

## MARBLING MAGIC

We purchased Storth Oaks **‘Everest’** J20 in 2015 and he has excelled above and beyond our expectations. **‘Everest’** has developed into a nice type of bull and his EBV's continue to increase and impress. He is now a trait leader for Low Birth Weight, Calving Ease and Gestation Length. He is a true growth curve bender- tracking from 1.8 for birth to 109 for 600 Day Weight, while only 93 for Mature Cow Weight. Huge Scrotal measurement, very High Fats and Breed- Leading Marbling put this bull at the very top echelon for multi trait balanced sires available in New Zealand.

In 2016 we purchased Earnsclough **‘Tussock’** to further our goals of strengthening our commitment to improving end product profitability for our clients. 30 years of well-balanced genetic improvement on Structure and Fertility have laid down a very solid foundation in the Fossil Creek Angus herd for our focus on Meat Quality traits. Pictured here is Earnsclough **‘Tussock’** after successfully mating 50 Fossil Creek stud cows out on Blair and Jane's hill block at Five Forks.

Tussock after stud mating at the Newhaven Hill Block



We encourage you to attend the Fossil Creek Open Day on May 10th, and if you are unable to attend this technical day and bull viewing – please contact us as we have an ‘open door’ policy to view both the Bull Sale lineup, breeding herd and young stock at any time at all.

We look forward to hosting you on Thursday 15th June for the 17th Annual Fossil Creek Bull Sale.

Kind Regards

*Neil & Rose and Blair & Jane*

## FACTS verses FALLACIES

No doubt at all, as the bull sale season gets closer you will notice the rhetoric and claims as to where to buy the best bulls ramping up. Many of the weekly farming publications are packed with advertorials - however it is a case of taking marketing claims with a serious dose of salt – and asking those studs some tough questions. Many claims are spurious in nature and not found to have any scientific background to support them, while several areas that are related to Maternal Traits in Angus cows do have a scientific base to them, but seem to get heavily embellished through marketing claims.

### *Body Fat Cover and Fertility.*

It has been well researched and documented that low fat covers and low body condition scores (BCS) in heifers and cows detrimentally affect fertility. However there is some suggestion that ‘excess fat may depress fertility’ and certainly very high BCS gives no advantage in fertility. Very fat heifers may not milk as well. There is possibly a negative relationship between fat deposition pathways in the body and follicle development in the ovary. Extremes may not always be best.

### *‘High growth rates mean big cows’.*

Wrong again and more scaremongering. Whilst there is generally a relationship between high growth and bigger cows, there are many genetics where Mature Cow Weight (MCWt) is in fact lower than 600 day Weight. There are very few elite sets of genetics with Moderate Growth, Lower Mature Cow Weight and a Higher Carcase Weight than Mature Cow Weight. These are of course the holy grail of efficiency and would indeed be very profitable.

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

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Find us on Facebook  
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## AUTUMN NEWSLETTER APRIL 2017

It has been incredibly rewarding recently for the Fossil Creek team to speak with our clientele and attend buoyant calf sales. We have a real passion and commitment to the Beef industry of New Zealand and it is great to share in the successes of the people who use our genetics. Many calves bred with Fossil Creek genetics have been topping calf sales throughout the South Island and it appears that finishers are seeking out details of the breeding background behind each line and are prepared to pay significant premiums for calves they know will finish early and grade well. Heifer calves with Fossil Creek genetics appear particularly sought after for breeding. Many years of meticulous attention to fertility and structure is becoming more widely recognised in the industry and coming to fruition in commercial herds using Fossil Creek genetics.

Our focus is to not only sell bulls that make a real difference to our clients breeding programmes and profitability but also to drive more efficiency throughout the whole beef industry.

*Neil & Rose, Blair & Jane*



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## FOSSIL CREEK ANGUS

ROCK SOLID ANGUS GENETICS

## 17TH ANNUAL FOSSIL CREEK ANGUS BULL SALE - 15TH JUNE 2017

We are looking forward to hosting our 17th Fossil Creek Bull Sale on **Thursday 15th June 2017** at the Fossil Creek Bull Selling facility, Ngapara, North Otago.

We are delighted with the 2017 Sale Bulls that will be on offer – they are the most even group that we have prepared. You will find bulls from the sire **‘Titelist’** who was bred in the same Montana herd as the highly acclaimed **‘Chisum’**. In addition, we have sons of our own multigrowth trailleader son of Chisum (**H34**), as well as a nice group from homebred **H28** and a cracker son of the \$55,000 **Hero H6** bull. The last sons of the safe as houses sire **MF 1520** will feature along with a lovely line of great female breeders sired by our **FC Galaxy G4** bull. As always, we urge you to take the opportunity to preview the bulls – either at a time that suits you, or during our Fossil Creek Field Day – on Wednesday 10th May – please see the enclosed invitation for details on this technical day and bull walk.

