

STRUCTURAL SOUNDNESS PARAMOUNT AT FOSSIL CREEK ANGUS.

Two cornerstones of the breeding programme at Fossil Creek Angus have always been fertility and structural integrity. Mating yearling heifers and condensed mating periods have contributed to high fertility rates for the Stud and our clients. This leads to more profitability for the clients and the wider industry.



Bill Austin in action at Fossil Creek

have locked into our programme.

Fossil Creek Angus is one of a small group of Angus herds in the South Island fully committed to selection for soundness and using independent structural soundness assessment to assist decision making in the bull sale selection process. It is amazing that even though we have many sets of eyes constantly scrutinizing the sale bulls, our Assessor Bill Austin has a very keen eye and years of experience is definitely worth the investment to get Bill and Judy in to do this independent analysis. To this end we have one of the lowest breakdown rates for structural related problems in our bulls, and remember that we have a full money-back 3 year guarantee on our bulls, not some dodgy 'behind the scenes auction credit' policy. Please remember that all of these structural scores are available on the sale bulls for your perusal, although an issue this year is not being able to get Bill on farm until after 'lockdown'.

We have led the way in the breed for maintaining structural soundness in the herd and the breeding cows in particular, some would say we are too strict in this area but we would rather it that way. Strict culling on all age groups of females annually results in a consistent type within the herd, with a focus on leg and pelvic structure and locomotion. Clean, smooth shoulders and an ability to hold their head up make for easy calving ability and helps with mobility on steep hill country as well. The Fossil Creek herd is renowned for calving ease and strong growth, and our focus is to use the appropriate genetics to lower mature cow size without sacrificing the growth and carcass weight attributes that we


EYES WIDE OPEN

The team at Fossil Creek Angus are urging all bull buyers and commercial cow operations to use the Angus NZ Self Replacing index and especially the Angus Pure index with extreme caution. The version of the model used to calculate the indexes is very out of date and with today's genetics is unable to filter out a large number of very undesirable animals with extremely poor maternal trait breeding values, simply because there is a very high weighting on 600 day weight (this has moved from a 2% weighting to a 22% weighting) hence dominating all other traits.

For example a sort of all Angus bulls born in NZ in 2018 that are potentially for sale carrying the Angus Pure Ltd classification and promoted as suitable for a commercial herd keeping all its replacements comes up with the following (anyone can do this by using the Breedplan tool) The number of bulls that fit the category is 1805

BUT

- 186 ARE IN THE BOTTOM 25% FOR CALVING EASE - WITH THE WORST AT -13.9
- 281 ARE IN THE BOTTOM 25% FOR BIRTH WEIGHT - WITH THE WORST AT + 8.8
- 380 ARE IN THE WORST 25% FOR MATURE COW WT - WITH THE WORST AT + 173 BEING THE WORST MATURE COW WT EBV WE HAVE EVER SEEN!
- 362 ARE IN THE BOTTOM 25% FOR SCROTAL CIRCUMFERENCE
- 263 ARE IN THE BOTTOM 25% FOR RIB FAT

We urge bull buyers to use the current Angus Indexes with extreme caution and even more so when using the Angus Pure  and  as primary or sole selection tools.

We also are very pleased to see the USA Angus Association, by far the largest in the world, have recognized that the one size fits all index system that they had (similar to New Zealand) is outdated. They commissioned New Zealand's own 'AbacusBio' from Dunedin to design and implement a new system based on the sub index or trait grouping indexes like they designed for Fossil Creek Angus about 5 years ago. We are really proud to have led the charge in this technology but disappointed that Angus New Zealand and some studs are still stuck in the middle ages, to the detriment of the industry. If we all select bulls exactly suited to each individual herd, (and not what a fancy marketing arm tells us) will make this will make a difference to profitability for the entire industry.

Look out for a Fossil Creek Angus 2020 Catalogue in your mailbox in mid-May and pick up the phone to any of us, anytime.

