



# The Long Black

New Zealand Lowline Breeders Newsletter No.1, April 2025

Hello everyone, and welcome to the first NZLB newsletter which we hope to bring you every quarter – cyclones, calving and cattle notwithstanding. We have called this first edition The Long Black because we breed black cattle and we hope to for a long time – and because it is editor Michelle's favourite coffee.

This is your newsletter so please tell us what you would like to read about. Your first input is to name this publication – send us your suggestions and we'll print a list in the next edition for your feedback and votes.

We plan to run an interview piece on one of our members each edition. This time we have twisted chairperson Fiona's arm and told you what makes this Taranaki action woman tick.

We plan to have handy cattle facts, quiz questions, a recipe and snippets of Lowline news. Contributions for any of these are very welcome. We're still undecided about whether to run advertisements (unpaid, of course) for Lowline cattle for sale – what do you think? Any questions or suggestions please contact our editor, Michelle, at [michelle@ironcladstud.nz](mailto:michelle@ironcladstud.nz)

## **INTERVIEW:**

NZLB chairperson Fiona Henschman is on a mountain high about Lowlines.



Her farm is a few kilometres from the Egmont National Park boundary, approximately 5km from the mountain. "I'm not sure of the altitude here but it gets cold." She loves her Lowlines because they are robust at handling the wintery conditions, with a nice thick coat and come through the summer just as well by not dropping weight while still feeding their calves.

Fiona started into agriculture with a six-month course on dairy farming, learning everything from welding and woodwork to all essential farming knowledge. When she moved on and joined the Farm Cadet Scheme that placed young people on working dairy farms, she met John while working for his brother.

"We got married and now have four grown-up kids. We took over the family farm in Taranaki, changed from Friesian cows to Jersey and that led us to look for alternative bulls to use for the cows that didn't hold to AB.

“Jersey bulls can be challenging at the best of times and that’s where we came across Lowlines. Calving trouble was what we were trying to avoid and Lowlines ticked that box well.”

Eight years ago Fiona purchased her first cows from David and Christina Clee and Steve Quinn, and Kaitake Lowline Stud was born.

“The little herd came together and I love them to bits. I now weigh them regularly, muscle scan yearly and can now start breeding and improving the herd for the beef market due to the data collected. Having data now on the cows/bulls I use is super exciting.

“I was lucky enough to supply Kiwi Butcher for three years with beef until they changed their way of business. I now supply Meat to Yours. They take my steers and heifers to run through their shop which I am very happy about.”



The Kaitake herd currently numbers 12 mixed aged registered cows, 6 2yr registered heifers, 9 yearling heifers, 15 calves all calf recorded (2 bulls, 9 heifers and 4 steers), and 6 mixed age registered bulls on the dairy farm at Weld Road. Thirteen calves are due in August.

What is your plan with your Lowlines? “Good question. I’m still active with the dairy farm - herd recording, paperwork, breeding selection etc just not actively milking. I thought I was retired but I guess you could say I’m semi-retired. While John is still milking he will need bulls so I’ll just tick along for now. As long as I’m enjoying easy-care Lowline cattle, growing great grass and playing with my horses on my 50

acres I’ll be happy.”

Being part of NZLB has helped nurture her Lowline dreams. “I’ve met some great friends through this group that I bounce ideas off and thoroughly enjoy their company.”

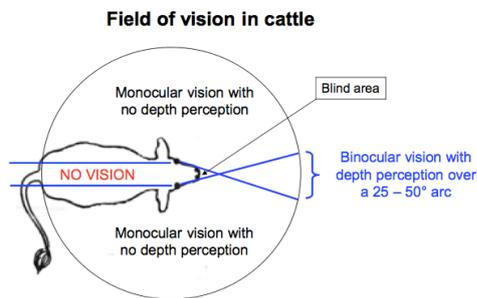
Kaitake can mean guardian, and Fiona is a guardian for our breed helping to promote the animals and the meat through her farming and updates on Facebook.

Fiona likes her steak medium rare.

