

*New Zealand*

# RED DEVON

*Cattle Breeders Association*

Newsletter 🌸 April 2019



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

## **President's comments.**

Hello everyone,

Council is working hard on the planning for the World Conference 2020. We have contracted AgriTravel again to organise this event for us. They are familiar with what we need having done the previous two for us. The tour starts in Wellington on February 4<sup>th</sup>, finishing in Auckland on February 16<sup>th</sup>. The flyer which will be in the Bulldust is also in this newsletter. As always it is challenging trying to showcase our cattle, country and people in a short time frame with reasonable costs. We will have all of the details at our AGM for members. It has been encouraging to see the increase in our membership of studs with larger numbers of cattle.

It is important for our breed to have our cattle being performance recorded and for us to start to showcase our cattle. For the Association we know we have quality stock, we need to step up to be seen as a competitive breed. Many studs do have a lot more cattle than what they register or record. Travelling around the country there is an increase in Red Devon cattle seen everywhere, members are selling to the wider farming community – are you promoting the importance of maintaining the registrations and joining the Association. Our performance recording needs more animals to increase the information we get from the system. But the Association cannot do this unless our members are active in this space. It's all about the bits that you cannot see – the genetics, and more and more it is the key selling point for all breeds as we understand how critical this is for improving our breed.

The AGM this year will be in Taranaki, on May 18th. We will have the meeting and evening meal in Stratford and will be visiting Jill and Steve Dirksen's property on Saturday afternoon. They have actively recorded their animals and can talk us through the importance, what they are looking for in the numbers. The stuff that complements what their eyes are telling them.

A major focus this year is to produce a quality publication on our Red Devon's and our members. It is intended that these will be available for members and for the conference attendees next year.

Best wishes

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April 2019.

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## Secretary

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**Front Cover:** One of Arthur's Tapuwae Bulls

## Members List

[\(click here\)](#)



## Important Dates to Remember

30 <sup>th</sup> April	Membership Subscriptions Invoiced
<b>May 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>AGM</b>
30 <sup>th</sup> June	ADL's sent out
30 <sup>th</sup> July	ADL's must be Returned (no Cow Credits for ADL's returned after the 15 <sup>th</sup> August)
10 <sup>th</sup> August	Calf Entries sent out
30 <sup>th</sup> September	Annual animals fees cows invoiced
31 <sup>st</sup> December	Balance Date; end of financial year
31 <sup>st</sup> January	Calf entry sheets cut off
2 <sup>nd</sup> of every month	Group Run Cut off for the performance recording reports

## Using the internet to promote our Red Devon Stud

A free, **Yes Free!** Stud webpage is available to all full members of the association. Your own webpage to promote your stud and cattle, take a look at the [current pages](#) to give you some ideas. There is space on your webpage to add what is happening on your stud and keep people up to date about your cattle or yourself. All you need to do is let me know at [NZRedDevons@Gmail.com](mailto:NZRedDevons@Gmail.com) with what you would like.

Another great benefit is the free advertising on the website for full members. This gives you the opportunity to tell everyone what you have for sale or what you are looking for. Don't forget to send a good photo of your animals, as they say 'a photo is worth a thousand words' and a good picture is a best seller. So again you can contact me at [NZRedDevons@Gmail.com](mailto:NZRedDevons@Gmail.com)

A good place to find local Devon breeders is in the [Breeders List](#) so to make sure things are up to date I would like to ask all members to check the information is correct, if there is any changes you would like to let me know at the usual [address](#).

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed with articles and photos to the newsletter. So don't be shy let everyone know how great our Red Devons really are.

Kevin



## **World Conference and tour of New Zealand 4th – 16th February 2020**

**The tour starts in Wellington with a welcome dinner on the evening of the 4th February.**

**We travel through many regions of the North Island visiting well known and new studs. Our conference day is Sunday 9th February in Hamilton. We will then continue north with our most northerly stud Arthur Beasley's Tapuwae.**

**The tour finishes in Auckland on Sunday 16th February. We will arrive in Auckland the evening of the 15th February.**

**We have a great mix of cattle, people, places and activities.**

**Keep an eye on our website the tour "button" will take you to the page with the registration details shortly.**

**If you are interested in the post tour of the South Island please let us know.**

**We do require minimum numbers for the both world conference and for the post tour to go ahead.**

**Enquiries: Karen Schumacher**

**President  
NZRDCBA**

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## **Birthweight, calving ease and bull selection**

At the last council meeting there was some feedback from members expressing concern at high birthweights, large calves and difficult calvings some herds have experienced of late. The following notes may help alleviate calving issues.

