



# PIQUET HILL

## Newsletter

Piquet Hill  
Te Akau  
Private Bag 540  
Ngaruawahia, Waikato  
New Zealand  
PH: 07 825 4833  
FX: 07 825 4832  
MB: 0274 938 557  
[www.piquethillrams.co.nz](http://www.piquethillrams.co.nz)

2011/2012



### **Piquet Hill Stud Update: 2011/2012**

### **Market Update:**

The long overdue adjustment of returns to the sheep and beef sector will put a smile on the faces of many farmers.

To see wool at over double last year's prices and winter lamb reaching \$8.00/kg looks very positive for the foreseeable future. With the dairy and forestry sector, also, looking very positive, the total farming sector is in for some good years by all accounts.

The world market for all commodities is in short supply in a world market driven by the huge increase of the growing wealth of the middle class in Asia.

Land prices will be driven initially by the dairy business as the demand for dairy land for run off grazing or dairy support land is taken up. Land prices are already starting to lift and for the first time ever we are seeing some city investors buying into the farming sector. Not surprisingly when 60+ finance companies, mostly out of Auckland, have gone broke. Suddenly farming, as an investment, looks very attractive. We have listened to the endless criticism over the

inflated value of land. The fact is that they are not making any more of it!

For sheep farmers, who have maintained a strong sheep flock, the returns for wool, lamb and breeding ewes is outstanding. Wool is making a major comeback, which endorses our belief, over many years, that the future for wool, as a niche product, would always return.

Sheep breeders are bombarded by advice on what sheep breed will give them the best return. What we offer is 40 plus years of breeding on hill country with major emphasis over 30 years in the virtual elimination of Facial Eczema: the curse of



sheep farming in the North Island. Much of the low scanning this year can be put down to sub clinical eczema (facial eczema you cannot see).

An investment in our proven genetics at Piquet Hill is an investment in the future of your flock.

### Sheep Performance

Lifting lambing percentage from 100% to 150% and from 160%–170% is now quite achievable, and we have seen hogget mating achieving 100% lambing. These dramatic gains all come from proven technology.

Better commodity prices and higher production in sheep have also seen some outstanding financial gains in the sheep sector over recent years. With more sophisticated farm management systems and the tools of cross breeding, farmers now have opportunities that haven't previously been available. The benchmark of 150% lambing on average hill country is quite achievable today using existing technology and genetics.

### Easy Care / Hardiness

Piquet Hill Stud is run under absolutely natural conditions with commercial stocking rates. Rams come forward for sale in natural conditions. We have noticed over the years with our Facial Eczema testing programme, that there is a dramatic reduction in grass staggers – so grass staggers appears to have a strong correlation with FE tolerance.

The Stud is now testing the sires selected for the FE programme to be also tested for worm resistance, which we will now build into the FE tolerance programme. The worm resistance testing so far is very encouraging.

### Genetics

Over many years Piquet Hill has sought genetic advice from scientists who appreciate the practical challenges of hill country farmers. Initially this advice came from the late Graeme Hight, and then Clive Dalton from the MAF Whatawhata Hill Country Research Station, both of whom worked on the Lands & Survey Waihora Breeding Schemes. Graeme was also involved with Piquet Hill in the New Zealand Romney Development Group which

encompassed 100,000 ewes and operated as a strong genetic base in our initial breeding programme. Dr Clive Dalton is now advising the Stud on genetic issues.

