**Keebles Farm – Massey University**

**History**
This intensive finishing unit was purchased in 1978 from the estate of Charles Keeble. A feature of the farm is Keebles Bush, a 15.5 hectare protected bush reserve considered to be one of the finest remaining examples of podocarp/broadleaf lowland forest in the Manawatu.

**Objectives**
- To provide a facility for quality research, teaching and extension in sheep and beef farming.
- To be managed as a profitable unit as part of the SBDRU.
- To provide a link between the University and Agribusiness.

**Location**
The farm is located approximately 7 km SE of Palmerston North on Tennent Drive SH 57.

**Altitude**
Ranges from 40 to 80 m above sea level.

**Topography**
Flat terrace dissected by easy gullies, with some steep faces.

**Climate**
1000 mm (average annual rainfall), July wettest month, February driest month. Prevailing southwest winds.

**Temperature**
Soil temperature (at 10 cm) – 6.7°C July minimum; 18.5°C January maximum.

**Soil Types**
Free draining recent alluvial soil (Manawatu/Rangitikei) on river terraces. Poor draining heavy clay soil (Tokomaru) on high terraces.

**Area**
292.7 ha.

**Effective Area**
236 ha.

**Subdivision**
The farm is subdivided into approximately 165 paddocks, ranging from 0.16 to 5.08 ha. Conventional post and batten fences plus some 7-wire electric.

**Drainage**
Tile and mole drainage.

**Water Supply**
Reticulated water from main Massey University supply.

**Staff**
2 full-time equivalent labour units + casuals as required.

**Stock Policy**
**Sheep:** All sheep on Keebles is involved in research trials so feeding and breeding policy is largely determined by trial protocols. Numbers on farm vary depending on research requirements but generally around 1000 MA ewes are wintered and lambed down. Around 200 ewe hogget replacements are also wintered.

**Beef:** Policy is largely determined by research requirements. No capital beef stock is currently carried on Keebles; trade steers or heifers may be purchased to harvest feed surpluses. The farm also carries around 40 Friesian and Jersey bulls that are used by the dairy farms to mate the heifers and cows after AI.

**Dairy Grazing:** 150-200 dairy replacements heifers (owned by University dairy farms) come on farm after being weaned from milk November/December. These are carried through on the SBCRU until several weeks before calving as two-year-old heifers.

200-250 dry dairy cows from the University farms are also carried over the winter and are grazed on crop with whole crop cereal silage that is grown on farm also.
YARDS
Main set of covered yards attached to five-stand raised board woolshed (~700 sheep night-pen capacity). Another set of satellite yards are located towards the rear of the farm.

PASTURE
Predominantly perennial ryegrass / white clover species.

GRAZING POLICIES
Non-trial mobs are generally rotationally grazed, with balage used to extend the rotation when required. Cows and in-calf heifers graze a winter forage crop (kale and/or oats).

CROPS & SUPPLEMENTS
20-30ha are cropped annually. Balage is harvested off approximately 25 ha, along with hay.

REGRASSING POLICY
Pastures are renewed on a ten-year rotation.

FERTILISER
Fertiliser programmes are based on soil test results.

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Typical fertiliser program is as follows:
250 kg/ha of Sulphur Super with added selenium.
Applications of 1t/ha lime was applied in early 2012.

KEEBLES FARM MAP