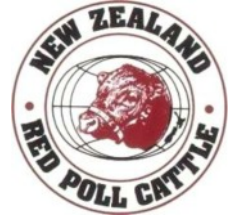


RED POLL

NEWS



Winter Edition

August 2017



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NB: This newsletter is on the website in a PDF file

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Closing date for next newsletter is November 15th, 2017

Cover: Heifer Calf at Jan Schepel's, Raglan

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE



After such a good summer and autumn we have now arrived at what I think is the most important part of the year when the main part of calving takes place. This can determine if the year is going to be a good for our bank balance and sanity.

I trust all members are ready for the cold and miserable days that can test most people who work on the land.

During the month of June eight of our members attended the 15th World Congress held in America. Participating countries included England, Kenya Canada, Australia, New Zealand and America.

The lack of fencing on the areas we visited was something I didn't expect to see. Also large lawns and cottage type housing in the rural areas. Miles of maize crops in the Mid West and being told that 40% of the crop went to ethanol.

This tour was well organised and we saw plenty of items of interest such as Purdue University; an Ethanol Plant that had 500 trucks a day (22 Ton average) arriving and taking only 6 minutes to have load tested and dumped before moving off. Budweiser Brewery, The Grand Ole Opry, a baseball game, harness racing, Purina Research Farm, Biltmore Estate, Caterpillar Company, Junior Red Poll Association Show as well as visiting many Red Poll studs.

We had a very competent bus driver and tour guide and all people we met were easy to communicate with and only too pleased to answer any questions that the congress members asked. The meals in America are huge by New Zealand standards and I was careful not to over indulge.

Many of the farms visited were organic or very little fertiliser was used. Cattle were in good order and explanations of the type of cattle and the way the farms run were given by the owners.

My thanks to Dan and Mary-Jo Schmiesing for organising a great tour.

The next World Congress is to be held in South Africa in three years time.

On the local scene there appears to be a shortage of in-calf heifers and cows for sale. There are a number of people looking to buy and if any members have some available please let me, or our secretary, know.

Graeme Evans

SECRETARY'S SAY



Those of you who didn't make it this year's AGM and Herd Tour missed a thoroughly enjoyable few days in sunny Northland. Our Northland breeders had had flooding just 2 or 3 weeks prior to our visit, but they showed great resilience and happily welcomed us on to their farms. The hospitality was great, the cattle we saw were all in good condition, the areas we travelled through were very scenic, and our accommodation by the beach was so relaxing. Thank you so much to our Northland members.

You should all have received a copy of the AGM minutes and Annual members should have received a discussion paper on DNA testing of Herd Sires and your Herd Pre-lists.

Main points from AGM:

Subscription increases for Annual members

(Associate membership remains at \$40)

1 to 5 females - increases to \$60 per annum

6 to 10 females – increases to \$90 per annum

10 + females – increases to \$120 per annum

Remit to alter Rule 1L was lost; therefore herd sires being used to sire offspring able to be registered will need to be **parental** DNA profiled. Breeders now have 2 years to register young bulls before the price of registration increases.

Congratulations to the Dalley family for being awarded the W W Davie- Martin Scroll for so successfully farming Red Polls organically and regularly supplying a Christchurch butcher with organic Red Poll beef.

WELCOME HOME: all those breeders who attended the World Congress in the USA. I believe they all thoroughly enjoyed themselves and were impressed with the variety of farms and places of interest.

WELCOME to new members:

Raeden Jackson, Waihou

Robert McLeod and Kirsty Loveday, Masterton

James and Kay Heaven, Kaitaia

Rusty Rhodes, Timaru

Anne McSweeney

282 Woodside Road, R.D.21,

Geraldine, 7991

Ph 036938862

Email: redpolls@slingshot.co.nz

NEW BREEDERS LOOKING FOR CATTLE

Fritz and Rhonda van Rooden are moving to a small block in Oxford soon, and are looking for yearling or mixed aged females.

If you can help, please contact our Secretary, Anne McSweeney, (as above) so your contact details can be passed on.

FROM THE EDITOR



Hi everyone,

Big apologies for the lateness of this newsletter. It was already due at the printer when I got struck with the dreaded cough and lost my voice for 6 days – I can hear some of you thinking well that would be change! However the sore throat and general feeling of malaise that went with it meant not much got done on the newsletter, however better late than never as they say!

Once again, a **BIG THANK YOU** to those contributing reports and photos for the newsletter. Perhaps if you are thinking of contributing you might try and send stuff in a bit before the deadline – that would also help tremendously. **November the 15th** is when the next lot is due! Remember I am happy to receive items for the next newsletter at **any time**.

Note: *If no "takers" name beside it, if a modern photo, chances are I took it. Gets time consuming putting names in all the time when it's me!*

Helen



Kelvin Lane, Graeme Evans & Mike McSweeney looking over Richard Alspach's cattle on the Northland Tour.

Photo: A McSweeney

PATRONS' PAGE I



WATER

There is nothing quite so mollifying as realising that, despite the best efforts of man, Mother Nature cannot be denied.

As farmers we are faced each day with the challenges of weather. We have learnt that we really have to accept and deal with whatever is served up by way of temperature, wind or precipitation.

Some of those situations may be mundane and unremarkable while others can be dramatic and challenging.

We are facing clearly evident climate change with violent swings and roundabouts in weather. Some of those changes can spell disaster for land based activities while others can be managed but in nearly all situations the role of water is critical; sometimes there is too much while at other times there is too little. As pastoral farmers we recognise that our styles of agriculture require water in fairly generous quantities to ensure plant growth which is the basis of our style of farming. Many of us receive water as rain while for others it is provided through irrigation; both of which are dependent to some degree upon the vagaries of Mother Nature.

