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SOME FARM MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS OF
EXPORT HOGGET PRODUCTION ON LOWER NORTH
ISLAND HILL COUNTRY SHEEP FARMS

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Agricultural Science in Farm Management at Massey University.

Alan Bell Walker
1984

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is a large number of people to whom the author will remain indebted for their input into this thesis. Many can only be acknowledged collectively, others must receive individual recognition.

Foremost is Professor Bob Townsley, my supervisor and mentor, who gave so generously and patiently of his time in providing guidance and constructive criticism during all stages of this study. The author would also like to thank all the other Massey staff members whom he pestered at various stages of his studies. Their assistance made my time at Massey a most beneficial and enjoyable experience.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries have been generous employers, and to the many colleagues who assisted with information and discussion I give my thanks. I must also acknowledge the farmers visited during the course of two surveys - without their co-operation this study could not have been undertaken.

The author is most appreciative of the typists involved in this presentation. To Barbara Walker and Adrienne Kendell who managed to decipher the original drafts, and to Barbara Marshall who prepared the final manuscript.

And finally I must acknowledge my wife Barbara who showed great patience and understanding in providing unending support.

Deficiencies in this thesis are not attributable to any of those mentioned.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to investigate some of the farm management implications of export hogget production on lower North Island Hill country farms from the perspective of a Farm Advisory Officer (Economics) operating within the Advisory Services Division (ASD) of the New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF). To establish the context in which the study is set, a brief review of the responsibilities of the Economics Section of ASD is presented as a precursor to developing the institutional and industry requirements of farm management research performed by staff of the Economics Section of ASD.

Brief reviews of existing sheep meat production systems, management systems for producing lean meat, and the market requirements for export hogget, indicate limited potential for further expansion of hogget production for export under conditions of relative profitability. Simple feed budgeting/gross margins analysis procedures are used to synthesise and evaluate export hogget production strategies for a range of lower North Island hill country farm types. Schedule prices, for export hogget meat, sufficient to break-even with pre export hogget production strategies are established, and the sensitivity of these break-even schedule prices to a range of management, output, and product price variables is investigated.

A highlight of the research approach is an interactive component of the research process, developed from Kelly's (1965) Personal Construct Theory and Woog's (1982) Personal Interaction Model of Extension, in which previously developed models are used as a basis for interactive discussions with farmers.

ABSTRACT (contd)

Export hogget production is shown to be feasible, although not necessarily fully compatible with, or desirable under, all existing hill country sheep production systems investigated. Export hogget production appears to have greatest potential appeal to moderately intensive farming systems practised under conditions where summer pasture production is poor, relative to winter grass growth.

The over-riding conclusion is that, whilst hogget production may have merit as a means of producing larger, leaner, carcasses for export, and whilst current production systems appear capable of producing limited amounts of export hogget, current schedule payments preclude any rational decision to produce hogget for export.