

CASE STUDY



Andrew Freeman, Ngahere Farm

THE CONFIDENCE TO MAKE BOLD DECISIONS

Andrew Freeman opened his farm gates to the NZ Grassland Association conference delegates in 2015, during which we heard of his 'flying ewe flock', triplet-rearing and plans for red clover.

Using FARMAX, the Ngahere team meticulously analyse the enterprise allocation intakes to see where greater efficiencies can be made. It's all about maximising the gain per kg DM produced on farm.

Farming on 615ha effective land, comprised of approximately one third hill, one third flat and one third rolling, Andrew runs a 2,300 ewe breeding flock, finishes 3,600 homebred lambs, plus 8,500 trade lambs, contract grazes 750 ewe hoggets and finishes a further 720 beef bulls heifers and steers.

Over the last five years they have started establishing high quality forages and clover and currently grow 78ha new grass, 147ha plantain/clover and 46ha of red clover.

ENTERPRISE COMPARISONS

With effective use of the enterprises in FARMAX, Andrew is able to compare the c/kg dry matter return for each enterprise. The more the farm is split into enterprises, the more valuable any analysis becomes. Andrew has his stock split into seven enterprises and his labour-intensive triplet rearing enterprise generates the highest c/kg DM.

MATCHING SUPPLY AND DEMAND

As you can see in the FARMAX graphs 1 and 2, supply gets tight in late summer and winter, so they manage their stock accordingly.

With a 'flying ewe flock', Andrew purchases light five-year-old ewes in January, feeds them well to tugging in order to time lambing to coincide with the spring flush in mid-September (around 150% lambing at 32-34 kg 90 day weaning weights). They then sell them to works in November. This reduces demand during the summer tight feed supply period.

In addition, the beef enterprises require very little over the winter months, but also utilise the spring flush well with bought in spring steers and heifers.

REACTING TO MARKET DRIVERS

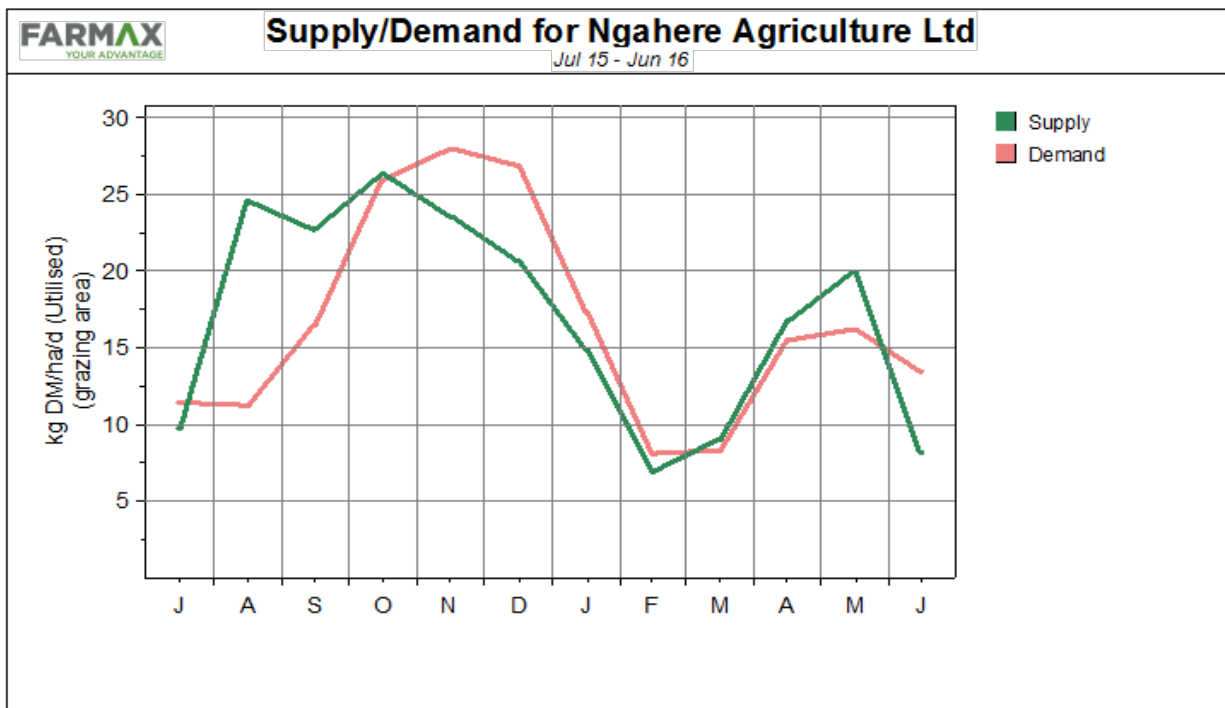
The farm adjusts stocking according to schedule and feed supply and type. Generally, stock trading will be driven by market information and feasibility in FARMAX.

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In addition, specific feeding decisions are influenced by trade value. For example, if winter hoggets are providing the best return, the red clover will be prioritised for them over other stock classes (such as ewes with lambs at foot) to match highest liveweight gain potential with highest performing feed platform.

Trades are also re-priced throughout the year to help adjust the balance of stock classes on farm and maximise exposure to the sweet spots of market and liveweight gain assistance.

GRAPH 1



GRAPH 2