I can see that the management of many water resources is going to become increasingly contentious and that we, as farmers, will need to ensure that our stewardship of water is responsible and sustainable and politically safe. I can imagine that we are going to be faced with the full force of those who see no connection between water and food; who believe that their food is somehow conjured up in supermarkets, and that farms should exist as green landscapes, as eye fodder for tourists or should revert to native forests. After all water comes from a tap or a bottle!

There will be others who will push for all water used on farms to be charged for, provided of course that the price of food does not increase. There will be those who will assert that rain is a gift for all and that somehow it must be subject to levies to be paid by those on whose rural land it falls. I know that

those scenarios sound far-fetched but one does not have to look too far to find apostles for those and other equally dangerous concepts.

Yes, the water quantum in our farming business is going to become increasingly political and I doubt that politicians will help us find the right answers.

Robin Shepherd QSO



PATRON'S PAGE II

I'm in the process of recovering from a cataract operation on my left eye. They seem to think it may help improve my sight in that eye a bit.

I'm sorry I wasn't able to attend the Annual General Meeting and herd tour. I understand it was a very successful tour and that all those who attended had a great trip around catching up with our fellow breeders in the north of the North Island.

I'd like to note that a painting Robin Shepherd did still graces the wall at our house after many years.

It sounds like those who went on the tour to the USA also had a great time and saw some very good cattle. As they say, travel broadens the mind. It would be good to see how some of the progeny of Robin Thomson's bull have developed in the conditions in the USA. Always very satisfying when stock one has sold perform up to and/or exceed the buyer's expectations.

Mark has written up the next instalment about the bulls used at Willow Lea – Larkhill Bottler this time.

I wish you all an easy calving Spring and hope we may catch up before too long.

Peter Fleming

NORTHLAND HERD TOUR REPORT, April 2017

As Warwick was unable to attend because of Work commitments I travelled up to Helen & Allan Bridson's and hitched a ride around the North with them.

Tuesday 18th, April

We arrived at **Davie-Martin's Martinvale & Puketi studs** almost bang on time at 2pm. We seemed to take a long way around with some doubts being expressed about the veracity of the satnav, but got there in the end. The weather was kind to us, with sunshine, and a gentle breeze. It was a very nice surprise to find that we were the second lot to arrive and that the first were Mark & Elke Harris from Australia. Those who were on the Australian Congress tour will remember seeing their "Ketlang" cattle in the pens at Lardner Park.

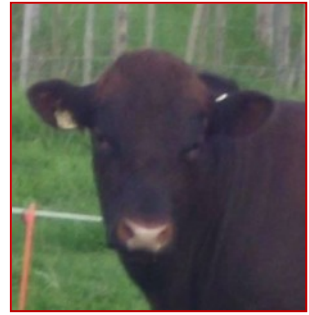
Before too long everyone else (Mike & Anne McSweeney, Doug D'Oliver (Aus), Judy & Graeme and Kelvin & Kath Lane) had arrived, with some grabbing a quick cuppa before stepping out to view the cattle on display. There were several groups to have a look at with pure Red Polls, some pure Angus and some Angus Red Poll crosses. Among the cows was an aged cow, a sister to the well known bull, Martinvale Bonz Vin.



Some Martinvale/Puketi females with an Angus or two in the background

The cattle all looked well, whether red or black.

The two year heifers are in calf to Angus. The Red Poll cows have been run with the Red Poll yearling bull, "Emperor". For the last few years the cows have been mated to AI bulls, but as Craig said this is a "catch up year" with a flesh & blood bull. Emperor has EBV's that they feel are right where they should be after years of breeding, so he has been given the opportunity to prove himself.



Emperor

After enjoying our look around the cows we retired indoors (well, the women did, the men went out on to the verandah – typical kiwi men!). We enjoyed a fresh cuppa and lots of chat while we waited for our dinner – well worth waiting for it was too. A big "thank you" to Judy, Don & Craig for hosting us for this lovely meal and for organising their cattle for our visit.



Mark Harris of Ketlang Stud, Victoria & our host, Don Davie-Martin

Wednesday 19th April

Our Whangarei Hotel was comfortable. After breakfast we set off via Tikipunga to pick up Norman Sherwin who was joining us for the tour. From there it was out to **Richard and Helen Alspach's** property at Arapohue, Tangiteroria. The weather was kinder than it was on the last visit there. The river – the Maunganui- is the same one that flows past Davie-Martin's.

***Photo:** Richard with heifers in the background.*



Richard had the cattle in three groups, his cows and calves, in calf R2 heifers and a group of steers in the yard. He had organised a competition around these steers. He had an agent in to assess them in order from 1 – 7 places. Allan

Bridson came first with his placings, however, one of the animals that almost everyone had put in their top three had been put further down by the agent as not having the future growth potential of the others. He would have made a great freezer animal on the day though!

This competition was a great idea but it may be that it has to be judged as just looking at the animal on the day, rather than for "potential". Allan's prize was a jar of home grown honey to be presented at Nina Walker's.



Women in red – Elke Harris & Kath Lane

Alspach's have 22 cows in their herd, plus 11 rising two year heifers, looking absolutely superb, with lots of favourable comments being heard. These heifers and the cows have been run with a two year old Omanwhenua bull of Sherwin's. The heifers were by another Sherwin bull, Omanwhenua Evers II.

Next stop was **Nina Walker's Houtu Stud** out the other side of Tangiteroria.

Photo: Nina putting out some hay so the cows would come up to us.

Nina's farm consists of a 50 acre home block and a 48 acre run off. She runs both Spring and Autumn calving mobs. Nina uses her cows to double/treble suckle calves. The cow's own purebred calf stays on the whole time with the dairy/dairy cross extra's being weaned at 3 months or thereabouts.

