



New Zealand

RED DEVON

Cattle Breeders Association



Christmas News Letter ❁ December 2012

www.reddevoncattle.co.nz



Merry Christmas

www.reddevoncattle.co.nz

President's comments.

Another year nearly over. Here in Waihi we have had some much needed rain over night. Hopefully the looming dry won't eventuate.

I have just come back from our council meeting held at PBB, Fielding on 3rd December. A full day from 9.30am to 4pm. The most time was spent talking about a grading up system. We are working towards setting one up and are sorting out the details. Graeme Dyke is going to try and make a draft of the new by-laws which will incorporate the new grading up system, not an easy task. Once we adopt the new proposals we will still have the most stringent systems in place to maintain purity and integrity of our cattle, the toughest in the world. As the detail is finalised I will keep you informed.

Other topics discussed at the meeting were a possible mini stud tour for overseas visitors in 2014. At the moment we are waiting on responses of interest from overseas. Also discussed was the hosting of two Brazilian graduates for a period through a University (possibly Waikato), where they will be doing work trying to identify any advantages or points of difference Devons have over other beef breeds. Karen Schumacher is coordinating this project and making things happen. These students will be spending time studying the same project in the other countries that breed Devons. Hopefully something really useful will come out of this.

Registration of cattle was also reviewed and what to do with commercial cattle outside the herd book. No decisions on these issues so far. Finally there was a feeling that the council was not communicating with the membership well enough. Members don't know what's going on! We will try and improve in this area. Feed back is always welcome positive or negative.

Have a happy Christmas and a damp New Year.

Colin.

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Front page is from a photo supplied by Sue and David Dreadon a fine pair of Devon Draft Oxen

Welcome to New Members

Ron Mansfield, of **Awhitu Heights Ltd** in the Auckland area
Stev & Deb Holmes, of **HOLMESTEAD** from Inglewood, Taranaki
Don & Jeanette Wills, of **WILLSNET** from Greytown, Wairarapa
Geoffery McLennon & Michaela Mullen, of Outram, Otago
Heughan Gordon, of Havelock North, Hawke's Bay

Best Wishes and a prosperous New Year



FROM THE NORTH

Even though the winter was very wet and cold we were able to get the stock looking quite good come spring. Again the grass has been very slow until this last week when we have had some warm rain for a change. Most of the maize crops that were planted end of October are now taking off. The local contractor has only just started making baleage in the last week and has not got a lot of work booked in at this stage.

We did have some calf losses mid September due to the cold rain and muddy conditions but since then the calves have been quite healthy. The calving has been quite spread out and we have had more dry cows than previous years. Most of the empty cows were in a mob that had a bull injure himself prior to Christmas. He was replaced by another bull a week later but still had a big gap in their calving.

Bull sales have been reasonably steady this year, helped by enquires from further south - thanks to Colin.

We have not been able to fill the demand for 1 year heifers for breeding this spring. These heifers have gone to form commercial herds, 27 to one property and they will take more if we could source them.

Tuppy has once again demonstrated the growth potential of Devon cattle with her 14 month heifers weighing in at up to 437kgs and the 14 month bulls up to 530kgs. The top heifer doing 50kgs in the last month. The heaviest bull being 317kgs when weaned on the 29th May 2012, now weighing 530kgs 28th November 2012.

We are in the midst of planning for the next Dargaville Fieldays to be held on 21-22-23rd February next year. We invite all members to call on us if in the north at this time.

From the North --- we wish you all a Merry and Safe Christmas.



Arthur

Devon Meat

As members of the association we all know the great taste of Devon beef and through the growth of Rannoch Meats others are now starting to see what we all know. Over this past year Rannoch Meats has grown to be delivering Red Devon beef throughout the North Island.

The year started with us establishing a stand at the Hill Street Farmers Market in Wellington, where we began selling individual cuts of meat to customers in Wellington. In order to sell through this type of outlet, we required certification with the council and Ministry for Primary Industries (previously called MAF). This was actually easier than I thought it was going to be. As long as the processes for storing and transporting of meat are good and kept up to date, then nothing to worry about.