Kind regards,

Neil & Rose and Blair & Jane

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AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2020

In a world of uncertainty, it is refreshing to be in an industry that is absolutely essential to survival and underpins the economy. Farmers, Freight and Fertiliser have gone from public enemies to food producing heroes overnight. As one Ag company put it "we need to seek opportunities out of this uncertainty". Using NZ wool for face masks, delivering ready-made pasture-raised GM Free and Gluten Free NZ

beef meals to households around the globe with easy instructions around how to cook them and using social media as a friend rather than a foe to profile NZ farming practices to a world that is now even more obsessed with phones and devices than ever. It is business as usual at Fossil Creek,

however we know for a lot of you these are testing times with calf sale postponements, severe drought and meat works holdups.



Fossil Creek Cows and Calves Autumn 2020

M.Bovis Free Herd

It is in times like these we are reminded that biosecurity is our number one asset. With the new 'National Beef Survey' programme to test 2,500 herds for M.Bovis now on offer, Fossil Creek Angus took up the opportunity last month to ask to be included in this voluntary 'whole herd' testing regime. As a stud we believe this was a proactive move to ensure that our closed-herd system was water tight and it is essential that we can guarantee to our clientele and the greater beef industry around the country, that we are indeed M.Bovis free. We can now declare that the Fossil Creek Angus breeding herd is officially Mycoplasma bovis free and we suggest to all beef studs to take up the opportunity to be included in this whole herd testing regime.



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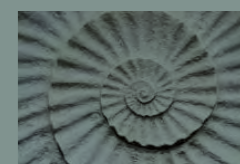
ROCK SOLID ANGUS GENETICS

FOSSIL CREEK 20TH ANNUAL R2 BULL SALE THURSDAY 11TH JUNE 2020

We are looking forward to hosting you at the 20th Annual On Farm Fossil Creek Angus R2 Bull sale at Ngapara in June, and we had hoped to make this a celebratory event to acknowledge our clients and Fossil Creek's commitment to the industry over the past 20 years and into the future. Rest assured, that no matter what the next 6-8 weeks may bring, we will have a robust plan in place to go ahead with the sale - this may have to take the shape with an 'online' element but the sale will go ahead, albeit with less socialising and more social-distancing. We had planned to showcase each of our 65 bulls in more detail online this year anyway (via our website and the Fossil Creek Facebook page) leading up to the sale, however we do hope that normal personalised bull viewing will still be able to take place by May. We will keep you informed over the next few weeks. Our catalogue will be sent out to you in mid-May with all details of bulls and sale logistics in it. Remember that you will be able to view all bull sale details online (NZ Angus online EBVs, or click via our Fossil Creek Website) at least a week or so before the catalogue arrives in your mailbox.



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'BEEFED UP'

The latest Rabobank Beef Quarterly report predicts the demand for beef in China to be extremely strong in 2020 and 2021, albeit now with post-Covid-19 logistical issues. With food security (both availability and safety) now at the top of mind more than ever, we are well placed to take advantage of this, but we need to ensure that all our meat is not in one basket – capturing high value European markets, the Asian lower value cuts and the American manufacturing markets in between these. This is with caution however even though African Swine Fever (ASF) resulted in Chinese Beef imports increasing by 51%, China is a country that has the ability to build hospitals in 10 days and could also rebuild their own protein supply in a fairly swift fashion as well! ASF has resulted in pork prices to triple in Asia, with beef and pork now equitable in pricing yet beef being more readily accessible. Blair and Jane's red meat study tour of Asia really demonstrated to them the texture-driven palates of consumers in China, where chicken feet and beef briskets were highly priced and valued items compared to chicken breast and fillet steak, which along with whole lamb roasts were lowly priced and sat unsold in supermarkets. Reduced red meat offerings from Australia due to drought have meant that there has been a redistribution of trade contribution



Fossil Creek Herdsire 'Tussock' and girlfriend

from New Zealand, with beef export receipts being 7% higher in the last quarter for us. However, it is concerning that we are simply being reactive to tightening global supply than proactive to what NZ has to offer all of the world's markets (not just Asia) and Jane has recently challenged our Trade Minister David Parker to focus on building new trade alliances and strengthening existing channels instead of being conveniently distracted by headline-hungry waterway activists in his other role as Environment Minister. Other countries are pushing trade deals at levels higher than ever seen before, with Brazil for example recently having 22 new plants approved for export into China and new European trade deals underway for both Australia and America.

We can have the cleanest waterways but without growing export receipts, we won't be able to fund health and education, let alone environmental initiatives.

