

# the BULLETIN

PRE SALE 2016



Welcome to our pre-sale edition of the bulletin. It's early May and we are particularly dry here as it is in many parts of the country. Thank goodness for the rains in January. On the positive side stock are enjoying the warmer weather and if we didn't need the rain so much we would be enjoying it too. The cattle prices have been one of the few bright spots in the agricultural sector. It's all being driven by the most basic economic equation of supply and demand. The supply side is going to take some turning around because unlike most other agricultural commodities you are limited in how fast you can increase production. You need to retain more females which in turn puts less beef on the market. Sellers of calves deservedly have had their day in the sun. Over the years you have kept the faith to retain cows. If you had listened to the consultants the cows would have gone years ago. In March we once again went back down to the Wanaka Show and stayed with Don and Vicki McRae at Alphaburn. It is always one of our highlights of the year. Wanaka is a stunning place and the show keeps going from strength to strength. For anyone that hasn't visited it is a wonderful event at what must be the most picturesque place for a show in the world. Later in March we went to the Platinum Primary Producers conference in Wellington. It was a great few days with great speakers and an excellent field trip. One of the highlights for me was meeting Holmes Warren of Tauranganui Romneys. He was a great gentleman and a visionary of agriculture and breeding. So much effort goes into this fantastic conference and we really love being part of it and enjoy meeting everyone who is also there. We always come home feeling enthusiastic and positive. Anna has put together an article on her parents Pete and Jill and their retirement. Pete was down within three days of takeover day and helping us. If he is not careful he will become a permanent fixture. After a brief visit home Pete and Jill came back for another tour of duty and they have been a great help. They came at a time when help was greatly needed. We have been transitioning the calves onto the fodder beet and trying to get the bulls in order for the sale. We have been a bit short staffed with our terrific worker from France, Paul Plante' leaving us last month as he begins his last few travels around N-Z and Australia before he heads back to France. Our new block manager Keith fortunately started on the 1st of May but we are grateful to all our +60's (Bruce, Maureen, Pete and Jill) who put in the extra yards during April to get us through such an extremely busy time. We are really excited by the sale bulls this year. Again we are putting up 80 lots and Anna is busy putting the catalogue together at the moment. The Charolais are an extremely even line with the majority being sired by Evolution or Evolution sons. The quality extends right through the catalogue with the bottom end being the strongest we have had. The Herefords are also looking terrific with the first sons of Gay Olympus the sire we purchased from Maungahina 3 years ago. Some of you may remember him being on display at last year's sale. He is really breeding true to type. He is an awesome sire and his progeny both bulls and females really excite us. We hope as everyone receives this newsletter you are all well and the weather is not getting you down in the dumps too much. Expect to receive the catalogue before the end of the month and we hope to see a lot of you at our sale on the 15th of June!

Kind regards,

Brent, Anna, Bruce and Maureen.



Transitioning the calves onto the beet.



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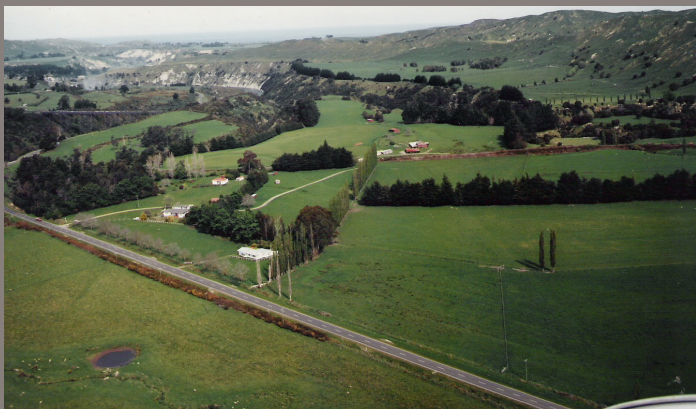




# THE ROAD TO RETIREMENT

*Jill and Peter Smyth are looking forward to an exciting future.*

With the average age of the New Zealand farmer only getting older and many of you out there thinking retirement could be good, I thought it would be fitting to write a story about my own parents who have been retired for just over a month. My Father, Peter had lived on our family farm for just over 70 years. The property was farmed before him by his father Ewan Smyth. Before World War II Ewan managed a large area of farmland for Humphrey Bayly which included this farm. When Ewan came back from the war Humphrey gave him the opportunity to buy the 1300 acre block which became the Smyth family farm called Blue Gum Flats.



