

DECEMBER 2020

## A FRIENDLY HELLO TO ALL OUR CLIENTS

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We hope you have enjoyed another years farming with your sense of humour intact.

Peter is starting our letter this year for Leon and because I am in the dog tucker pen with a stuffed knee which cannot get replaced till March. It is also a bit of a sign off from me as after 64 years running the farm and 50 years breeding rams I will be handing my last block of the farm with the Texel and Texel Suffolk flocks over to Leon and Wendy. Marion and I will still be around as we still love our sheep and Leon is always in need of a repair man!

My grateful thanks to all our customers who have supported us with great loyalty over the years. It is a source of pride to me that we now supply rams to 3rd generation clients. I also have the greatest respect for the farming skills of our clients. This keeps us on our toes to produce rams of high genetic merit.

I am very pleased that after all the hard years Marion and I put in to improve the productivity of our sheep flock, Leon and Wendy have had the enthusiasm to carry on our ram breeding project. Leon has a passion to improve the genetic capability of our sheep and great concern to do his very best for our clients.

The Texel and Texel Suffolk flocks I have been managing continue to show strong genetic progress on our SIL genetic trends graphs. The introduction of three top British Texel sires has boosted lamb growth rates. The ram lamb progeny of one sire Vorn 873.17 weaned at an average weight of 35.2kg on 15 December and grew to an average 68.4kg in April.

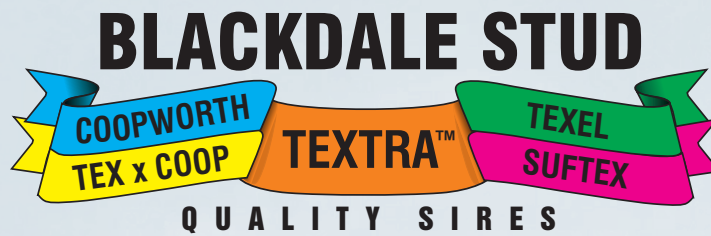
The latest NZ Texel Across flock analysis including 71 flocks ranks our British sire Vorn 774.16 as highest growth rate sire used in NZ. Already Vorn 873.17 ranks as the 9th highest growth rate for NZ.



Nice day Autumn 2020



# BLACKDALE STUD



COOPWORTH  
TEX x COOP

TEXTRA™

TEXEL  
SUFTEX

QUALITY SIRE S

While I am strongly for performance based selection rather than show type I appreciate good sound physical appearance and we try to support the Gore Show. So it was pleasing that our stud sire Blackdale 27/18 a son of the British ram Vorn Yardstick was given the Supreme Champion Texel award at last Februarys show.

I have just helped Leon weigh off his  $\frac{3}{4}$  Texel flock singles. At approximately 75 days old, 50% of these went at 38.52kg liveweight - big well muscled lambs still with tails on and not a dag in sight. Lambs capable of growing at over 500g per day birth to slaughter.

The Texel cross ewe mated back to a Texel ram has to be the best bet for profitable lamb production.

We are still working the GDF9 fertility gene into our Texel, Textra and Texel Coopworth flocks. The 20% boost in fertility from a ewe having one copy of the gene appears consistent.

This years lambing was a perfect example of Murphy's Law - if it can go wrong it will go wrong! With adverse weather, losses from feeding mouldy baleage and an outbreak of suppurative arthritis in lambs in their first week. However the Texel and Texel Suffolk flocks after scanning 195% still tailed 166%.

I am gutted by the demise of wool. After a lifetime of selection for wool weight and quality, and despite a product with admirable qualities we have been swamped by synthetic fibres which are contaminating the planet. Abandoning the wool promotion levy was a stupid decision by farmers. It left wool an orphan in the market place. We did manage to sell some high bulk Texel wool at \$4.24 greasy and there is some hope for fine bulky wool. However we are still uncertain how to progress wool selection except to maintain wool quality and bulk and sheep with a clear belly and crutch requiring only one shearing per year - such as the Texel crosses provides look the most promising.

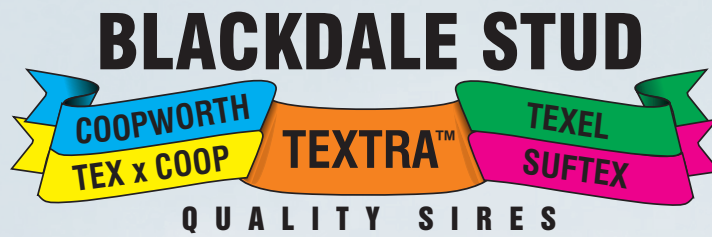
## RAM ORDERS FOR 2021

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Please return your order form by 20 December 2020 using the enclosed reply paid envelope or emailing to [blackdale70@gmail.com](mailto:blackdale70@gmail.com) . Phone orders are welcome on 021 855 106 or try evenings on (03) 224 6106. Please indicate the number of rams required and the preferred price option. Also indicate any special requirements we could help you with.

