



THE WELSH BLACK CATTLE BREEDERS SOCIETY OF N.Z INC.

Newsletter November 2017:

Hello Welsh Black Cattle Breeders,

Spring is almost over and most spring calving finished and no doubt everyone is looking forward to some fine weather – but not too much! We have included some comments on spring from around the country and I'm sure some of you will resonate with the reports.

LEPTOSPIROSIS: As you all know this is a serious disease and radio reports have noted that this year more women than men have contracted Lepto. The wet weather has exacerbated the problem so we must be extra careful not to put ourselves at unnecessary risk. Most will be aware that a 7 – in - 1 vaccine incorporating protection against the most common leptospirosis strains is now available. Calves should be vaccinated at about 3 months of age with a booster a month or so later and lambs and kids similarly. An annual booster is required for all older animals. Sheep and goats can also be vectors for the disease and anyone with pigs will be aware of the risks associated. Check with your local veterinarian and remember that OSH takes a very dim view in cases of humans contracting the disease from unvaccinated animals.

WEBSITE: At last we have been able to edit the website and are updating it. There are a few teething problems with the herdbooks as the files are so large but we are working on it. Please send us photos to use in the Gallery section. We need a few New Zealand animals and it is intended to change the photos from time to time. We are able to have a section for buying and selling stock so if you have some for sale or want some let the Secretary know.

2018 AGM: This will be held in the Nelson region on 6, 7 and 8 April, 2018. Details on accommodation and activities will be advised at a later date. In the meantime, note the dates on your calendar and we will look forward to seeing a good muster of members for the weekend.

Shirley Jenkins,
Secretary

From Shirley Jenkins in North Auckland

The main feature of spring here in the north is mud! Growth has slowed with all the recent wet weather although temperatures are rising now. Our last calf was born 22 September and ended a somewhat disappointing calving with a 20% empty rate. A heifer aborted twins in May (I noticed her acting strangely one morning recently, shaking her head and rubbing her nose on the ground and assumed that she had been stung by a (or more) bee as the hives are in the adjoining paddock but when she did not improve a vet check and blood test revealed that she had spring eczema), and 2

older cows had calves which died at 2 weeks of age. On a brighter note I took two 2 year old bulls to the Wellsford Bull Sale on 21 September and they were purchased by the dairy and beef farmer who bought the three I sold there last year. He was happy with his first experience with the breed and the resultant calves and lack of calving difficulties, so hopefully he has another good year.

The Welsh Journal arrived a few days ago and there was a full report on the tour written by Alwyn Jones and finishing “No words can really describe the hospitality we received at each and every visit, and our thanks must go to everyone involved in organizing a truly remarkable 4th WORLD CONFERENCE. You had to be there to feel the atmosphere, the friendliness and the friendships made during the tour among the delegates and everyone involved in the celebration of the Welsh Black cattle – as Glyn (Jones) said ‘albeit half way round the world from home’. The wealth of knowledge will be with the delegates for a life time and here’s hoping we will see you all in the United Kingdom for the 5th WORLD CONFERENCE in 2020.”



We don't have the problem which is arising in some regions in Germany with wolves. The article states “One of the biggest problems for the future is the increasing offspring from the wolves. In the last three years, the number of wolves is getting 100% higher, as they have European Community protection. The wolves make a lot of problems in cattle handling, production of cattle and sheep. After a wolf attack – you cannot recognise your cattle!”

From Anthony Williams in Taranaki

In simple terms it's been a bitch of a winter/ early spring,

The dairying side of our operation has been very trying, we started really well with calving in mid-June which ironically was a drier month than average, we had plenty of grass cover, heaps of supplements on hand.

It is expected that we have wet periods and we have procedures in place to cope with average wet weather, our heifer replacements have comfortable conditions and grew well, they needed to get out and play, the continuing wet conditions made this very trying and offering them shelter from the weather became counterproductive as the facilities became soiled not having sunny conditions to dry things out.

The herd, although losing condition, have endured the elements as best as one could expect, milk production has just fallen below last season levels, there a lot of herds on 16hr milking or OAD. We have just finished the first round of AB, which has gone better than we expected under the circumstances.