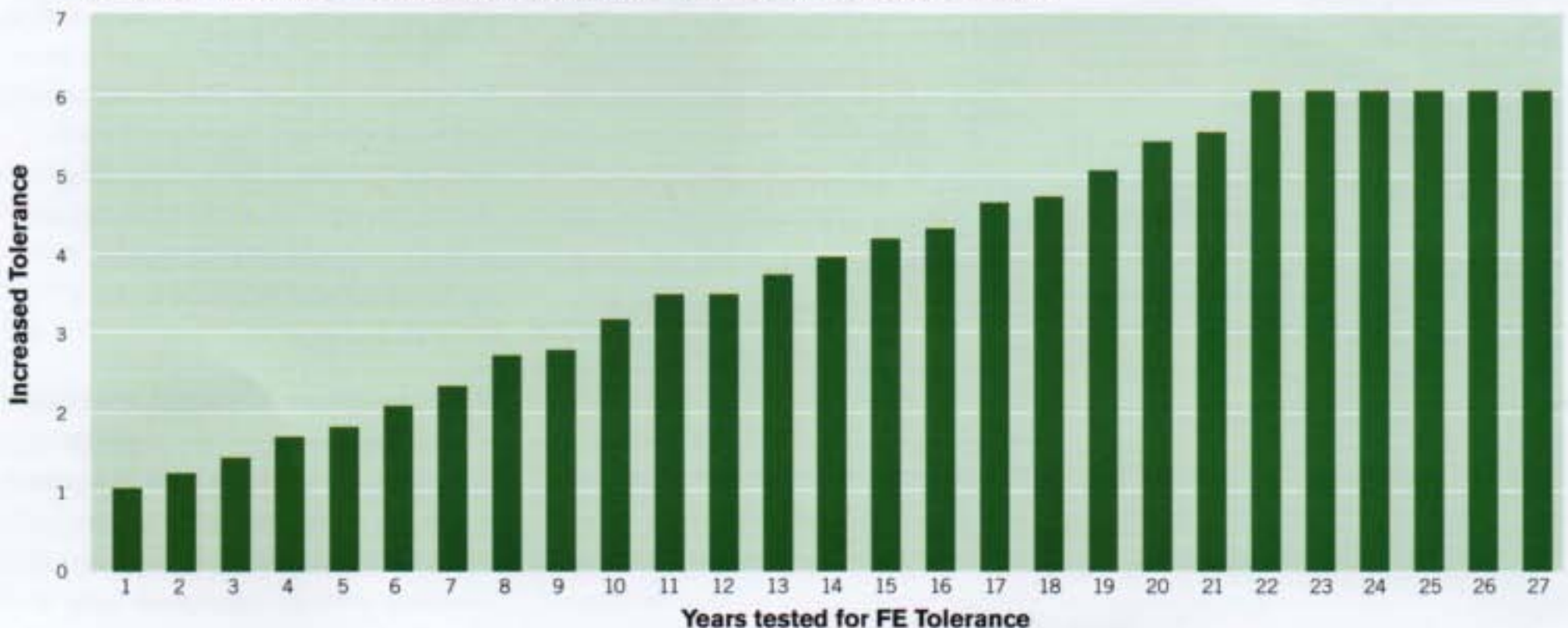
Through the leasing and exchange of sires from breeders with a common philosophy in breeding, we now have linkages to a massive pool of genetic material alongside our base flock of 10,000 Romney ewes.

### Facial Eczema (FE)

In recent years we have seen some quite severe outbreaks of Facial Eczema. At Te Akau (which is a chronic area for FE), we have seen no clinical cases for the last ten years in our flock of 10,000 ewes and replacements. This clearly demonstrates the enormous genetic gains made over 30 years of testing with the toxin (sporidesmin) for FE tolerance.

We can offer rams for sale in the knowledge that Piquet Hill rams are highly tolerant to FE using high doses of 0.5–0.6 mg of sporidesmin per kg liveweight. These are some of the highest rates used in the country. The total flock at Piquet Hill has

Relative Tolerance = Increase in amount of toxin required to cause liver damage.



## Facial Eczema the bottom line

2% of Clinical cases of Facial Eczema in your Ewe Hoggets will lose you 25% overall lifetime performance of that age group of sheep.

Towers/Hockey/Smeaton  
Whatawhata Research Station, 1983.



been sired by FE tolerant rams for over 30 years.

We also exchange and lease rams from breeders who are testing at very high rates of toxin in the northern North Island and this year we will use sires tested up to 0.6mg of sporidesmin per kg of liveweight.

More and more farmers are coming to the inevitable conclusion that FE and drench resistance are major constraints to increased sheep production and the longer you continue to buy rams from breeders who are not testing for these traits, the greater the problem will become.

We continue to see farmers producing outstanding results using production-recorded FE-tolerant rams by minimising the problems associated with FE. We also continue to see prospective clients with massive losses in hoggets and in overall production.

Remember that 2% of clinical FE cases in a line of ewe hoggets will lose you 25% in overall lifetime production for that age group of animals. This was shown in a trial at Whatawhata in 1983 by Towers, Hockey and Smeaton.

## Breeding for Worm Resistance

In the late 1980s we did six years of Faecal Egg Counting (FEC) to select for resistance to internal parasites. This came with very mixed results. All sale rams now go through a no drench programme. The best performers through this programme are identified and are then selected for FE resistance and then used as stud sires. This enables us to perform a worm resistant protocol and FE resistant test while working under commercial farm conditions.