*The family farm pictured back in the 70's. Located an hour north of Napier on State Highway 2 at Raupunga.*

Peter came home from school in 1963 and helped run the farm until he took it over in 1983 with my mother Jill. During the time while Pete helped his father on the farm he established his own Horned Hereford stud. His father always had commercial Hereford cows but Pete took an interest in the pedigree cattle and also showing. Pete was also passionate about sheep and had both a Romney and Suffolk stud. While most farmer's dream is to hand over the family property to the next generation, none of his three daughters had an interest of going back to Raupunga to farm the family farm, so selling up and retirement was realistically the only option.



*Pete pictured with John Bayly at the clearing sale. The history between the Smyth and Bayly family dates back before WWII.*

The many years spent living at the same place meant there was always going to be an attachment to the property and to life on the farm. While Pete found it very difficult when he went into each paddock for the very last time, the hardest part of their road to retirement was loading the cattle out in the last fortnight before they left the farm. Watching the ewes go was just as hard and were sold earlier back in January. The same day they loaded the cattle Pete also loaded up a transporter with his old 1966 Austin stock truck and his 1964 International TD5 bulldozer. Although this was a very emotional experience it was also followed by a terrific cattle sale at the Wairoa Sale Yards. Whilst it was not a great year to be getting out of sheep they had struck a good year to sell 350 head of cattle. The in calf mixed aged cows made up to \$1470 while in calf 2 year old made \$1515 and the top pen of steers made \$1550. What had softened the blow of selling up all the cows was that Brent and I over the last four years had started bringing South a selection of their registered horned Hereford cows. They have really enjoyed watching the cows come down to Silverstream and are grateful they have not had to cut ties with the Hereford game completely.



*It was an emotional day when Pete loaded up his old Austin and TD5 bulldozer and had to say goodbye to a couple of old mates.*

With 70 years of farming in the same place comes 70 years of farm machinery, vehicles, tools and accumulated junk. So probably the most daunting part of the whole retirement process was getting all this stuff organised for the clearing sale which was held in the last fortnight before they left. Fortunately for them they had a lot of willing friends and family who offered their help in the last few weeks. I think if they were to do it all over again they would have started the process of organising the clearing sale a whole lot earlier but never the less it got done and they managed to sell most of their stuff. Over the weeks leading up to the clearing sale Jill cleaned the house from top to bottom finding all sorts of house wares she could make a buck on and Pete discovered all sorts of things to sell including untouched boxes of items that still had lot numbers on them from clearing sales he had been to.





*A selection of some pretty old stuff that is ready to be sold at the clearing sale. Many of these old artifacts still had their instruction manuals.*

The clearing sale brought many of the family home for the final time including us three daughters, my sister Stef currently resides in France but was a key figure in that week leading up to the sale along with her husband Dan. The other sister Fee is a corporate banker in Auckland and managed to get away with her partner Jesse to come and help out. Pete's sister Joyce was also there offering her assistance remembering it was her home too that was being sold and much of her father's belongings were being offered at the clearing sale as well.



*Pete on his old International 275 which sold for \$3,000.*

The clearing sale was a fun day for all especially with the dozens of family and friends that showed up to support it. Old items fetched ridiculous prices and what was my parents junk found a use for someone else. After the sale we all stayed on for the last shindig at the farm, had a BBQ and a few drinks. The following week they were to experience the most emotional part yet which was saying good bye to the guy that had worked for them for the last 6 years. Lance was a wonderful worker and had become great mates with Pete and Jill. They had a great relationship and to not see each other every day like they were used to was truly going to be so sad for all of them.



*Pete and his grandson Ryder.*

So what's the plans for them now and how do they intend on keeping themselves busy? The plan is and always was to retire at Mahia beach just south of Gisborne. The family have always had a Bach out there and have spent every summer holiday at Mahia. It is an isolated but stunning spot and the beach front Bach is currently under renovation turning it into a home. They currently are living in limbo with no real home at the moment but Peter has never been busier and this is a result of two separate trips down to help us in that first month. While he has been flat out working down here with us he has thoroughly enjoyed getting up every morning not knowing the plan for the day and having no responsibilities. Jill spent her first couple of weeks of retirement on a bridge cruise to the islands.



