

New Zealand

RED DEVON

Cattle Breeders Association

News Letter ❁ December 2017



www.reddevoncattle.co.nz

President's comments.

Hello everyone,

What a challenging year weather wise it has been. The rain never stopped for most of the year, then once it did the wind has just blown. I hate to mention that we need some rain!

The demand for Red Devon bulls continues to be very strong. The dairy sector has been chasing every spare bull in the North Island. At the recent bull sales in Taranaki, two of the on-farm sales had Red Devons category listed and there was good competition for them. A number had been supplied by our members. While this is excellent, it does mean we are losing animals out of the Association.

There is a Short article in this newsletter about the world mini tour to the USA which is happening in May next year. We are still waiting for more details and information re costs, accommodation etc. Once I receive this, we will e-mail this to you. I hope some of you are considering heading over. The tour sounds very exciting. Of course, we at Council are now starting to think about the next World Conference which will be in New Zealand in 2020. You will see a number of Councillors during the 2018 as we head out to visit most of you. This is to give us an in-depth knowledge of the cattle in our Association, plus help us plan for 2020.

We have been working with PBB and all of the Breed Societies re changes to Society rules. Legal opinion has confirmed the responsibility we have as Councillors to ensure the integrity of the herd book is maintained. Our visits will also help council members to better understand your expectations of the register so that the council ensure that we can back up our register.

Further on in the newsletter I have an article re the coming year fees and the benefits to our members. We have been working hard to make sure you our members have a range of benefits and value from your membership.

I hope you all have a safe and happy Christmas and get to have a few days of rest and recreation.
Warmest wishes

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December 2015



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Front Cover:

Red Devon Cow and calf

New Members

Ross Balemi, Broadwater Red Devon Stud, Wellsford.

Important Dates to Remember

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
31st December	Balance Date; end of financial year
31st January	Calf entry sheets cut off
30 th April	Membership Subscriptions Invoiced
March to May	AGM
2nd of every month	Group Run Cut off for the performance recording reports

Remember that Calf entries have to be in by the end of January this can be done on-line or by sending in your completed Calf Sheets to PBB. It is good to see that many members are now entering their calving details on-line. If you would like a help sheet on how to enter your calf info on-line, please email me at nzreddevons@gmail.com

Now there is no charge for entering performance data with your cattle records, I would strongly encourage members to enter the birth weights and calving ease score on their calving sheets or on line when entering their calves in to the system. By collecting and recording this information, you find that over time this information will be invaluable in assessing the merit of cows, calves and bulls. Along with the additional weights at 200 and 400 days this would build a much better picture of your cattle through the EBV values that are produced in Breedplan.

Fees of our Association.

In almost every newsletter over the last few years, I talk about our fees. We have been advised of a small fee increase from PBB. At our meeting in November, we did a lot of work on the budget for the coming year. As a result, we have a small increase to our membership fees and to the 2 year old heifer fees. We will have a small loss for the year.

I would like to confirm again 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 olds.

A reminder that your cow fees are sent out in October every year based on YOUR ADL form. Every year we then get a small number of members who write in to PBB requesting a credit, having not returned their ADL form, and finding they have less cows than what is recorded in the register. As is noted on your ADL letter the number of cows recorded to you in the register as at the end of August is the number that you will be charged for. PBB then charge the Association for the proportion of Red Devon cows that make up the total number of cow recorded at PBB. They are unable to give the association a credit as this would affect all the breed societies administered by PBB. As a result, we cannot give you a credit, as we have been charged for these cattle.

Please make sure you get your ADL forms in on time, to insure you only pay for the cows you have.

Your full membership fee includes a number of extra benefits.

- You receive free advertising of stock for sale on the website.
- You receive a free profile of your herd on our website.
- All performance recording and weight recording are free. (No royalty is paid by you)
- You can purchase any semen which the Association bring in from overseas at a subsidised rate.

Currently we have semen available for Prioton Magnate and Tillbrook Prince at a cost of \$40 per straw. This is only available to those who have full membership. Please support your Association.

Schedule of Fee for the Year

1st January 2018 to 31st December 2018

Fee schedule		
	Annually	<i>GST Inc</i>
Full members	\$160.00	<i>\$184.00</i>
Associate Members	\$60.00	<i>\$69.00</i>
	Per Animal	<i>GST Inc</i>
Pre Dam List (3year old)	\$25.00	<i>\$28.75</i>
Heifers 2 year old	\$20.00	<i>\$23.00</i>
Transfer Fee	\$20.00	<i>\$23.00</i>
Supplementary register admin set up charge	\$30.00	<i>\$34.50</i>
Re-instatement Fee	\$25.00	<i>\$28.75</i>
	per Hour	<i>GST Inc</i>
Re-work charge for member's– actual time at	\$50.00	<i>\$57.50</i>
	per Listing	<i>GST Inc</i>
Website		
Website Advertisement	\$20.00	<i>\$23.00</i>
Photo for Website Advertisement (Per Photo)	\$5.00	<i>\$5.75</i>
Website Stud Profile Page	\$50.00	<i>\$57.50</i>

Red Devon USA Mini Tour

Jeremy Engh of Red Devon USA is planning USA Mini Tour in the second half of May 2018 (14th -24th, dates to be confirmed).