As we walked among Nina's cows we were all impressed by how beautifully quiet they were. As we went down to see the Spring calving mob below Nina's house she told us their paddock had alligator weed (*alternathera philoxiroides*) in it. She does not put un-weaned calves out there as it causes a photosynthetic reaction [*and can cause blindness*] in calves, although the cows seem to be fine eating it.



This photo of alligator weed is from the Waikato Regional Council website. It is becoming a major pest in Waikato as well as Northland.

Once we had filled our eyes with this cow mob we worked up an appetite for lunch climbing up the hill to the house again. It was well worth the effort! Lunch began with vegetable soup (including meat from

Nina's bull that came to grief – very nice too) and savouries, followed by delicious cheese cake and a banana cake that had the image of a Red Poll cow on the icing.



The Red Poll decorated cake

Nina still has the old cow that featured in the newspaper a few months ago. She is now 27 years old and did not look too bad. She did not have a calf last year but has been out with the bull in the cow mob this year. Nina is not planning to dispose of her unless she can't cope with the conditions. She is very fond of her.

She acquired her from Shepherd's Rangitihī stud at 20 years of age. Nina has had several daughters from her. From there we left to go down to Dargaville then up the coast to Omapere.

Thursday 20th April

Scattered showers and sunshine greeted us as we left for **Ged & Raewyn Thomson's** property at Victoria Valley. Raewyn's garden was looking especially appealing, with colourful roses and dahlias alongside blue salvias in the front garden.

Heifer and her young calf at Ged & Raewyn's.

We walked down the track to look at their herd. Ged had some young stock in the first paddock and his cows and heifers with calves were a bit further along.



Ged and Raewyn have 23 acres – very lush looking when we were there. They had some very new autumn born calves. The bull he used was an unregistered Tamihana bull. He had a cow from Nina Walker's there – she is a younger sister to Robin Shepherd's bull.

From there we moved on to **Robin & Gena Shepherds “Rangitihi Stud”** at Pamapurua. The farm is approximately 200 acres. Robin said they have a 40 acre stand of native bush which includes a highly thought of stand of puriri trees.

Gena Shepherd bringing out the kettle for lunch

We had a wonderful lunch and welcome cuppa under the verandah roof. Afters included chocolate sponge and a wonderful passionfruit sponge – the latter made by Raewyn Thomson.



After lunch we drove down the back

to see the cattle and admire some of Gena’s horses, including a mare and foal. The rising 2 heifers were by Houto Quade (see photo back cover). They received many favourable comments. From there we went to see the rising three heifers. Robin is experimenting with using a Charolais bull on them this year.

Right down the back were the cows and calves, again calves by Houto Quade and in calf to him again. Some good looking cows and calves in this mob too.

A big thank you to all who hosted the Tour.



The tour looks over Shepherd’s 18 month heifers (& pet lamb)

Photo: Shepherd’s

The Annual Dinner was held on Thursday night at the Ramada Resort, Reia Taipa Beach. The meal was pretty good. The speaker that Robin Shepherd had organised was unable to attend at the last minute for personal reasons so Robin stepped in with a very interesting and informative talk on local history.

The following items about Doubtless Bay come from Wikipedia: -

'Kupe, the first Maori to arrive in NZ in 900AD is thought to have made his landing at Taipa in Doubtless Bay. The bay was named by Captain James Cook as he sailed past the entrance to Doubtless Bay, recording in his journal that it was "doubtless a bay". Days later Jean de Surville on the French ship St Jean Baptiste anchored in the bay. He ran foul of local Maori and was forced to flee, kidnapping Ranginui, one of their chiefs.

In 1792 the first American whaler, Captain Eber Bunker from Nantucket, came into Doubtless Bay on the "William and Ann".

In 1838 an English whaler, Captain William Butler settled in Mangonui establishing a trading post on what is today known as Butler Point, 200 metres across the harbour.

Maori played an important role in the supply of fresh foods to the port. They were also sought after for their navigation skills, seaworthiness and as harpooners. Nearly 500 whaling ships have been recorded arriving into Mangonui between 1833 and 1894; up to 30 at any one time. 95% were American boats.

Flax, kauri gum and kauri trees were also popular local products.

Coopers Beach is named after the barrel makers and repairers who plied their trade in the vicinity. Cable Bay was named after the Cable Station that operated from 1902 until 1912. It was jointly owned by Britain, Canada, Australia and NZ. It spanned 3,458 nautical miles. All messages were in Morse code.'

Robin made the area "come alive" with his talk and it was very well received. He has a vast knowledge of the local history, having lived there for so many years. Thank you, Robin, for filling in at the last moment.

EVANLEA REPORT

It is now winter and with the grass not growing we are in for a long cold winter in the Wairarapa.

Cattle have done well over Summer and Autumn which will help them get through the hardest time of the year.

Calving is due to start at the end of July and I am looking forward to this year's crop of calves.

Members who attended the AGM in Northland saw a number of herds this year and most were commercial cattle. The quality of the Red Polls in the north is very good and members of our Association were looked after extremely well by the people we visited.

Judy and I attended the World Congress in June and thoroughly enjoyed the trip and catching up with members who have attended these events in the past.

Eight members of our Association were at the World Congress and all seemed to enjoy their trip.

I have been approached by Rachael Hancock from Australia enquiring if we would accept a young Australian on an exchange visit perhaps later this year. If you are interested in hosting someone, say for a week or two, please let me know.