CHAROLAIS: A special note for all those Charolais fans that we will sell 9 Charolais bulls this year on behalf of the Moonlight Herd (the old Roseville Herd, now based at the top of the South Island). The bulls have arrived at Ngapara and are looking great. They will come with the usual service and guarantees that have applied in the past from Roseville Charolais. Please find enclosed the details of our Fossil Creek Bull Walk Open Day on May 10th.

Please look out for your 2017 Fossil Creek Angus Bull Sale Catalogue in your mail box in May. Contact us for further copies and any questions.

## FOSSIL CREEK ANGUS



## FOSSIL CREEK ANGUS



SIMPLIFYING SUB INDEXES!

The value of Breeding Indexes is that they are designed to portray the economic benefits of the animal in question and are in theory intended to directly reflect how that animal’s offspring will perform within the management system and environment in which these cattle are run.

A new index model has been designed specifically for the New Zealand Beef Industry system, where most beef cows are grazed on moderate to steep hill country, often with poorer feed available. Heifer replacements are kept within the herd and steers and surplus heifers either sold to specific finishers or fattened at home with increasing numbers targeting larger numbers of premium or branded programmes. The new model was commissioned by AngusNZ (and is already operating in Ireland) with input from many sectors and co-funded by Beef + Lamb Genetics but not yet implemented.

Limitations of Current Angus indexes

The current Angus NZ indexes were designed and implemented nearly 20 years ago when the beef price was less than \$3/kg carcase wt. Although there have been various modifications and iterations over the years, we find ourselves with a model that hasn’t kept up with industry needs. As we hover around a \$5.50/kg beef schedule, the current indexes are essentially driven (and in fact overwhelmed) by growth so the excessively growthy bulls will dominate and swamp both maternal and carcase /eating quality attributes. This is a major limitation in today’s commercial environment where farmers are striving to both maximise fertility in their herds and seek premiums at the same time for their progeny. The current indexes are designed to be a one size fits all and in the beef model there are just way too many conflicting traits to use this approach.

A new way forward

Beef + Lamb Genetics and Abacus Bio have come up with a new approach to use 4 new commercially relevant ‘Sub Indexes’ which together make up an overall single index.

**i) Growth Sub Index:** Purely only relates to the income to be generated from the growth traits exhibited by the animal. Will also indirectly correlate to carcase weight.

**ii) Calving Ease Sub Index:** Mostly relates to calving ease traits along with gestation length so gives real values relating to successful calving outcomes.

**iii) Maternal Sub-Index:** Specifically takes into account the real values of the cows in a New Zealand Hill Country Environment. This penalises cows for High Mature Cow Weight EBVs and for Low Rib and Rump Fat EBVs. In future this may incorporate other traits for fertility such as Antral Follicle counts which is very heritable.

**iv) Eating Quality Sub-Index:** As the name suggests, this relates to premiums available for high value branded beef. Rewards High IMF and penalises carcasses with excess fat cover requiring trimming. Note there is no weighting here for Carcase Weight as this is valued indirectly in the Growth Sub Index.

Note that individual sub-indexes may have negative values if economically reflected by a bad set of contributing EBVs. The group of sub-indexes portrays a very accurate picture of the animal in respect of its ability to contribute to some segments or all of the value chain.

It is possible to have two bulls with the same overall index but one may be a very maternal sire in having great calving ease and maternal sub-index but only moderate growth and low eating quality sub-indexes.

The other may have huge growth and carcase attributes but very poor calving ease and maternal sub-indexes. With these new tools – Bull # 2 would clearly be identified by its sub-indexes as a terminal sire that should not have daughters retained. ‘Information is Power’ when used in the right context, and we will endorse these new sub-indexes in order to drive industry efficiency forward.

Name	Growth	Calving Ease	Maternal	Eating Quality	NZBeef Total \$
WMR TIMELESS 458 (IMP USA)	302	7	-1	51	359
TUWHARETOA REGENT D145(AI)(ET)	297	-15	-7	116	391
RENNYLEA EDMUND E11 (AI) (ET)	174	47	60	77	358

Above is a snapshot of what 3 bulls may look like in the new subindex system. Note that all 4 subindexes are additive and all have similar overall total NZ Beef index values. The index values are all expressed in dollars.

However it is obvious that **Edmund** is a very balanced maternal sire with moderate growth and carcase quality, but **Regent** whilst having very high value in the growth and carcase traits is showing as more of a terminal sire. Quite clearly you wouldn’t use **Regent** as a heifer mating choice.

**Timeless** gets most of his value from growth, is not very strong as a maternal sire and not particularly strong in the area of eating quality.