Arriving in Washington DC. the plan to spend one day at [Lakota Ranch](#), in Remington Virginia where cattle from Lakota as well as from several other local Devon farms including cattle owned by David Schumacher, Cathy Cochran, Steven Bassett and more will be on view. A one day visit to [Stratford Hall](#), the home of Robert E. Lee, a famous general from our Civil War, and an opportunity to see both horned beef and dairy Devons similar to those farmed in the 1800s. Stratford Hall is very close to the birthplace of our first President, George Washington.

After 3 days in Virginia, the plan is to head north to Pennsylvania, to be hosted by Bob Vankirk of [Four Seasons farm](#). Bob has both commercial and purebred cattle and has been a very active member of our Association for many years. At Bob's there will be cattle from other east coast producers including George Kepple, the Bentrem family, John Lindley, and Paul Colucci.

After a day at Four Seasons Farm, it's off to Pittsburgh, Pa., where there will have a tourist day in this great American city. From Pittsburgh, everyone will fly west to Las Vegas, Nevada. To be hosted by Kelly Heaton and Chuck Hughes, and have the great "American Western" experience. Taking in the Grand Canyon, an old time cattle drive and more.

After the visit everyone will return to Las Vegas and then home.

Keep an eye on the [Red Devon USA](#) Web-site for travel details and more information

Devand Red Devons

What a winter it has been. The wettest on record for the Bay of Plenty, a years' worth of rain even if it stopped raining at the end of August.



Feeding out has gone on for longer as the lack of sun has really held the grass back. We can only hope we get some good consistent warmth and sun alongside regular rainfall for it to really motor away. Though we are already buying in some extra baylage straight from the field as a precaution, but with luck we won't need it. We have noticed the cabbage trees (*Cordyline australis*) are all in full flower and looking at the road, dust clouds are swirling along it. A little ominous to my mind.

A few Devand Cows and Calves

Having moved to autumn calving we only have a few spring calvers and they are doing well, but have noticed one of our neighbours is winter calving which on this light hilly ground seems to work well so maybe, just maybe we may try moving it back a little. Very pleased with our last Devand Genesis calves as they have turned out strong, large and good confirmation, planning to retain all if possible.

With the 'Silly Season' upon us, we wish all fellow members a Merry Christmas followed by a Happy and Prosperous New Year.



Daughter Grandson and Mother

Gayle & John Couch, [Devand Red Devons](#)

Shemshi Red Devon Beef.

Lee has had another busy year, in May she came along to the AGM and in early July she was awarded the runner-up prize for the Tastiest Produce from the Butchery in the Farmers Markets New Zealand 2017 Winter Food Awards. Later she had a great article in the local paper about all her achievements ([Gisborne the place to be for Beef Farmer](#)). Currently Lee has just about finished this year's calving, as well attending the regular Saturdays Farmers Market with her Shemshi Red Devon Beef and burgers.



A Tale of Two Genes

Within a few weeks of birth, or at least by the time calves are weaned, most calves can be identified if they have horns or not. Then there are always a few awkward ones with something that looks like horns which appear later on.

Yes Scurs.

Scurs:

Hard growths of the skin tissue (as opposed to skeletal growths) where horns would be. Scurs are distinguishable, at least in their early phase, by their being loose on the head if you wobble them. Many scurs remain small, loose and button-like, but some will grow to several inches in length and be visually indistinguishable from horns, especially as larger scurs may eventually attach to the skull, particularly on bulls, when they are several years old.

Scurred cattle should be classified as polled since they do have a polled gene. Only polled animals can express the scurred trait.

To understand the inheritance of the scurred trait, we must first take a look at the genetics involved in the inheritance of the polled/horned trait. The polled or horned condition in European cattle is determined by one set of genes. The polled gene is made up of two parts, the dominant polled allele (P) and the recessive horned allele (p). The dominant allele (P) prevents expression of recessive allele (p) so the offspring all looked polled.

This allows three genetic combinations:

- animals with both alleles for the polled in the gene (PP), are called homozygous Polled;
- animals with one polled allele and one horned allele in the gene (Pp), are called heterozygous;
- animals with two alleles for horns (pp), are also called homozygous but this time Horned.

Homozygous means having two alleles that are the same

Heterozygous means having one each of two different alleles

Since polled is dominant to horned, the heterozygous animal (one allele for polled and one for horned) will be polled. Therefore, the homozygous polled and the heterozygous animals will both be polled. Only ones homozygous for horns (having two alleles for horns) will be horned.

