

# SUMMER NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2016

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CREEK  
ANGUS**

ROCK SOLID ANGUS GENETICS

At a recent field day the host farmers declared that the most beneficial and profitable thing they have ever done on their farm was to concentrate on getting the basics right. Being bold enough to acknowledge that the most fundamental parts of a farming business are often the most profitable is something that we as an industry are gradually making a return to. A key take home message was that as beef and sheep farmers we can sometimes get slightly distracted by shiny marketing around newer/better/faster/more complex ways of doing things - but the highest return on investment that will blow any other stock enterprise out of the water (including dairying, even at a \$6 payout) is ensuring that we feed our breeding stock to their genetic optimum at the critical times of year.

As Albert Einstein once said "Any intelligent fool can make things bigger or more complicated, but simplicity takes a touch of genius". Efficient and effective production to bring your investment in high quality genetics to fruition is exactly this.

With a kind Spring in many regions around the country, no doubt regrassing and winter crop plans are well underway – this is a crucial time of year, with some of New Zealand's most inspirational plans devised from the seat of a tractor!

*Neil & Rose, Blair & Jane*



Neil talking to Brian Corrigan, Rennylea Angus, Albury

## WORLD LEADING INNOVATION

There have been some exciting developments extending from the fertility work that Neil has undertaken for Beef and Lamb Genetics over the past two years. The main driver is to explore the relationship between a heifer's follicle count in her ovaries and her ability to both get in calf and get in calf early (which as you know are crucial key profit drivers in any beef breeding enterprise) however due to the scale of this study, there may be a myriad of learnings develop from this.

Neil and fellow veterinarian, Dave Robertson have completed close to 2000 specific ovary scans this year on beef heifers all around New Zealand. The majority of these have been Angus heifers, with other breeds included from the Central Progeny Test Herds. This is now by far the largest data set in the world in performance recorded and pedigree animals.

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

Neil and Rose: [neilandrose@fossilcreekangus.co.nz](mailto:neilandrose@fossilcreekangus.co.nz) (03) 4324093 / (021) 332919  
Blair and Jane: [newhavenfarms@netspeed.net.nz](mailto:newhavenfarms@netspeed.net.nz) (03) 4324154 / (027) 4324154

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There are some very promising trends already apparent in these animals, and the study is now at the point where data is being correlated against pedigrees and current EBVs to analyse the relationship. The ultimate aim would be to make a Heifer Fertility Breeding value and ideally in the future, a Gene Test for this trait. There is also a lot of data being collected on onset of puberty which is developing into some interesting observations and may differ from the established thinking on the relationship between puberty and fertility.

Beef and Lamb NZ recently teamed up with Australia's Meat and Livestock Association (MLA) consortium of scientists, Breedplan and Breed Society representatives to formalise further joint work between our two countries on the Maternal Beef Productivity project.

Neil and Dave recently travelled to Australia to present their work to date of which caught the attention of all participants due to the size of the trials and the preliminary findings. This initiative is unprecedented and represents a huge opportunity to capitalise on resources from both countries for industry good projects.

Watch this space over the next 6 months. We will keep you up to date with findings as they come to light. The ability to predict a heifer's fertility potential before she is even mated would be a game changer for the whole industry, and we are delighted that Neil and our local North Otago vet Dave are leading the way with this work.

## FROM THE HILLS...

With another calving amongst the tussocks at 600 metres above sea level now under our belt, we are delighted with the performance of the stud cow herd. We recommend that you visit our website to view the drone footage of the Fossil Creek cow herd that was taken by young Marc Boardman during the snow in August (the most efficient way to get out to the back blocks to check them!) [www.FossilCreekAngus.co.nz](http://www.FossilCreekAngus.co.nz)

With mating well underway, our two new herdsires, 'Earnsclough Tussock' and 'MF Outlaw' are out on the hill blocks doing their thing. Both these bulls have created a lot of very positive feedback from those in the industry who have called in to view them before mating.

We have completed a medium size embryo transplant programme on a few of our elite Donor cows with good success. We used two new sires, 'SAV Resource' and 'Hoover Emperor', both well researched new bulls from USA. We do this to breed outcross bulls from the cow families that have performed consistently well - to ensure that we continue to produce a range of dynamic attributes that our clients around the country require.

'Fossil Creek Galaxy' bloodlines continue to breed failsafe bulls for sale and lovely daughters. A group of our well grown yearlings are servicing all 85 Fossil Creek yearling heifers and the 60 first calving Fossil Creek heifers. As usual, like the mating policy for the mixed age cows - they will be out for just 2 cycles. There is an outstanding son of 'Rennylea Edmund' and an extremely docile well balanced son of USA bull 'Spickler Titelist' from the same stable as 'Chisum'. There is also a really intensely muscled son of our Hero bull out chasing yearling heifers, so we look forward to tracking the progress of those offspring.