*The clearing sale dragged many family and friends back to the farm for one last time.*

They plan on doing a lot of travelling as both have always enjoyed tripping round the world. Also with a daughter and grandson in France they have a great reason to travel. They both enjoy playing golf and Pete is an avid fisherman. They have both enjoyed the flexibility of making commitments later on this year without the worry of lambing or shearing or any other farming responsibility. Retirement can be difficult as it is a big change of lifestyle and removing yourself from land that you have such an attachment to can be hard. Retirement is also a chance of starting a new life and spending more time with family, friends and doing things you love. Since leaving the farm on the 31st of March this year Jill and Pete have not looked back and certainly have not had time to be bored. They have a heap of trips and events to attend over the next wee while and are extremely excited to have nothing to tie them down.



*Beautiful Taylors Bay on the Mahia Peninsula. A beach front property here is where Jill and Pete will settle for now.*

# THE ADVANTAGE OF A BREED

*Are we losing sight of what the different breeds are really there for?*

By Anna Fisher

There are over 800 breeds of cattle recognised worldwide, some of which adapted to the local climate, others which were bred by humans for specialized uses. Breeds fall into two main types either Bos Indicus or Bos Taurus. The Bos Indicus cattle also called Zebu are adapted to hot climates, while the Bos Taurus cattle are typical of Europe, North-East Asia and parts of Africa. The Bos Taurus cattle are what we are familiar with in New Zealand. Here we can split these types of cattle further into British breeds and European Breeds.

British breeds such as the Angus, Herefords or Shorthorns are some examples of our more common maternal breeds. The purpose of these breeds is to breed a functional and hardy female who can handle the tough conditions on New Zealand's hill country. She is also set apart by all her maternal qualities such as exceptional fertility, good milking ability and a great pelvis for a trouble free calving.

The European breeds such as the Charolais, Simmental, Belgium Blue or Limousin are some examples of the most popular terminal breeds in New Zealand. The point of these breeds is to breed progeny that excel in growth and carcass traits as all progeny whether they are male or female are bred for slaughter. The terminal breeds add value to a system by breeding cattle that have fast and higher growth which leads to bigger carcass weights. They are also known for their higher yield. Higher yields and bigger carcass weights lead to more dollars in the farmer's pockets.

I often find myself asking the question as to whether farmers know the difference between maternal and terminal breeds? I ask this as I hear many instances where Herefords are used as a terminal sire over Angus. There is some benefit gained here from hybrid vigour and the resulting females are hard to beat as a cow, but if all the progeny were destined for slaughter then certainly there is production lost from not using a real terminal sire. Another reason for the question is that someone also once said to me that they would never use a Charolais as these types of cows would never be any good on his hill country. A Hereford breeder also said to me that the Hereford breed needed to lift its game so they could compete with the Charolais and other European breeds. I think both these comments show a lack of understanding of the value of the strength of diversity amongst cattle breeds. Terminal breeds are bred for terminal traits and whilst the odd person likes a Charolais cross cow the general rule of thumb is they are too big and do not excel in the maternal traits like a Hereford or Angus. As for the second comment a Charolais is not the competition for the Hereford! They are two completely different breeds used for two different things.

If we do not differentiate between our terminal and maternal breeds, herds can be compromised and production lost as a result of using the wrong breeds for the wrong jobs. Maternal traits in a herd can be compromised by selecting a maternal sire that excels in terminal traits in order to improve the productivity of their steers and surplus heifers. You can also compromise a breed by over selecting for maternal traits in a terminal breed and vice versa by selecting for terminal traits in a maternal breed.

This brings me to my next question; Have we lost sight of what each breed is supposed to be used for?

There is a natural tendency in breeding to try to improve the

areas you perceive you have weakness in. Unfortunately often that means that you breed away from the natural strengths that you may have in your breed. It is very rare that there is not a trade off. In New Zealand, beef cows have traditionally had the rough end of the stick when it comes to where they are run and the conditions in which they are run. She has been the valuable tool that grooms rough pasture and in times of plenty has the ability to carry extra condition or reserves for when times may not be so good. The beef cow has a huge amount of challenges facing her in an average year and in times of drought, extreme wet or extreme cold, her resilience gets pushed to the extreme. One of her greatest challenges is to maintain a 365 day calving interval. On average she only has 82 days from the time she calves till she gets back in calf. If she fails to rebreed her fate on most commercial operations is that she is down the road. It is totally unrealistic to expect that the traits you need to produce this type of cow will conversely produce you high growth, high yielding steers. I would even go as far to say that while you can breed good steers from the maternal breeds they are really a bit of a by-product of breeding a good hill country cow.

