



# WAITAKI BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL FRASER FARM

## Waitaki Boys' High School Fraser Farm Update. May 2024

Like the entire New Zealand sheep and beef industry, Fraser Farm has had a challenging season with lower product prices and at times a shortage of moisture. Unlike much of the industry we are fortunate to have an irrigated farm with excellent water security and a community that helps us out in so many ways, as well as many willing and able helpers in our young Waitaki men. The Farm Committee carries on with a process of continual improvement of our wee business, keeping an eye on the long term. We are reminded of the saying that one of the biggest mistakes you can make in farming is have a short-term memory in what is a long-term business – or in the words of the school song, we will be *Strong to Endure*.

### Key points this month:

- Rams were joined with ewes on 24 March. This year we have had a change of ram breeder as Doug and Jeannie Brown retired from farming. Colin Elliott supplied some excellent looking South Dorset Down terminal sires, and we are eager to see their lambs on the ground.
- Last year we identified some drench resistance on Fraser Farm, of certain worm (internal parasite) species to most drench classes. This was not unexpected due to our quite intensive irrigated farm, so we made several management changes to address it with the assistance of Mat O'Sullivan of The Vet Centre. As we buy in 1-2 year ewes each year we should 'dilute' the problem over time, and we will avoid carrying most lambs late into the autumn when the main problem species of worm peaks. This year the last lambs went off on 29 April, and in future we hope to clear all lambs shortly after mating date. We will update you on tests next summer.
- Wool has been a missing 'icing on the cake' for sheep farming for some time. In an attempt to rectify this, we are trialing supply of wool to end product through AgWool, a New Zealand company. This entails us carrying some of the cost of processing and production, but we hope it will mean a much more significant share of the final retail price ends up behind our farm gate. In addition, we are looking at the possibility of having some non-uniform WBHS apparel to sell from the company we supply our wool to.
- Thank you to Lynn McCullough who donated 6 ewes (3 Border-Leicester and 3 Coopworth). We look forward to seeing how they go alongside the Perendale and Perendale-cross ewes we have.
- Thank you also to Jock McLeod who donated us some lucerne hay.
- Finally, as well as involving the boys in good farm management practice and making sure the farm is something everyone can be proud of, one of Fraser Farm's aims is to produce cash surpluses we can invest in the school. Congratulations to the boys who were awarded Fraser Farm Boarding Scholarships for 2024: **Connor Tait, Lochie Horn and Henry Hope**

