Fielding on June 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>. I will look forward to seeing you there.

Colin

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Front Page Photo; Heifers in clover at Wayne and Patricia Aspins Tinopai Stud

## COUNCIL NEWS

Your Council had a meeting recently, held at Wayne and Patricia Aspins property Waiuku

### Council has approved the semen importation of 4 Bulls,

- Vix Zinger Z120(P),
- Vix Cookie C88(P),
- Gowan Ross Dundas D100 (P),
- Wynstay Coricudgy (P)

## NAIT REMINDER

When you have registered with NAIT you will be issued with a number, please give this number to PBB (PBB is a NAIT-Accredited Information Provider)

For More information on NAIT see [www.nait.co.nz](http://www.nait.co.nz)

## **GRADING UP**

Council have agreed in principle to Grading up of the Female side only, with further investigation of the Australian and English systems. We feel we need to align our selves as much as possible with their systems.

## **BROCHURE**

We are continuing the development of the new society Brochure show casing the Breed. Graeme Dyke has kindly taken this job on as well as organising society merchandise we will keep you posted.

## **AGM**

The Date has been set so keep this Weekend free and come and join us on the 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> June 2012 further details to follow as we make the final arrangements it's a great time to come and meet members and share your enthusiasm with your fellow Red Devon Breeders! Venue has been set for the AGM meeting to be held at PBB in Fielding.

## **PHOTO COMPETITION!!!**

We are running a photo competition open to all New Zealand Red Devon Cattle Breeders Association members only and photos need to be of pure bred Red Devon Cattle only. The closing date for entries is 30<sup>th</sup> May 2012. Any thing you think worthy of entering should be E-mailed by the above date to our Web master Kevin Fletcher [nzreddevons@gmail.com](mailto:nzreddevons@gmail.com)

**You could be in to win a cash prize of \$100.**

We reserve the right to keep all photos submitted for use in Promotions of the Breed, and/or other uses as we see fit, so get snapping!, the winner will be announced at the up coming AGM., on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

## **WEB SITE NEWS**

Thank you to those of you who are using the Web site to advertise your cattle this is a very reasonably priced way for you to get your Cattle viewed. Council have set the price of an advert to \$10.00 for text for 60 days and \$2.00 per photo for 60 days please use this site its there for you!

A Calendar has bee added to the Events Page so that members can add any events that they may be holding on farm or they know of that may be of interest to other members. It is a useful way of promoting a stud bull sale or open day that you may be holding

## **NEWS LETTERS**

Please keep sending in any interesting or relevant articles, or photos, about the Breed to us; that's Jill and Kevin, so we can get a half decent news letter out to you! It really is only as good as the material sent in to us.

## **From Devon to Devons**

**An article from our new Patron Joan Power**

What have I learnt from my Devons? There is no book of rules. When I started my herd in 1984 I was still learning about New Zealand, the seasons were the wrong way round, the sheds and barns that I associated with farming were not needed, farms (including 'lifestyle blocks') changed hands often and we could buy a 50 acre block near our work. A chance article by Pam Davidge in a farming magazine set me off. You could buy Red Devons in NZ. I telephoned, read, visited, and pestered. Eric Rhodes who still had a few of his late father's herd sold me the five cows he still had paper work for; Bill Scott had two empty cows with papers, a dispersal sale in Northland sent me

off to Darcy Gilberts'. I now discovered the wide gap between theory and practice in the matching of herd book numbers. With a female animal standing in front me the tattoo, the pink slip, the sale catalogue and the herd book number bore no relationship to each other, or to the cow, they referred to a male animal. I had an embryo herd but I eventually had to resign myself to abandoning hope with one of my dear ladies, the correct connections could not be found. I slowly expanded, buying when stock (with papers) was available and using AB. Going to my first AGM I found support and genuine encouragement and advice.