Regards to all
Judy & Graeme Evans



TAMIHANA REPORT

The American Congress Tour took us from Kansas in the West, to North Carolina in the East, with just about everything in between. What a wonderful adventure. Catching up with old friends & having the opportunity to make new ones, that is really what these tours are all about, with the bonus of seeing the country involved in a very unique way, plus of course, admiring their cattle. It was interesting to note, how a lot of emphasis was being placed on grass feeding. Some breeders have worked out that a different type is needed to convert bulky [grass] feed to beef, while some are still learning. After enjoying the Summer temperatures for nearly four weeks, it was a wake-up call when we flew home to Taranaki, where temperature was a normal Winter 10dg C.

Our cows were reasonably pleased to see us home, after being shut on their early Winter block for the last two months, with nothing to live on for the last three weeks except their constitution. Started break-feeding two days after returning home. Unfortunately, no way to prevent pasture damage with the ground so wet, even with 40-per-cent fewer cows than last year. Reduced numbers because of [1] demand for cows by new breeders; [2] This could be the normal weather pattern because of the grand solar minimum.

Grass is not plentiful with no fertiliser being applied for 12 months due to the hills being too wet all year to get the spreader anywhere near them. Might have to resort to aerial application this season.

Have orders for all of our for sale bulls already, with only one Red Poll, [a Marden Rays Promise son] & the Speckle Park, who will be used to follow up the A.I. mob, retained for our own use.

The route for the new Mount Messenger SH3 road has still not been decided, & drilling & investigations are still being carried out even though the politicians promised action by June 2017. Modern PC New Zealand has to appease everyone, from Iwi to forest & bird, so progress is never rapid. Yet no one cares or complains, when the cities with their urban sprawl, rapidly gobble up & cover in tar seal, our most productive food producing land. I'll leave it there.

Cheers, Robin

OPOUTERE REPORT

After five weeks of enjoying 25° to 30° days, in the USA, it has been a shock to the system to be back home in winter. It was a marvellous tour, we saw some great sights, met some good people, and were made so welcome.

Back home, conditions under foot are quite wet, grass growth has been slower than we had expected, (it always is when you are short of feed.) However we have a good supply of silage on hand, and stock condition is very good. The cows are due to start calving mid August. The ten rising one year bulls, plus the Zorba bred bull we purchased from Robin Thomson, are all doing well, and being typical rising one bulls, i.e. pushing their silage around, and each other around, then having a rest and doing it all over again.

The local trade cattle are doing well, we intend to send some more off, when the schedule gets over the \$6 mark.

Wishing all fellow breeders a good calving and a good spring.

Allan & Helen



A maternal moment at Opoutere, April 2017

AGM TOUR OF NORTHLAND 2017



L-R: Kath & Kelvin Lane, Mark & Elke Harris (Aus), Judy Evans, Anne McSweeney



Admiring Raewyn Thomson's pretty garden



L-R: Richard Alspach, Don Davie-Martin & Kelvin Lane



Young calves at Thomson's



Cow at Nina Walker's



Robin Shepherd in the role of guest speaker at the AGM dinner

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS PHOTOS, June 2017



Welcome display at Jackson Farms



Spegal's stud advertisement



US Red Poll cattle centennial plate



Gail Spegal welcoming the Tour



A typical livestock trailer



Ross Draper, Trent Storm, Ian Coghlan
Australia)

THE INTERNATIONAL RED POLL CONGRESS & TOUR, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 1-25th JUNE 2017, Part 1

Warwick and I left NZ on the 30th of May to fly to Houston on our way to the 15th International Red Poll Congress hosted by the breeders of the USA. After a 13½ hour flight that left at 4pm in the afternoon we arrived in Houston for a 1 night stopover – still on the 30th of May. We flew Air NZ – I'm sure they have shrunk the room between seats since we last flew long haul. Completing immigration requirements took a while but they decided to let us in – so that was a good start.

This first hotel introduced us to the foreign concept of two double beds in close proximity (this was the norm all through our time away). The trip from the airport to the hotel acquainted us with the sectioned concrete roads that are common in the States. Very like travelling on an NZ train before they started to weld the pieces of track together – clickety clack, clickety clack.

Next day it was return to the airport to fly Delta Airlines, firstly to Atlanta and then on to Dayton, Ohio. Let the Tour begin!

We were just about to claim our luggage and suddenly a “Welcome Red Poll Cattle Breeders” sign was thrust beneath our noses and there were Dan & Mary Jo Schmiesing waiting to pick us up. Their shuttle took us to our Comfort Suites Hotel back in Troy. We settled in and then went for a walk to the nearby Walmart – huge. After the purchase of a couple of paperbacks and a coffee we returned to the hotel where several other couples had now arrived. Dinner was at the local steak house across the road – steak naturally! First mistake of the tour, I ordered a shandy – “how do you make it?” Beer and lemonade. Note their lemonade is like our lemon cordial – does definitely not go well with beer. You should have specified Sprite I was told by another breeder. Lesson learnt.

Thursday, June 1st – DAY ONE

Time was our own til late afternoon. First official tour event was dinner at Versailles Winery. Up on the bus at 4.45pm. We met our bus driver, Aaron Anderson (also a minister) and our tour guide, Barbara (Barb) Rayburn (retired after thirty years as a Park Ranger). We later found out that Barb

guides as a volunteer – she gets her bed, board and travel free but no pay. She proved to be very efficient at her job. They were both lovely people to be around, both very obliging, with a nice sense of humour.

On our way to Versailles Winery we passed through Greenville, home of the famous female American sharpshooter, Annie Oakley. The company owns three wineries/restaurants. They do not grow their own grapes, just buy them in. The restaurant building was fairly basic. Tables were clothed in layers of newspaper – that’s a bit different we all thought - but the reason why was shortly revealed. Food came out from the kitchen in large boilers which were tipped upside down directly onto the tables. Contents included shrimps (king prawns) crab pieces, baked corn and small potatoes. Warwick thought he had died and gone to heaven with all the seafood. We shared a table and some wine with Bert & Dorothy

Hancock (Aust). The after dinner speaker was a youngish Republican Senator. He was ex military, very pleasant, sounded a pragmatic sort and answered a few questions. Unfortunately he was not able to stay for in depth conversation as his minder gave him the nod and he had to leave.