It's not surprising that many farmers are confused about what to do while they wait for promised solutions to worms. We have a solution, and the responsibility will remain with the Stud Breeder to breed sheep for the industry which are resistant to internal parasites. It's very important for us to link this worm resistance with the FE resistance work we have already done, along with standard performance recording under SIL.

With increased rates of fertiliser, increased subdivision, better pasture species on top of global warming, we are seeing a recipe for more severe FE and greater worm burdens in future years. The trend is clear.

## Facial Eczema advertising

There is some extremely misleading advertising regarding FE testing in rams. Farmers should ask four key questions to check what is going on:

1. Ask to see the FE Testing Certificate.
2. Ask how many years the breeder has been testing.
3. Ask what level of sporidesmin is being used to test the rams.
4. Ask if the flock exclusively uses sires that have been tested for high FE tolerance.

## Romney

The Romney is back in favour. Emphasis has always been placed on Romneys to perform at commercial stocking rates on tough hill country for maximum returns. Major emphasis has always been placed on fertility and easy care.

At Piquet Hill we have bred Romneys for use on hill country for breeding purposes for over 40 years. The Romney is a dual-purpose sheep and the swings in the value of meat and wool over past years illustrate the futility of chasing one product at the

expense of another. All Piquet Hill Romneys are run under absolutely natural conditions.

We supply a large number of long-time commercial Romney breeders, some who have bought rams for over 30 years from the Stud. After 30 years of FE testing to improve FE tolerance, and a programme to address worm resistance, we are well positioned to address two of the major inhibiting factors to profitable sheep production.

### **Breeding Composite**

At Piquet Hill we have bred a Composite ram of 1/2 Romney/Perendale/Finn/Texel. This Composite has particular qualities that give advantages in milking ability, growth rate, hybrid vigour and overall production. For anyone wanting to stabilise high production at around 150%–160% lambing, this is an ideal Composite.

### **Terminal Composite**

We have produced a Composite terminal sire (Terminal Composite) using Poll Dorset, Suffolk and Texel. There is a strong degree of FE tolerance in all these breeds and the Composite has an outstanding growth rate and finishing ability.

### **Lincoln Trial**

Don't be hooked by the old adage of size delivers everything. We have clients who want heavy rams over 75–80kg, and we have clients who refuse to take sires over 65kg.

The whole issue of size must be related to your targets for overall production. As far as income goes, the smaller-framed ewes at the Lincoln trial were the better performers producing 12% more carcase weight/hectare than the bigger ewes. Smaller ewes are more efficient. (Lincoln University study by Dr A. M. Nicol 2005.)

### **Hardiness / Soundness**

Many ram buyers comment positively on the longevity and hardiness of Piquet Hill Rams. Selection for soundness, over 40 years of breeding on hill country is an important end result in our breeding programme, all rams are guaranteed for the first season against failure.

### **2011/2012 Sale Rams**

- Romney
- Breeding Composite
- Terminal Composite

### **Replacement Females**

**January 2011:** We will also have 2000+ ewe lambs and a number of aged ewes for private sale. As with ram hoggets, these are aggressively sought after and you will need to book early if interested in them.

### **General Information**

All rams are Brucellosis Accredited and we guarantee all rams for the first season and will replace, if unsound. We sell between 1100 and 1200 rams each year to between 150–200 clients.

Rams are sold privately at Piquet Hill during November/December for two-tooths and January/February/March for hoggets. We have specific open days in September/October for an on-farm inspection of rams coming up for sale.

### **South Island Rams**

We know there have been severe outbreaks of Facial Eczema in Nelson/Malborough this year. We will