NEW A.I SIRE PORTFOLIO FOR OUR 2020 BULL SALE

We are very excited to offer sons to you this year of three new Multitrait Super Sires that were used in our A.I and E.T programmes in 2017. Fossil Creek Angus is always trying to anticipate market trends and client requirements when choosing sires for matings and we believe we have done exactly this with these boys.

Our main A.I sire with a good number of sons available is

'LD CAPITALIST'. This proven bull is very powerful in phenotype and structural balance and he is a trailleader for calving ease but has moderate growth, great EMA and carcass weight but yet at the same time is likely to put good downward pressure on mature cow weight. Both indexes are very high and the fat EBVs higher than breed average. Capitalist is very well muscled and as the photo highlights is very stylish with a great outlook and masculine features.

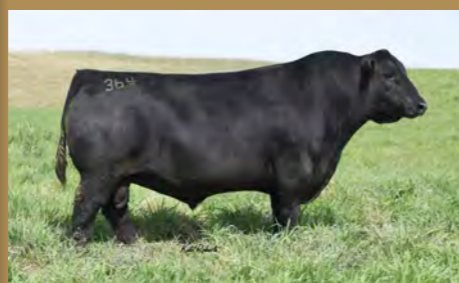


'LD CAPITALIST'

We will also have for sale a number of bulls sired by a son of Capitalist named **'MUSGRAVE STUNNER'**. Again he was selected for his extreme muscling, high growth but moderate birth weight and calving ease. His EBVs for carcass weight and fats are very high and both indexes are in the top 5%. Stunner is currently #1 sire in Canada for registrations and his outstanding dam recently sold for \$66,000 USD. We have used him in an extensive E.T programme at Fossil Creek Angus.



'MUSGRAVE STUNNER'



'GDAR REGULATOR'

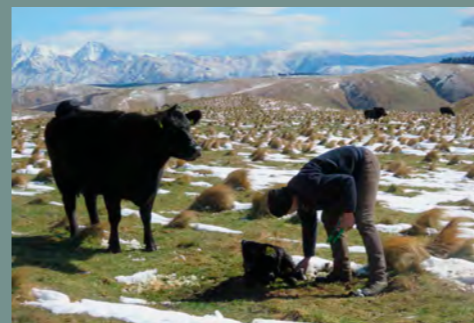
'GDAR REGULATOR' is another sire used in our A.I programme at Fossil Creek, siring sons for this year's sale. He is an amazingly sound, thick bodied sire from a great cow family at one of USA's most recognized maternal herds. Regulator sires moderate frame, calving ease and growthy progeny with very positive

fats. Another feature is great docility and great indexes, and is a really strong maternal breeding prospect.

PREMIUM OPPORTUNITIES

It is pleasing to see implementation of Alliance's new 'Hand Picked' premium beef from its Pure South stable of products. This now gives South Island beef finishers at least two high value options for their best beef products. Silver Fern Farms and Alliance each have their own set of specifications relating to age, PH, fat and meat colour etc, but both have a need for intramuscular fat to gain the best premiums. Some of our clients who are finishing their cattle have had premiums in excess of \$250 per animal. This adds a real challenge to the bull purchasers selection criteria, however careful use of EBVs should at least assist this process, as long as you are covering off the cornerstone traits first and foremost (you need a live calf on the ground that will be well supplied with milk and have a good growth rate and structure – a dead calf with high IMF is still worth nothing). Please feel free to ask us at any time for input into this selection process that is suited to your individual herd environment and at the same time meets finishing requirements for yourself or your calf purchaser.

FOSSIL CREEK FROM THE FIELD

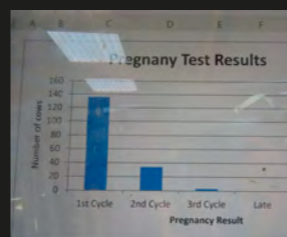


Blair Tagging Calves, September 2019

We certainly don't have to tell anyone what a challenging Spring/ Summer 2019 was. A mild Winter (with only one decent snow fall up on Blair and Jane's hill block where the Fossil Creek stud cows are run), followed by a particularly cold and windy Spring - and a Summer that seemed to have been missing in action altogether. We were however fortunate to pick up rain in February unlike many other areas in both Canterbury and the North Island, and we had some decent heat in March, before the frosts kicked in.