### **1) Select the right type of bull for the job.**

First calvers (especially 2yr olds) require a much finer, lighter bodied bull than cows. Use EBV's when available to select a below average birthweight bull, but make sure that the bull selected has lighter bone in legs, not too broad in the head and not too deep in the brisket/chest. A more "dairy type" animal will produce better results with heifers.

Higher birthweight, heavy boned bulls with above average EBV's for both birthweight and growth rate should be reserved for cows, which are more capable of delivering a larger calf. Having said that don't disregard heavier type bulls, two bulls used at Millstone over several seasons provide a good comparison. One produced calves less than 35kgs the other averaged 38kgs at birth but at 400 days the heavy bulls progeny were 50kgs heavier and 100kgs better at 600 days. That equates to around \$300/head, so higher birthweights are not all bad, just use the right bull for the right females.

### **2) Cows produce heavier calves than heifers.**

Mature cows don't have to put any of their energy into growth, as heifers are still doing, so given the same feed, heifers will have smaller calves.

At Millstone this season 70 MA cows produced 72 calves, all unassisted. The weight range was from 30 - 53kg at birth with an average of 39.4kg. The calves from the 30 2yr heifers averaged 34.4kg.

### **3) Make sure heifers are well grown enough before deciding to mate.**

At Millstone yearling heifers are mated to calve as 2yr olds. Nothing under 320kgs is mated and the average weight of those mated is around 350kgs at 400 days. Mating heifers under 300kgs is not recommended and generally results in calving trouble and stunted adult cows so either hold over the smaller ones to calve as 3yr olds or cull.

### **4) Don't overfeed in the last month before calving,**

R2 heifers need to be well fed throughout pregnancy but feed should be restricted for both heifers and cows in the last month to avoid large calves and allow cows to utilise and metabolise some of the fat which may have been laid down both internally and externally. Post calving adlib feeding will ensure good milking and conception rates (especially in heifers)

### **5) Record,**

weigh and utilise EBV's and performance data wherever possible. The association subsidises breeders who performance record so you are getting a lot of information at no cost to assist in identifying non performers in both cows and bulls.

Heughan Grant Gordon

## Hello fellow Red Devon Breeders.

We hope you enjoy our update from Manu Stud.

For those who have not met us we have been members of the Red Devon society since 2006 so are heading in to our 13<sup>th</sup> Spring Calving season with our Herd of Purebred Red Devons. We have a 22 Ha property which consists of flat to rolling with a little steep situated within central Taranaki predominantly sheep and Beef country.

We are comfortable with around 15 breeding cows, and aim to sell Bulls into the Beef and Dairy industry. And always have Heifers coming on. It is getting increasingly difficult to cull each year now, as after breeding to improve our stock each year we tend to be at the stage where we are pretty happy with the herd and just want it to stay as is.

So it is now becoming a very hard decision as to who stays and who goes. In a perfect scenario we would have plenty of fellow breeders to sell females on too,



Manu 141 our main stud bull



Manu 159 a rising 3 year in calf heifer

but increasingly we are finding people who are interested in them want Polled not dehorned and are not interested in joining the society. This in our view is quite disappointing for the Red Devon Breed going forward.

Up until last year we have had excellent sales of our breeding Bulls both yearling and 2 year olds. We begin our calving season in early June this suits our system and allows our yearling bulls and 2 year olds to have good growth and weight for the markets.

Increasingly we have clients only interested in leasing Bulls which is very tricky, unless we don't

bring the leased bull back to the property once the lease is over. In our experience it increases the chances of injury to the Bulls and creates much unsettling among the reintroduced group. And our land size does not allow for groups to be kept separated for resettling.

The M Bovis outbreak has caused sales of Bulls last spring to somewhat slow down, we believe due to more AB Bulls being used, a worry about trucking, also the Dairy industry coming under increasing pressure, and compliance costs, meaning a few of our clients have opted to keep the Bulls an extra season. The comments from some of them have been that the Bulls were so quiet and good to handle that they loathed parting with them. So that bodes very well for the Docility trait which Red Devons are renowned for, but of course not so well for sales.



