

FARMING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

We had a group of teenagers here a couple of weeks ago on their first hunting experience including a young lad from overseas. We took them to show them our freshwater crayfish/ Koura, in a hill block 580 metres above sea level. We were amazed by how many hundreds of freshwater crays are now in the creek, the population of these has increased markedly in the past five years. The point is that we have done NOTHING different – they haven't needed a permit, resource consent, SNA protection, winter grazing plan or any other bureaucratic paperwork to help them thrive, we have simply farmed as usual beside them. If only our regulators would understand that we are all trying to do the best we can by farming for livestock, livelihoods and the environment then NZ would be far better off.



Please put our bull open days in your calendar now and look out for our Fossil Creek Angus 2023 Catalogue in your mailbox (and online) in mid May.

Thursday 18th &
Saturday 20th May.
1pm - 4pm.

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INSURANCE



It is extremely important that you take up the opportunity to insure your bulls on sale day. As an FMG Premier Sale, they offer you a good deal of 6.5% to cover the bull for a full 12 months following on from the automatic 14-day free cover offered on sale day. Please take the time to consider this as an investment in surety and a basic, sound business decision. We are not promoting FMG in any way but they will be present at the sale to talk you through the rationale behind this decision.



We look forward to catching up with you over the next couple of months and as always, we have an open door policy if you have the chance to come and view the bulls, the breeding herd and the calves in their natural environment to check that we are practicing what we preach.

Kind regards Blair, Jane, Neil, Rose



FOSSIL
CREEK
ANGUS

ROCK SOLID ANGUS GENETICS

AUTUMN APRIL 2023 NEWSLETTER

It is hard to believe that Autumn 2023 is upon us already, our thoughts go out to farmers that have been hit hard by the East Coast Cyclone in February. Nothing could prepare you for such a massive force of mother nature and to have houses, yards, farms and livestock under threat yet still help others in the wider community shows the genuine resilience of farmers. The best story we heard from a client was the Hawkes Bay farmer that hotwired a roading contractors digger that happened to be in their area for existing work (and was unreachable by the roading company), he then spent 10 days of his own time and fuel digging out the road to their valley then neatly replaced the digger back where it was. No resource consent, no traffic control permit, no cost to the ratepayer, just a few extra hours clocked up on the digger and a job well done. The other massive force heading our way is the relentless wave of impractical regulation, with no sign of reprieve even with post disaster recovery in the north, widespread drought in the south and markedly lower economic returns under an inflationary pressure cooker situation. We continue to push our industry representatives to take a far tougher stance on advocacy for all of these issues. Our sector's tolerance (and at times patronage) of the current coalition is untenable and there is a great risk that this will continue with an equally damaging new government post October.

Thank you for your continued support and for continuing to keep us on our toes to make sure we are breeding the right genetics for the right job. We are proud of the fact that Fossil Creek clients come to us not because of shiny marketing campaigns, headline grabbing stud bull sales or the Tui girls serving drinks and crayfish at our sale (we don't by the way!) – but because we are no-nonsense stud breeders that are passionate about providing good genetics that will perform for you, add profit to your bottom line and be structurally sound.

BULL VIEWING

Thursday 18th May
& Saturday 20th May

1.00 - 4.00pm

Newhaven Farms
434 Dunrobin Rd
Five Forks



BULL VIEWING DAYS

While you are welcome to come and view the bulls at any time leading up to the sale, these bull viewing days have been really well attended as the bulls will have their Lot Numbers on them and be sorted out into their auction order. It also gives you plenty of time to work your way through the catalogue and peruse the bulls at your leisure. These will be held in the afternoons of Thursday 18th May and Saturday 20th May at the sale venue, Five Forks. We hope to put on some better weather this year than the gale force norwesters last year!

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Herdsmen Pisa Range and Powerman captured by Jane in the snow



2023 BULL SALE

We are looking forward to presenting this year's bull line to you. In line with our conservative herd expansion (increasing quantity without compromising quality) we will have 80 bulls to offer at our sale this year. This is from a cohort of 180 bulls born, so we have been able to uphold a heavy selection pressure.

We have our first release of sons from Fossil Creek Prophet, Earnsclough PisaRange, Fossil Creek Quidproquo, Te Mania Powerman, Fossil Creek Qantas, along with Rockley Q7, Fossil Creek Navigator, Heatherdale Spotlight, Fossil Creek Quade and some nice A.I progeny from Musgrave Blackloch, KG Justified and Taimate Lazarus.

You can view our Herdsire EBVs by clicking on our website (fossilcreekangus.co.nz/herdsires) and we will of course have their full EBV details in the sale catalogue which will arrive in your mailboxes in mid May.

