

# FERNVALE GENETICS

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Welcome to the Fernvale update for 2015. We hope everybody is having a productive season.

Things at Fernvale have been a bit of a mixed bag with things like clover root weevil, Brandenburg Salmonella, a dry summer, cold winter and a wet slow spring all contributing to an ever changing game plan. For an example our ewe Hogget's were put onto winter crop on the 8<sup>th</sup> April this year, which was 6 weeks earlier than planned. Lamb survival however has been exceptional with favourable weather in late



September and early October which has been great! I also believe that the stud policy of only retaining multiple reared females is vital to lift productivity throughout the commercial flocks that our rams are used in. The Fernvale stud is now fully DNA profiled which has been the essential part to completely embedding this stud policy.

12 months ago we were approached by DLF seeds to undertake a substantial Rye grass trial. We accepted the offer and are currently undertaking trial work to ascertain the superior grasses for growth rate and overall stock performance. The decision was made easy because the majority of trial work that has been carried out has been purely focused on Rye grass production

## DNA TESTING LAMBS AT TAILING

rather than stock

performance. Currently there are five Rye grass stands that have been included in the trial where 20 stud Ewe lambs 3 weeks post weaning went into each block with those animals remaining in their block right through to winter. Buffer works lambs are also used throughout the summer that were monitored for growth and killing data. The stud ewe lambs went to the ram while remaining on their individual blocks in order to monitor the conception rates of the different grass species. To this point of the trial the Stud ewe Hogget's scanned 146% which was very pleasing.

It appears to be a good time to be sheep farming rather than chasing dairy Cows, it is almost a wee bit of a reality check for the dairy industry. It is great to see that the wool job is finally coming right, all that is missing now is a staple strength test which could easily be implemented if the politics surrounding it is silenced as we still have large flocks within New Zealand with substandard wool quality due to the composite trend of the last decade.

We hope this newsletter finds you well. Don't hesitate to call if you have any queries, we have scheduled to start selling rams in the first week of December. Enclosed is the standard order form and a self addressed envelope for you to fill out.

Kind regards – Lloyd and Angela