The story on Scurs

Some polled cattle have Scurs. Scurs can only be seen in polled cattle.

Scurs are incompletely developed horns that are generally attached only to the skin. They range in size from tiny scab-like growths to large protrusions. Therefore, polled cattle can be smooth-polled or scurred (polled, but expressing scurs).

Scurs are genetically transmitted, but the method of transmission is different from the polled gene. In males, the gene for scurs is dominant. So if a bull has scurs, he might be either heterozygous (Ss) or homozygous (SS) for the scurred condition. In females the genes for scurs is recessive. Only (SS) cows will be scurred. (Ss) cows will be smooth polled.

In horned cattle, the horn hides the scurred condition, so you can't evaluate the scurred condition. Not all polled cattle are free of scurs; it appears that only cattle that are heterozygous for the polled/horned genes (Pp) will express the scurred trait. This means that both homozygous polled and horned animals will be free of scurs.

To emphasize the difference between scurs and horns, cattle should be classified as smooth-polled, scurred-polled or horned. Remember that all smooth-polled and scurred polled cattle have at least one gene for the polled condition. However, homozygous horned cattle (pp) can never carry a polled gene.

It is probably easiest for breeders interested in polled cattle to ignore the scur trait except that this is an indicator that the animal is heterozygous for the horned-polled gene. Efforts should be concentrated on the polled gene. When the herd becomes homozygous polled there should no longer be scurred animals.

Nutrition

Now we are getting over the wet winter and the spring looked like to be going to get off to a good start until the tap ran dry. Now is the time to take a look at your cows' nutrition. A good starting point for this is what in the soil and how your pasture is performing. If you haven't done a soil test for some time it may well be worth considering seeing what level of fertility and essential minerals are available to be taken up into the plant matter. Below is a table of the major and trace minerals required for a balanced diet

Major			Trace		
		g/kg DM		mg/kg DM	
Sodium	(Na)	1.2	Copper	(Cu)	7-10
Potassium	(K)	5.8	Cobalt	(Co)	0.09
Magnesium	(Mg)	1.9	Selenium	(Se)	0.03
Calcium	(Ca)	4.4	Iodine	(I)	0.5
Phosphorus	(P)	3.2	Zinc	(Zn)	25
Sulphur	(S)	1.8	Manganese	(Mn)	25
Chlorine	(Cl)	2.4	Iron	(Fe)	40

In New Zealand, the most common deficient trace elements are copper, cobalt and selenium.

With the soil test, results you start to may a long term plan on where to start to improve the soil and plant health.

In the short term, there are several things that can be done to assess any minerals deficiencies in the cows. A number of questions have to be asked like in the past year has there been any high risks to health that may have been treated by prophylactic measures like Zinc for Facial Eczema (Excess zinc intake will increase the risk of milk fever, copper deficiency, and may depress appetite). Have the cows been in very muddy paddocks over winter or on a crop of swedes and chou mollier which can result in a mineral imbalance. Do your cows have reduced milk yields, reproductive problems, becoming lightening of coat colour, soft hooves or Anaemia.

So what can you do to find out what is going on? There are a number of things actions to take,

If you are culling some cows, ask for a Trace Element Status liver biopsy to find the levels of minerals in the liver and should include Copper, Cobalt and Selenium. Blood test can also be done however, they may be inconclusive in some cases and you should discuss the situation with your Vet.

Once you have the results you then start to fix the problem. There are a number of ways to tackle the deficiencies but you cannot do everything at once so depending on your situation the best thing to do is form a plan with the assistance of your Vet to bring your cows major and trace elements back into balance

Magnesium is important for the cows at calving time, Red Devons, being such good do-ers, tend to be overweight which can induce milk fever. If you want to sleep easy it pays to administer magnesium bullets about a week to 10 days prior to calving. Write the cow numbers on them with a felt pen in case they are regurgitated. Your vet will likely lend you an applicator. Alternatively, Magnesium can be administered in the water as magnesium chloride or on the grass or silage as magnesium oxide. This is more work and the amount used should be reduced gradually, whereas a bullet is a one off treatment.

Below are some useful web-sites and tips

- [Guide to new Zealand Cattle farming](#)
- [Nutrition Of The Beef Cow Post-Weaning \(Through To 4-6 Weeks Pre-Calving\)](#)
- [Trace element supplementation](#)
- [Copper deficiency](#)
- [Magnesium supplementation](#)

Cobalt

Cobalt deficiencies will cause vitamin B12 deficiency which depresses growth rate. Cobalt deficiency can be prevented by supplementation with cobalt or vitamin B12 or topdressing pastures with cobalt.

Testing

If cobalt deficiency is suspected, a vet should take blood or liver samples to determine vitamin B12 levels. Testing is most effective in late spring.