The Welsh Black herd unfortunately have also been under the same horrific weather constraints, I had our first bad calving ever - lost the calf, another cow slipped, and another mismothered her calf so that's 3 deaths which is a first. The stud bull that I bought from Daniel is now with the herd.

Well not particularly what we want but I think it's called FARMING, so we look forward to a good late spring, with warmth, sunny days and good grass growth and dare I say not a dry summer.

Weaners sold recently made \$4 per kg bringing \$440 to \$480 per calf.

From Mary Paton in Hawkes Bay

Just an update from Colonsay. Well, calving all finished at Labour weekend. We had a few twins this year. Farm was very wet during winter months and then we got the spring winds which dried everything up. Last Sunday we had a real downpour.... I got 39 mls in an hour & Graeme & Nicola got 45mls and they are just across the road.

All docking in Romney mixed age ewes finished in early October. Hoggets have almost finished lambing & should be ready for docking next week. We have 10 Welsh Black rising 2year bulls for sale next year - we do have a dairy farmer wanting 2 of those. Well, hope to see a good turnout of members at AGM in Nelson next year.

From Katrinka Good in Banks Peninsula

Winter has been very, very wet and spring has started the same way - 244mm of rain for September so far - but the grass is green and growing when it gets the chance and the ewes are looking OK for lambing, which is now in full swing. There have been several little slips as a result of all the rain but so far nothing that's done too much damage.

The cattle are in great condition ready for calving. There was one early calf by the wandering Wagyu bull and the rest are due from 1 October, to Rembrandt. I will be interested to see how the Wagyu X looks as he grows up. It's possible that Glyn could have a calf or two from that bull but I haven't heard from him recently.

My neighbour and I have signed all the documents to put the gully between our properties into a QEII covenant which will benefit the Wainui stream and give me a proper stockproof boundary along that side at very low cost. Definitely a win/win. A huge pile of posts has been delivered and the fencing work will be done over the next few months. The sooner the better!



From Margaret Foord in Nelson

Spring is rapidly heading to summer, and the days are blurring in the speed as they pass. Calving has nearly finished, with one late cow still a week or two away. We've had a wonderful drop of heifers; 16 of the 21 calves born; it's the first time we've had 75%. We're increasing the breeding cow numbers by share-farming with our neighbour, and they also want the female calves, to develop their own herd, so it is a good year to have heifers.

It has been an interesting season; we had 8 young cows come up from Hokitika after Russell Copland's herd was sold; they were mostly little cows that have since had little calves, and they've made me think about how big our line of cows has been getting, and that we don't need to breed them so big. So we will see how the calves grow out. Their mothers are little because the bulls had been running with the herd fulltime, and so they would have been in calf before a year old, and then got in calf again as soon as they cycled, so they have great pelvic passages and fertility!

One of our big stud cows died 5 days after calving, in the back of the winter rough block. It was basically malnutrition that took her out; I underestimated her need for feed. She would easily have been twice the weight of the little Hokitika cows, who would have coped ok on the rough block.

We're looking forward to a fertile response in our cows to AI this season; after Les made available all that semen to the Society I realised we'd best get on with it, and have been inseminating with such as Seisiog Hebog, Pennal Meirion 6th, Haulfryn Byron, Dysynni Boy 2nd . . . and while it's early days, all good so far! I was heartened by the birth of three AI heifers this season, and have lovely visions of more AI heifers from the current programme. Bulls are all very well, but it's the females who are around for the long-term; some of our heifer calves over the last couple of years have been from 15, 16 and 18yo cows; tremendous cows!

We sold a few yearlings in the local spring sales. A few steers sold for \$860 and \$980 ea, then a couple of yearling bulls for \$1000 ea. At auction time I got in the pen with the bulls, giving them a rub, showing how quiet they are [both fellows liked a scratch in the paddock], and I had a label on their pen that they were purebred Welsh Black; everything I could think of to help people notice them and their breed.

That's all for now, and I'm thinking Christmas will be upon us before another newsletter comes out, so best wishes to everyone for the season, and I hope that you are able to stop and relax [albeit briefly] for the New Year, before the rush of the summer farming takes over.

Warm Regards
Margaret Foord
Chair

Welsh Black Cattle Breeders Society of NZ Inc