We intend to start private selling for two tooths in late January/early February while ram hoggets will be offered in March after scanning.





## RAM FAIRS

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The Southern Texel Breeders Ram Fair will be held at the Gore A&P Showgrounds on Tuesday 19 January 2021 with selling commencing at 10.30am. Inspection is prior. We will put forward some high quality rams by the high growth rate British sire Vorn 873.17.

## BRUCELLOSIS ACCREDITATION

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Blackdale remains brucellosis free following our annual blood tests.

## LAMBING 2020

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I normally do a rundown of each breed, the scans and then lambs tailed to ewes mated. Happy to say scan figures were good, winter was kind and stock/pasture covers were great up to the start of August. That is where I will leave Spring 2020! Those that survived have done well and with good feed covers now, we hope to move into 2021 on a more positive footing.

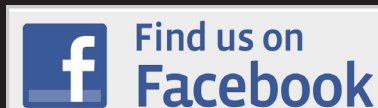


### BLACKDALE CONTACT DETAILS

EMAIL: [blackdale70@gmail.com](mailto:blackdale70@gmail.com)

WEBSITE: [www.blackdalestud.com](http://www.blackdalestud.com)

FACEBOOK: Blackdale Stud



# BLACKDALE STUD

COOPWORTH  
TEX x COOP    TEXTRA™    TEXEL  
SUFTEX

QUALITY SIRES

## LIFE ON THE FARM – A BRIEF PICTORIAL 2020



Nice spring morning



Maggie and Leon assisting fleece weighing ram hoggets Spring 2020



Jessica helps Daniel with fencing during lock down



Sorting up mating mobs

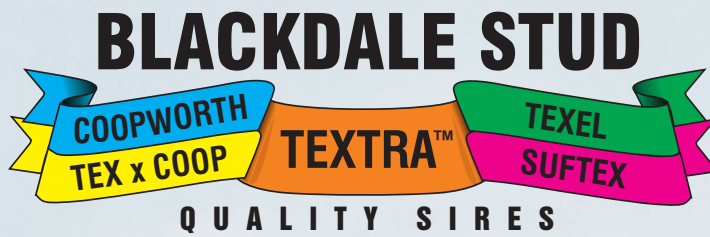


Ewe hoggets heading to the shearing shed

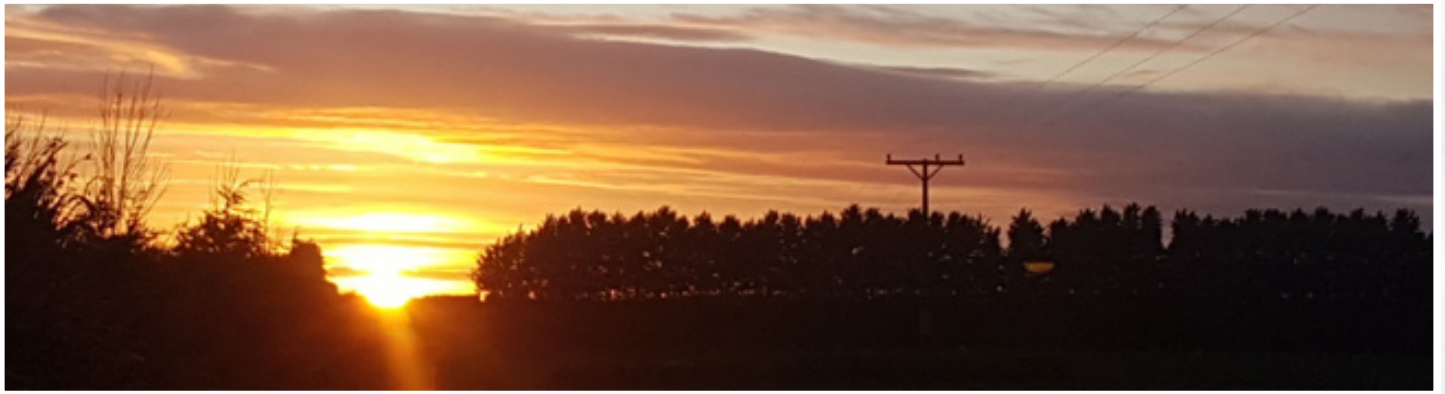


Winter feed out





## LIFE ON THE FARM – A BRIEF PICTORIAL 2020



Sunrise



A nice winter freeze



How many?



