

## ANGUS NZ – UPDATE ON INDEXES

Some of you may have noticed or heard that the official Angus NZ indexes have been suspended as at mid August. After hundreds of hours of Neil's time and effort to make breeders aware of flaws behind the calculation of these indexes the board has finally investigated and confirmed that the mechanics calculating the indexes had in fact been changed five years ago by a member of our society that had no authority or mandate to do so.

This person has acted totally recklessly, and has put all NZ Angus breeders at risk of liability of claims for misrepresentation under the Fair Trading Act, and especially those breeders using the AngusPure index as a marketing and sales tool rather than a breeding tool.

Neil has repeatedly communicated his concerns about the makeup of the Angus indexes to both 'AngusPure' directors and 'Angus NZ' directors for the past four years and had been threatened, bullied, intimidated and had suggestions about our stud being deregistered simply for being a whistleblower working with the industry's best interests in mind.

More recently Neil and Rose have had to defend a defamation case against them personally relating to Neils lobbying about these risks.

Fossil Creek Angus has endured criticism by Angus NZ Boards and members for rejecting those 'official' indexes and using the Abacus Bio Subindex system to protect our clients from misinformation and five years damage to their cowherds, if they were to make decisions based on those misrepresented indexes. Its been a bloody long haul to make the industry see they were taking commercial breeders down the wrong rabbit hole, and we are so pleased for both your sake and ours that we stuck to our guns. A thanks to Neil for his tenacity on this issue.

## DISCUSSION GROUPS

Blair and Jane host a number of discussion groups of farmers at their hill block throughout the year and so

please remember if your group is looking to go on a tour at any stage throughout the year, we have an open door policy to anyone that would like to come and spend a few hours looking around and chewing the fat on anything. Best to keep Jane away from Politics until after the election as you may need to put a couple of days aside to cover off the wide range of debacles up for discussion!

Also, please remember that we welcome anyone to come and view the Fossil Creek stud herd, the young stock and each cohort of sale bulls at any time. Contact us at any time and we will make it work. It is important that you come and see that we really are practicing what we preach, and running the herd under genuine commercial conditions.

## FOSSIL CREEK FACEBOOK

Love it or loathe it, social media is here to stay and we actually find it a really great way to keep you up to date with action at Fossil Creek – including footage of cattle mustering and updates on each year group of animals. Please find us on Facebook (@fossilcreekangus) and push 'Follow' or 'Like' to keep in touch with what we are up to. A reminder that our website [www.fossilcreekangus.co.nz](http://www.fossilcreekangus.co.nz) has the links to our latest Facebook posts and also key information such as current Herdsire pedigrees.

## THE LEGEND LIVES ON

A Fossil Creek Angus Herdsire that will go down in the history book as one of our cornerstone bloodlines is the mighty 'Storth Oaks Everest J20'. He is still living the dream up in the tussocks at the hill block with the other herdsires. You may recall that Everest is a Rennylea Edmund son and now has 198 registered progeny on the ground.

He is a strong bull with a flawless dataset – a true multi-trait leader for New Zealand. With a huge scrotal area, high fats and marbling, he one of the most consistent breeding bulls ever used with a low birth weight and short gestation length, yet a high 600 day weight. It is nearly impossible to find sires like this that excel in both Maternal and Carcase traits. Everest will have some fine sons for sale in our upcoming 2021 auction.



Please pick up the phone to call any of us at anytime during the year, we welcome discussion/feedback and having a general yarn. Again, we welcome you to visit and we hope now that lockdown is behind us that we can get out on the road and see your beef herds in action.

Kind regards, *Neil & Rose and Blair & Jane*



[www.FossilCreekAngus.co.nz](http://www.FossilCreekAngus.co.nz)

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# WINTER NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2020

## 2020 SALE

A big thank you for your support of our 20th Annual on-farm Fossil Creek Bull sale. While we went very close to the wire of still being under the shadow of Covid, the timing was fortunate to have just come out of restrictions that week of the sale. Everyone was ready for a long overdue catch up and this was reflected in the number of people (and the steak and refreshments consumed afterwards!). We were particularly impressed with the Southland buyers that flew up by plane and landed at a nearby airstrip, a pretty dedicated effort in the midst of a North Otago Norwester. We really value your support of our genetic programme and the feedback on our no-nonsense approach to ensuring that we produce what the industry needs and wants – without fear or fanfare. Our greatest reward is seeing Fossil Creek genetics working in a myriad of environments around the country (and abroad) and production that is directly making a difference to your herd's production and profitability.

Thanks to our dedicated and focused clientele the Fossil Creek Angus sale was one of the more consistent anywhere in the country – with an even gallery of bulls and (unlike further North) no underpinning of the sale from stud buyers looking for a headline or two. Our focus is fairly and squarely on the commercial beef breeder, to ensure that you can choose from a sizable selection of bulls that will be suited to your needs, without being chased out of the bidding by 'behind the scenes credits' and large corporate cheque books. The 2020 sale was very strong right through to the last lot and an almost a full clearance of bulls indicated there was a consistent base of great bulls for everyone. Each year our phenotype throughout the lineup becomes more even and we are extremely proud that our sire selection programme seems to be cementing in the many traits that our clientele seek for improving their bottom lines. Many of you seem to place a strong emphasis on trying to combine as many of these traits in a good looking and sound, docile package.