Sharl Liebergreen from Beef and Lamb Genetics will be presenting these indexes in a practical manner during our Fossil Creek Field Day on May the 10th here at Fossil Creek Angus, Ngapara.The Fossil Creek Angus bulls at this year’s sale will feature the new Subindexes. Please see your enclosed Field Day invite for details.

Georgie Cameron and Walter Cameron

WAINUI STATION

Georgie Cameron is a 4th generation Cameron at the 4,000 hectare ‘Wainui Station’, in the hills of the Waitaki Valley near Kurow. Alongside her parents, Walter and Sandy – their passion for breeding robust, powerful beef genetics is obvious both here and at brother Tim’s property ‘Viewfield’ in the nearby Hakataramea Valley where Fossil Creek Angus genetics also play a key role.

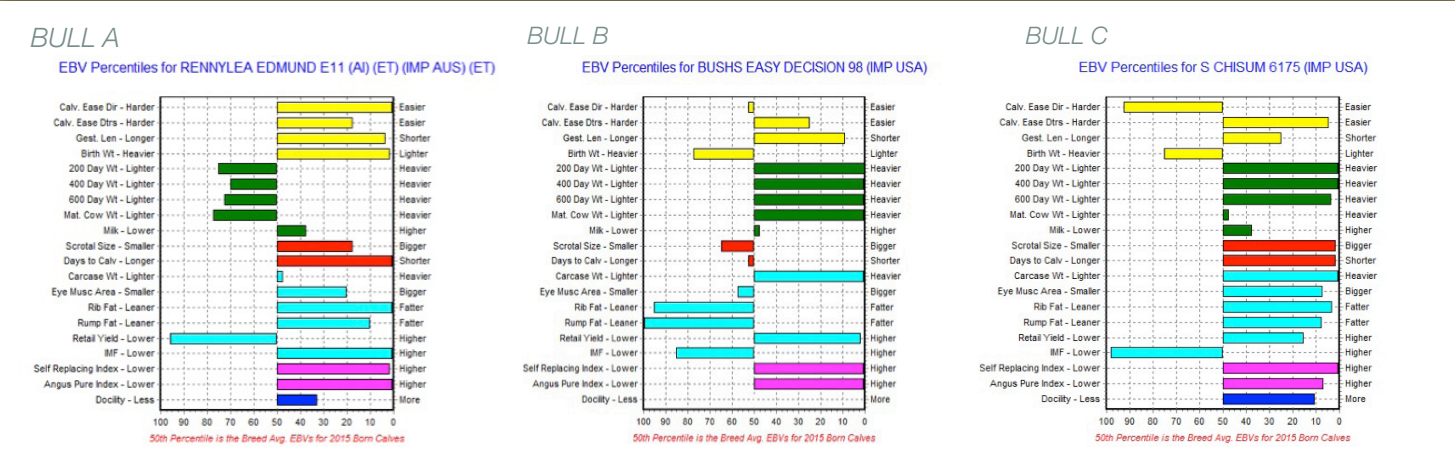
Wainui is a 14,000 stock unit operation - and the Cameron’s relish the chance to finish all of their calves on the 450 hectares of irrigated land that lies directly at the foot of the hill country blocks that their cows are run on – with elevation up to 3,500 feet above sea level in a 15 inch rainfall environment. “Our breeding cows are a key part of our operation, not just a tool for pasture control. We feed them well and breed them well” says Walter.

They are mated as yearlings and Georgie is delighted with the 100% in-calf strike rate for the second calvers – “which are often the tricky age group to successfully mate in a harder environment”.

A number of lines of outside cattle are finished in addition to those from their own breeding herd, and like all finishers - the genetic background of animals is clearly demonstrated in growth patterns and attaining premiums, is becoming increasingly important to the Camerons. “We are definitely finishing cattle with Fossil Creek Genetics earlier than the outside stock– with Silver Fern Farms Beef EQ Programme forming a key part of how we look at our genetics. We are now obtaining a high hit rate into the Beef EQ Premium Grade” says Georgie. “As an added bonus, the temperament of the Fossil Creek bulls and their offspring is great and the cows seem to last forever!”.

The Cameron family are a great example of how important it is to be balancing the maternal productivity and efficiency of a cow herd and the finishing traits of their progeny.

3 bulls almost identical SELF REPLACING INDEX but totally different package of traits contributing to this economic value. This is really hard to work out which bull is best for you without referring to all the individual EBVs. Bull A great all round for multitraits, Bull B huge growth and MCWt and low fats but hardly the best for a maternal sire. Bull C is generally more balanced for a maternal sire except calving but not the best for terminal as no IMF and too high fats so more trimming.



Wainui Station Steers averaging 540 kg LW - April 2017