*Picture shows Kaitake Lowline sirloin, with Caesar salad and fries, from advertising by Field to Fork, the café and butchery part of Meat to Yours.*



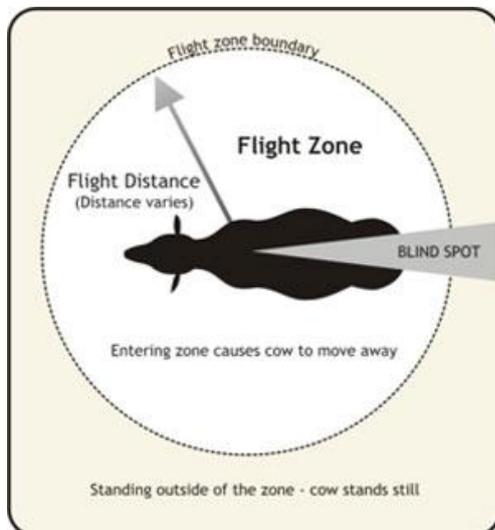
## **Moving cattle**



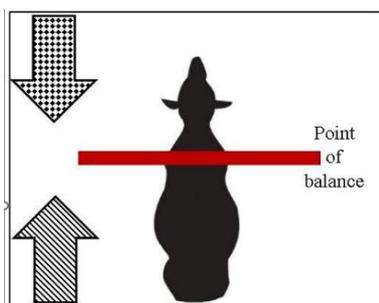
**Cattle have almost 360° vision.**

The flight distance or flight zone is the term for knowing how close you can get to cattle before they start moving. With dairy cattle that are regularly handled, it may be five metres or less. With a herd of beef cattle that have been out the back for a while, they'll be off if you get within 100 metres. You can get cattle moving by entering their flight distance. The closer you get, the faster they will move away. You can manage the speed with which they move by how close you get to them. Conversely, if you want

to stop them moving, you step out of their flight distance.



- ❖ Completely tame animals have no flight zone
- ❖ The flight zone gets bigger when an animal becomes excited.
- ❖ The flight zone is also bigger when you approach "head on".
- ❖ An animal's flight zone will vary depending on how calm it is.
- ❖ Calm cattle are easier to move.
- ❖ If cattle become excited, it takes 20 to 30 minutes for them to calm back down.



The next trick is to understand what's called the "balance lines". There are two balance lines.

One runs across the shoulders (see diagram) and the other runs along the backbone. When you're working up close, whichever way you move through those lines, the animal will move the other way.

- If you're alongside the animal and move forward, it will move backward (see arrow)
- If you go back, it will go forward (see arrow)
- If you're in front and move to the left, it will move to your right and vice versa

*Source: ACC guide to safe cattle handling/various others.*

## **Bovine brain benders**

What is the term given to a female bovine that has not produced a calf?

When someone refers to a cow as open or empty what does he or she mean?

In cattle, this term means naturally having no horns. A. Docked B. Pointed C. Buffed D. Polled E. Smooth

In days, what is the gestation length of a beef cow?

What mineral deficiency causes grass tetany, a condition in which cattle appear nervous, lack muscle co-ordination, and have muscle twitch? A. Magnesium B. Calcium C. Sodium D. Selenium E. Phosphorus

Between what ribs are ribeye measurements taken? *Answers later in newsletter.*

## **Recipe (from Fiona)**

### **Oven Baked Beef Brisket with BBQ Sauce**

**Ingredients: Rub:** 1.5-2kg beef brisket

Prep: 15min Cook: 10 hours

1 tbsp olive oil (or a neutral oil like vegetable, canola)

**Sauce:** 2 garlic cloves minced

1 tbsp brown sugar

½ cup or 125 ml apple cider vinegar

2 tsp paprika powder

1½ cups or 375 ml ketchup

1 tsp onion powder

½ cup or 110g brown sugar packed

1 tsp garlic powder

2 tsp EACH black pepper, onion powder, mustard powder

½ tsp cumin powder

1 tsp cayenne pepper (adjust to taste for spiciness)

¾ tsp mustard powder

1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce

1 tsp salt, ½ tsp black pepper

1. Place Rub in a bowl and mix to combine. Rub all over brisket. If time permits, leave for 30 minutes to 24 hours in the fridge.

2. Put the sauce ingredients in a roasting pan, add 2 cups water. Mix, add beef, cover with lid or double layer of foil.

3. Bake at 160C or 320F for 4 hours, then uncovered for 30 minutes, until fork tender. Baste every hour or so with pan juices. Check every now and then to ensure the liquid doesn't reduce down beyond a BBQ sauce consistency (add water if it does).

4. Simmer BBQ sauce. Remove brisket, scrape/pour sauce into a saucepan. Simmer over medium heat until thickens into a BBQ sauce syrup consistency.

5. Roast for 10-15 minutes or until surface is caramelised.

6. Return brisket to roasting pan, turn heat up to 200C or 390F. Drizzle with oil, brush with sauce (reserve most for serving).

7. To serve, slice brisket thinly across the grain and serve with remaining BBQ sauce. This is terrific served as a meal with sides or piled high onto rolls with coleslaw as sliders. Serves 8 to 10.