[www.FossilCreekAngus.co.nz](http://www.FossilCreekAngus.co.nz)

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**FOSSIL  
CREEK  
ANGUS**

ROCK SOLID ANGUS GENETICS



We have always had a policy of full refund on any bull that becomes unsound within three years of purchase based on a pro rata system. Many studs insist on simply giving a credit on next years bull purchase but we believe that this is a bit sneaky and it is a system fraught with problems including ultimately trapping buyers into a potential treadmill which is hard to get off. We back our product and are proud of our very low rate of bull breakdowns, and attribute this to the very fussy 4 pairs of eyes (and independent experts) that make sure that only the most robust bulls make the cut for sale day. The size of our herd allows us to be ruthless in our sale day selection and this is also underpinned by structural assessment and semen testing regime.



**FOSSIL  
CREEK  
ANGUS**



## Fossil Creek Bull Open Days

The concept of running three open days over a couple of weeks was a total success in May and June – holding three outstanding afternoon sessions with great attendances and our clients got plenty of one on one time to quiz the four of us on a whole raft of topics. We thoroughly enjoyed the interaction with so many of you because time for in depth discussion on sale day tends to be very limited. Thank you for taking the time to attend and do your homework on the bulls you were seeking, we intend on doing this again every year and might get Jane and Rose to up their game and do some catering for open days (however the way the country is going with the ‘feminazi’ regime, it will more likely be Blair and Neil in the kitchen!). By the way, Jane wrote that term feminazi so don’t hunt a man down for saying that!



## Buying Stud Bulls

We are often asked how we go about sourcing a bull suitable for the multitrait programme that we operate here at Fossil Creek. The short answer is that it is not easy. We have a shortlist of stud breeders who we feel have a similar set of breeding objectives to ours with both phenotype and genotype. Our requirements for docility and absolute structural soundness and fertility are non- negotiable. We then study in depth the Performance records of the bulls at those studs and use the internet solutions sorting facilities (that we outlined in our ‘tech notes’ to you in our April newsletter) to make a list of candidates which we then study the pedigree to look only for sires that align with our objectives. We look very carefully at the dams and grand dams calving and production records as the cow family criteria, which are extremely integral to the success of our programme.



Only then do we hit the road and view these potential stud bulls. It could be pretty hard to get the four FCA directors on the same page but because we have a very clear vision, this job is an enjoyable one.

## Introducing our new Herd Sires

This year we have retained a two year old Musgrave Stunner son from one of our top ET Donor cows Fossil Creek Prophet P136 and we welcome a ‘GDAR Regulator’ son from Earnsclough Genetics and a ‘Thomas UpRiver’ son from Te Mania Angus. Both outside sourced bulls passed the strict inspection both on paper and in the flesh and have pedigrees that fit what we believe our clients will require. ‘Fossil Creek Prophet’ , ‘Earnsclough Pisa Range’ and ‘Te Mania Powerman’ are now all on board at Fossil Creek, ready for the 2020 mating. We believe that all of these boys reflect the focus that we have on all maternal traits that pay dividends for you in the paddock.



Pisa Range, Powerman and Prophet

## Heifer Mating Bulls

We continue our programme of calving over 300 stud cows a year and with over 150 yearling bulls running around we will have plenty of yearling bulls available in the Spring. We are well supplied with great Calving Ease bulls for both beef and dairy yearling heifer matings. The feedback on Calving success from our clients yearling heifers is very good and we urge breeders to use a sufficient number of heifers and either multi-mate bulls and/or rotate the bulls. We strongly recommend that you either restrict heifer matings to 2 cycles only or alternatively overmate the group and only keep and calve down the heifers pregnancy tested positive in the first 45 days. We are seeing great improvements in overall herd fertility in our clients herds where mating periods of heifers and cows is restricted to a tight period.



## Fossil Creek – Update from the Field

Neil and Rose became grandparents to baby Rebeka in January and are looking forward to the borders being open again with Australia so that they can spend time with her as she grows. They enjoyed having their younger daughters Ella and Georgia at home from their tertiary and secondary studies during lockdown. Winter has been a very mild one thus far in North Otago (albeit with only 2 mls of rain in the past 2 months) with a lot of Winter yet to go, and no growth expected until October up where the Fossil Creek cow herd are at Blair and Jane’s hill block which sits at 550 – 600 m asl. The cows have worked their way around each hill block, spending nearly a month in each block and starting with the darkest lying blocks first that tend to totally freeze up and/or be hit harder with snow. Jane and Blair have welcomed Josh Scott and Ben Paton to the team at Newhaven in 2020, Josh hails from Dan Carter country in Southbridge and is playing rugby for the Union club at Ngapara and Ben grew up in Kurow (with his folks now at Grampians Station in the Mackenzie Country) and is playing for nearby Valley club and the North Otago squad.



Jack Price (Lincoln Student), Ben Paton and Josh Scott

## Global Feedback

It is always great to hear how New Zealand Angus Genetics are performing around the world. This is ‘Yxskafkalens Rex 861’, taken in Northern Sweden. This bull is sired by Turihaua Rex and from an embryo out of Fossil Creek Ibx 11 - 04 - one of the great donors in the Fossil Creek Herd. Thanks to Yxskafkälens Angus for the update!



## Powerful Genetics

In Spring 2018 we carried out a substantial AI programme up in the hill block yards, along with a sizeable Embryo/Donor programme utilising a number of our top Donor cows. Both programmes had a good success rate and we have a large number of rising yearling bulls and heifers sired by ‘Basin Payweight’ and ‘Hoover Dam’ and we will of course present these sons for sale at our next Annual R2 Bull sale in June 2021. Both these sires are exceptional multitrait specialists and were chosen to fit well with our maternal programme.



Basin Payweight



Hoover Dam



Freshly weaned Fossil Creek stud calves