

# Ceres Farm

Mid-North Coopworth Company

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MEMBER OF COOPWORTH GENETICS AND NZOSR  
FACIAL ECZEMA GOLD™ CERTIFIED  
WINNER OF 2012 & 2013 NZ SHEEP INDUSTRY AWARDS



## Newsletter 37, September 2013

As far as the weather is concerned, it was an extraordinary year. After the worst drought in 70 years we got the mildest winter since records began. The drought was of course far more difficult to manage than the mild winter.

Whilst lamb prices were already low, with the drought came very poor prices for store stock compounding a difficult financial year. Since a lot of stock was killed it is on the cards that replacement ewes and lambs will fetch quite good prices this spring.

At the annual Sheep Industry awards the MNCC flock again collected the award for top overall flock. Further, the MNCC flock was a finalist in both the reproduction and growth with meat categories.

It is also worth noting that again Coopworth flocks in general did very well at these awards.

### The MNCC Flock

Due to the severe drought conditions, for the first time in about 30 years I decided not to mate the hoggets. As a result the ewe hoggets look really good. Similarly the ram hoggets are in better condition than usual at this time of the year.

The ewes lambed well, but there has been a slight dip in ewe performance this year with less triplets and more singles. The good winter/spring weather provided an easier lambing period.

There is a new set of SIL graphs showing the progress of the MNCC flock on my website ([www.ceresfarm.co.nz](http://www.ceresfarm.co.nz)). There is still a steady climb in the traits I am breeding for, as one would hope! The only exception is ewe size (DPA). I have so far not been able to stop the ewes getting bigger. Perhaps with better fertility, more meat and milking ability this is to be expected. However, since SIL has quite heavy penalties for ewe size, eventually the right balance between ewe size and efficiency should be struck.

### Facial Eczema

Due to another reconstruction of the Ministry of Primary Industries, there will be a new structure and different personnel that carry out research on FE (what little there is still being done) at the Invermay Research Centre. The running down of what once were excellent research centres like Ruakura and Invermay should be a course of concern to all farmers! No doubt the cost of testing for FE tolerance will go up.

The only good news on this front is that there will possibly be a Facial Eczema DNA factor in the 5K SNP chip coming out in the next year or so. It should enhance the current FE test and give more information on the non-tested animals. Every 2th ram will have a BV (breeding value) for FE and will have blended BV's for other traits with the combining of DNA and recorded (SIL) information.

This should (in theory) enhance the accuracy of the forecast and, for me as a ram breeder, it will be possible to make an earlier assessment of the genetic value of the rams to be used in the recorded breeding flock. The use of ram hoggets should get quite a boost.

The FE Gold mark has made a good start and it is our hope that we will be able to restrict false advertising regarding the FE status of the flocks.

## MyoMAX

The incorporation of the MyoMAX™ gene into the flock is a slow but steady one. With so many traits to keep an eye on, I cannot go allow the use double MyoMAX (MyoMAX Gold™) rams only. That said, *all* rams in the MNCC flock should now have at least a single MyoMAX gene (including those for sale). This will give a steady increase of the MyoMAX gene in the flock and next year most ewes will also carry at least a single gene. Hopefully, I will get an increase in the choice of rams with MyoMAX Gold (i.e. a double muscle gene).

## Beef & Lamb

Later in the year, sheep and beef farmers will be asked to vote for a new entity to be formed by the amalgamation of SIL, Ovita and Zoetis with Beef & Lamb . It is mainly another way to finance SIL and sheep research, and this is unfortunately what is required to keep things going. With the demise of the Wool Board, SIL and sheep research generally have found themselves largely without funds and were kept going primarily from subsidies from Beef & Lamb.

The proposed solution will now be formalised and I hope you will vote for it. Since it is in New Zealand's best interest it should of course really be financed by the Ministry of Primary Industries... but that would be asking too much.

## Ewes for Sale

Like most years I will again have between 70-100 cull ewes and a similar amount of ewe lambs for sale. These ewes will make excellent commercial replacement animals and are recorded with SIL.

## Ram Prices

Although the indexes (DPP) of the 2th rams for sale have risen considerably, prices for rams have been adjusted to the same average as last year. All rams have an index of 2000 or higher, with most rams actually having an index above 2500.

FE tested & 4 <sup>th</sup> rams used 2013	\$ 1,500
SIL index ≥ 2700 to 2900	\$ 1,350
SIL index ≥ 2500 to 2700	\$ 1,000
SIL index ≥ 2000 to 2500	\$ 900

Please keep in mind that a good SIL recorded ram with good FE tolerance, fertility, growth, and carcass and fleece weights (all of which MNCC provides), is a sound investment in the future of your flock. The opportunity to invest in genetics of proven value has never been better.

As usual, this year's 2th ram selection list will be made available on the website by the end of October.

Please send me your ram needs either by returning the form on the next page, sending me an e-mail, or by phone.

As always, I wish you all a prosperous farming season and hope to see you in November.

Edward Dinger.



**Return this page to:**

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128 Baker Road,  
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**Orders by phone (07 827 8784) or email (rams@ceresfarm.co.nz) are also welcome.**

**Name:**

**Address:**

(Please include street number, your postcode and e-mail address)

**Telephone:**

**I need approximately..... rams from MNCC**

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Coopworths