Manu 180 one of 2018 crop of Bull calves.

We have one cow which we would like to give a little history on as she is our oldest Cow.



Quantock 60

We purchased Quantock 60 (171405060) from Sydney Bates of the Quantock Stud in Levin along with at least 3 other heifers in 2006. (All her ear tags have fallen out). She produced her first calf in July of 2008 and has produced a live healthy calf every year since. The other 3 Heifers didn't make the grade for one reason or the other, and in her first calving season we thought she wasn't going to make the grade, she seemed a bit soft. But she continued on and not only made the grade has gone on to produce 11 live calves in a row with the 12<sup>th</sup> due this year and I hope I am not tempting fate to say

she may make the 18 + years which we have noted the Heirs of Maghera Stud and several other breeders have achieved over the years this is a great achievement indeed. Quantock 60 has always been very laid back in temperament and nothing fazes her, she loves a good scratch.

Very pale in colour and dehorned with a white udder, excellent feet, and udder shape which obviously means for us, any Heifers are kept if possible with the hope her genetics continue for a long time. We have several other cows who are also looking like making a good age. It certainly shows that the Red Devon Breed has got what it takes with the ever changing requirements with farming use especially when times get a bit tough ie. dry conditions and very wet conditions generally a very versatile animal we find.

We are getting ready for an early June Calving season with 16 out of 17 cows incalf.



Quantock 60 gets a much loved scratch



Manu 141

We hope this very dry summer is not too stressing for every one including your cattle, and that your journey with your Red Devons is going along nicely.

Kind regards  
Steve and Jill of Manu Red Devon Stud

## Update from Ohuka Polled Devons Stud.

Ohuka's autumn calving herd had a very successful 2018 season with 13 heifer calves and 6 bull calves born, all polled except 1. This will bring the herd to 40 females to be mated this autumn, which is our target number of breeding cows. This was achieved quicker than expected due to the high number of female calves born. Having three herd sires makes allocation of paddocks a tricky business as we also run 2 bull mobs simultaneously, the weaner bulls and the older bulls. On top of that our 5 year old Bongalabi Atlas bull has a paddock all to himself. We don't put bulls next to bulls or bulls next to heifers so allocating paddocks is like a game of chess. We use the in calf cows to clean up the paddocks behind the weaners.



The next calving has started and we are planning our mating to start about 27 April, which is easy to remember as it is my birthday. We now use a calf trailer to weigh and tag the newborn calves after an over-protective mother cracked some of my ribs last year. This works well as the mother can have her nose just inches away from her calf but behind the safety barrier of the cage. Planning for mating consists of deciding which females go with which bull. That means looking at the inbreeding coefficients, the EBV's and the confirmation of the animals as well as their previous offspring in order to produce the calves that fit our breeding program. All breeders have different objectives but also have a lot in common, like ease of calving, docility and ability to produce quality meat fast. Ohuka adds the objectives of polling and short gestation to the mix.

We have just finished the magnesium supplementation in bolus form and will follow up with copper closer to mating. Copper deficiency is widespread in New Zealand and Devons are susceptible. This time of year all cows should be glossy and have no winter coat left. If a Devon looks more yellow than the others and still a bit furry in places it is highly likely to be in need of copper. We provide Magnesium pre calving against milk fever and copper pre mating. In addition in Facial Eczema prone areas there will be a need for Zinc when spore counts get high. Zinc and Copper boluses should not be given simultaneously and it is not recommended for Magnesium and Copper. Consult your vet.

Our heifers, which calve as 2 year olds, are in calf to our 2 year old Vix Jurassic bull and with the first calves due to hit the ground imminently we are looking forward with interest what this very promising youngster's offspring will look like.

There is an all breeds stud sale in Taupo on 24 May and we are considering taking a few yearling bulls along to test the market.

*Dirk Sieling  
Ohuka Polled Devons*



Weighing calves on day 1 is important and can be done with the most basic equipment.

Kathy demonstrates the set-up in the photo, made up on the spot with an old sack with 4 holes for the calves legs, some baling twine a spreader bar and a set of scales.