GALLOWAY CATTLE SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND REPORT TO 2018 WORLD GALLOWAY CONGRESS

Following on from our attendance at the 2016 World Galloway Congress in Scotland, a similar number of NZ breeders are attending this year's World Galloway Congress in Melbourne. We welcome the opportunity to meet like-minded people from other Galloway breeding countries, and to not have to travel very far to see our "neighbours" Galloway herds in Australia.

Our breeder numbers remained fairly static over the last two years, with older ones retiring and younger breeders taking up membership. Strongest growth in membership was in the Central/Taranaki region in the North Island, and Canterbury and Nelson in the South Island. Our membership is diverse, ranging from small "lifestyle" farmers who are employed full-time elsewhere or run other small businesses, to commercial farmers on large farms who are also dairy farmers or sheep & beef farmers.

While the Belted herds comprise the largest numbers of stock in 42 registered herds, the White Galloways are increasing in both popularity and numbers, in 39 registered herds. The Galloway registered herds number 5, so they are a rare breed in NZ.

Large numbers of purebred yearling and 2 year old bulls, both Belted and White, are sold each year into the dairy industry for mating with dairy heifers. Their attributes of high fertility, easy calving, hybrid vigour, quiet temperament, and colour-marking the calves, are appreciated by the dairy farmer. The 1st cross calves that result usually go into the beef industry achieving excellent meat yield results when sent to slaughter from 18 months onwards.

Some of our breeder members keenly show their best registered animals at local A & P Shows with great success. Unfortunately showing has been limited this last

summer due to the Mycoplasma Bovis outbreak in NZ, with some cattle classes being cancelled at these shows, to restrict possible exposure and spread of this disease, which our government hopes to eradicate. It may be several years before it is known if they will succeed, but farmers support their efforts and hopefully eradication can be achieved. Sales of registered stock has been affected to some degree with buyers showing reluctance to move animals through areas where M.Bovis outbreaks have occurred.

Displays promoting the three Galloway breeds took place in February at the Southern Waimumu Field Days, which attracts large numbers of visitors, and also at a smaller event, the Canterbury Rare Breeds Annual Auction which promotes the conservation of all types of rare breed farm animals.

In 2017, our society celebrated 70 years of Galloways in New Zealand, the first Galloways and Belted Galloways being imported from the Scotland in 1947. The society was formed soon after the arrival of these first imported animals. Our annual AGM and Herd Tour weekend was held in April last year at Martinborough, a beautiful wine growing and farming area in the lower North Island, where the first Belted herd began. This herd was named “Kowhai” after one of NZ’s native trees, which bears distinctive yellow flowers. To mark the 70 years Anniversary, Graeme Clinton and Barry McAlley were presented with special certificates for 50 and 40 years membership respectively, and a special award was presented to Suzanne Kernohan for 50 years breeding purebred Belted Galloways, having recently dispersed her herd to retire from farming in her late eighties!

Our 2018 AGM and Herd Tour weekend was held near Nelson at the top of the South Island in May. We enjoyed delicious local food and wine, and visited four local herds including all 3 types of Galloways. Also, an interesting visit was to an American Bison stud where these magnificent animals are being bred as a conservation measure outside their country of origin.

The society plans to introduce mandatory DNA testing and inspections of all registered bulls to be used as stud sires born after 31 December 2018, to maintain and improve the quality of the national herds and to provide for the collection of DNA data as a breed resource.

We continue to promote the purity of the breeds with 5 generation pedigrees required for the registration of progeny. This purity is paramount to the Society’s purpose of promoting the Galloway breeds, and supporting our members in their stud breeding efforts.

New Zealand is offering to host the 2024 World Galloway Congress, and if this goes ahead it will be held early in 2024 in the far south of the country, where some beautiful herds are farmed. We hope many Galloway breeders from around the world will make the trip in 2024. You will be guaranteed a warm “kiwi” welcome.

Angela McNaughton

Secretary/Treasurer GCSNZ.