

New Zealand

RED DEVON

Cattle Breeders Association

Newsletter 🌸 October 2021

Hi everyone, I hope your winter has been as kind as ours up in Northland.

Spring is here and the grass is finally starting to grow at close to the required rate. Our calving at Rockview was a 'blur' and was over as quickly as it had begun. We are sure that Arcadia Proverbial, the herd sire which we used again, gets some amusement from having the cows and heifers calve at such a phenomenal rate. He served our 30x cow herd, including the maiden heifers and they have all calved in 34 days (excluding 2x AI cows). As a young 15mth old bull, his mob contained 20x MA females and they all calved in 27 days. A medium-framed, young bull with superb Red Devon fertility! He has been sold now and he leaves the arriving bulls some very big boots to fill!

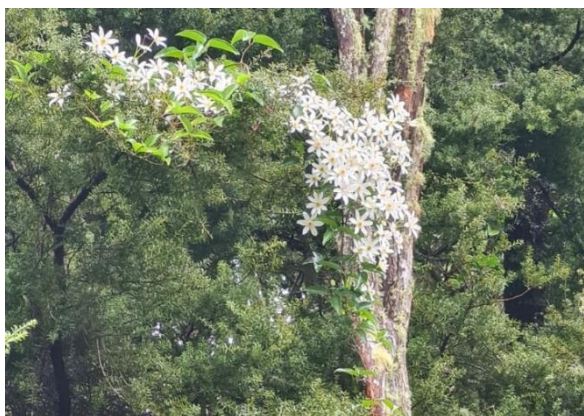


Arcadia Proverbial, our Pocket Rocket!

We were very fortunate to obtain our Belmur Clay straws just before our Artificial Insemination date last year and we were delighted to get 1x heifer and 1x bull calf from the 3x cows we inseminated. Both are tremendous looking calves with good length and some frame which we like to see (currently awaiting DNA confirmation). We look forward to the new genetics that these two will offer us here at Rockview. A big thankyou to Stephen Harris for his effort in seeking this semen for NZ to use. It is not an easy process to obtain the semen and then land it in NZ so we really appreciate Steve's dedication in making this happen.

With calving occurring so quickly, we have had to be very careful with our grass management this season. We suddenly had the whole herd requiring masses of grass as they all start raising young calves and the spring flush has not quite arrived, even now. Luckily it is improving as I write this!

We have a very warm farm but also predominantly kikuyu grass which needs its routine hard grazing each year before the winter sets in. The other quality grasses available have improved a lot since we purchased the farm in 2017 and it continues to each year. This was a lease block for many years, and when we bought the farm, it showed. Surprisingly, over 20 years ago, half of our 62ha farm was covered in solid manuka and totara trees and has since been put back into pasture. You wouldn't know it was now! It was cleared with a lot of thought though and there are lots of ridges and pockets of beautiful bush left with a selection of large shelter trees in most paddocks. We enjoy the gorgeous Native Clematis hanging from many of the trees at this time of the year - such a delightful climber!



Native Clematis in full flower.

Whilst there was a lot of debris in paddocks, we have cleaned it up with fires over the few years we have been here. The Devons forage, grazing very thoroughly and leaving a tidy finish, which helps us as we clean up. The cattle maintain their condition so easily and all without making mud during the wet, winter months which is a bonus. We are so grateful to be farming with this breed!

Northland Red Devon Club

Over the winter months, I have been working towards establishing a Northland Red Devon Club for our region. The Red Devon breed is well supported up here in Northland by a large number of enthusiastic breeders and farm visits have worked very well in the past.

The first outing for the new club is being held here at Rockview Red Devons, Arapohue, near Dargaville on **Saturday, October 30, 2021**. The day begins at 10am and all NZRDCBA members are very welcome to join us. Please see attached flyer with the details. We look forward to seeing you on the day.

Please Note: For anyone unable to attend this outing because of COVID travel restrictions or any other reasons, please call us when you can visit – it would be our pleasure to give you a personal farm tour.

Colleen Hunter,
Field Days Coordination
Rockview Stud

Semen Available

For those of you who are interested in Artificial Breeding, there is semen currently stored in New Zealand from the long-established Australian studs, Gowan Ross and Vix Devons. Their breeders are Alison Heap and Vic Edwards. All bulls are council approved for use in New Zealand and semen is easily obtained.

A number of New Zealand breeders have already had very favourable results from using these genetics. Price is AUS\$30 per straw (No GST).

All bulls are polled, two are tested homozygous polled (PP).