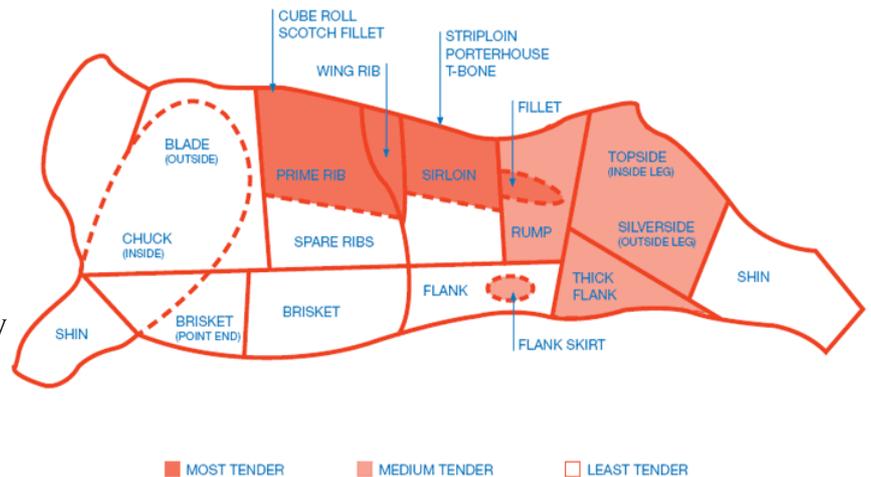
We are now regularly selling every second Saturday at the farmers market and have built up a following of supporters who will only buy from us and only want to buy Red Devon. The market has also been a great way of getting our brand out there with people sampling the meat and then purchasing a ½ or ¼ beast. The Hill Street Farmers Market is a good fit for us as all the sellers are within 300km of Wellington and they all produce their own food. So customers know who they are getting the food from.

The number of comments I get from people about how different our meat tastes and that they will now only buy from us is great. I put this down to four key things that we are doing with the meat:

1. We hang our meat for 2-3 weeks before it is butchered. The aging adds a lot of flavour to the meat.
2. Our animals are killed and processed at between 18 – 24 months, when they reach a carcass weight of 200-250kg. The younger animal means more tenderness to the beef.

3. The animals are quiet and stress free on the farm and when being processed, so no changes in the pH of the meat.
4. Finally the Red Devon breed adds intramuscular fat to the meat.

Educating the public about what makes good meat has taken some time. The Angus breeders have done a great job of promoting lean beef, so when people see a marbled Devon steak they are not so sure. However just one try and they are hooked. The older generation are the ones who look for the marbling and know why this improves the cooking and flavour of the meat. We also have to educate people about the differences between fresh and frozen meat. All of our meat is vacuum packed and frozen, which puts some people off. However for storage it is safer to handle and as we have already hung it for 2-3 weeks the flavour is already there. With our meat there is no shrinkage with water loss, so what you see is what you get.



The other big event for us this year was an article on TVNZ's 'Sunday' programme about Cow Pooling. This is where 4 people get together and purchase an animal off Trade Me. 21 days later they get it home killed, butchered and share the meat. This hour long programme talked about Cow Pooling, talked with the supermarkets and talked with a company in the South Island (Farmgate Meats) operating the same way we do. The comparisons were great.

For the same quantity of meat all packaged ready for the freezer, purchasing through the different options costs:

- Cow Pooling will cost you about \$1200-\$1400
- Rannoch Meats model will cost you about \$2000 - \$2200
- Supermarket will cost you about \$3200 - \$3400

For the hour this programme ran we had about 500 hits on our website, I fielded around 100 emails in the days following and received about 10-20 orders. This was the single biggest best FREE advertising I could have hoped for. Those customers are now repeat customers with many of them continuing to purchase and needless to say they are also telling their friends about us, so building our customer base.