Bert & Dorothy Hancock (Australia)

Friday, June 2nd – Day TWO, Morning

Light breakfast at 6am, bags to the bus by 7am. Off to **Jackson Farms**, owned by the Jackson Family. On the way there passed over a crossroads where State Highway 70 & SH 75 cross – one North/South from Michigan to Florida, the other East-West; known as the “Crossroads of America” because both interstates are among the most heavily travelled in the country. The countryside generally has well kept houses and big old wooden barns but also quite a few derelict ones. Lots of 2 storey houses with long narrow double

hung windows. Single storey houses seem quite small. Most noticeable to us was the lack of any fences. Properties would all have been fenced farms in the old days but fences removed for cropping. Not even boundary fences left. If they do still run cattle they are mainly kept in barns, with a small amount of fenced pasture/yards. From Troy, Ohio it is about an hour to Jackson's in Indiana – the Hoosier State.

Teresa Jackson welcomed us and introduced extended family. The family had organised a great display of Red Poll memorabilia including the John McKee Memorial Travelling Trophy for the Premier Breeder at the National Show. [See Photo right.] John was Jim McKee's (McMarshall Farms) brother, who was killed in a farming accident. We then sat down to a real country breakfast.



Jackson Farms run about 30 cows, using two main herd sires. Most of their farm is in crops and they pasture some of their cows off farm at neighbours. They sell freezer packs of beef and sell 4-H livestock, and participate in a lot of shows. Teresa's late husband, Bill, and she bought their current farm in 1973. They also bought his father Carl's herd. Carl had bought his first Red Poll cow, Lady Astor in 1947. He chose Red Poll's because he liked their frame size, the fact they were polled and the solidity of the animals. The Jackson family have now celebrated almost 70 years of breeding, raising & exhibiting Red Poll cattle. 2017 is their 68th consecutive year of showing at the Indiana State Fair.

As we boarded the Bus we were all given a "cake pop" a bit like a truffle on a stick. They were quite delicious!



A few of the cows and calves at Jackson Farms.

Afternoon: SPEGAL FARMS, Gail & Shirley Spegal.

We arrived here for a tasty lunch of salads and steak. Gale gave us a run down on the history of his herd, saying that they used a lot of semen from Purdue University when Purdue gave up Red Poll cattle. Currently they are using semen from Esquire's Navigator, a bull from Esquire Land & Cattle Co., Arkansas.

Gail introduced his granddaughter, Megan, whose reign as National Red Poll Queen (2014-2017) is coming to its end. She is the last Queen as it is being amended to Red Poll Ambassador so young males can participate too. The role involves meeting breeders, attending shows, passing out prize ribbons, holding banners in photos, some public speaking on the breed etc.

Gail & Shirley farm 20 Red Poll cows. They keep one herd bull and also use AI. Some heifers are kept as replacements; some along with bulls are sold for breeding and the remainder go as freezer meat. They sell steers at 1000 lbs.

Most of their land is rented to their son, Todd, who farms it as part of his 3,000acre cropping farm. In the Midwest there are only 6 months of pasture growth. The rest of the year hay and ground corn are fed. Gail is still proud to hold the record of the largest Red Poll bull at 1 year old – 1434lbs. He was purchased as a calf from Pinny Purdue farms (Marshall Mohler) in 1990. He gained 3.2lbs a day. It is Gail's 60th year of showing at the Indiana State Fair.



The fattening pen at Spegal's

DAWN MIST REPORT

As I sit writing this, the rain continues to pour down - there are now streams running through all the neighbouring properties; roads, driveways and culverts being flooded and gouged out - I'm a bit concerned that Mike might not get home later this afternoon as although there are three ways out of here, there are flooded culverts in 2 directions and a flooded ford in the third to contend with!! Next week, the sun will shine and the surface water will be gone, but the already sodden soil will be even wetter.

The cows were taken out of the crop 2 weeks ago because the mud had become too much to cope with - the grass is fast running out, but there is still plenty of baleage for them. We must be due for a warm, dry Spring! A few dairy farmers have already started calving down here in South Canterbury and the rest will be hoping the bad weather will be over for the next couple of months.

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to Northland, in April (for the AGM). It is a very pleasant part of the country to visit at that time of the year - scenic and peaceful. The overnight stays at Omapere and Taipa Bay were too short - they really were relaxing, beautiful spots and one of these days we'll go back and stay longer! Thank you so much to all the Northland breeders who treated us so well - great food, friendly welcomes and well fed cows (despite the flooding they had just had 2 weeks previous). We were impressed with the quality of the stock we saw. I know they have had a lot more bad weather since then and we understand how disconcerting things become.