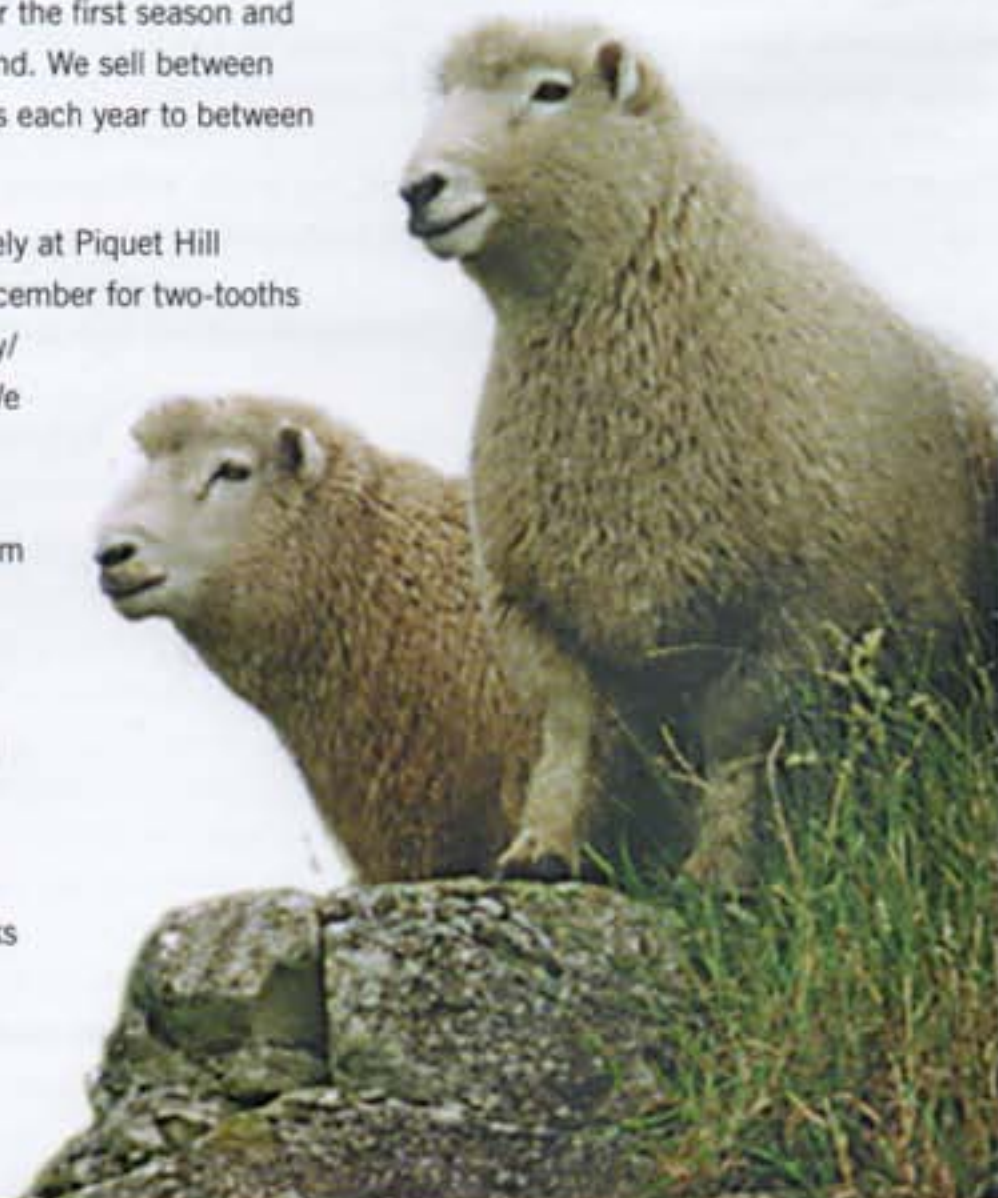
freight all rams to Blenheim free of charge. Josh Jamieson is our South Island representative. Phone (03) 579 8084 or 0800 379 958.

**Expect a phone call:** We phone all clients in early September to discuss ram requirements for the coming season and answer any questions about how we at Piquet Hill can help them achieve their objectives. So expect a call sometime soon.

Owing to the increased interest and demand for sires that are both resistant to FE and internal parasites we are advising clients to pencil-order their sires as early as possible.

We look forward to hearing from you. Feel free to contact us at any time, from the team at Piquet Hill.

Peter, Tom and Will Jackson.