Rather than embracing genetic diversity the past two decades have seen breeds attempting to become more like one another. Too many breeds continue trying to be all things for all people, rather than indispensable components of complementary crossbreeding systems aimed at maximising efficiency. Holmes Warren believes that the focus must always be centred on those traits worth most to the commercial farmer. Attempts to select for too many traits will end up with progress in none. There is so much bias in the beef industry towards different breeds which leads to some breeders thinking that their breed is the only one that is necessary. By being a multipurpose breed and encouraging farmers to only use their breed is really encouraging the farmer to underperform. I am not against straight breeding as it suits a lot of farmers from a management perspective. It makes it easier by not having too many mobs. I do think though, that if farmers want to lift production, using different breeds is a real advantage. Farmers can make it hard for themselves if they choose to increase production or improve traits if they are only willing to do it with one breed. Every breed is different and they all have some advantage over the other so why not use this advantage.

If we don't keep in mind the breed and its use, it could be changed into something that it was never meant to be. There are many examples of how breeds have been changed. A great example is the Shorthorn which was originally bred as a dual purpose breed suitable for both dairy and beef production. Over time the different lines diverged and in the 20th century two separate breeds were developed, the milking shorthorn and the beef shorthorn. Just by selecting for certain traits two completely different breeds have occurred. Breeds can vary from country to country as well. The Charolais you find in the United Kingdom are very different from the Charolais you would find in the States. The Charolais in the U.K have been heavily selected for carcass traits so the cattle you generally see are very heavy in the bone, extremely muscled and some would find the females a bit grotesque. The American Charolais are what we would consider far more functional but would certainly not excel in the terminal traits like in the U.K. I would even go as far to say the Charolais are more like a maternal



States. We see this diversity of type within breeds in New Zealand, therefore you can no longer assume that you can run a certain breed on certain country. This divergence in type is the result of breeders selecting for traits which when taken to extremes can change the characteristics of a breed.

I believe that hybrid vigour and the use of terminal sires in our beef industry is seriously undervalued and is not used enough. Many farmers are losing a lot of value by only using one breed. No breed of cattle is perfect (although some breeders may suggest otherwise), therefore crossbreeding allows the opportunity to mix breeds to create a breed mix that is more ideal than any of the parent breeds that would have been. Crossbreeding really should have a purpose though. Mixing breeds at random will not produce the benefits of that of a well organised cross breeding system.

So why is crossbreeding so under used in this country?

Crossbreeding has been far more accepted in the sheep breeding industry. With many farmers only mating their best ewes to the maternal sire to breed replacements whilst the rest are put to a terminal sire. Putting the poorer ewes to the terminal means that replacements are not being bred from poorer ewes and the performance of the poorer females is lifted from the use of a terminal sire and hybrid vigour. We do not see this method in practice as much in the beef herd, yet it makes a lot of sense. In many instances cattle have played second fiddle to the sheep side of the business and it becomes the easy option to keep a simple system with the cattle

My last question may be another reason as to why a lot of farmers continue with their straight bred systems. Are premiums giving farmer's a false sense that they doing a good job but if they did the sums they would realise they could be achieving more?

There are different premiums that can be received from the meat companies. There are breed specific premiums plus the Reserve Grade at Silver Fern Farms which is open to all beef breeds. The breed specific premiums are an extra 15 cents/kg. Those that qualify for the Reserve Grade receive 25 cents/kg. This is a 3-4 % premium at the end of the day. It is a nice premium to get but hardly worth sacrificing the 10- 15 % production gains you would get from crossbreeding. When you say the word 'premium' to a farmer their eyes light up because farmers like to think they got more than someone else but if you said to them 'you can spend 60 cents and get 15 cents back' it may not look so rewarding.