As usual, all bulls have been BVD tested, BVD vaccinated, parent verified, 50K DNA tested and will be independently Semen tested and independently Structural and Docility Assessed during April/May to give you extra confidence when making your purchasing decision on sale day. The cost of these assessments comes in at over \$30,000 a year but is an important ingredient in ensuring we present you with the most rigorously selected bull line up on the day when coupled with all of our other monitoring assessments during the year like IMF, calving stats and weight gains.

We will again be providing our 'Sub Index/ Star System' alongside the Bull EBV data in our catalogue centrefold (the only type of centrefold allowed these days!). The feedback has been that this greatly simplifies your bull selection process but unlike generic industry indexes (such as the flawed Self-Replacing Index which is an over-simplification and can lead you to buying a terminal bull for a maternal situation), it still gives you the power to decipher what type of bull will suit your herd and farming system.

RECALIBRATION OF EBVs

The tech gurus in Australia can't help themselves and have had a slight recalibration of some of the EBVs. We haven't noticed a great deal of difference except to see a change in overall in Eye Muscle Area EBV. We don't feel this is much cause for concern as the EMA is one of the least important traits in terms of profitability. Also with the wider acceptance of genomic data going into the EBVs (through our 50K DNA tests) there appears to be a widening of the range of EBVs in any given herd.



Fossil Creek Herdsire Quidproquo Q17

FOSSIL CREEK IN THE FIELD

With scanning and weaning done and dusted during March, we now have the chance to look at the weaned calves out in the tussock blocks. These calves seem to settle incredibly well within 24 hours and it's a great feeling to be relaxed about "releasing" them back into the hill blocks after weaning and we are rapt to see some very promising Musgrave Avenger and Millah Murrah Paratrooper calves coming through.



Freshly weaned Fossil Creek calves

We were pleased with our scanning results with a 93% in calf rate in the first 45 days in the 103 R2 heifers, and a 96% in calf rate in first 45 days in the 223 mixed age cows with only 5 dries. We have 350 stud girls calving this coming Spring and the tight calving pattern will keep Blair on his toes for tagging amongst the tussocks, a job made easier by fetal date scanning by Vet Dave Robertson so we know exactly when they are due to calve.

We often have comments from visiting farmers on our thickset cows – with a nice broad head and body depth but this is three decades of Fossil Creek breeding coming to fruition, not something that has happened by chance. While we do not want big cows on our hills, we want cows that have the constitution to survive a harsh Winter out the back of the farm without losing body condition and then Spring up well in September, even though grass growth doesn't appear again until mid October.

Jack Price (who has been with us since he was a high school student) has secured a great stock manager role in Canterbury and we will welcome Jonty Jennings from Southland to the team in late May. Jess Lake from Waitaki Girls' High School has started one day a week work experience with us and Ben Paton continues to be a key part of the team here.



Weaning time at Fossil Creek

Neil and Rose are enjoying living in Weston and travelling out to help with the myriad of monitoring in the stud and have also been busy with their two little granddaughters, spending time with them both over in Australia and here when they visited with Amelia in February. Ella and Georgia are busy with their tertiary study and work in Dunedin and have exciting careers ahead of them. In regards to team Smith, Charlotte and Henry are both at boarding school now and George (aged 11) is busy juggling a farming career with the occasional attendance at Five Forks school when it fits around calf weaning, lambing, crutching and teacher strike days.



COMPARING APPLES WITH APPLES

Fossil Creek Angus is again pleased to be at the forefront of improving outcomes for our clients and our Beef industry. We are pleased to be independently engaged in some exciting developments with Jason Archer and the Beef and Lamb Genetics team. At Fossil Creek we have one of the larger datasets on Fetal aging in-utero calves conducted by our Vet, Dave Robertson, one of the best in the business. BLG took our data and analyzed it and have written a paper where they concluded that accurate fetal age scanning can be used to establish a conception date and hence a proxy for calving date. This proxy calving date can then be used as a baseline to measure other traits like growth rates but without having to physically monitor calving date.



This feature when coupled with DNA parentage verification opens up a new chapter for R&D in commercial beef cattle.

We are also in the early stages of an investigation into the use of electronic cow management tags in yearling and 2 1/2 year old first calver's to further research puberty timelines and return to oestrus after first calving. This work is really exciting and enabled by the huge advances in technology.

We have engaged Abacus Bio Ltd to update the subindex suite which our herd has successfully offered to our clients to take the hassle out of sorting EBVs and the myriad of confusing data. We have partnered with a group of other like minded studs to try and expand the base of this great system.

It will likely look a bit different from what we have been offering but the simple star system will still exist but we have to shuffle the right deckchairs with respect to the EBV emphasis, to take account of changes in understanding especially in some of the essential maternal traits. Be sure to read the new explanations for the indexes in the front of the catalogue when it arrives in mid May.