First lambs to exit  
23 November 2020

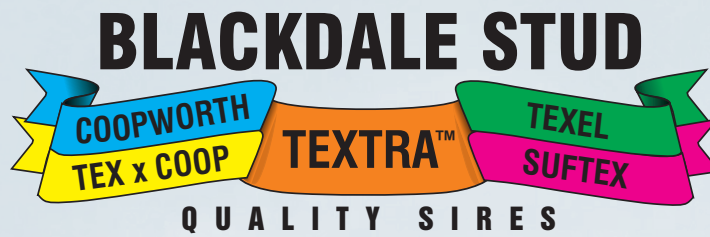


Spring freeze 2020



Getting some tailing done





## RIP BLACKDALE TEXTRA 416.13 (HOS)

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Over some 50 years Blackdale has produced some outstanding sires which have shown genetic merit of exceptional quality. These sires have gone onto make a significant contribution to the productive performance of the NZ sheep flock. To a breeder these few special sires are the pinnacle, the rarest of gems to go forward with.



Textra 416.13 (HOS) was one of those gems. Physically impressive, he's left thousands of progeny across multiple flocks in NZ. His semen sales raised \$8,243 after costs for Hospice Southland. He was the first NZ sire of any breed to break the 5000 index barrier in Maternal Worth + Meat. Currently he ranks Number One in NZ with an index of 5341 (\$53.41 improvement on base year per lamb).

His legacy will live on in our flock, that is the beauty of genetics.

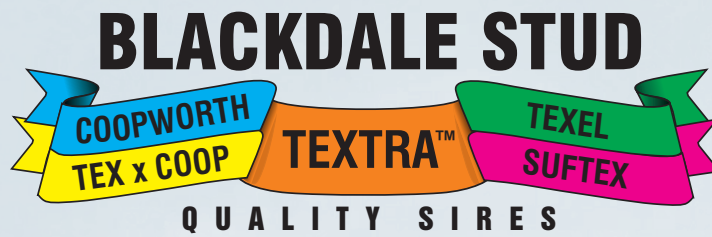
## 2020

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2020 - Wow! The good news is if you're reading this you have survived one of the most strange years in modern history. Some highlights for me were super strong lamb and ewe prices at the start of 2020. I have never had such good returns for cull ewes and prime lambs (I miss them already!) The dedication of my clients to come for rams in February floods was epic - taking road trips to a whole new level and even in one case having to helicopter home! Lockdown, just having a few weeks with family and a couple of welcome strays at Daniels house, on the farm, good weather and good fun. Not sure lockdown in a city would be as nice. Our youngest Maggie even made the TV news segment sledging behind the quad through the mobs. 2020 also marks 25 years of a special partnership with Wendy as my wife. Hard to believe how quick those years have gone, but we have dragged up 4 pretty cool individuals and had some awesome experiences together.

2020 also became the year NZ could not deny that our relative ability to stay afloat is because of those silly farmer types and those in the primary sector - exports, \$ income and food all essential. With world travel/tourist markets down to a trickle and most industries and retail disrupted or broke, it's the Ag sector saving this country 'despite' the best efforts of regulators and interest groups to stuff us. My hat goes off to the processing industry for the efforts through the year. They have managed to navigate work disruption, and complete market madness, bouncing from market to market, country to country depending on lockdowns and trade conditions. Yes they could have been better in some aspects of throughput, yes prices are back however it is a sound enough base in a world where nothing is certain and other industries are facing total disfunction.





## GREENHOUSE GAS LIVESTOCK MEASURES

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Before some of you want to pay my green party sub I need to explain our investment of several thousand dollars in sire evaluation of GHG outputs. As a director of PGGRC (Pastoral Greenhouse Gas Research Consortium) I pushed for a genetic option for the sheep and beef sector. Millions were being invested in vaccines, capsules etc which might be fine for those milking cows but these are too expensive and impractical for extensive livestock. The resulting research showed genetic difference and an ability to reduce outputs of GHG by 10% while showing no difference in performance outputs. My hope was that by improving our understanding of the 'engine' (rumen) we could find animals which lifted production whilst saving the planet! No client has asked for us to spend thousands of dollars on this and currently no market signal makes it a compelling trait to invest in. I am thinking about the future, your flocks futures and establishing a base understanding of where our genetics are at and I will develop selection policy on this information. In 10 years we will know if it's a good investment for you or nuts!

## LOW INPUT CPT

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Blackdale362.15 currently ranked 7th in NZ for Maternal Worth + Meat was used in this years low input National Progeny Test. Progeny are measured for normal production traits plus dag reduction, no tailing, limited drenching and GHG levels so it will be interesting to see how high performance sires achieve. Currently Blackdale sires are ranked number one on dag score reduction and FEC on the November lists.