I have no disrespect for any of the grades and certainly think Silver Fern Farms do a fantastic job marketing and packaging their breed specific brands and Reserve Grade, but by having a single focus of meeting this grade may mean we are not running our whole system as efficiently as we possibly could. The trait that seems to have the biggest effect on whether the carcass

meets the Reserve Grade is marbling. Since marbling seems to be laid down later on when the animal gets closer to maturity, older animals are more likely to meet the grade than younger ones. This may encourage farmers to hold on to their stock longer just to meet this requirement. This may be inefficient when considering other options. Every day an animal is alive it's costing you money from either holding costs or because they are eating feed which has a cost. If they are gaining weight sufficiently the cost benefit may be in favour of keeping them growing. The best return you can get on feed consumed is an animal that finishes fast and makes use of the spring grass which is the cheapest and best quality feed. We just need to do our calculations and work out whether selecting breeds that will meet these premiums will actually make us more money. We must always consider the days they are on property, carcass weight, schedule price and yield. An animal with a higher yield will not need to be as high live weight of their counterparts. We are breeders of both a terminal breed and maternal breed. We really enjoy both the breeds and really love most breeds of cattle as long as they are structurally sound, good functional cattle. Our breeding strategies for the two breeds are slightly different. While structural soundness and type is paramount for us and will always come first, more pressure is put on the maternal traits in the Herefords and likewise terminal traits in the Charolais. The maternal traits such as fertility, milking ability, calving ease and udders are extremely important in our Hereford herd. We would never consider keeping a dry cow or not calving at two years old. These are all traits that are extremely important to our commercial buyers. How could we expect them to buy bulls off us if we did not put the same practices in place at the stud end? These maternal traits are important in our Charolais herd too and they too are calved as two year olds. The only difference is that by selecting or not selecting for these maternal traits in our Charolais herd is only affecting us (or the odd stud buyer) as no progeny of our bulls are used for breeding. As breeders of both we would not consider telling buyers to use a Hereford as a terminal sire likewise we would never tell anyone a Charolais cross heifer is the ideal hill country cow.

Whatever the breed of cattle you are breeding there is always the option to explore other opportunities that other breeds may offer you and your system. There is no right and wrong breed but there are ways of using the different breeds to maximise profitability in your system. There is room in the industry for different breeds and crossbreeding should be encouraged by all stud breeders and breed societies if they believe it can help a farmer improve their productivity. At the end of the day everyone in the industry needs to be encouraging efficiency within all aspects of the industry, within and beyond the farm gate.



*An example of how a breed looks completely different in two countries. In North America some of the Charolais (left) have been transformed into an animal that could be described as more functional and maternal whilst the Irish Charolais (right) has been bred to remain like the more traditional type of Charolais with the focus being on the terminal traits.*

# SHANNON STATION

Martin Family-Wairoa

## CLIENT PROFILE



This will be Silverstream's third year offering Hereford bulls in our annual bull sale. The Hereford cows originated from Anna's parents, Pete & Jill's 'Na Puteputi Stud' in Wairoa, Hawkes Bay. In the first two years selling Hereford bulls we attracted many new buyers to our sale but also welcomed some of Pete and Jill's existing clients who joined us all the way from Wairoa. Shannon Station had been buying bulls from Pete and Jill for years and in the first two years we have sold Hereford bulls they showed they still had confidence in the Na Puteputi genetics and a change of ownership and location was not going to be an obstacle for them. Shannon Station has been in the Martin family for over 100 years. Frank Martin now oversees the whole operation while his son David manages a finishing block and Jefferson Powdrell manages Shannon Station. It was really heartening for us and Anna's parents to have Frank, David and Jefferson attend the sale since the inception of the Herefords. It has also been a great excuse for Jefferson to catch up with old mates. Jefferson and his wife Amanda have been at Shannon Station for 20 years and while he grew up in Wairoa he did do a 6 year stint in the South Island. During this time he was the head stockman at Molesworth Station but also helped with the autumn muster at Muller Station in the Awatere. Since leaving the South Jefferson has attended 15 autumn musters at Muller. He says "I can't get those autumn musters at Muller out of my system".

Frank ran Shannon Station for 21 years until the end of 1996 when Jefferson took over. Frank was born in Gisborne but went to secondary school in Wellington. He did a diploma at Massey University and ran one of the University farms for a while before he headed back to

