

GENOMICS

All Fossil Creek calves are genotyped and have had their EBV accuracy strengthened by the addition of genomic data. This '50K' DNA testing comes at a considerable cost (as we test all calves born) but gives our young cattle more accurate EBVs and is a valuable double-check for our tagging at birth process. It potentially speeds up genetic gain, as it is vastly more accurate than generically assuming that progeny inherit 50% of genes from their Dam and 50% of genes from their Sire, which is seldom the case in practice. While a large investment, we believe that every stud has the responsibility of utilising this technology to assist with greater NZ-wide genetic gains and it will be good to see more studs investing in Genomics in the future.



YEARLING BULLS FOR YEARLING HEIFER MATINGS.

Each year we have a select number of Yearling bulls for sale – we do this via private sale so that we can carefully match these young bulls with the client herd's requirements and overall breeding objectives. We do not lease bulls out due to the biosecurity risk and we find it hard to fathom that there are some studs still doing this, especially when some are leasing out to the dairy industry before bringing them back into the beef bull herd to sell as R2s. Unlike some coastal stud operations with plenty of year-round grass, these boys are literally on the hillblock in the snow/dust/mud at 580 metres above sea level until late September so to get them up to speed to hold an auction would be a tricky task - we prefer to sell them as required during late Spring. Give Blair a call on (027) 4324154 to discuss your yearling bull requirements, orders ideally need to be in before the end of September so that we can ensure that you get the best match for your herd.

PROTECTING YOUR INVESTMENT

Your bull team are a valuable genetic asset and we don't need to remind you that they need to be well looked after when they arrive on-farm. Bulls and rams used to be "forgotten about" for most of the year in a paddock behind the dog kennels but this is a thing of the past due to their value at purchase time and what they can earn your herd in genetic gains. They don't need mollycoddling but as they are not over-fed while here at Fossil Creek they will still be growing when they arrive and need to be fed at a moderate level that allows them to grow without becoming too overdone, ideally on a hill that ensures that they are kept fit. The insurance industry have recently stated that they are astounded by the low uptake of bull insurance in NZ – you wouldn't buy a new ute or side-by-side and not insure it, so please take advantage of the insurance deals to insure them for the first 12 months. We wish you a kind Winter and productive Spring and should you get the chance, we would love you to visit the Fossil Creek breeding herd and young stock any time to check that we really are practicing what we preach. We are always on the other end of the phone to chew the fat with you on anything beef, bulls and breeding.

Kind regards,
Blair, Jane, Charlotte, Henry and George



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THANK YOU

What a sale on June 10th! We really appreciate your support and thank you to all bidders and underbidders for your faith in Fossil Creek genetics for both your breeding and finishing requirements. We feel humbled by the great distances that people travelled in order to get to our sale, those that joined us online and the homework our clients did beforehand to select the right bulls. We also appreciated the people that travelled from the deep South along with the North Island to get to our bull open days leading up to the sale. This year's sale was of course dedicated to Fossil Creek founder, Neil Sanderson who sadly passed away two months before the bull sale. It was a fitting tribute indeed to have a strong bull line-up, a well-supported sale and then for Lot #4 'Fossil Creek Urban U032' to sell for our stud record of \$71,000 to Shian Angus in the King Country - this was the icing on the cake in remembrance of Neil and his passion for beef breeding.

While we were pleased with the demand for our genetics from stud breeders throughout the country, our focus continues to be our loyal commercial clients first and foremost. It is important to us that we stay 'true to type without the hype' and consistently produce robust bulls that are value for money. We have recently returned from bull sale week up in Gisborne and were astounded (and at times aghast) at the prices that commercial buyers are paying for their bulls up there. It was good to see that our Otago/Southland Angus bull sales were well supported but without the high averages that tend to occur north of the Waitaki River and beyond. We aim to consistently offer 80 bulls for sale at auction, out of 180 bull calves born each year. This keeps quality at a high level yet allows a good number of bulls to be up for offer, with something for everyone.



Lot #4 in the ring



Clients Ashleigh and Matt from Tutira, Hawkes Bay with Fossil Creek stud cows in the snowline, day after the sale



Bull inspection time





FOSSIL CREEK SKETCHER



TE MANIA RUSTLER



TIMPERLEY THUNDERSTRUCK



FOSSIL CREEK RIPCURL



MARTIN FARMING ASWEAN

FOSSIL CREEK HERDSIRES

It is always exciting to watch the next cohort of bulls (and their heifer sisters) grow out over Winter up on the hill block and we will have a strong offering of sons of both proven performers and promising new bloodlines for our June 2026 sale.

This will include sons from Fossil Creek Ripcurl, Te Mania Rustler R300, Fossil Creek Tangent T080, Stokman Solution S329, Timperley Thunderstruck, Fossil Creek Sketcher S293, Tehama Testament and Martin Farming Aswan 2991. The strength in this lineup is pretty exciting as we are focused on ensuring an even lineup of bull (both on paper and in the pen) year in, year out. With a large number of sons (and daughters) from each sire this allows us to analyse whether they are producing consistent lines of offspring that are structurally sound and meet performance milestones.

