Nithdale Field Day

8th July 2011

Nithdale Station

Vision – *To develop Nithdale Station Limited in a profitable and sustainable way.*

Six key enterprises:

Commercial Sheep & Beef
Dairy Support
Stud Romneys and Suffolks
Dairy Unit
Forestry
Farmstay

Property bought by Charles Tripp in 1924. Andrew's parents and family trust bought into the farm in 1988. Andrew and Heather bought into the farm July 2001.

Area of Nithdale - 1478ha
Half hill, half paddocks – good balance
Forestry - 42ha (Pine, Macrocarpa, Douglas fir, Eucalyptus nitens)
+ Leasing neighbours farm - 157ha (145ha effective - 75% paddocks) from 1 September 2010

Effective Area = 1504ha (1229ha – Sheep/Beef/Dairy Support, 275ha Dairy Platform)

Stock Wintered 2011:

MA Ewes	- 3503
2th Ewes	- 1470
	4973 (Including 1088 Stud Romneys & 335 Stud Suffolks)
Ewe Hoggets	- 2164
Ram Hoggets	- 581
Rams	- 52
Muttons	- 15
Beef Cows	- 142
Beef Calves	- 185
Dairy Beef Calves	- 165
R2 Dairy Beef Steers	- 67
Bulls	- 6
R1 Dairy heifers	- 253
R2 Dairy Heifers	- 197
MA Dairy Cows	- 743

+ extra 1118 ewe hoggets grazing on brassicas for winter

Staff:

Sheep & Beef Unit:
Farm Manager, Tractor driver/General, Single Shepherd

Dairy Unit:
Lower Order ShareMilker plus own staff: 2IC, 2 Dairy assistants, 1 casual worker & 1 calf rearer in the spring

2010/11 Season

- Lambing % - Stud Suffolks – 127
  Stud Romneys – 123
  Commercial Flock – 96
  Down approx 1400 lambs due to storms
- Calving % - 82
- 2723 lambs @ 18.6kg ($122.76 net including last years pool)
- 334 Store lambs @ $102
- 686 weight gain lambs @ 18.6 ($20.96 net – Alliance Lamb Plan)
- Purchased 100 beef cows + calves in Nov
- 34 beef cattle @ 301kg ($1115 net) + 65 beef cows ($805 net)
- 38100kg wool (av $3.44/kg)
- Ram Sales: 345 (Romneys & Suffolks), 48 Ram lambs leased
- 354000kgMS (392kgMS/cow, 1287kgMS/ha)

Nithdale Dairies:

We made the decision to convert part of the farm in 2007/2008 due to the low returns for sheep and the long term view that our business would benefit by having more diversity. First year production was well down on budget. Second season back on track with current season 11% ahead of last year. Dairy Unit (275ha) is the dairy platform. All dairy support on the Sheep and Beef unit (grazing young stock, wintering young stock and cows – brassicas and silage plus silage for milkers spring and autumn over and above any surplus on dairy unit). Installed a grain feeding system autumn 2010 – this season fed 300T crushed barley.

Nithdale Genetics:
We purchased Murray Rohloff's Awareka Romney Stud in 2008 and we are expanding the Suffolk stud as well. Obviously the number of sheep has dropped considerably but we are still running just under 5000 ewes. We still believe in a future for sheep farming with more emphasis on improving performance in low cost, low input systems particularly on extensive properties where change in land use is limited. With the type of sheep we are running and the traits we have been selecting for we believe we have the genetics that suit a number of these properties. Our existing clientele is predominantly in the lower half of the South Island but we do have a small number further north as far as Gisborne. The spread of our clientele shows that our sheep are adaptable and perform in a number of different environments under a number of different management systems. Plans are to grow our existing client base in the South Island and within a couple of years grow our sales into the North Island making use of the new DNA SNP chip technology enabling us to select also for facial eczema resistance.

<u>Romney Stud</u> started in 1982 – emphasis on easy care and high performance. Since 1992 selecting for worm resistance. Since 2005 breeding MyoMAX gene into the romneys. This years Romney ram lambs are 8% MyoMAXGold (2 copies), 64% MyoMAX (1 copy) and 28% Non Carriers. Started dag scoring and selecting for reduced dags two years ago. Part of the Southern Romney Development Group. *Goal is to breed a low cost maternal sheep that can handle a tough environment and maximise output of quality meat and wool.*

<u>Suffolk Stud</u> started in 1996. Since 2005 also breeding the MyoMAX gene into the suffolks (had already been using texels and retaining crossbred animals since starting the stud). This years Suffolk ram lambs are 26% MyoMAXGold (2 copies), 58% MyoMAX (1 copy) and only 16% Non Carriers. Most of our clients want the growth of a Suffolk with the meat of a Texel but a black face. We have exported some semen to the UK – both MyoMAX Suffolks and pure Suffolk (Scrapie Type 1). Part of Premier Suffolks which is a Sire Referencing Group made up currently of 9 members – all in Southland except one from North Otago and one from the North Island. *Goal is to produce a black face terminal sire that maximises growth, meat and survival.*

Development:

We have been developing the hill blocks over the last five years. More important now as the sheep have been pushed into the hills (most of paddocks taken up with dairy or dairy support – grazing and winter feed). Cultivating what we can first (about 1/3 of hill), through one or two brassica crops, capital fertiliser, fencing and putting in water. Then will oversow the rest over time. To date have developed 150ha.

Trees:

Forestry blocks pruned for timber. 7.3km of shelter planted through the 1990s. Plus amenity plantings. Particular interest in native plantings. Total trees planted since 1991 – approx 75000. Have registered for carbon credits and already sold 3000 units.

Farmstay:

Started up the Farmstay in February this year. We have a two bedroom self contained unit attached to the Homestead. Offer bed and breakfast with evening meals and farm tours by arrangement.