

ISSUE

02

September, October, November

2023

THE SILVER BULLETIN

Newsletter of the New Zealand Murray Grey Society



Welcome to the Second Newsletter of 2023!

By now Murray Grey calves will be hitting the ground, both in our beef herds and dairy herds around the country. Oh, the excitement a new calving season brings! Spring is an exciting but busy time of the year, make sure if you are in the market for a new herd sire to check out the on farm sales coming up in the next couple of months from registered breeders!

Hope Spring treats you all well. – Caitlin Brooks Editor.

2024 Murray Grey Calendar – available to purchase!

Huge Thank-you to Sue Clarke for making the 2024 calendar possible. A lot of hard work and dedication makes things like this happen. Please make sure you purchase a few additional copies so we can cover the costs. Another thanks to the stud sponsors.

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FROM THE PRESIDENTS Paddock: BARRY MACDONALD

Dear Members,

By the time you read this newsletter calving will be well through for most herds in the north and probably midway for those further south. Just around the corner will be the spring bull sales. So, at this time of the year, it's definitely all go. I hope that the spring is kind for us all, especially those who have had major climate challenges during the past season. As if weather events haven't been enough there are now also challenges on a number of other fronts for those who are pastoral farming. But let's not get too disconsolate. After all we enjoy breeding and raising our Murray Grey cattle and when we gaze with pride over our herds it helps to put those challenges into perspective.

Our Breed society is also facing challenges mainly on the matter of finances. At our July zoom meeting we had a good discussion on how to put our finances on a stronger footing for the current year. The last few years we have made losses, a situation the council is hoping to avoid this year. After considering a draft budget, which shows increasing costs over virtually every facet and taking into account that previous councils hadn't raised fees for some time, we have reluctantly had to increase the Dam fee by \$2/cow. We have also cut back on some aspects of advertising – the printed media – and more emphasis will be put into the digital options, namely Facebook. There'll be more on this in the not too distant future.

While our draft budget, with the above changes was showing a breakeven situation, it's still not guaranteed that we can achieve that and we will continue to make every endeavour to keep the bottom line positive.

As outlined in the previous newsletter there have been ongoing discussions regarding the future of databases. Those discussions continue and once a more definite option/outcome has been put forward, members will be informed.

My thanks again to Life Member Trevor Beer who donated some original Murray Grey books which were auctioned with the funds going to the Twisleton Fund. A total of \$705 was raised and our thanks to those who participated in the auction. My thanks to Sue Clarke for organizing everything.

We welcome Max and Jake Hayward and their MJH prefix, as junior breeding members. It's great to see the boys continuing the family tradition.

In conclusion, I wish everyone a great early season ahead and let's hope the prospects for our breed and the beef industry in general will stabilize and prosper going forward. All the best.

EXPOSING THE WIDER DAIRY INDUSTRY TO MURRAY GREY BEEF

Chequers Murray Greys – Jane Burke & the late Neill Burke

“Putting bulls from Chequers into the progeny test program is my way of advertising the virtues of the MG breed – easy calving, good temperament and good eating.”



Chequers
Qudos Q4



Chequers
Raptor R5



Above
Chequers
Tarella dam
of C.
Tennyson
T10

Have you ever thought about how Murray Grey could be given greater exposure to the wider beef producing market?

To that end, Chequers Murray Grey Stud (Jane and the late Neill Burke) has entered bulls into the Beef and Lamb NZ genetics dairy beef progeny test programme and been accepted twice, with another bull up for consideration again this year. As an aside Torrisdale has also done this. If B&LNZ decide your bull fits their criteria then semen must be available to them to use for their next spring mating usually with around 60 cows. Data on all calves born in the programme is collected from their birth, throughout rearing and the carcasses assessed at slaughtering. Probably the only downside to all of this, is the bull must be alive after 3 years unless released from the programme earlier. LIC have first rights to purchase semen but the bull can be used for natural mating and semen may be used in beef stud cows.

Chequers Murray Grey stud was started in 2005 when we acquired heifers from Riverview, Kensington and Oakview studs. Once we had got into the swing of life with the cattle, we were trying to decide what our objective for having them was and soon realized that the end product ‘meat’ had to be a good eating experience. And so our search for genetics that would put fat and marbling into our herd began. Studs in both New Zealand and Australia were visited and we imported embryos from Mount Major and the semen of Woodbourn Warrior A69, Mount Major Kingswood and Bottlesford Kudos.

The two bulls that are now in the programme, Chequers Qudos Q4 and Chequers Raptor R5 are both by Bottlesford Kudos. Chequers Tennyson T10 has been accepted for the 2023 trial, his sire is Woodbourn Warrior A69 who is the grand sire of B. Kudos. Woodbourn Warrior has been used extensively in our herd as has Mount Major Kingswood.