Please take a moment to look at our website and peruse our Breeding Policies, Values and Female Bloodlines.

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







## FOSSIL CREEK BULL SALE 2017

We are pleased to announce that our 17th Annual Fossil Creek Bull Sale will be held on **Thursday 15th June 2017** at the Fossil Creek Selling Complex, Ngapara.

We are delighted with the 2017 Bull Sale line up - a long overdue kind Spring here in North Otago has allowed the young stock to have a chance to express their full genetic potential.

We look forward to presenting our 2017 Bull portfolio to you, when our catalogue arrives in your mailbox in May.

## SWEDISH SUCCESS

We were delighted recently for our Swedish Angus breeders, Graham and Bettan Kent to win the Reserve Champion at the Swedish National show with a bull bred via embryo transfer from 'Fossil Creek Pride' and 3rd place with a heifer bred also via ET from 'Fossil Creek Greta'.



## CLIENT PROFILE

'Hill Springs' is a 3000Ha property in the Teviot valley near Roxburgh that runs from heavy river flats bordering the Clutha River to extensive run country rising to 2000 metres. John and Tina Pannett have run the property for many years and have now introduced the next generation.

Curtis, their son has returned to gather the reins with a real interest in their cattle enterprise. Curtis is a fixed wing pilot and has been gaining hours of experience at one of the six million acre Kidman stations in South Australia.

The Pannetts run 10,000 stock units with 380 beef cows playing an integral role in providing robust financial returns. 60 yearling heifers are mated with all R2 and R3 cows mated to a higher growth Angus Bull with positive fats and a good maternal package. Heifers are mated for 2 cycles to achieve a high 90's calving rate and the cows for less than 3 cycles for a 95% calving.

All fattening calves are wintered on fodder beet, and 190-200 of the steers and heifers are sold at 12 months in the local sale, often topping the sale. This year the tops realised \$1400 per head. The remaining 120 are wintered on fodder beet then slaughtered in the following spring. "By wintering that group they attain a great growth rate and attract spring premiums so it is an efficient closed system" says John. Replacement heifers then go onto a life in the challenging hills of the property.

The Pannetts are great supporters of Fossil Creek Angus and previously, the Roseville Charolais programme - the sire bulls in their paddock would fit into any pedigree herd - very impressive!



Fossil Creek commercial sire looking over the Clutha Valley



## GLOBAL FARMER ROUNDTABLE

Jane was nominated to sit on the 'Global Farmer Roundtable' in October - an international farming forum hosted by the United States, a U.N- style forum with 12 other farmers selected from around the world. This year's farmers came from the United States, Canada, Britain, Nepal, Zimbabwe, Argentina, Mexico, Spain, Rwanda, Brazil, India, Indonesia.

Free trade and the removal of the \$585 Billion USD wasted on the false economy of agricultural subsidies were major topics of discussion. Jane was questioned a number of times on why New Zealand wasn't making the most of their pasture-raised, free range, GM Free status – all of the other countries would have given anything to be in our position.



The world needs to pay more for the opportunity to purchase our product and the robust stories behind them, however we seem to be very poor at following through on this.

Our \$37 B of exports are on sold by someone else for \$250B! It is of real concern that our new trade minister is actively pushing the ranking of our primary industries down the priority list and as farmers, we need to make a stand on this.

The key Global Farmer Roundtable message was that farmer voice's are incredibly valuable and should be utilised at any opportunity to ensure that regulators and urbanites understand the practical realities and increasing challenges of farming.

## MINISTERIAL MISSION

Nathan Guy, New Zealand's Minister of Primary Industries recently toured the Newhaven hill block and discussed the latest initiatives that both the Fossil Creek Angus and Newhaven Perendale studs are undertaking. With a target to double NZ agricultural returns by 2050, MPI acknowledges that progressive stud operations are the engine room of genetic efficiency.



Blair with our local MP, Jacqui Dean and Hon. Nathan Guy.

We welcome you to come and view both the young stock and breeding herd on farm at any time of year. It is essential that we gather feedback from you during the year on your genetic progress, challenges and opportunities - as it is our job to ensure that we are producing a genetic package that best suits your needs.

We wish you and your families a safe and happy festive season, and a productive Summer on the farm. We look forward to seeing you during 2017.

Kind Regards

*Neil & Rose and Blair & Jane*

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Neil and Rose:

[neilandrose@fossilcreekangus.co.nz](mailto:neilandrose@fossilcreekangus.co.nz)  
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