

1994 LINCOLN COLLEGE CENTENNIAL AWARD

F.E. & C. Cameron

Forbes and Christine Cameron farm 640 ha of medium hill on the south bank of the Rangitikei river and a 80 ha downland block. Their farming enterprise is breeding and finishing sheep and cattle and they utilize modern techniques to achieve high levels of stock performance and high financial returns for their products.

Commercial Romney ewes are bred using rams from the Cameron's recorded flock and regularly wean 140% purebred and Texel and Down cross lambs. Ram and ewe lambs not retained for breeding are finished to 18 kg carcass weights and marketed throughout the year on contract directly to the United States.

Selection criteria for the recorded ewes are clear: easy care, prolificacy, growth rate, wool production and wool quality. The success of the breeding programme is borne out by the performance of the commercial ewes. Far from being a closed and pampered elite group, recorded ewes are run with commercial ewes throughout the year except mating and lambing. High performing commercial 4-T ewes are regularly screened into the recorded flock.

Substantial selection emphasis is placed on wool. Hogget fleeces are weighed and carefully assessed for colour and style.

The Camerons are keen breeders and promoters of Salers cattle which they have chosen for their reputation to produce

fast-growing steers which are lean at 280-320 kg and cows which are easy calving and hardy.

Lincoln University degree students have visited the Cameron farm for the last 7 years as part of their North Island tour. From an animal production viewpoint this visit is the highlight of their tour. Performance targets are clearly defined and husbandry practises well described. The Camerons are enthusiastic users of new technology and provide the students with an excellent practical example of ultrasound measurement of fat and muscle in rams; ultrasound to detect litter size; MOET to increase numbers and accelerate genetic progress in sheep and cattle; performance recording; sire referencing; use of new breeds. Reasons for employing each technique are clearly spelt out and its advantages and disadvantages openly appraised and debated.

Indeed the lasting impression of the autumn visit comes after a half hour walk to the crest of the nearest hill. The sight of all ewes and cows in one mob on their winter rotation is worth many thousands of words from animal, pasture, management and soil teachers.

For their contribution in hosting Lincoln students on their North Island tour and demonstrating their skills to achieve high levels of stock performance, Forbes and Christine are worthy recipients of the 1994 Lincoln Centennial Award.

P.R. Beatson