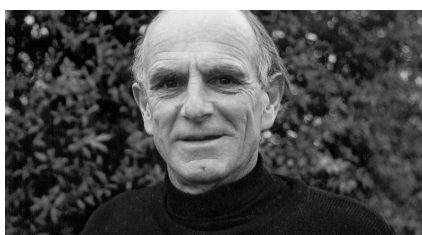


merino inc. newsletter



from the chairman...

The New Zealand Merino industry enjoys a high profile, both nationally and internationally. This state is a direct consequence of initiatives taken by Merino growers, starting with the formation of the first regional Association in 1988. Other regional Associations followed, creating a forum for the evolution of Merino Inc. in response to the perceived need for growers to co-ordinate their interests within the industry. In particular, there was a necessity to champion the Merino cause to Wools of NZ, and only the accord that had developed made this possible.

Producer Boards have since been terminated, and the Commodity Levy Order implemented. Merino growers no longer have control of their levies, which are collected by Meat and Wool NZ Ltd. (MWNZ). I urge all growers to read MWNZ Ltd.'s recent publication, "The Year Ahead 2004-2005", to understand the new levy system and its financial plan. Note that funds collected under the Commodity Levy Order for industry good activities do not, for the wool sector, include marketing or market development. Fortunately for the Merino sector, the marketing focus fostered by the initial Merino Inc. has been continued by the NZ Merino Co.

Merino Inc. has a key role to play in maintaining grower unity and campaigning for Merino interests with MWNZ Ltd. Unlike the old Producer Boards, the new MWNZ Ltd. is obliged by the Commodity Levy Act to be far more sensitive to grower requirements.

Inevitably, there will be further adjustments in the industry as the bodies formed from Producer Board reserves adjust to the new levy stream, and Merino NZ Inc. is well placed to promote Merino growers' interests as this occurs.

AGM report:

The new Board elected at the Merino NZ Inc. 2004 AGM is:

Chairman – Ross Beech

Vice-chairman – Tom Rowley

Directors – Richard Burdon, Simon Cameron, Bob Todhunter

Appointed director – Geoff Mavromatis

A big thank you to Rob Mathewson for his work as Chairman guiding us through the establishment of Merino Inc as the merino industry R&D organisation representing all growers. Also, thanks to Helen

Mathewson for her support and assistance.

The resolution to restructure Inc.'s regional representation was passed unanimously, which means that from the 2005 AGM, the Board will have 4 grower directors and the power to appoint 2 others.

I commend the North Island Merino Assn. and their director, Lyn Finch, for responding to the Board's wish to reduce the number of directors [and therefore the cost of representation]. Lyn retired from the Board a year earlier than legally required, ending a 9 year role with the Merino Inc. Board. Her retail and manufacturing associations with fibre brought a valuable and distinctive perspective to the Board. Thank you, Lyn.

In summary, I ask you to reflect on the progress we have achieved as a unified group. Growers drove the changes, and their co-operation is still required. I appeal to all growers to maintain this industry unity by supporting Merino NZ Inc. and the regional Associations in their roles as your representatives.

Ross Beech

couldn't get to 'classer select'?



If you missed the Classer Select professional development workshop for classers and owner-classers, don't despair. You can find all the material presented on the Classer Select webpage www.classerselect.co.nz. There will also be updates posted from time to time.

There was an excellent turn out for the workshop, and the various presentations and demonstrations were enthusiastically received. However, we have received comments from growers who were disappointed at not being eligible to attend, and we are considering how we can provide some of the material 'live' to a wider audience, maybe as a road-show seminar.

winter shearing gets media coverage

Winter Shearing gets Media Coverage Concerns about welfare of sheep shorn in winter have been aired in a series of Letters to the Editor in "The Press" and other newspapers over recent weeks. While it isn't clear if the sheep referred to in the original letter were actually merinos, as alleged, it is timely to remember that growers are required to adhere to the codes and minimum standards for animal welfare. It is an offence under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 if the codes and standards are not met.

The animal welfare codes most relevant to merino growers are:

- Sheep
- Animals transported in NZ
- Animals at saleyards.

Copies of the codes can be obtained on the MAF web site (www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity, then click on "Animal Welfare" in the menu on left hand side of the page) or by contacting Merino Inc.