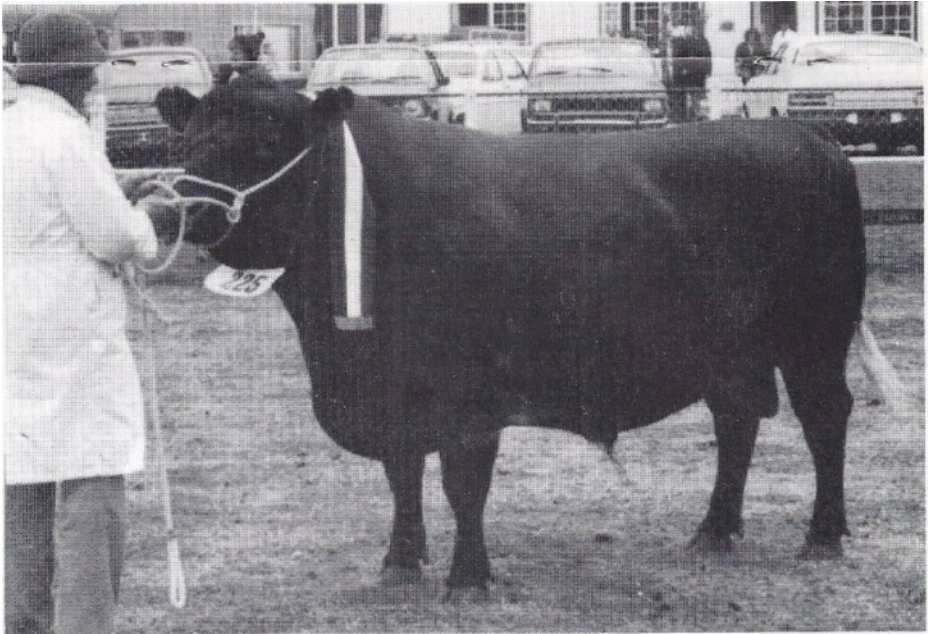
We had the Aussie family home in early June for a long weekend and managed to get the whole family together for an evening, which was lovely. We decided against going on the World Congress trip because we felt it was too long, and Mike didn't want to go for just part of it. In hindsight, we are pleased we stayed at home with the winter being so wet.

We did manage a night away in Dunedin, with the Methven family, to watch the Lions/Highlanders match. It was such an exciting game and Forsythe Barr Stadium is such a good place to watch rugby. It is so central in Dunedin and we had wandered through downtown Dunedin and had an early evening meal

before joining the crowds of fans making their way to the stadium - a great experience for the three grandchildren. It was very helpful having a 10 year old rugby-mad grandson pointing out which players were which. I do hope Christchurch builds a similar stadium in the not too distant future.

Wishing you all an enjoyable, sun-filled Spring calving.

Anne & Mike McSweeney



Willow Lea Rock

Exhibited by M. D. R. Munro.

Supreme Red Poll, 1979 Royal Show, Invercargill.

Sired by Larkhill Bottler

Rock was also All Breeds Champion at the Otago Summer Show, 1979
Photo from NZ Red Poll Herd Book, Vol 34

Bulls Imported by Willow Lea Stud - LARKHILL BOTTLER

Larkhill Bottler was selected for Willow Lea by Brigadier Hurst before he came over to New Zealand for our 75th Jubilee celebrations. Larkhill Bottler was sired by Larkhill Robbery from Larkhill Red Harlequin. We imported him in 1971.

The first notable calf by Larkhill Bottler was Willow Lea Rock, born 20th of October 1975, out of Christina 16, our Champion cow. The bull calf was specially requested by Mel Munro (Seaview Stud). I agreed with Mel's request for a bull calf out of our Champion Cow and can still remember placing the calf in the boot of Mel's car to transport the calf home from Willow Lea to Waikouaiti.

Mel must have done a great job rearing the calf on milk powder as the he grew out to be a stunning bull and went on to win the Meat And Wool Cup at the Dunedin Show in 1979.

Larkhill Bottler was used for maternal mating.

Two sons of Larkhill Bottler's were Willow Lea Omega (purchased by Robert Campbell) and Willow Lea Optmist (purchased by John Watson).

Larkhill Bottler was used from 1973 to 1974. He left a very strong line of heifers.



Larkhill Bottler, imported from Australia by Fleming and Son. Champion bull, Royal Show 1974.

NB Bottler semen was also used with great success in the late 1990's by Ross McKibbin, "Oldfields" herd – and maybe some other herds too. [Editor]

A couple of pertinent poems from Robin about the Tour

A QUIET DAY IN THE HEIFER PADDOCK

They gathered in the paddock with Red Bands on their feet
They'd come from distant places our cattle for to meet
So the heifers had been marshalled in an organised array Quite
relaxed and munching on bales of meadow hay
The viewers cast their eyes across the placid herd
Then discussed the finer points as they nodded and conferred
The cameras and the cell phones clicked, capturing the scene
While the editor made notes on whatever she could glean And
all the while the heifers ignored their honoured guests More
interested in the hay than photo pose requests
'Till the visitors got in their cars and quietly drove away. Totally
unfazed, the heifers finished off their hay.

Robin Shepherd

21 April 2017.

EVIDENCE FOR THE FAMILY COURT

D N A D N A
Genetic markers all display
Unique ID, like barcodes do
Showing parental lines that one can view;
Such information is beyond dispute
Even if a sire refutes
The evidence, which indicates
He'd found ten heifers to be mates.
His protesting innocence will fail -
All bellowing to no avail.
There's really nothing he can say
With his markers in calves' D N A.

Robin Shepherd

22 April 2017

HOUTO REPORT

It's hard to believe that it's July already. 2017 started rather sadly for me as I lost the first Purebred Red Poll cow that I bought to start my Stud, Woodcocks Esmay. She came from Jimmy and Dianne Tatt.

On New Year's Day, I found her stuck in a trough. She was sitting with her legs under her, but she couldn't get out as she was jammed in and couldn't rock forward enough to stand up. We lifted her out with the tractor but unfortunately she had been in the cold water too long and had hypothermia. She died later that evening.

Sadly the neighbour later informed me that he had seen her in the trough in the morning but didn't think to tell me until late in the afternoon, by then it was just too late. She was 18 years old, so I guess it was a bit much to hope for, that she could have recovered from such an accident.

*Woodcocks Esmay by
Birchwood Endeavour 53 ex
Martinvale Kings Younger*



I was very much looking forward to the Herd tour in April and getting to see everyone, so it was with great dismay, that I found myself with a broken leg on the 25th

of March. With my Autumn calving mob due to start calving any day I was really struggling to manage the farm and the cows, but with help from my amazing family and friends we managed to get it done.