Putting bulls from this stud into the progeny test programme is my way of advertising the virtues of the Murray Grey breed – easy calving, good temperament, and good eating.

Who doesn't love some Murray Grey in their office/home?

Each member will receive one copy – there are extras available for purchase at \$23 per copy + postage costs. Please make sure you support this awesome initiative so we can cover the costs and make this an annual occurrence!

You can order extra calendars through contacting Sue Clarke yorkvale@xtra.co.nz – please bare in mind stock is limited so don't delay get in before you miss your chance!



Upcoming Events

Christchurch 160th A&P Show -15th,16th & 17th November 2023 – Cattle section is a Royal Event

Horowhenua A&P Show 18th February – 21st February 2024 – Royal event



Upcoming Bull Sales

Torrisdale: 11:30 am Wednesday 11th October – 40 yearling bulls on offer

Mangaotea: Thursday 14th September 12pm Yearlings and 2 year olds

MURRAY GREY COUNCIL MEMBERS

President: Barry Macdonald

Vice President: Zarah Blackwell

Treasurer: Peter Stachurski

Carolyn McIntosh

Tony Powell

Caitlin Brooks

Hayden Fletcher

Michael Gray

Keep an eye out as we introduce a Council Member each Newsletter!



NEWS & UPDATES FROM ACROSS THE DITCH



Murray Grey Beef

196 likes • 219 followers

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Showcasing the value of Murray Grey Beef - a grain based initiative developed by South Australian Murray Grey Breed Promotion Group.

SA Murray Grey Producers now have an exclusive market that they are able to sell into. All cattle that are sold through this brand for quality assurance are grain fed by one SA Murray Grey Breeder.

The hope is to be able to promote the breed and the Murray Grey Beef Cattle Society through the launch of our new grain fed beef product.



Murray Grey Beef

Yesterday at 9:26 AM · 🌐

How amazing does this beef look!

Bred and fed right here in SA!

100% Murray Grey

[#murraygreybeef](#) [#supportlocal](#) [#Australia'sown](#)





COUNCIL MEMBER PROFILE:

Hayden Fletcher

*from Denali Murray
Grey Stud*

Originally from Drummond, Southland (Just around the corner from Torrisdale) Hayden Fletcher now lives and farms with his wife Mara and 1 year old Finn in Culverden, North Canterbury.

Hayden grew up in and around the sheep and beef industry. After University at Otago, he travelled. Spending time on a Merino sheep stud in Western Australia and a Commercial Angus cow calf operation in Montana USA, before returning home. After spending a couple of years back in Southland he decided it was time to branch out again and moved to Culverden to take up a stock managers Job on a Sheep, Beef, and grazing property. It was in Culverden he met Mara. A veterinarian from New York USA, and in August 2022 they added Finn to the family.

“After some serious contemplation I decided, I was never going to own my own farm if I stuck to what I was doing so I took the leap and started my career in Dairy. As a farm assistant on the property next door to where we are today. I am into my 10th Year of dairy all with the same company where we are now equity Partners on our 950-cow operation here.”

The transition to dairy never extinguished Hayden’s passion for beef cows. He has always had a soft spot for Murray greys. “They are unfortunately really under rated and have gotten a really unfortunate reputation over the years.” With the ultimate goal to have their own place one day about 3 years ago Hayden and Mara started building up their herd of Murray Greys. Some select females were purchased and some embryo transfer work was undertaken using dairy cows as recipients. “It’s certainly not a traditional operation but in our position it’s a fairly cost-effective way of creating the type of cattle we are after. We have the first ET calves on the ground this spring and another round planned for next spring.”