Treatment

Vitamin B12 must be given by monthly injection of 2–3 mg of water soluble solution. A long acting vitamin B12 formulation is effective for three months in calves.

Another option is a single injection of 0.12 mg/kg liveweight (i.e. 6 mg for a 50 kg calf).

Controlled release cobalt intra-ruminal boluses can last up to 12 months.

Topdressing of pastures with 350 g/ha of cobalt sulphate (70 g Co/ha) with fertiliser will increase pasture levels > 0.05 mg/kg DM within four weeks. Levels will then decline over the following 9–12 weeks.

Copper

Cattle in New Zealand are commonly deficient in copper which causes depressed growth rate, fertility and calf survival. Farmers are encouraged to consult their veterinarian and possibly develop response trials.

Breeding cows need large amounts of copper to support pregnancy and lactation and if levels are adequate calves will be born with good copper status. Monitoring is essential before embarking on a supplementation program as copper toxicity and deaths are possible with over-dosing.

The best way to assess copper status is to measure levels in the liver using samples from slaughtered animals or from animal live biopsies.

Recommended times to monitor copper status in cattle are:

- Cull cows in the autumn
- Pregnant cows in late winter by live biopsy
- Cull growing cattle at any time
- Rising one year cattle in mid-winter by biopsy.

Testing

Liver Cu < 45 μ mol/kg fresh weight of liver indicates copper deficiency.

Blood can also be tested for copper levels but is less accurate and does not reflect long term copper intake.

Treatment

Drenching with copper supplements is not advised as it provides only brief benefit. Other supplementation options include:

1. Subcutaneous injection of copper salts (eg calcium copper edetate) at a rate of 0.4–1.0 mg/kg liveweight is effective for one 1–2 months.
Note: Do not stress cattle after administering copper salts for 24-36 hrs.
2. Copper can be added to drinking water using an inline dispenser (3–6 mg Cu/l) to provide up to 90–180 mg/cow/day.
3. Intraruminal boluses containing copper oxide (CuO) particles are effective for 6–9 months.
4. Topdressing with copper added can increase pasture levels rapidly.
Annual application of 6–12 kg copper sulphate/ ha (1.5–3 kg Cu/ha) in autumn or spring is best. However, effectiveness can be reduced if molybdenum levels are high. **Note** that pastures should not be grazed after application until rain has washed fertiliser off the plants.

Selenium

Selenium deficiency can depress conception rate, calf survival and growth can be lowered with selenium deficiency which can be remedied by injection, drenching, adding to drinking water or applying with fertiliser. Selenium status is measured by the level of a selenium containing enzyme in the blood called glutathione peroxidase (GsPx).

Monitoring selenium status should be: Just before calving, and at any time in growing cattle, but at least two months after any selenised drench or vaccination has been applied.

From this test supplementation levels can be predicted by a veterinarian or animal health laboratory.

Testing

If selenium deficiency is suspected a vet should collect tissue samples, preferably blood. Cattle will be deficient when the selenium concentration in blood is < 130 nmol/l. Concentration of selenium in pasture is another good indicator and this should be >0.03 mg Se/kg DM.

Treatment

The type and frequency of supplementation is determined by the level of deficiency, time of year, accessibility of stock and ease of administration. Be certain stock are deficient in selenium before treatment as excessive selenium is toxic and accumulates in the liver and kidneys.

Many drenches and vaccines contain selenium as sodium selenate or sodium selenite.

Administration by either means should be at 0.1 mg Se/kg liveweight. A rapid increase in blood selenium will gradually decline over 6–8 weeks.

Longer lasting supplements are available including injection with barium selenate at 0.5 - 1 mg Se/kg liveweight (500 mg for cows), or boluses containing metallic selenium and Iron, lasting 10–12 months.

Selenium can be dispensed in-line to the water supply to provide 1.5 – 3 mg Se/cow/day.

Pastures can be top dressed with 1 kg selenium prills/ha (10 g Se/ha) in spring or autumn every one or two years. This should only be done if pasture levels of selenium are below 0.03 mg Se/kg DM

An end of an era

TINOPAI stud is retiring! Wayne and Patricia Aspin have been stalwarts of the NZ Red Devon Cattle Breeders Association. Wayne was a past president and has been instrumental in reinvigorating the breed in NZ. The Aspin's started breeding Red Devons in 2002 after a successful career in dairy farming. As he did with his Jerseys, Wayne was always pursuing high genetic merit in his cattle. He also strove to introduce new blood into the NZ herd.



Wayne and Trish were environmentally pro-active, established a QEII covenanted area on their farm and have been recipients of several awards, including the Sir Peter and Lady Elworthy Environmental Awards.

Advancing age and health issues made them decide to sell the cattle as well as their farm.

The association thanks them whole heartedly and wishes them all the best for the future.

