



LIMOUSIN

Carcass, Yield, Efficiency.

Summer 2012 Newsletter

www.limousin.co.nz



Welcome to Summer!

Summer has certainly arrived early in Canterbury with almost everyone frantically making winter feed around here. Let's hope the grass growth continues throughout the country from regular rainfall.

Most of you will have made your mating decisions by now. Best of luck with that. There seems to be more AI being done this year which is a real positive. Time now to let the 'expert' into the paddock to complete the job!

Many of you will realise by now that 2013 is the Society's 40th anniversary. This milestone will be formally recognised in two ways. Firstly, the official dinner will be held on Saturday 27 April as part of the AGM weekend in Nelson. This will be held at the renowned World of Wearable Arts and Classic Cars Museum and should be a great night. Please consider attending because the organisers want to make it quite a celebration. Secondly, the NZ Management Committee is putting together a 40th Anniversary Magazine which will highlight some of the more significant events over those years. This special publication will be released at the AGM.

In this newsletter we profile Kevin & Marion Wickens and their Sentosa Stud at Maungarutoto in Northland. They take us through the last 15 years and their journey with Limousin over that time. Notable

achievements include their success over the years in the North Island Bull Trial and more recently their involvement in supplying Limousin genetics to a Taranaki dairy farm.

This newsletter also reports on exciting developments in genetics with the successful importation of three heifers from Australia and the importation of (mainly black) embryos from the UK.

Finally, we congratulate Dannie & Bethley O'Shea, and Natalie Roberts, on a wonderful PGG Wrightson Stud Tour programme a few weeks' ago. This is now available for viewing on the web. This sort of publicity is invaluable and will have really raised the profile of Limousin throughout the country.

40th Anniversary Celebrations

[In conjunction with the 2013 AGM & Conference] Please see enclosed sheet.

Venue: Nelson

Dates: 25-28 April, 2013

Join us in sunny Nelson and enjoy a few days of relax & recreation - cruising the Abel Tasman National Park, wine & beer tasting, local stud visits, and great food culminating in the 40th Anniversary dinner (and we promise that there won't be an Angus steak in sight!). Details on separate sheet.

Breeder Profile

The Sentosa Story

– Kevin & Marion Wickens

What's in a name?

Actually, quite a lot. At that time we were looking for a name to register our herd. The name Sentosa came to us while watching a travel programme on TV which showed a very popular theme park on Sentosa Island off the coast of Malaysia. The pronunciation of Sentosa had a nice sound to it. The following week we approached an Asian teacher, who taught languages, about the name Sentosa. To our surprise she knew the island well and said the name was a literal translation of 'tranquility'. How good was that given that we were intending to shift to the countryside and raise Limousins with our first objective focusing on docility!

Our journey begins

In 1997 we registered the Sentosa name and started with a mature Framoire cow in calf with a bull calf at foot, along with two heifers from Alan & Jocelyn Lane's Miranda stud. They were followed with four Rhenbrook heifers which we mated at Aro's to Franmaree Quinton, a lengthy quiet bull. This was the start of our fascinating, intriguing, steep learning curve journey which we have enjoyed sharing with our city living family members and grandchildren. Up to this stage we had been leasing small

blocks on the outskirts of the North Shore, Auckland. Shifting a small mob without yards or loading facilities was definitely challenging as many of the neighbouring lifestyle blocks did not have these facilities.



Purchase of our own block in 1999

Yee Ha! In 1999 we purchased 100 acres of bare land in Maungaturoto about one and a half hours travelling north of Auckland. This was a larger land size than we had initially envisaged but still came within our available budget. The addition of three cows from Ernie & Theresa Rust's Greenacres herd improved both milk & docility traits. In 2002 I started working on the block Monday to Friday living in a ZincAlume shed. It was just like camping and great fun! Marion remained in Auckland working full-time to keep the cash-flow going. Over that time we concentrated on developing our infrastructure. Yards were built, water reticulation installed, tracks formed, and so on. We went from seven large paddocks to fourteen with lane access in two areas which resulted

in far easier management of the property. In 2003 we were able to move from Auckland to permanently live on our Maungaturoto property.