# PIQUET HILL

Newsletter 2011/2012

**Tear off and fax to (07) 825 4832 or post to Private Bag 540, Ngaruawahia, Waikato.**

**Pricing:**

Stud Sires FE Tested	\$2000 – \$3000
High Production Flock Rams	\$800 – \$1000
Flock Rams	\$600 – \$700
Ram Hoggets	\$500 – \$600



Peter Jackson

**Order Form:**

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ rams for me in December, or please send me more information.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_



William Jackson

**Post To:**

Piquet Hill  
Te Akau  
Private Bag 540  
Ngaruawahia 3742  
Waikato



Tom Jackson

**Rams For Sale:**

Piquet Hill has been selling rams to the industry for 43 years. Rams are sold to a wide range of finishing and breeding country. We guarantee against first season failure for all two tooth and hogget rams, and will replace in this instance. The Stud is open for inspection, by appointment. All two tooth rams are sold privately at Te Akau in December/January and hogget rams in February. Sale is by private treaty and all rams come forward in an absolutely natural condition off hill country.

Piquet Hill thinks of a ram as an investment, not a cost. It is about genetic improvement for the future. We are dedicated to supplying your flock with the very best genes that will keep us all in business.

If you are interested in securing rams or visiting Piquet Hill to inspect rams in October/November, it is essential you notify and pencil in orders prior to December.

- **Romney**  
Highly FE tolerant sires.
- **Terminal Composite**  
FE tolerant terminal sires.
- **Breeding Composite**  
Hardy hill country sires. FE tolerant.

## Breeding: a long-term commitment.



By Dr Clive Dalton

Breeding is a long-term priority for both sheep and their farmers. Sheep generations turn over every 3 years, whereas a human generation is about 20 years.

Many studs only last for 3–4 sheep generations, so if you want continued genetic gain from your ram breeder, make sure the next farming generation carries on from where the old man left off. This is so that genetic gains in the flock are not dispersed and lost.

Piquet Hill is a good example of continuity where Peter Jackson did the hard yards to sort out high-performance sheep on real hill country over four decades from the flock he took over.

It was exciting times when the power of the stud industry had to be challenged with proven facts. Peter was an early member of the pioneers of Group Breeding Schemes who did increased genetic gain to commercial sheep farmers with low fertility

and low survival. Then on top of that there was the devastation of Facial Eczema that again took guts to work out a breeding solution.

Now the next generation of Jacksons have taken up the challenge. In the next four decades William and Tom will have a dozen sheep generations to build on past achievements – and face the job of speeding up genetic gain for resistance against internal parasites in the flock. Worms will be a greater problem than FE ever was as it's more universal. I firmly believe it's a national emergency, if we want hill country sheep farming to have a sustainable future.

Keep in close touch with Piquet Hill to watch the progress.

### History of Piquet Hill:

The Piquet Hill Stud was started by Peter Jackson at Te Akau on North Island west coast hill country in 1966. Tom and William Jackson joined the breeding operation in 2003 and both will take an active role in the future direction of the stud. Rainfall averages 1125mm, with dry summers and dry autumns the norm. The stud today sells in excess of 1000 rams into the North Island and the north of the South Island.

### Objectives:

Major emphasis has always been on fertility, growth rate, wool weight, worm resistance and Facial Eczema tolerance. Our aim has always been to breed the most profitable sheep for New Zealand hill country farmers.

### Easy Care:

The Stud is run at commercial stocking rates on tough hill country. It always has been operated under an easy care policy with no shepherding.

### Production Recording:

Piquet Hill Stud is a strong supporter

of performance recording and selection for structural soundness. The Stud was a member of the original New Zealand Romney Development Group, with screening over 100,000 ewes for performance. In recent years there has been strong emphasis on Facial Eczema testing and delivering structural soundness to the sheep we breed. For over 40 years Piquet Hill has operated its recording through Sheepplan, Animalplan, and SIL.

### Brucella Ovis:

Piquet Hill Stud is an accredited flock.

### Facial Eczema:

The Stud has tested hundreds of rams over 30 years for Facial Eczema tolerance. We regard ourselves as having one of the highest tolerant flocks in New Zealand for Facial Eczema. This is judged by the very high levels of Sporidesmin used to test rams. The results speak for themselves.

### Worm Resistance Programme:

We have recently embarked on an intensive programme to breed worm resistant sires, which are then tested for Facial Eczema tolerance.

The longer you continue to buy rams from breeders who do not test for FE tolerance or worm resistance the worse your problem will become.

### Cross Breeding Composites & Purebreds:

We have a range of cross breeds and composites using our strong base Romney FE tolerant ewes as the foundation. The results using these crosses for a specific purpose have given quite outstanding results. It is a pleasure to see so many of our clients achieving high performance without the constraints of FE that has bedeviled this industry in the past.