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Romney NZ Newsletter – September 2007

Chairman's Comments

At last we seem to have the climate coming right and lamb prices are showing some indication of improving. Your council has been working hard in developing our wool project, working with the Gore and Fielding ram sales committees on revamping the sales and a number of other initiatives as well; on these areas we are now making real progress. The wool initiatives that we are taking have the potential to make Romney the most profitable breed in this country. However we have to be realistic about how quickly we can consume enough wool to make a difference to our clients, so over the next 12 months our major focus will move from setting up the project to creating significant demand which can make a difference to our clients. There is still a long way to go but we are committed to making a difference for your commercial clients.

All the best for lambing and the upcoming ram selling season.

Graham Senior
Chairman Romney New Zealand

1. Romney House

At the time of printing we had signed up Romney House for sale and expect this to be finalized shortly. In regard to this we have had one member questioning whether council had followed proper procedure in the sales process. Romney New Zealand has therefore sort legal clarification which confirmed our own view that the council has acted correctly and have the right to manage the sale process. The price offered is very good and will mean that even investing part of the sales proceeds (in a secure bank) will return us more than the net rental we presently receive.

2. Ram Sales

Working alongside the sales committees we have worked through the changes to the two sales. These will be for Feilding and Gore.

The Feilding Sale will move to the 20th of November and the Gore sale will be on the 4th of December. These sales will be Romney only, will have 3 or 4 speakers and will be open to all Romney rams (they must have 3 generation pedigree). For the across flock analysis, we will need all data in by the 8th of November so that we have time to do a run and for you to get your data.

For the Fielding sale we are also looking at increasing the number of people that get a copy of the catalogue. Working up to the sale we will be looking at an advertising campaign plus articles on the change, but please spread the word yourselves as to the change in dates so that we can make this a success for our breed.

3. Wool Update

A number of areas have now been completed. We have agreed on a new brand, we are presently reviewing lawyer documents on the rules and constitution of the new commercial

company, final legal documents are in Nepal for signing regarding our agreement with them and we have finalized terms for a retail outlet for Romney New Zealand in the lower North Island.

We are still finalizing requirements with a company in Wellington for a significant purchase of rugs from us, which will be the first of many. There have been delays in sending the first shipment of wool away. Principally this revolves around finalizing the legal agreement before we allow wool to leave New Zealand. I had hoped that we would have sent the wool about a month ago but the plan now is to send it around the 20th of September.

I am expecting that the next consignment will be pulled together around early November and is likely to be sourced from the North Island. A further shipment, hopefully in February, will be sourced from the South Island. The aim is to move from sourcing wool from ram breeders to getting all wool from your commercial clients by early next year. Before this can happen we need to improve our commercial data base, put in place a quality assurance system and flock inspection process.

While we are still developing things any breeder who wants to promote this project to their clients or wider should go ahead. If you need a bit more of an update ring and I will take you through where we are so far. I have included a copy of our recent press release for which you are free to use.

4. Brand

I have included a copy of our new brand; any full member who wants to use it on any promotion needs to check with me first before they do so. Please contact me and I will send you all the relevant information. The important point is to make sure we all stick to the brand guidelines so that we maintain the integrity of the brand.

5. Field Day

At this stage we are looking at having a field day at Hugh Taylor's property on the 25th of October on the Merial Saleable Meat Yield Project and we will also have an update on the wool project as well. Presently this date is only tentative and maybe delayed for a week if this would allow us to say more on the wool project. In the North Island we will include a summary of the Merial Saleable Meat Yield Project during the ram sale.

6. Merial Saleable Meat Yield Project

So far the lambing in both trials has gone well. In the South Island we have two Lincoln students helping with the lambing which again means that lambing information will be available for this trial. In the North Island we had proposed to do parentage testing. With the sale of the sheep and cattle part of GTG to Catapult, the price of parentage testing we would have paid was close to double what we paid last year. While incredible disappointing to see a company set up by New Zealand farmers take such an advantage of the monopoly that they now have there are lessons we can learn. To me it just reinforces that we will not be doing our parentage testing with them. Progressive Meats is still working on the North Island data and given the problems they are having in getting the data to us we will be using Alliance's plant in Dannevirke for this coming year.

John Bates
CEO
Romney New Zealand