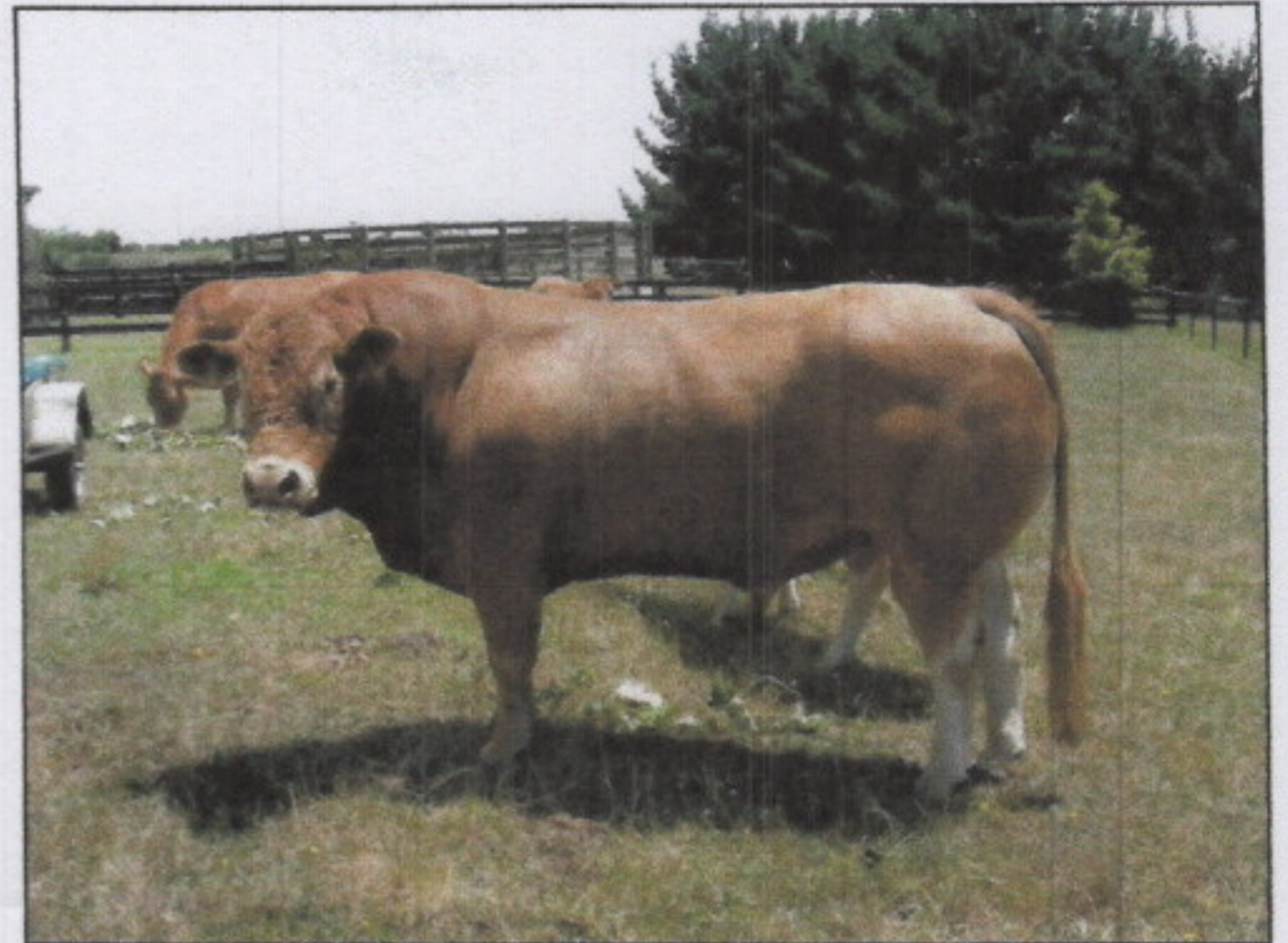
Sentosa herd expands - 2002

The Rototira stud of Pixie & Murray Rintoul were breeders of the style of animals that we liked and in 2002 we purchased 20 of their in-calf females to expand our herd. It was great to have these females from the largest registered herd in New Zealand at that time with 200 cows. Subsequent to this purchase Murray & Pixie provided us townie's with valuable guidance, mentoring and sound advice including assessment of our calves and operation. Murray continues to do this to this day which we still greatly appreciate.



Sires purchased from the Rototira stud in 2002 were Rototira Valder, a very lengthy and well-muscled polled bull, and Rototira Victor, a bull of exceptional docility producing well-muscled calves which we continued to use for a number of years. In 2007 we purchased Snake Gully Alvis from Danny & Bethley O'Shea to introduce new genetics into our herd.