My cows were true to their breed and managed to have a trouble free calving for me, with 18 calves being born unsupervised and left to their own devices for most of the time. By the time the Herd Tour got here I had managed to get a plan worked out and it was a huge thrill to have everyone visit and have a look at my stock. The weather played nice and the day turned out very well.

I was very happy with all the kind remarks that people had to say about my cows.

The weather since then has been appalling and the winter has turned out to be very wet so we have the usual mud and floods happening. I am always amazed how well the cows' feet stand up to the constant wet conditions. I was very lucky to only have to spend 8 weeks in a cast with my leg and now am back to full speed running the farm; needless to say I am a lot more careful about getting around in the mud than I was before I broke it.

I hope everyone is getting through winter without too much trouble and stress.

*Kindest Regards
Nina Walker*



Woodcocks Ego (2 years) by Birchwood Endeavour 53 ex W. Esmay. According to herd book. Ego was inbred, as W. Esmay was also by B. Endeavour 53.

Woodcocks Edwina by Roger Palmer's Woodstock MT (by Oakwood Muscle Tone) out of Woodcocks Esmay.

Calf at foot by Woodcocks Nero (by Birchwood Prime Optimist 66)



RANGITIHI RED POLLS, Spring Report

After a great autumn, winter has brought us down to normal with rain in very generous quantities. Four floods in four weeks.

So far we have managed to find grass for cattle but we need a break in the rain soon. Stock are in good condition despite the weather which today has turned cold with just 14 degrees.

We sold a line of weaner bulls in late May for the strong market rates and a line of weaner heifers have been bought by a local couple who have taken a real fancy to Red Polls and are setting up their own herd with those young stock plus some in-calf Red Poll cows.

The three year old first calvers are about to drop their calves from a Charolais bull. We wait with great interest to see what those are like.

Our neighbours who run beef cattle, decided to take three months holiday, where they expected sunshine and no mud. That sounds very pleasant but the farm sitter is quickly learning about mud and flood.

We are thinking of those of you who are knee deep in snow. I have been told that the severe weather kills the bugs.

Gena & Robin Shepherd

RAS News via Mark Fleming

We have just had the RAS conference again. I have been voted back in as Chairman for the Beef again. We are dealing with MPI on a new disease going through the North Island which is a concern. MPI is trying to pass the buck as usual. The disease you may be aware of is Theileria which is a wasting disease that is transferred by Ticks. Other ongoing issues are with individual Breed Society problems; one being the management of the three Highland Groups. Personalities and showing ethics seem to be the issues there. Also ongoing is how our Royal shows will be set up going forward. Auckland A & P have their own right to use the Royal word now. They went to Clarence House to clarify and apply for the use of the word. So everyone is happy that issue is now put to bed.

Cheers, Mark



Houto Quade by Garthmyl Toreador out of Garthmyl Quantum pictured at Shepherd's; taken on the 2017 herd tour



Doug D'Oliver (Australia) & Judy Evans at Alspach's

ADVICE

"I want to be a farmer, like you." the young lad said
"I want to be a farmer, it's the vision in my head
I want to be like you Dad and have a cattle herd
I want to be a farmer and that's my final word."
"Well son I see you're really keen to be working on the land
But let me tell you something before you try your hand.
Farming has its ups and downs and changes day by day
Farming is not easy work and all rolling in the hay
There's times when on the darkest night you're out there in the rain
Then six hours later you're struggling waist deep in a drain.
Or it could be that you're in the race helping birth a calf
Pulling hard to get it out and that is not a laugh
Or if it is a good day then you're riding round and round
Bored to death from discing ten acres of rough ground.
Or you might be on the boundary where the heifers have got through
And are making friends to neighbour's bull, number twenty two
Or you could be admiring the bumper crop of hay
Ready for the baler when a rain storms comes your way
And I tell you lad there is no fun shooting your prize ram
Because he got pneumonia swimming in the dam
And when you work July to June, then calculate your tax
The accountant says that IRD will sting you to the max
And the OSH inspector caught me out without a safety hat
They fined me twenty K for a little thing like that
And then that line of heifers sent up from Taupo way
Turned out to be reactors and there was nothing I could say.
So if you want a farming life of gentlemanly ease
Then wed an earthy girl who will always want to please
And loves the rain and winter mud no matter wet or cold
And you can lead a life of ease and so delay getting old."

Robin Shepherd

STRATHWELL REPORT

Well what a turn around, from three years of drought I think the soils are at field capacity since the last rain receiving 100mm in a day and half. On Easter Friday I canoed down the Selwyn River from the main South Road to the back of the farm but this recent flood was hugely bigger than we received in 2000.

The forecast was well documented which allowed farmers time to move stock to higher ground. I moved our cows on Friday morning; the photos of the flood were taken a day later. I have never seen shingle moved so far along the paddock from where it originated in the adjacent creek. There must be over 100 ton of shingle on top of good soil in some places which will take time to rectify. *[See photo on left below]*

When it's this wet it's hard to find anywhere dry enough to hold stock and to provide shelter at the same time snow is forecasted to come. At least calving hasn't started yet which is a good thing. Despite this cold spell all cattle have held up well with good condition and like their owners looking forward to a warm Spring.

Ian & Anita Fleming.