Shannon permanently. Shannon Station has been in the Martin Family since 1906. Franks grandfather owned a pub in Gisborne and was a silent partner in Shannon Station with his brother who farmed it. Back in 1906 the farm was solid bush. Gangs of bushmen were paid a pound an acre to clear the land. Most of the land was cleared by 1925 and this was followed by fencing and subdividing and then topdressing in the 1950's. The other side of Frank's family ran the property until 1945. Franks father made a trust until Frank purchased the property in 1968. Shannon Station is 2015ha of which 1624 is effective with an additional 106ha purchased in 1991 that David runs in Awamate. Shannon is located in the steep hills of Ohuka, only a few kilometres in a straight line from the Urewera National Park. It's approximately 40 minutes from the township of Wairoa and the homestead sits at 2000 feet which is the highest homestead in Hawkes Bay. The property gets an annual rainfall of 1600ml and while we were visiting in January the feed was plentiful. Shannon is an attractive property. The pumice soils mean the country can suffer from erosion but over the years the planting of trees in vulnerable areas has helped with this. The property has a large area of rolling southerly facing country, which means care has to be taken at lambing and calving time to make sure the ewes and cows are set stocked on the most sheltered country. The cows begin calving on the 1st of October. They pushed the calving back to this date due to the higher lambing percentage they get nowadays. The Ewes begin lambing on the 10th of September. They usually scan around 170% and dock 140% which is up from 110% from when Jefferson arrived. They lamb 5600 Romney ewes and finish 80% of





*Frank with Mason Birrell and Anna at our sale last year*

The calves are weaned late March and all head down to David's block. In recent times the calves have been wintered down there on Fodder Beet. The calves have been yard weaned for 4 years. Jefferson finds it helps settle the calves before they head down to David's.

Like many hill country breeding properties Shannon has had to quit stock at certain times of the year into an unattractive market so this is where David's block has given Shannon more flexibility. With Shannon as a breeding property and then having a block like David's, has added more value. Instead of dumping store cattle they can take more through themselves and finish them. It is also more cost effective to winter cattle at David's. Because it was a dairy farm it is all set up with silage pads and the infrastructure to handle feeding out. Making hay or silage isn't really an option at Shannon as there are no flats to speak of.



Irrigation has also been put in at David's this year. Probes have also been installed to monitor soil moisture. They also grow a bit of maize and sweet corn down there and then put it back into oats for the winter.

Shannon runs 700 breeding cows. 200 straight blacks, 200 straight Herefords and 300 black and white cows. Jefferson says that he loves the black and white cows the most. Jefferson likes the fact you get the hybrid vigour of crossing but still have the traditional blood lines to handle the harsher environment. Once the bull has finished, the cows go into 'work mode'. The cows are perfect for this country, tidying up pastures for the sheep. The tough conditions suit the Herefords which have been here since 1960. The Angus were only introduced when they picked up the lease on the neighbouring property back in 1999. At that time the Angus cows running on the lease were purchased and integrated into the system.



*Cows out with the Hereford bull at Shannon Station*

Jefferson prefers the Horned Herefords as he believes they are tough and have more longevity than other breeds. If his bulls last longer then he has more money to spend to get a better quality bull when they do need replacing. Jefferson also finds that the Horned Herefords also have a better strength of bone. He also does not find the horns an issue as the bulls are going over Angus cows so most of the progeny are polled anyway. The improved quality of the progeny he gets from the horned cattle far outweigh the odd calf that needs to be dehorned.

**WE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR GOOD FRIEND PAUL PLANTE FROM FRANCE WHO WE WERE LUCKY TO HAVE WITH US FOR 6 MONTHS. PAUL COMES FROM A CHAROLAIS BACKGROUND AND HAS EXPERIENCE WITH A GENETICS COMPANY BACK AT HOME. PAUL HAD BEEN WITH US SINCE NOVEMBER AND STAYED THROUGH TILL APRIL. UNFORTUNATELY FOR US PAUL HAS TO HEAD HOME IN JUNE. HE HAS BEEN A GREAT PERSON TO HAVE ROUND AND A TREMENDOUSLY HARD WORKER. WE REALLY DON'T KNOW HOW WE WOULD HAVE GOT ON WITHOUT HIM. PAUL WILL BE BACK FOR A SHORT VISIT FOR OUR BULL SALE SO IF YOU SEE HIM ROUND MAKE SURE YOU INTRODUCE YOURSELF.**





# 28TH ANNUAL BULL SALE:

WEDNESDAY 15TH JUNE 2PM



**LOT 9** *By Silverstream Frampton*



**LOT 28** *By Silverstream Evolution*



**LOT 29** *By Silverstream Evolution*



**LOT 48** *By Silverstream Heritage*



**LOT 49** *By Silverstream Evolution*



**LOT 55** *By Silverstream Evolution*



**LOT 65** *By Gay Olympus*



**LOT 67** *By Gay Olympus*



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