

BULLetin & RAMble

NEWSLETTER FROM INCHEOCH FARMS

Hello folks,

We hope you are all keeping well and managing through these strange times we find ourselves in. We have friends stranded in Australia, others who can't get to jobs in NZ, some who have had to juggle around lambing help and many more for whom life has simply gone on as normal.

This is just a bit of an update on some of the things that are happening at Incheoch and what our plans are for sales later in the season.

I'm sure you'll appreciate that it's difficult to come up with a plan right now. But be assured, we are coming up with a number of plans to make the Working Genes sale happen in some form or other.

If you are thinking about a bull or ram that hasn't been pampered and has been bred with your margins in mind, give us a call or perhaps we can arrange a visit to view stock here and chat through your genetics & breeding stock options.

Meantime —here's hoping you've been managing to make the best of this summer weather, and all the best from us at Incheoch.

Kind regards

The McGowan family.



WORKING GENES

Thurs 3rd Sept '20

**TEXEL, LLEYN
SHEARLING RAMS
(& STORMTROOPERS)**

**SIMMENTAL, LUING
& ANGUS BULLS**

Hope to see you then



Thanks for supporting us at Working Genes'19

Back in 2008 when Mr & Mrs Obama were unpacking boxes in The White House, we sold 48 rams through a ring tied up with string, in an old cattle shed at the foot of Glenisla. This year we hoped the 1000th ram would go through the same ring. It looks like that might not happen in just the same way as we'd thought—but we are working on getting a workable solution to help you identify and secure the right genetics for your flock or herd.

It is thanks to the support you have given us along the way and through your commitment to our breeding programme that we have come this far. We don't take this commitment lightly and will celebrate this mile-stone by redoubling our effort to breed better bulls and rams.



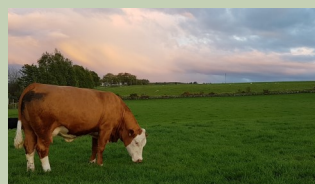
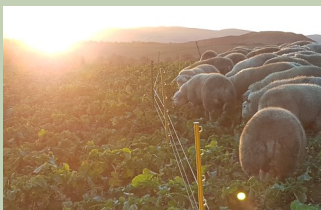
How is the sale going to work in Covid19?

To be quite frank—we don't know for sure, but we are looking at a number of options:

- We are preparing the catalogue and the stock to be ready for private viewing on the farm in the 3 weeks prior to the sale. We will look forward to catching up with you then!
- We hope to have photographs and videos of all lots.
- We will likely offer to deliver rams and bulls (at least to a collection point local to you), especially if you can't make it to the sale.
- We have been studying how on-line auctions have been working and have installed high-speed broadband at the sale shed.
- We hope to have some kind of on-farm sale on the 3rd September. It looks likely to be for a limited number of registered buyers only.
- We want to offer a home-bidding option in addition.
- We will do everything we can to help you find the right ram or bull for your own unique requirements.



We would value your thoughts on how we can make the sale work—if you have any suggestions or just want to chat through your requirements, please get in touch with Neil & Debbie on 01828 633652 N 07788 100010 D 07801 783988



Herd efficiency measures:

We strive for continued improvement in our suckler herd efficiency. You might be aware of our ewe efficiency score, a number that sums up what each ewe has achieved in a year. We are trying to find an equivalent measure for cows, and are working with a couple of different measures until we find one that we are happy with.

Calf wean weight by cow wean weight is looking like the leader at the moment, if we can find a way of not penalising the fit cows compared to cows requiring an expensive winter.

This table shows our results over the last few years. It's easy to make excuses—2019 a disappointing number of pure Simmental yearling heifers scanned empty, and 2018 figures saw some bad luck calving twins. But we don't make excuses for cows any more, so I suppose the same standards apply to us.

Bull Year	2016	2017	2018	2019
Cows to bull	207	221	228	240
scanned in-calf	192	202	210	217
Scan %	93%	91%	92%	90%
scan twins	11	7	13	5
(%)	6%	3%	6%	2%
extra twins reared	5	1	1	
Calves Weaned	194	196	207	
Weaning %	94%	89%	91%	

The odd thing about selection for better efficiency and lower costs, is that to make progress, you need to identify some that fail—making you less efficient with higher costs! A cowboy in Colorado told me that if his cows pd'd 95%, he'd been too good to them and should have been running more cows in order to keep pushing selection pressure.

Fertility is Fundamental—and is the main focus of our beef programme at Incheoch. It has been for Luings for a long time and we are placing a lot of pressure on our Simmental herd to identify the winners and losers; act on the information to create

70 Incheoch Stud Luing Cows (those selected to breed pure)

- All calved at 2yo and brought a calf at weaning every year.
- Average calving interval 356 days
- Weighed 680 kgs at weaning at Condition Score 3.0
- Average Frame Score 6.0
- Calves weaned 274kgs at 6mths with no creep (= 41% efficiency).
- 1/3 of cows polled.
- All calved in first 2 cycles.
- Selected for weaning efficiency, calving interval, udder & teat scores, docility and longevity.

Did you know?

Ultrasound scanning lambs loin gives a 60% accurate prediction of meat yield, but CT scanning improves to 99%. At Incheoch, we ultrasound scan around 200 Llyn lambs per year and all of our pure Texels. The top 15 Texel ram lambs are taken to the SRUC CT scanner. Incheoch lambs represent 5% of the UK Texels that are CT scanned.