## LATEST NATIONAL NEW ZEALAND SIRE EVALUATIONS

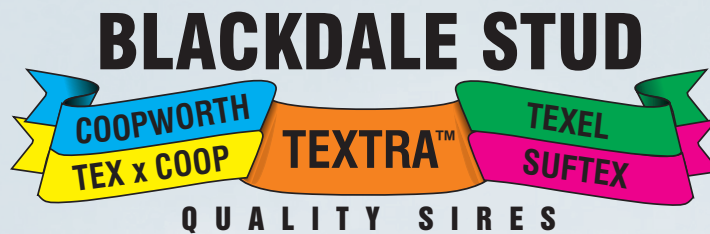
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November Sires Summary (NZGE) for all NZ breeders have Blackdale sires for NZ Maternal Worth + Meat placings as:

- 16 of the Top 50 sires of all breeds for NZ
- The number 1, 3, 5, 6 & 7th placed sires.
- If we include Blackdale sons from other NZ flocks then 24 of the top 50 are from our genetics.

We have been pleased to hear from clients that these performance levels are being seen in flocks and despite a terrible spring in the south lambs have survived and thrived.





## PROSPECTS FOR 2020/2021

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The world is in uncertain times and I don't need to do a market report, just ask any deer farmer about high end restaurant trade!

Our first indication of the new season - flocks lambs off mum at 75 days is this:

- last year 113 off at 18kg for \$160/ head
- this year the same lambs 168 off at 18.85kg for \$131/head (22% lower/kg).

That is the new reality. Perhaps with a Covid vaccine, and better economic news into 2021 things may improve but it looks to me after reaching awesome levels last spring we are back to more average returns.

Wool returns look to be dire and a friend in the North Island recently sold shedding rams (100) for over \$2,000 each as farmers look to cut shearing costs. This is rather frustrating for the sheep industry as non performance sires hit the ewe flock which will take some 5 to 10 years to convert out of wool, this will certainly setback breeding programs. Totally understandable given the wool industries failure to deliver a return but it will have significant implications on the future NZ flock and it's performance and saleable products.

We always welcome communication with our clients so please get in touch if you'd like to have a chat. If you haven't already be sure to have a look at the Blackdale website and facebook page. Our facebook page continues to get more and more followers and likes. We try to keep this up to date and relevant to what we are doing. Any ideas of what you would like to see there let us know.

From everyone at Blackdale we wish our clients and their families a very safe and Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year. All the very best for a settled and successful season and we look forward to seeing you in the coming months.

Kind regards

*Leon, Wendy, Peter and Marion*

### **Leon and Wendy**

Phone: (03) 224 6106

Leon Cell No: 021 855 106

Email: blackdale70@gmail.com

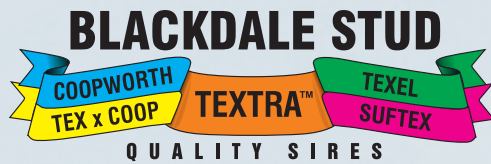
### **Peter and Marion**

Phone (03) 224 6059

Email: matblackdale@gmail.com







# RAM ORDER FORM

Please return by 20 December 2020

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

## NZ ELITE SIRES (TOP 5% IN NZ)

Maternal Breed \$1500     Coopworth     Texel     Texel x Coopworth     Textra

No of rams required: \_\_\_\_\_

**COOPWORTH ORDERS** - No. of two tooth Rams required: \_\_\_\_\_

Price bracket requested (range \$600-\$1250): \_\_\_\_\_

**TEXEL ORDERS** - No. of two tooth Rams required: \_\_\_\_\_

Price bracket requested (range \$500-\$1250): \_\_\_\_\_

**TEXEL X COOPWORTH ORDERS** - No. of two tooth rams required \_\_\_\_\_

Price bracket requested (range \$600-\$1250): \_\_\_\_\_

**TEXTRA ORDERS** - No. of two tooth rams required: \_\_\_\_\_

Price bracket requested (range \$600-\$1250): \_\_\_\_\_

**TEXEL X SUFFOLK ORDERS** - No. of two tooth rams required: \_\_\_\_\_

Price bracket requested (range \$500-\$800): \_\_\_\_\_

## RAM HOGGETS FOR MARCH PICK-UP

No. of Pure Texel Ram Hoggets required: \_\_\_\_\_

Price bracket requested (\$500-\$700): \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Texel x Coopworth Ram Hoggets required: \_\_\_\_\_

Price bracket requested (\$400-\$700): \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Textra Ram Hoggets required: \_\_\_\_\_

Price bracket requested (\$400-\$700): \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Texel x Suffolk Ram Hoggets required: \_\_\_\_\_

Price bracket requested (\$500-\$600): \_\_\_\_\_

**TEASERS** available \$300 each - required numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

*Comment/Special requirements* \_\_\_\_\_