Available are:

- Gowan Ross Gentleman G82 (P)
- Gowan Ross Johann J73 (PP)
- Vix Jatz J60 (P)
- Vix Jurassic J76 (PP)

Contact Vic Edwards directly if you are interested. Email: vixdevons@bigpond.com

Details are also on the NZ Red Devon Association website on the semen available page.

Getting to the stud visit in Northland under COVID restrictions

If you're already in Northland, well you've just joined many of us in a (hopefully!) short term Level 3 and we can't really know until closer to the time what is going to happen.

There are people who had successfully transited Auckland a couple of weeks ago: you get a few hours to drive through and you cannot stop so you don't technically enter the level three area. It is not yet clear if this will still be possible going forward. If you are interested in making use of this option, look for a future email detailing how to go about it. Or an email explaining it is no longer possible, if that's the case. We'll send this out the week prior to the 30th, as soon as it's clear what the situation will be.

If you are in Auckland Tamaki Maukarau, you don't yet know when you'll be able to travel North, and you'll be well aware of that when the time comes. If you're in the North Waikato, you're in the same boat and you don't yet know if you can travel out of region.

For those further south, there is also the option of flying into Whangarei. If you want to go that route we can help arrange travel from Whangarei to Rockview, and back. Finally, there may be a water-based option, but we have not explored that.

Marketing - is something we all need to do

Solid response to adverts taken in Farming First and Dairy Exporter have led to good uptake of the bull supply available. Paid adverts are currently suspended for a few months to match supply with demand. Articles in regional publications can be thought of as free advertising, and we encourage you to send in links or seek support in composing such articles. Sometimes it helps to get articles published if an ad is run alongside it. The association will consider all requests for such advertising. Here's a good article from Don Wills in Waterford Press's Business Rural North, Spring edition, page 50:

<https://digitalpublications.online/waterfordpress/business-rural-north-spring-21/50/>

Dirk's Tips for beginners: AI

I have been asked to write something about AI and hence the notes on cull cows will be delayed until next month.

Breeding with artificial insemination is reasonably straightforward. Select animals that are cycling which shows by being ridden by other animals and bare patches over the tail and pin bones. Tail painting will also indicate cycling if the paint is rubbed off, other devices like flash mates are available which will light up when the cow is on heat. Selecting non cyclers will result in wasted semen straws.

Talk to your vet, he will explain the 10 day program and insert CIDR's into the selected animals. A week later he will remove the CIDR's and administer a PG injection and possibly eCG to improve results. The animals are now synchronized and two days later a release shot of GnRH will make the animals come into heat in the next 8 to 20 hours.

So insemination occurs 12 to 14 hours after the last injection. In large herds success rates average about 65%, but in small herds with careful selection of recipients the success rate can be as high as 85% or even 90%. Of course animals can be inseminated without this program but it means correctly identifying any animals in standing heat and inseminating your cows all at different times.

The important thing to know is that whatever method used, you will still need a sweeper bull to make sure the remainder of your herd gets in calf.

Changes in membership

There have been no changes in membership this month. We need to take action if we want to grow. Have you sold any stock to non-members this year? Did you invite them to consider joining?

New Member introduction

New member Shan Ali is looking to shift his herd from a mix of Jersey, Fresian and Hereford to Red Devon. He has 6 heifers acquired through Alan Hargreaves on his 33 acres at Te Kauwhata south of Auckland and is currently seeking a bull to bring to them. The shift to Red Devon is because the other breeds were challenged by drought conditions in recent years and Shan's research indicates the Red Devon should perform better. Shan is looking forward in particular to the characteristics of low birthweight, rapid weight gain, and docile temperament in the Red Devon.



Handling stock is not entirely new to Shan, who has farming experience from Fiji. He joins the Red Devon Association as part of the exercise to maintain registered stock and enjoy a premium on the purebred stock. Shan is looking for advice and guidance from the Association, on how to manage genetics, record data, and optimise the characteristics of his herd. This little herd will soon be growing as a bull has recently been organised for the heifers pictured here.



COUNCIL:

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Members List

[\(click here\)](#)



Important Dates to Remember

30 th April	Membership Subscriptions Invoiced
30 th June	ADL's sent out
30 th July	ADL's must be Returned (no Cow Credits for ADL's returned after the 15 th August)
10 th August	Calf Entries sent out
30 th September	Annual animal pre-list dam fees invoiced
May 2022	AGM
31 st December	Balance Date; end of financial year
31 st January	Calf entry sheets cut off
2 nd of every month	Group Run Cut off for the performance recording reports

www.reddevoncattle.co.nz