Working Genes:

We got a phonecall from a ram client recently who was going through his rams after tugging time. There has been some discussion in the yards about what the numbers on the tag meant — in this case the management information was MFA 13. We were able to confirm that MFA is our Texel flock code, and 13 is in fact the year of birth. The ram in question would have covered ewes here as lamb in 2013, sold to a hill farm in 2014 where he has now worked 6 seasons. His full mouth of good teeth and good condition meant he was staying around again—despite the disbelief in what the tag indicated!



Incheoch Sale Bulls

We expect to offer 11 Simmentals bulls, 8 polled (including 4 homozygous polled), selected on maternal lines. There are 4 sons of the tried and tested Canadian sire, Gibby's Real Deal, along with some new genetics.

We rate the 2 Angus bulls as the best we've offered—with calving ease and performance.

The most promising line-up of Luing young bulls we have had will give a great opportunity for an injection of thrifty, no-nonsense cow-traits into your suckler herd. We are so pleased with them that 3 are running with stud cows at the moment.

Cattle breeding is a long-term business—we continue to hone our breeding programme and our search for new genetics takes us across the globe. Sometimes we find the next step, often useful ideas, sometimes we come home and find the answer was in the paddock all along.

A phrase we heard lately was: 'You can't breed today's cows to yesterday's bulls and expect to be in business tomorrow.'

We're not trying to breed today's bulls, nor even tomorrow's bulls—we're trying to breed bulls for the day after tomorrow, when the suckler cow will need to work hard for a living and look after herself—be fertile, efficient and robust—...when carbon-efficient grass-fed beef will be recognized as a responsible, nutrient-dense meal choice.

There's a long way to go—but these bulls are the result of our steps in this direction.

Did you know?

The maternal ebv in sheep and the milk ebv in cattle are similar. They are both a prediction of the maternal effect on either 8 week (sheep) or 200 day (cattle) weights. To select for more early growth—the 8wk or 200G ebv is what you are looking for. To select sires to breed daughters that will influence a given growth rate by milking or caring for their offspring better more effectively, the maternal or milk ebv is what to look for.

8wk or 200G is a prediction of early growth (with the maternal effect removed), and Maternal or Milk is a prediction of maternal influence (with the predicted growth effect removed).



Gibby's Real Deal (above) and a son below—Dirnanean Fontana. Fontana's first daughters have calved this year with fantastic udders and very motherly.



Blizzard's lambs are kicking up a storm

We are really proud to introduce our new Texel senior stock ram. Blizzard is a Texel like we've not seen before—he has tremendous shape but is wild like a stag! A homebred son of Glenway Yosemite, we can use him across a lot of the flock—and we have! There'll be a handful of his sons at Working Genes'20 and plenty more to come.



We like his movement and expression, his length and end, his complete wool cover, and his 5-crop mother who has never been assisted to lamb.

His Index puts him in the top 1% of the Texel breed and he has a really good FEC ebv for worm tolerance.

He is pictured on the day we gathered him in from his second batch of ewes. He had 2 cycles with half of the stud Texel ewes, then got a batch of 50 Lleyns. He looked better when we gathered him up than when he went out!





In the October school holidays we had a family trip to Orkney and Shetland to catch up with some friends, discover a bit of history and have some family time.

We learnt a lot about Vikings and stone-age settlements, enjoyed some great hospitality and the scenery was amazing. Even managed to fit in a Monitor Farm visit on Shetland where Trevor Cook was talking at the Budge girls' farm at Bigton.

We had a whistle stop tour of some sheep enterprises around Salisbury Plain in the summer too. Some large, extensive late-lambing flocks trialing September shearing ewes (after weaning), to eliminate handling, mis-mothering and flies on shearing nicks. Ewes got CLIK along with lambs for flies. Full-woolled ewes looked content grazing in the heat—wonder if insulation works both ways?

One of our hosts had a great comment: "The kiwis had to learn to run sheep more efficiently—and they managed it by doing 3 things: They run big mobs; they have invested in good infrastructure to make tasks as easy as possible; and they don't have many people looking over their shoulder."



It was great to catch up with folk—and see how some of our rams had bred at both ends of the country!

Open Farm Sunday

With a lot of help from neighbours and friends (we counted 20 helpers), we hosted a LEAF Open Farm Sunday event last spring.

200 visitors, some of them visiting a farm for the first time were fascinated to see sheep clipped, feel the wool and join in spinning it. Angus had some newly hatched chicks; kids big and little sat in a tractor,



fed a pet calf, got to pretend to be a vet and lots more. David Brown even auctioned a bull—but the highlight of the day was jumping in puddles!

We had fun too, and hope to do it again.

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Touring the Country



QUOTES & JOKES

"Some people dream of success, while others get up every morning and make it happen." ~ Wayne Huizenga

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." African Proverb

"If we could sell our experiences for what they cost us, we'd all be millionaires."

~ Abigail Van Buren

"Don't worry about people stealing your ideas. If your ideas are any good, you'll have to ram them down people's throats."

~ Howard Aiken

"If you lend someone £50 and you never see them again, it was probably worth it."

Cowboy Logic

"I tried to use 'beefstew' as my login password, but it seems that its not stroganoff"

~ Unknown

*'What is a monkey's favourite food?
...Ape-ricots'*

~ The Beano

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...we promise to update it soon!