



# 2025 SPRING NEWSLETTER

## SHEEP AND BEEF RECOVERY, EIGHT MONTHS ON

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### WEATHER

After a desperate looking December, we had somewhere around 280 mm between Christmas and New Year, Moikau at the strip, had near nearly 500 mm. The season had all the hallmarks of drought with many hanging onto store stock they would have struggled to move profitably had it not rained when it did.

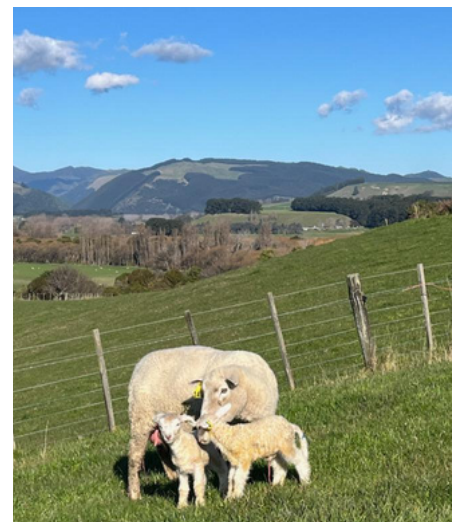
We grew a lot of grass but not a lot of meat however the ave lamb wgt still managed 19.71kg.

After a difficult harvest (short days and showery conditions) the weather settled down before the next deluge, in early May strong southerly conditions and another 300 mm. Trees down but minimal long-term damage.

Our thoughts are with those that are suffering repeated property damages as a result of the heavy rains, heart breaking. As Owen Evans reminded me recently “they have been talking about climate change for a while now”.

### LAMB MARKET

In August 23 Lamb was selling for \$7.00/kg, in August 24 was selling for \$7.20/kg and last week \$9.80/kg! It is a critical lift in income, when we look back on 2025, we will look upon it as a year of priming the pump! The sheep and beef recovery is only eight months long so far with stock numbers lower than usual there will be a lag effect.



Turanganui ewe with  
her strong twin lambs



## AUSTRALIA VISIT

Recently Robyn and I travelled through Victoria and South Australia catching up with several contacts we had there. They had been feeding sheep continuously for 18 months with one farmer telling us he had spent \$700,000 feeding his 10,000 ewes. This is despite the price of the barley being around \$330 a tonne c/w, \$500/t NZ. Feed-lotting sheep was commonplace with ewes in mobs of about a thousand in 1 ha “containment pens” often with a vantage feeder type system. The larger operators were using chaser bins to fill up the feeders. Lambs in smaller pens 40 x 45 m, mob size about 400 to 450. An automated system we saw had a solar powered auger which ran directly from the silo (filled weekly by the feed company). The ration was enough to take a lamb from between 40 and 45 kg live weight through to 55-60 kg live weight in 30 days. They plan on a 5:1 conversion rate however this year Charlie and his sons managed 3.1 to 1. You don't have to be particularly good at maths to work out that feed lotting at \$300/tonne for the rations had the till ringing, approximately \$60 per head after the cost of \$17.60ea in feed was deducted, Charlie described it as getting every last drip out of the rag!

Solar farms and wind farms were commonplace with reports of substantial annual payments for both the generation and distribution of the resulting electricity. In one case we were told of the electricity company had wanted to go directly over the property and by negotiation the line was redirected along the roadside on the boundary for a substantial annual fee. Over there it seemed like it was all about negotiation.

The 4 properties we visited were almost all sheep systems of between 10 and 20 thousand ewes and despite this there seemed to be no concerns about drench resistance. All were amalgamations of smaller properties with one having 12 woolsheds, with only 2 functional sheds and a moratorium on fixing them due to the purchase of a team of shedder sires. Australia has this year produced the least amount of wool since 1890.

## CURRENT OUTLOOK

We used to sell around about one thousand rams per year which has now dropped to around 700, a drop of 30%. Looking around it's easy to see the impact pine trees have had on large areas of sheep and beef country. But perhaps the largest effect on our ram sales has been a shift in the sheep cattle ratio from 85 to 15 down to 65 to 35, a drop of 20 percent on its own. Sheep have done all the better for it.



## GLOBAL OUTLOOK

PGG Wrightson ran a series of cropping updates in the lower North Island recently. The take home message was that we only produce about 1/3 of our cereal grain requirements onshore and we are exposed to the international market. While the local market looks okay in the short term the Ukraine conflict has encouraged all countries to try and be more self-sufficient. That means lower prices for grain and therefore cheaper priced chicken and pork and to a lesser extent beef. The bright side is that a portion of the land that would have grown cereals may change to summer feed crops sparking greater demand for store lambs. It takes a 7.5t crop of barley to compete with lambs on a reasonable (6.5t DM) brassica crop.

Our Beef and Lamb prices may hold up despite the cheap chicken and pork because of the perceived benefits of grass-fed meat. The only ethnic group to grow in Europe is the Muslims (360 million in the last 10 years) so it may be better to be a lamb producer than a pork producer.

## WHERE IS TURANGANUI HEADING:

- **Worm Tolerance.** Our selection for sheep requiring less drench was interrupted last year by Barber's pole. We have been resilience testing (drenching those that require it as defined by weight gain until 25% are left undrenched) and resistance testing (FEC) the undrenched portion. Despite no testing this year those that grew well through live weight six or eight and remain un-culled are a pretty safe bet.
- **Feet and structure.** We have made massive strides in the last 25 years on feet, but the recent adoption of foot scoring and the power of breeding values will start to work for us as we gather greater depth of information.
- **Survival.** This is comparatively good but must be closely watched when working on growth rate.
- **More fat for thrift.** We are using fat as a guide to a more thrifty animal, they still have to produce.
- **Facial Eczema.** All sires being screened for facial eczema now (albeit at modest rates of .27) the breeding value for facial eczema while not extremely accurate does give the opportunity to select more tolerant animals for those who need it.
- **Growth rate.** Our focus is at weaning; a good start means options for store lambs and robust ewe lamb replacements set up to meet their targets. Typically, we wean at 84 days at around 285 to 295g per day.



## RAM BUYING

On another note, if you are wanting rams this year can you let us or your agent know the tally and price bracket you want shop in and whether you would like an appointment to select your rams.

If you want to book a rental car Farmlands card partner with Hertz gave a significant saving (something like 35-40%) online booking discount code 88818 using Farmlands card or call Hertz Wellington.

Prices remain as last year; \$1950, \$1650, \$1400, \$1100.

Please contact us if you want to discuss price/production bracket. Rough dates are set now so give us a ring or send us an email if you want a date to work on. As always, all the best for the spring and the season ahead.

We will be holding an open day on Thursday, 18 September 2025 with Dr Mark Ferguson speaking, with a bit of history, and a bit of the future for Turanganui.

All the best for the spring ahead, enjoy capturing these good prices.

Regards, the Turanganui crew



L-R: Guy Warren, Mike Warren, William Warren, Jayden Hume, and Cameron Judd. Not present - Michael Buick



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