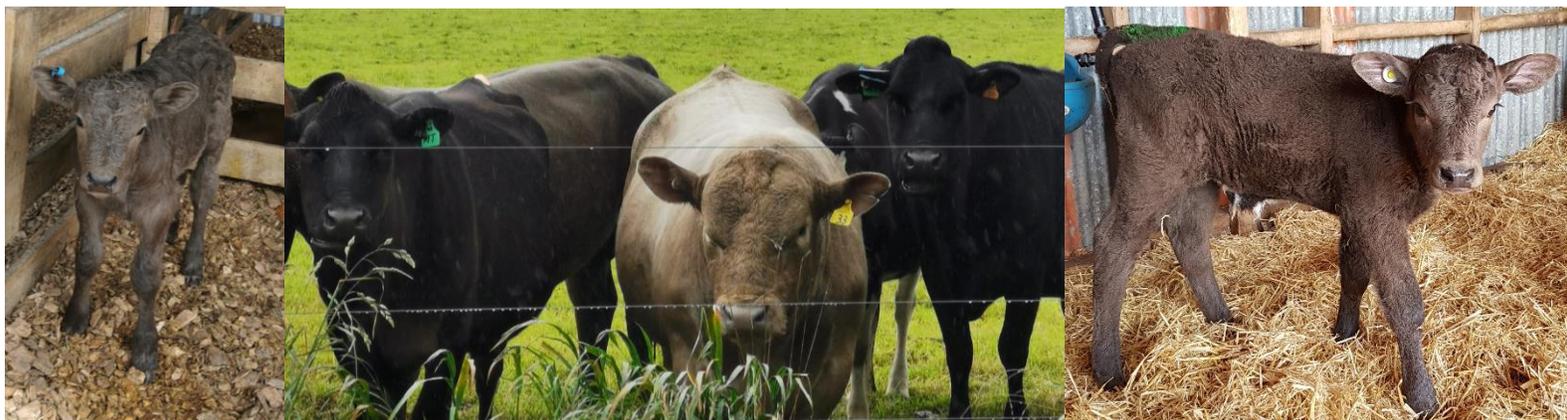
Murray greys are also utilized across the dairy herd via AI. In 2021 a reasonably significant investment was made in the purchase of Torrisdale Ranui R86. He has been collected and is used across the dairy herd as well as over the Murray Greys. The male dairy cross calves are reared at the dairy farm before being sold at 100kg and they have a keen buyer for the female calves, and they leave at 4 days old.

“With the purebred cows I am looking to breed for balance. Not extreme in any one area but consistently trying to be moving the needle across the board. I do care about EBV’s and a strong believer in performance recording. We want cows with strong maternal instincts that have their calves unassisted. I don’t believe in chasing ultra-low birth weight or calving ease. I am also not afraid to use bulls with birth weights on the higher end. Ultimately, I believe it is my job to challenge these cows so that I can have confidence that I know exactly how they will perform.”

“At the moment our bull market is the dairy industry. But I do truly believe there is a place for the Murray grey as a genuine beef animal and am conscious of maintaining a breeding program that reflects that. I don’t want to be chasing one market at the expense of the other.”

The herd prefix Denali is named in memory of Mara’s beloved Italian Mastiff dog Denali. “He was an awesome mate to have around and it’s great to be able to keep his legacy alive with the greys.”

DAIRY BEEF TRIAL — GOOD REPRESENTATION



Photos of Murray Greys sold into the dairy industry from Stonybrook & Waimak Studs & the resulting calves

“Murray Greys are well positioned to meet the challenge of creating a dairy beef animal that helps the dairy farmer identify a non replacement animal, a calf that is born easily so the cow can recover and get back into calf early. And importantly for the finisher: produce a valuable high quality product to meet premiums at the meat works”

Murray Greys have been well represented from two studs in New Zealand (Torrisdale & Chequers) in the recent years of Beef & Lamb Dairy Beef Progeny test in joint venture with Livestock Improvement Incorporation (LIC). This trial involves 1300 dairy cows and semen from selected sires is inseminated randomly to meet minimum progeny numbers per bull. Resulting calves are recorded and measured from day 1, including birth weight, gestation length, weaning weight, days to weaning. Calves are followed all the way through the trial to the day they are slaughtered with carcass attributes, which also involves carcass scanning prior to being sent to the works as well as measurements of the carcass during processing.

For the NZ dairy industry, bulls that colour mark calves are attractive to the dairy farmer, making identification from their dairy replacements easier, polled at conception to eliminate the cost and need to disbud, calves that are born easily and earlier (easy calving and short gestation for days in milk) fast growing (days to weaning) and produce a valuable product (yield and carcass quality) for their end use. Bulls that produce dairy beef calves that meet this criteria are in high demand in the AI industry and help assist farmers in reducing bobby calves (and to meet their milk processors regulatory requirements which does offer a premium). Murray Greys are well positioned to meet this challenge!

You can keep up to date with results of each sire cohort as they are released here <https://www.blznzgenetics.com/progeny-tests/beef-progeny-tests>

WANTED – CONTENT FOR THIS MAGAZINE!

The only way we can keep this Newsletter interesting and informative is to have contribution from our members – photos, articles on bulls/cows, updates from around the country – please make sure you drop Caitlin a line (and a few Murray Grey Photos!)

Deadline for the next Newsletter is November 20th for the December/January/February issue due out on the 1st December.

Email address for content – whinnie456@yahoo.co.nz