Because our block was nurturing every known variety of weeds, (how many breeds of thistle are there?) we were advised to buy some old ewes, I had the advice and help of an older, wiser neighbour and ended up with 100 Coopworths. Even an old pensioner sheep dog, being a lifelong "Pommie" dog owner I could not believe the casual gift of "Blue". She was a genius, a heeler cross, and, once familiar with the farm she would perform miracles with the only command Go Back Blue Taught us a lot, on one occasion Stewart and I were standing on two hillocks both telling Blue to go back, she quietly looked from one to the other and went home. I hate sheep! They are so much work and are so ungrateful. Being told we should get a ram I read up the veterinary book, Disaster!! How in the name of fortune could I detect scrotal mange? Puzzle rot? Woody tongue? Pulpy kidney and suspect feet? Actually when we finally found Ceddie he was no trouble at all. Lambing was another saga better forgotten. I also flirted with goats for scrub clearance but their escapology antics wearied me. Back to the Devons and hard labour, Stewart learned to make safe fences, we had enormous bonfires, we sprayed, we press ganged visitors who came for a break and went home exhausted. Those who needed fire wood found out DIY was not easy. I learned to ride a Suzuki mud bug that did at least lessen the hill climbs.

My aim was a breeding herd of twenty cows plus followers and the production of a bull I was proud to use and others I was happy to sell. It was not a smooth progression. I had black noses, white splodges, doubtful feet, extras teats, lost calves and, just one, bad tempered mother. She tried to face me off when her calf was born, and strangely that calf, a bull, would never have been safe he had a nasty eye, he was steered, and they both left the farm. Planning diverse bloodlines is a persistent problem for small breeders, 80% success with AB is not good if you only have eight cows. If you buy a bull you soon come up against close relationships. Do you keep a proven dam or her daughter who is (on paper) a better breeding prospect? I hated sending good promising cattle to the yards or works. Culling is a constant worry you have to get rid of potentially good animals from lack of space. Luckily as my Devons and I became better known I established a customer base and was able to sell locally. Even found regular customers for weaner bulls.

Just one of the crazy things that happen to keep you alert. I had a very swampy paddock at the bottom of the farm with an erratic stream along on fence line. Going down with the morning hay,

in pouring rain, clad in oilskins and gum boots I was sure Angela had calved yesterday, yet she was lined up with the rest eating. Counted the calves and was one short. Frantic search. At desperation point I knew I had to cross the stream, now a gushing torrent and check the far bank, in those days I had an Irish Wolfhound, he was very wary of newly calved cows and gave them a wide berth. Finally found the new born calf right in the far corner over the stream, by now a torrent, no



way could the babe (male of course) be left to cross safely. I prodded him up, steered him along to the only low part of the opposite bank, half carried half dragged him into the water, he struggled I stumbled but managed to fling him to the safe bank. Ungrateful little beast bawled for Mum and ran off tail high and hungry. I mean while had fallen and could not stand, my boots had filled with

water and I was not very safe, I yelled for the dog my hero came, crawled down the bank close enough for me to grab his collar and then stood firm while I found my feet. I always had a bit of a downer about that calf.

As our first farm and wide spread arthritis had already cost me a hip and knee we decided to find a kinder home and concentrate on just Devons, by now I was the association secretary, we were using computer records and becoming more mainstream. The four yearly World Devon Conference had come to New Zealand and we were keen to join the next tour. We have since visited Brazil, America, and England, experiences we shall never forget, whatever the strain on finances, farm cover or domestic upheaval I would recommend you all try to visit at least one "Devon" country. In 2012 the conference is back in Brazil, do go, the contrasts, the country the people are fantastic. And your fellow travellers teach you so much. Regretfully I do not think I can make the trip, my spirit is more than willing, but the stamina is suspect.

For the future I hope that an acceptable form of cattle inspection can be reinstated. That all members bother to keep accurate computer records (they are a fund of information). I believe that the British system of 'boxed beef' could be a useful source of income and a chance to spread the word about Devons.

Although retired from breeding I still have Devons on the farm. Steers that just grow meat but let me look out on red, red cattle grazing on the green, green grass.