We had a great calving up on the hill block again this year - while it is always a challenge leaping around tussocks in snow to tag calves, we believe it is important that our girls are Wintered and calved up in the hills in genuine commercial conditions. We have a great crop of over 300 calves for our 2021 sale, from bloodlines including 'Earnsclough Tussock', 'HD Spotlight', 'Storch Oaks Everest', along with A.I calves from two USA multitrait specialist sires - 'Basin Payweight' and 'Hoover Dam'.

Mating this December (2022 sale bulls) included 'Fossil Creek Navigator', 'HD Spotlight', 'Earnsclough Tussock', 'Grampians Granite', and an A.I. programme for 120 cows using 'Musgrave Black Loch', 'Paintrock Trapper' and our own 'Fossil Creek Navigator' and 'Earnsclough Tussock'. We were delighted with the result 80%



in-calf rate for the R3 Heifers. We remain focused on a tight calving pattern, with a 50 day window for all matings (just over 2 cycles). This hard line policy will always pay dividends throughout a cow's breeding life.

CLIENT PROFILE – THE KING FAMILY

Gavin and Leigh King farm 1,100ha near Hororata in mid Canterbury. This includes a 400 ha snow-prone hill block, 'Roundtop' near Windwhistle. Just over 300 Ha is now irrigated from the Central Plains scheme. Oldest son, Fraser is now home following seven years as an Agribanker and will soon own some of the holding. Dougal, their middle son owns 'Heatherlea' nearby which is converted to a fully watered dairy platform milking 1,300 cows. 33 year old son Angus (great name) is a geologist currently contracted to a USA company at a Zinc mine at Red Dog, Northwest Alaska.

The Kings run an Angus commercial herd of 285 females which includes 80 R2 heifers. The herd is almost solely based on Fossil Creek bloodlines. All heifer calves are retained and mated to Fossil Creek specialist Calving Ease yearling bulls. The replacements are picked from the first cycle conceiving heifers with the balance fattened on fodder beet and killed. They winter graze 600 of Dougal's R1 and R2 replacement dairy stock, as well as 1000 of the dairy cowherd from Heatherlea.



The King farm team and Redmond family selecting calves at weaning, March 2020

Another 200 R1 & R2 mainly Dairy/beef fattening cattle are also wintered - yes that adds up to 2300 cattle over winter. Fodder Beet features prominently coupled with in-house supplements and bought in ryegrass straw. 100 ha of mainly cereal crop and 4,300 breeding sheep round out this diverse farming enterprise.

The Kings have been buying Fossil Creek Angus bulls almost exclusively for over 20 years right from the days when the stud was located in North Canterbury and bulls were sold in the paddock.

The Kings are well-versed at selecting Fossil Creek bulls in the mid-range price bracket that deliver high end results and they historically topped the Canterbury Park calf sales before deciding to sell their steer calves privately. Moderate growth bulls with strong maternal backgrounds are selected, with docility being of paramount importance.

More recently all steer calves are sold to the Redmond family who farm at Pendarves, near Ashburton. The Redmonds buy around 1000 Angus calves per year and are strong believers in performance genetic- only buying calves with proven higher and quick growth backgrounds. "The Kings cattle have consistently delivered at the high end of these selection goals. Many go to Five Star Feedlot @ 500kg in Nov to Jan and others to Countdown in the Summer and Autumn at 320 kg cwt. John McKone, PGGW Genetics Specialist." The steers are finished on grass, maize silage and surplus potatoes. As an interesting side note, check out Amanda King's amazing fine art photography (including some great Angus bull art) at www.bythehorns.co.nz or FB @ByTheHornsPrints

CALVING EASE – UPDATES TO EBV CALCULATIONS

Some considerable modifications were implemented into the software motherhood that is used to calculate the Calving Ease Direct and Calving Ease Daughters EBVs in December 2019. This included improved modelling of genetic groups, a revised procedure for handling calving difficulty scores, and a revised procedure for handling of genomic information. Importantly, the new Calving Ease EBVs now provide a better estimate of each animal's breeding value.