FOSSIL CREEK REFLEX R228

We travelled to Gisborne in late June to attend the Tangihau Bull sale near Gisborne as there were 16 sons of 'Fossil Creek Reflex R228' in the Tangihau sale (Reflex was Lot 31 at our 2022 sale, he sold to Tangihau stud for a bargain price of \$14,000).

These 16 Fossil Creek Reflex sons represented 30% of the bulls up for offer in their sale. We were really pleased to visit Reflex himself in the herdsire paddock before the sale and to see him in fine form, (albeit carrying a hell of a lot more weight than we would in our herdsires down here!) After two matings on steep hills matched with a large number of cows (he has 110 progeny on the ground), he was as sound as ever in structure including impeccable feet which is a necessity in their steep, slip-prone hills.

The 16 Fossil Creek sons sold for an eye-watering average of \$35,000/bull - including a new NZ record of \$161,000 along with others at \$110,000 and \$58,000. We were really pleased with their type, bone, structure and EBV package. It was a rewarding sale to attend – to see these boys in the auction ring and also to know that their sire Fossil Creek Reflex has left a hell of a lot of strong male and female progeny and is still going strong. Reflex could possibly be the cheapest record-breaking sire bull ever sold when you look at his return on investment for Tangihau. We are really pleased that Dean and the Tangihau team continue to use him to full capacity and we look forward to watching the continued progress of his progeny.



Fossil Creek Reflex R228 in the Tangihau herdsire paddock'



2 of the 16 Fossil Creek Reflex sons at the Tangihau sale

E- STAR – MAKING THE BULL SELECTION PROCESS MORE STREAMLINE

The Bull buying process can be a complex one. EBV tables can look more confusing than an ACC invoice and this isn't helped by stud marketing hype and the pressure of an auction situation.

For those of you that have been on the Fossil Creek journey with us for a few years, you will know that following genuine concern that generic industry indexes often lead to poor bull buying decisions, Neil took the bull by the horns 8 years ago in an effort to come up with a more accurate suite of indexes. The existing Angus NZ 'Self-Replacing' Index is too focused on the 'days to calving' trait and doesn't give separate weighting to important maternal traits verses terminal traits - meaning two bulls could have the exact same SRI figure but could be chalk and cheese in their data. It is concerning how many bull buyers still only compare bulls and studs on their Self-Replacing Index figure.

For the past 8 years, Fossil Creek has engaged the genetic gurus at Abacus Bio to run all our sale bulls through a more comprehensive 'sub-index' system. Due to interest from other studs in our indexes, the decision was made in 2022 to improve and expand this concept even further and five other studs around the country joined us in the 'E Star' programme. This separates out crucial traits for each herd goal and puts them into a rationally-weighted index.

This was another pioneering move by Neil and he was pleased to see that the industry had taken it on board to make a similar move (through the N Prove programme) in the past 12 months. We are delighted that Neil got to see this as it was vindication that this was the right move by Neil all those years ago. We will continue to keep these indexes fit-for-purpose as they are another string to your bow as a bull buyer and information is power.



FOSSIL CREEK 'IN THE FIELD'

It was great to connect with so many people during our bull sale week and our two bull walk days. We really appreciate the feedback on our genetics and the results that you are getting out in the field, at calf sales and on your killsheets. It has been an unusually wet Autumn/ Winter so far here, making for delays in pre-lamb shearing and ewe scanning but we are looking forward to hopefully getting back into a fine/frosty pattern during July and August. Our thoughts go to those that have had more extreme weather over the past few months.

The 80 Fossil Creek stud R2 heifers have been making their way around the hill blocks keeping fit over Winter and are due to start calving at the end of August. The 280 mixed aged stud cows remain out the back of the hill block until calving and seem to be making a good job of chewing out the back blocks over winter.

Date-accurate pregnancy scanning allows us to keep them right out the back of the hill block and only bring them into medium tussock blocks just before their due dates for tagging/weighing at birth throughout September.

Ben Paton has now clicked over 5 ½ years with us, Millie Williams who joined us in December is settling in well and Archie Rooney comes out for one day a week from Waitaki Boys' High School as part of the 'Gateway' training programme. The Smith offspring (Charlotte, Henry and George) are managing to fit (some) study around their main focuses of sport, hunting, farming and possuming. Charlotte is first year at Otago Uni and Henry and George are boarding at Waitaki Boys' High School. Fortunately there is a school farm at Waitaki Boys' that tends to keep them well occupied with crutching lambs often taking precedence over class time.

Blair continues on his hockey crusade in the local Men's competition and Jane thinks she may even run another marathon this coming year, as it can't be any harder than the farming marathon we are all running every day. Rose enjoyed making connections with clients and fellow breeders during bull sale season and is grateful for all the messages of support and memory-sharing after Neil's passing back in mid-April. This has been a time to spend with their family from both Australia and New Zealand along with connections in the beef world from around the globe. Rose stays connected with Fossil Creek through helping out with data input and travelling down from her home in Tai Tapu when she can.



Tribute to Neil - April 2025



FOSSIL CREEK ANGUS



ARCHIE, LUCY, MILLIE, GEORGE, CHARLOTTE, HENRY - BULL SALE 2025