## FROM THE NORTHLAND FIELD DAYS

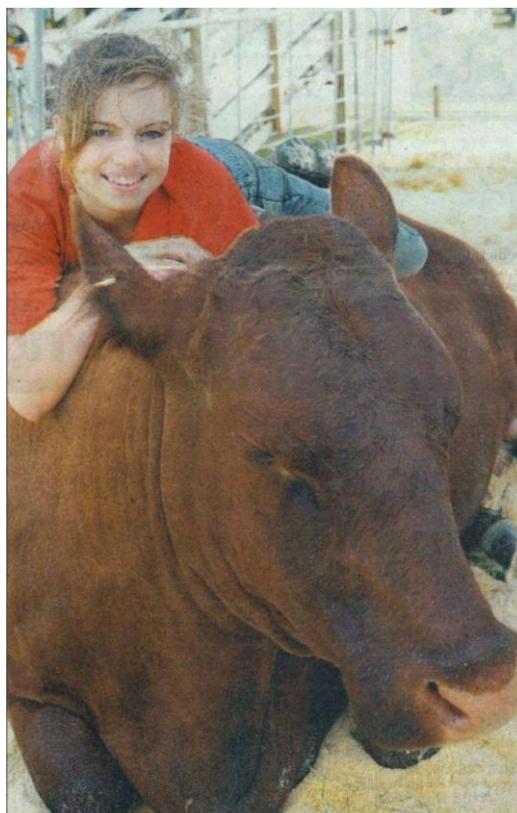
As is usual our small team arrived at Dargaville at 5.30 on Wednesday to set up the tent and the pens for our 2 animals. Because of other commitments we were not able to train any new animals so we went with the tried and true Joy2 (Rata) and her last years bull calf 19, a halter put on 2 days going down for the first time since last year and told to remember what it was all about, this seemed to work well as he led me on and off the truck for the 3 days. By day 3 he was oblivious to all the kids and adults pocking and prodding him and wanting him to stand up so they could guess his weight for the competition we were running. His weight being 578kgs at 18months of age a weight gain of 330kgs in the last 12 months.

Our junior ambassador Jamii for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year proved a hit with the kids and their parents introducing them to Rata for a pat or a ride on her back which she took in her stride as usual.

Even though the gale force winds that were predicted for Saturday did not arrive we had our cover for our stock ripped in half before we got there on Saturday morning. The cover served us well lasting several years and some good storms.

Bev Trowbridge and her horned Wiltshire Rams on site again this year creating quite a bit of interest, with most town kids having to be told they were not goats but sheep. These sheep complement our Devons in their easy management style, and actually make our Devons look nice and quiet in the pens as the sheep do not like being handled.

We are most privileged to have 2 past breeders Eileen Porter and Betty Seager spend a day with us helping to promote our breed, and to all the other club members who gave us some time – thank you.



*Jamil Kingston Relaxes on top of a placid Rata*

As is always the case it is hard to evaluate whether it is worth all the hard work and cost involved for such a promotion, a plus for the Devons being we were the only cattle on show. This was noted by the public.

We did have some enquiries as to the suitability of Devons in a cross breeding and heifer mating programs and it is always good to meet past and present clients by talking to them one gets a better understanding of what they might require in the future.

## **A Recent Visit to David and Lorraine Rooke and the Carrs Island Red Devons**

**By Eileen Porter**

Their property is situated in the Clarence near Grafton N.S.W, visiting with a friend we found some wonderful polled and horned cattle quietly grazing on paspalum cooch and kiauyu near Pecan Nut trees. This family have owned Devons for four generations using polled sports (Natural Polled) and English and Australian AI Bulls

They have had an amazing season of rains and grass. We saw a group of prime steers ready for market at approximately 550 kilos live weight, he would get about \$1.90 per kilo live weight much less than our farmers.



*David Rook With some of this Devons under the Pecan Nut trees*

The property is prone to flooding when the huge Clarence River rises and as they have walked

around nearby Grafton they flood another three feet deeper, all goes under except for a high purpose built mound. Their property is called Ermington after his great grandfather s land. They move their cattle 100 miles away to a Glen Innes property when the need arises.



*Dam by Clampit Diamond AI UK and calf by a son of Alderside Lancejack*

Their present line is by a Garnsony, West Australia bull hual park vista. David and his mother visited our Towai Brailands Farm in 1987 and at last I could return their visit and see there excellent stock. They hope to visit New Zealand soon to see the cattle here and catch up with friends



*A dam by a son of Bermerside Magnet, very dark and he said Arthur saw this bull in England*

# Members List

As at March 2012

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