The Welfare of Sheep code includes feeding and general conditions, as well as management practices including docking, castration, shearing, including pre-lamb shearing, animal health etc. For example, here is a part of the shearing code:

"Provision should be made for extra feed and for appropriate shade and shelter for sheep after shearing (see Feed and Shelter). Newly shorn sheep require up to 40% more feed for 3 weeks or more after shearing to sustain body temperature and maintain body condition. Maintenance requirements may be increased for 6 to 8 weeks after shearing. There should be ready access to covered yards or effective shelter for several weeks after shearing in case of cold wet weather."

visit an interesting website www.wool.com.au

This is the web site for Australian Wool Innovation Ltd (AWI) which is the Australian wool producers' organisation. AWI initiates, commissions and delivers research and development (R&D) for Australian woolgrowers. They put a major emphasis on the adoption of technology, both on-farm and along the global wool pipeline. They also provide trade development and market intelligence services on behalf of Australian woolgrowers.

The AWI web site provides current wool industry news, access to AWI publications including "Beyond the Bale" (their grower newsletter), and information about their research and training projects. For example, find out what is happening with new shearing technologies including Upright Posture Shearing Platforms; research into alternatives to mulesing; access information about the "Wormmaster" project or see what wool prices are doing in Australia.

carcasses downgraded because of seed?

we want to help you but first we need your help!

We want to hear URGENTLY from merino growers or finishers who send lambs to slaughter and have had carcasses downgraded because of seed contamination problems.

Merino Inc. has identified that, on some properties, up to 30 to 40% of merino lambs slaughtered at 8 to 12 months, may be discounted and down-graded to cutter grade as a result of seed contamination in the carcasses. This can reduce payment for these animals by as much as \$35 to \$40 a carcase, from a potential of \$70 or more.

Our scoping of the problem shows that it occurs particularly in Marlborough and Otago, but varies considerably from year to year. Not surprisingly, we believe that barley grass, Stipa and Brome species are likely to be involved, but there is no data on which ones are the problem on each property.

Merino Inc is embarking on a project that will look at both the farm and the processing end to better identify the problem grass species, and to look at steps that can be taken to reduce the problem, and ensure that merino stock can achieve the best prices. We have engaged Alan Marshall from Tectra Ltd, to work on this problem. To get the best outcome from this work he needs to hear from everyone who has had carcasses downgraded with seed problems.

The sort of information that he is seeking includes

- Numbers of carcasses down-graded over recent years
- Properties that cannot sell stock to particular meat companies because of past problems
- Opinions about what grass varieties are causing the problems

All data that you provide will be confidential, and won't be reported in any way that identifies your property. If you have a seed problem, please help, and contact Alan Marshall. It shouldn't take more than 10 minutes over the phone for him to get the information from you.

Phone: 03 325 7260
or mobile: 0274 329 399
Email: alan.marshall@tectra.co.nz
Fax: 03 325 7261
Post: Tectra Ltd. P.O.Box 66
Lincoln University

Or leave your contact details on 0800 merino and he can get back to you.

young merino exchange to tasmania

Return airfares and expenses will be provided for a young person, currently working on a merino property in New Zealand, to visit Tasmania and gain experience on a merino farm there.

Applications close on October 15 2004. Contact NZ Studbreeders Assn, phone 03 358 9412, or email nzsheep@clear.net.nz for more information and an application form.



dates

September 23 2004:
Closing date for Lincoln University
Foundation / Rabobank "Farmer of the
Year Award 2004 for Hill and High
Country Farming".
Contact Don Kennedy Rabobank:
0800 722 622

October 15 2004:
Closing date for ASB Bank Rural
NZ Stud Merino Breeders' Young
Person's Exchange .
Contact NZ Studbreeders:
03 358 9412

October 21 2004:
Merino Grower Investments Ltd (MGIL)
AGM (Christchurch)

July 12–14 2006:
World Merino Conference, Perth,
Western Australia.
Website:
www.congresswest.com.au/merino2006

merino inc directory

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ADMINISTRATION	Allison Brook	admin@merinoinc.co.nz
RESEARCH MANAGER	Claire Mulcock	claire@merinoinc.co.nz

www.stocksale.co.nz

Don't forget that the Stocksale web site, run by the Canterbury Merino Association, is available for you to sell your merinos. There's no cost to use the web site. If you've forgotten your user name and password, contact your regional Merino Association, or david@stocksale.co.nz.



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**THIS NEWSLETTER IS DESIGNED TO FIT
IN YOUR MERINO INC. FOLDER**