



*We have had another challenging season on farm in Southland with a dry summer and a falling schedule however good rain from mid March turned the grass growth around which also coincided with a welcome upside in livestock prices. Our first on farm sale of elite rams at our Open Day Ram in November went really well and will be a regular feature going forward. Other ram sales through the season have been good too.*

### Changes Ahead

Heather and I are planning on shifting off farm at some stage over the next 6 months with Russell and Philippa White taking on more responsibility on the sheep and beef unit at Nithdale. This includes the stud which I have been predominantly responsible for myself. Over the next 12 months I will still be involved during a 'transition phase' as Russell picks up the marketing and sales side of the stud as well. Long term I will be still involved in the overall direction of the stud and to some degree at sale time but Russell and Philippa will take on the bulk of this side of the operation too. Heather and I have been farming here at Nithdale for nearly 30 years and feel we have some other things we would like to be involved with while we still can. Having Russell and

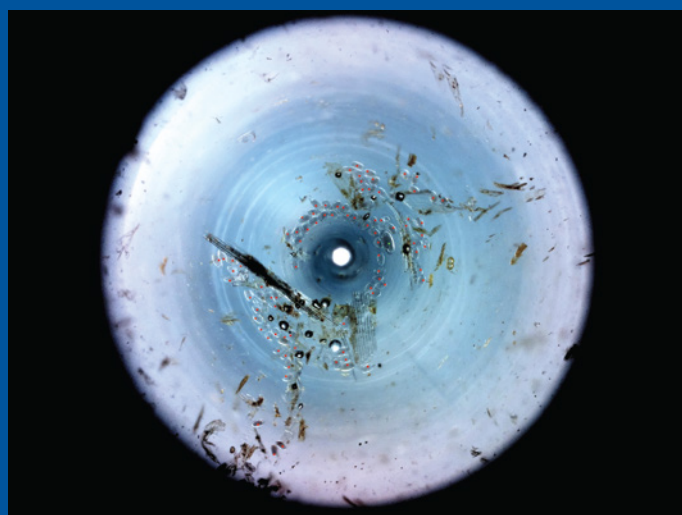
Philippa here over the last 5 years and with Russell keen as mustard has helped us make this decision! I'll still be only a phone call away so more than happy to talk with clients anytime!



Russell & Philippa White

### New WormFEC Kit

Recently we splashed out and got a new FECPAKG2 kit from Techion Group. We were one of the first to buy the original kit way back when Greg Miriams first started up FEC PAK in 1992. We certainly got value for money from that purchase! The first thing it did was help us reduce the amount of drenching we did – only drenching animals as they required which saved in the cost of drench and time in the yards. At the same time we started breeding for worm resistance and have made huge gains in this space with lambs requiring less drenching and our ewes, which have never been drenched, almost halving their fecal egg output over the last 30 years through breeding. This year all our romney ram lambs to winter have an above average index for worm resistance. This reduced reliance on drenches along with a good quarantine drench policy has meant our last



Digital Image of a fecal egg count sample from new FECPAK G2 kit

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reduction test showed that all drench families are still working well on farm and we don't have issues with drench resistance which is a problem on a number of farms. Even just this last week a newsletter from Vetsouth discussed the increasing number of farms in Southland with triple drench resistance (18% of farms tested) and the rise in incidence of Barber's Pole worm (*Haemonchus contortus*) down here.

Combined with the banning of bionic sheep

capsules for lambing this season farmers need more tools to combat drench resistance. Buying worm resistant rams is a pretty important addition to the toolbox! We still can't throw away the drench gun yet so the new FECPAK G2 kit will help us to continue to monitor drench effectiveness and mob FECs. It is easier to use once you get the knack of it and all our staff can easily take a sample, process it and get results back on the digital images produced. If it's easy to use it will get used!

## On The Ranch with Russell



*Flock Ewe Lambs Early June*

Welcome to the first addition of "on the ranch"

A bit about me, I was born and raised in South Otago. Grew up on a sheep farm in the Otekura Valley, in-land from Kaka Point. I've worked around the Otago & Southland area from Waikaia to Slopdown. Philippa and myself also leased our own sheep & beef block down in Tahakopa for a few years before moving to Nithdale in 2018. I have a strong passion for farming and look forward to the possibility of working with some of you during the ram sale season ahead.

So, what's been happening on Nithdale over the last few months..... It's been an interesting season that's for sure. We have been growing some straight red clover paddocks for the last few years now and this year it certainly has shown its true value. We had finished 75% of our terminal lambs by the end of February off the clover. Even in the hot and dry period, the clover was pumping and gave us the ability to grow the lambs faster and heavier than previous years to counteract a falling schedule. We also put our flock ewe hoggets on the red clover to pump them along before mating as they had suffered in the dry. This was a known risk with the possibility of the oestrogen levels in the clover mucking up their cycling. Pulling them off at least 3 weeks prior to the ram going out was the recommended time frame. Overall the flock

hoggets went to the ram looking butter fat @ 46kgs mob average (all mated) which was some of the better weights they had been in the last few tough years. We did end up selling a few store lambs towards the end of the season, by this stage it had rained around the country-side and we were selling the lambs into a strong grass market.

The ram hoggets for this coming season are on their way to be the best yet. With the introduction of the new Romdale breed to Nithdale, this has given us an awesome range of meaty looking lads! They have the frame and grunt to perform on any land type thrown at them. This will be the second time I have used the Romdale across our hoggets for mating. I've found the lambs hit the ground running and have had to pull less stuck heads overall.

The next few months will be the same as most of you, shifting breaks, chasing power shorts and hoping for a half decent ewe & hogget scanning.

If anyone would like a visit over winter to chew the fat, then don't hesitate to get in touch with myself or Andrew.



*All the best for Winter.*

*Regards,*

*Russell & Andrew*