Shingle across the paddock



Selwyn River in flood



UK STORY -THE BLEDISLOE TROPHY & MORETON PERCY

The Bledisloe Trophy was donated to the society in 1956 by the then Lord Bledisloe to be competed for at Royal Agricultural Society of England (R.A.S.E.) shows. It was first awarded to Sir Merrick Burrell with Knepp Royalist, and was awarded to many famous bulls in the Society including Mistley Linking Licias, Foxearth Paddy (who can be found in the pedigree of many of the AI bulls in store), Sandilands Romeo and Pinpur Intercontinental. With the demise of the RASE show in 2009 the trophy was returned to the Society and is now awarded to the bull whose offspring score the most points in shows in a calendar year.

In 2016 the trophy was awarded to Moreton Percy, a bull that not many had the pleasure of seeing and so I thought readers may be interested to know of his history.

Percy was born on the 27th April 2000 to the cow Moreton Fiona, bred and owned by Jack Birch, and sired by Datchworth Concorde (Bledisloe Trophy winner 1988). As many of you know, Jack was Helen's father and on retirement helped Pat McLaughlin with her herd, keeping a couple of his own animals with Pat's cattle. Percy was born at Marsh House and during that year I showed Fiona at several shows including the Three Counties and The Royal. This was the first year Giles Crisp (owner of the Uggeshall Herd) won "The Bledisloe Trophy".

It was at the Three Counties Show that I first met Denise and Graham Powell. They had an organic dairy farm in Herefordshire and Denise fell in love with the baby Percy, just two months old and following Fiona around on the halter. She wanted to buy him but he was destined to be castrated: we had no intention of keeping a bull for our couple of heifers.

Later in the show Paul Farndon came by (Paul's father had been stockman for Rosemary Philipson-Stow with her Underhills Herd) and was also impressed with the little Percy telling me not to castrate him. He convinced me to keep an eye on him and see how he progressed.

Suffice to say in December I phoned Denise and we agreed a deal over the phone and on 20th January 2001 Percy left Caverswall for a new home in

Herefordshire where he worked on the dairy cows and their Red Polls, until 27th May 2007, when he was sold to Clive Wills (*Ferndale Herd*) in Devon.



Moreton Percy aged 4 years at Denise and Graham Powell's farm in Herefordshire

Photo: Manceys

In June 2009 Helen and I were discussing which bulls to use on our herd that year, I said I wouldn't mind seeing if Percy was still alive. A couple of

weeks later I arrived at the Royal Show and on arrival was greeted by Diana Flack with the words, "Hi Terry, do you know anybody who wants to buy Moreton Percy?" We did the deal with Clive on the phone later that day and Percy was destined to come home.

Helen Arthan (Chorlton Lane) had hired our bull Moreton Lord Tobias (Bledisloe Trophy winner 2008) for the previous couple of years and so we agreed to share the cost and Percy went into joint ownership.

Now the problem was how to get Percy from Devon. After many discussions it was decided that it was too far with our aged trailer, so we had to find another way and the following took place.

At 6am on the 11th August 2009 Davey's Hauliers from Launceston, Cornwall, collected him from Clive Wills farm near Plymouth, with a small vehicle (no large vehicle access). They took him to Launceston and transferred him to a larger vehicle going to Sedgemoor Market, Somerset. Wick Williams, hauliers from Cheshire, hauled cull cows from Sedgemoor to Ashby de la Zouch and so they collected him and bought him to Derbyshire where I met them, and Percy finished his journey in our trailer, arriving at Caverswall at 7.30pm.

Before leaving I had prepared a paddock and put a heifer in to keep him company for a couple of days to help him recover: he was already nine years old. We let him out of the trailer; he immediately served the heifer (who had not been showing signs of being in season) and then ate the corn put out for him.

On the 27th May 2010 his first Moreton heifer, Moreton Baby Adelaide, was born at Caverswall to that service. It would have been Jack's 89th birthday. Over the next few years he mainly spent his summers in Caverswall and winters in Cheshire producing many more heifers than bull calves. Many of the heifers joined our show teams with great results.

We had Percy put to sleep at home in Caverswall on the 8th January 2014: he had been struggling with an arthritic hip. During his life he produced 40 registered Red Poll females and one registered bull.

During 2016 Percy's offspring were shown at many shows, notably The Red Poll National Show at Cheshire, winning the Dry Cow class and Reserve Female Champion with Moreton Lady Africa (also Champion female at the Three Counties 2015, 2016). Chorlton Lane Evanesca won the heifer class and Junior Champion. Chorlton Lane Albert won his bull class, and went on to be Champion bull and Reserve Show Champion, for Michael Paddock and Sarah Marsden. (Eaves herd) Together the three animals won the Progeny Group of Three. A fitting tribute to a wonderful bull.



Terry Mancey

Percy on his return to Caverswall.

Photo: Manceys

ROSEMARKIE REPORT

Home to a change in temperature and recently (mid July) a power of rain, over 5 inches in three days.

We thoroughly enjoyed our time away and catching up with everyone we had met previously on the last two international tours. It does not seem like three years since the last Congress & tour.

Spring has sprung with the arrival of 4 illegitimate Shropshire and Shropshire cross lambs. Fortunately official lambing is not due to start for another couple of weeks a good break between for recording purposes.

We kept only 20 cows this year for breeding, including two mated yearling heifers. Of course it is the year when there happens to be an outstanding demand for breeding females. We have 8 rising yearling heifers but only a 1 or 2 will be available for sale.

I'm looking forward to our calves by G14, Emir Alec. If all goes well, we would like to try backcrossing one of his sons (if there are any bulls by him) over some of Alec's half sisters.

Calving is due to start about the 22nd of August so looking forward to seeing the result of this year's mating.

Helen & Warwick

Photos Back Cover:

Top: Wilkshire Kingsley Junior.
Jeff Wilkins', "Wilkshire", USA herdsire. Sired by Tamihana Toms Kingsley CP

Bottom: Bull calves & dams at Bridsons in April, 2017.
Calves by Tamihana Favour Son