He was a well-muscled bull with very good width and was easy to handle. Alvis served us well for four years.



Two top cows in the herd over the years have been Greenacres Neptuna, a top show cow, and Rototira Sasha, a cow with exceptional docility. Female progeny from both these cows have been retained in the herd whenever possible. Rototira Ullage, purchased in 2002 from the Rototira stud, has also been retained and is still going strong at 13 years of age. She still produces a calf within the top two or three of the drop each year. Her female calves have been retained in the herd for breeding and her male calves have sold very well, both at auction & privately, as rising two year olds.

Last but not least is Leudal Nana purchased from the Rintouls in 2002, a matriarch cow which is now 20 years old. Nana has produced 16 calves over the years. She is a great cow and still in excellent condition both in health and structure with very good feet. Out of respect for this great cow she has now been returned back to Murray for a very well earned retirement on his flat

paddocks. All her female calves have been retained in our herd and all show her excellent docility, conformation and traits. Interestingly, a daughter of Nana, Sentosa Classic, has produced twin calves this season. Her male progeny have always sold very well including Sentosa Yorkshire a winner of the weight gain and 5th for conformation in the 2005 Bull Trial. Yorkshire was purchased by Kevin & Beth Walker of Taumaranui. Having produced twins and reared them to a weaning weight of 340kg each in 2000, and having produced a heifer calf last year at the age of 19 years which reached 430kg at 12 months of age, Nana has proven what a great milker and mother she has been.



Why go bull trialling?

'Why not' is the reality. We enjoy the environment of bull trials and it gives is a benchmark of where we are at with our progeny compared with those of other stud breeders. We choose a top bull calf. Our second choice is often one we consider lower ranked and this provides a comparison of standard within our herd. Having our bulls

critiqued by judges and commercial operators has helped to ensure our standards are being maintained or improved.

Since 2003 our success in the bull trials over the years has included coming first for conformation three times and top weight gain twice, and being judged in the top three numerous times.



We have found that participation and success in the bull trials over the years has been a very good promotional tool for our herd.

Limousin in dairy farming

We have been involved in a project with a large Taranaki dairy farm over the past two years. They milk 800 Friesian cows year round calving 400 in spring and 400 in autumn on a high input system producing calves to specific weights. So far seven Sentosa bulls have been used for this. Moving from bulls of other breeds to Limousins has resulted in an average 10% improvement in both birth weight and yield at slaughter. This, together with a shorter time to reach target weights, thereby reducing monitored daily feed costs, has been of

significant benefit to their operation. The calves produced are not grass fed but grown on an animal nutritionist feed plan. Hopefully we will be able to report more fully on this project at a later date.

The future of Sentosa

Most of our herd already has desirable gestation EBVs. To further improve in this area, a bull from the Mangatara stud was purchased at the 2012 North Island Limousin Bull Trial Sale to further shorten the gestation length of our herd. Mangatara Freddy has a very short gestation length, a desirable trait for the dairy industry. We are continuing to use the Rototira bloodlines through our senior sire Sentosa Emperor, a son of Leudal Nana and grandson of Rototira Victor. We know from experience that by doing so will retain excellent docility, good calving ease, very good growth rates and sound structure.

Thank you for the opportunity to profile our herd and our operation.

Kevin & Marion

Proto testing

Congratulations to the many breeders who have already DNA tested animals for proto.

Your Management Committee wants to reduce the incidence of proto amongst Limousin bloodlines. It strongly recommends that all sires are DNA tested.

Please send hair samples in a suitably labelled envelope to Daryl Bott, Waiau Pa Road, RD 4, Pukekohe 2679. Ph (09) 232 1468.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



On the national front, both North and South Island bull trials are well underway and from all accounts the line ups of bulls on offer provide a wide range of genetics and will again appeal to buyers at next year's sales.

The North Island trial has 19 bulls, with entry weight average of 425kg and as at 29th November the average weight was 493.5kg. One of the stand-out bulls at this stage is Mangatawhiri Gawan with an impressive relative weight gain of 108kg from entry, and now weighing in at 648kg.

The last of the protoporphyria hair samples for 2012 have been sent for DNA testing and confirmation of all results will be updated against the animals on the web by "The Office" as they come to hand. It is pleasing to see so many recorded animals now displaying the clear proto status either by test or by parentage.

As you may have read Karen Hedger's "From the Board" report, ALBS is closer to arriving at a realistically priced, one