Our final success in a great year was at the Steak of Origin competition. I quickly decided that this was something we should do, so took a sirloin off one of the animals being processed that week. No special criteria for selection of the animal whose meat was selected - just needed a sirloin so sent one in. We were rapt when they told us we had made the semi-finals. Without doing anything different we were in there with a chance. We didn't make the finals, but when the full report of results of all the classes came back we were again over the moon. Our random selection was 1st on the tenderness rating for our class i.e. we were rated 1st in getting into the semi-final, based on the laboratory testing of the meat. Out of a class of about 170 animals we were decidedly chuffed about that. Will have to see if we can do better next year and convert the taste judges off the Angus!

So after a very busy year we are still on a big growth curve, we have 150+ people on our mailing list and this is continuing growing. We have more demand coming in and are looking to increase supply. Graham Dyke and Chris Hehir have both supplied us over this year when we have had more demand than we can breed. Making sure we have animals at the right weight all year round can be difficult. This is where you in the association can benefit also. I am interested in talking to

anyone who would be interested in supplying Red Devon to us either finished or for finishing.
What we are looking for:

- Red Devon heifers or steers that are between 12-24 months
- Weights of 300-450kg

Preferably in the lower half of the North Island, but open to a discussion.

We are also looking at growing our own breeding cattle also, so looking for more breeding cattle.

Give me a call or email:

1. Julian Downs
2. Phone 06 304 9893
3. Email: Julian@rannochmeats.co.nz
4. Website: www.rannochmeats.co.nz

2013 looks to be a promising year with more growth on the horizon. Restaurants and cafés are the next area to tackle as well as expanding the sales across the country.

Finally thanks to the association for putting a link on the association website

Julian Downs

A Fine Dairy Cross

My 6 Jersey Cows provide milk for the small group of calves I rear. I have 4 of these A/D to the Jersey for replacements and 2 to the Red Devon. This breed crosses very well with the Jersey with easy calving and early maturing animals. The Steers join our group of fattening Steers and I have sold Heifer Calves to our Neighbours for Breeding on. I strongly recommend the use of the Red Devon for cross-breeding purposes

Jill Wills

Jill Wills farms in central Taranaki with her husband Jim, they farm on 475 acres of flat to rolling with some steep country. The majority of the



property is run with an open faced Romney breeding Flock of approx 800 head, with the inclusion of Suffolk and Dorset Down over some of the Flock. Jill runs the Suffolk Stud and has the only registered pedigree Suffolk Stud in Taranaki at this time. She recently set up a small Dorset Down Stud also, the couple buy in Weaner Beef X Steers and Heifers for fattening usually Angus Hereford x or Hereford Frisian X for the Local Trade. They source these through Stock agents or privately if they can get them.





Jill has a single Milking plant which she Milks several Purebred Jersey Cows, she leaves the cows own calves on and milks once a day in the morning and feeds extra identified Heifer calves which she buys in from Pedigree jersey Dairy farmers, these calves once reared usually for 8-9 months go on to the Dairy industry. Any Bull Calves are kept entire and sold to Bull Rearers.

She has used the Red Devon over a couple of her Jersey Cows each year for the past approx 5 years, and as she mentioned above any Bulls are Steered and go with their fattening Herd and the Heifers either go on for Breeding to a neighbouring Sheep and Beef Farmer or off to Local Trade. They thrive on this property and Jim and Jill would Buy Red Devon X if they could source them. They purchase any surplus Weaner purebred, Red Devon Heifers we have to spare to fatten as well.



Jill Dirksen

Your Red Devon Web Site



Don't forget that this is your Web Site where you can promote your stud and your cattle. It is a good place to start researching which way to plan your breeding program with the use of Internet Solution Animal Enquiry.

You can Sell items on the website for a small charge of \$11.50^{inc GST} for sixty days or even have a page for a stud profile for an annual fee of \$57.50^{inc GST}. There is always a steady number of people viewing the website from all over the World, making it a good tool to promote your stud and cattle. Items of news that you may have can be posted on the web site so that other members can catch up with what is going on.

A good photo can save a thousand words so with summer now here it's time to dust off the camera and record the improvements in your herd. You can then put the photos to good use by displaying them on the web site.

Web master

Kevin Fletcher

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Two of Clive Baker's
18 Month old bulls



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As at December 2012

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