## *M's Meanderings*

This is a column of snippets from around the traps.

We welcome your contributions.

Contact [michelle@ironcladstud.nz](mailto:michelle@ironcladstud.nz)

**History of Lowlines:** Matt "Numbers" Wilkinson is compiling a history of the Lowline breed in New Zealand. He is keen for breeders to write something on their history with Lowlines and to share with him any information they have about the early days of Lowlines in New Zealand.

**Across the Ditch,** the recent Toowoomba Show featured a Lowline spectacular competition that had 25 entries in some classes. A great turnout by exhibitors and a special Kiwi connection with the new perpetual trophy for the top Lowline of the show named for Canterbury breeder Philip Worthington who passed away in June. The splendid trophy was arranged by Christine McIntosh of McIntosh Creek Lowlines, presented by young Queenslander Meggie Reithmuller who helps the Worthingtons show their cattle with the Rangiora High school students, and won by Martin Page of Smart Lowlines for his outstanding bull.



**Circle of protection:** At the Oxford A&P Show recently the Rangiora High School cattle handling team earned praise for quick thinking in the ring. Eight Lowline heifers were in the rare and miniature breeds class, along with a Belted Galloway heifer, when the Galloway's halter chinstrap snapped. The Lowline crew quickly surrounded the Galloway and her handler in a circle, helping to calm the startled animal while a new halter was substituted. Health and safety officials were passing the ring at the time and were suitably impressed. For the team, who have rehearsed for this, it was a chance to put it into practice.



**In the beginning:** How long have you been farming Lowlines? Who has been farming them as a stud the longest in New Zealand? A recent find in the files reveals the answer to be Gordon and Debbie Guthrie, of Ashmore Lowlines in Ashburton, clocking up 26 years as a stud. Close behind is the Woolstone Park Stud, of Rangiora, with 25 years, and Kevin and Penny Harmer, of the original Araawa Stud, Killinchy, with 24 years, but who no longer have animals. The Clees of Rancho Radiata have clocked up 23 years, Compak Black Stud of Palmerston North 20 years, Sally and Harvey Rhodes, of Edsal Stud, Ashburton, who

recently sold their animals 19 years, and the Moores, of Triple M Stud in Taranaki, 18 years. It's addictive.

**Paddock-2-Plate:** New Zealand's only registered school Lowline stud at Rangiora High School notched up a first recently. Hospitality students and International students hosted a gastronomic smorgasbord of beef dishes. This was the final piece to conclude the Paddock-2-Plate connected learning programme, linking Agricultural Studies and the rearing of the school's Lowline cows with Food Technology and the hospitality programmes at the school. The Lowlines came from the school stud, called Whakatipu (canoe of learning), which began three years ago. A cow no longer wanted in the herd was dispatched by Cheviot Transport to Harris Farms meat plant about 90



minutes away where the animal was processed and the various cuts of meat packaged and returned to the school. Both the transport firm and the meat company gave their time to support the concept. With the collaboration of Harris Farms butchery expertise preparing the beef, students were able to produce dishes from an assortment of cultures including Greek kebabs, Kiwi BBQ sliders, Korean soups and German open sandwiches. The butcher/chef who helped cut up the beef was very complimentary of the marbling and quality of the meat. The 50 or so invited guests were equally impressed with the professionalism of the students and thoroughly enjoyed tasting some amazing dishes.

### **ALCA News:**

**Journal:** Bookings are now open for the Australian Lowline 2025 Journal, featuring a fresh new look. The ALCA council says the 2025 Journal is set to be a must-read for breeders and enthusiasts alike. To secure your spot, visit the Lowline shop to book at

<https://lowlineshop.com/collections/promotional-material/products/2021-lowline-journal-advertisement>

More information and prices on the ALCA website. If you need assistance with advertisement design or general inquiries, contact Samantha Hamilton, Breed Executive [office@lowlinecattleassoc.com.au](mailto:office@lowlinecattleassoc.com.au)

### **New contacts at head office:**

Registrar Quinn Dalton, Monday-Friday 8am to 4pm Ph: 02 6773 5588 Email: [lowline.registrar@abri.une.edu.au](mailto:lowline.registrar@abri.une.edu.au) (All animal inquiries)

Breed Executive Samantha Hamilton, Monday-Friday 8am to 4pm Ph: 02 6773 3295 Email: [office@lowlinecattleassoc.com.au](mailto:office@lowlinecattleassoc.com.au) (All memberships and general inquiries)

**Answers to quiz:** 1. Heifer. 2. The cow is not pregnant or bred. 3. D Polled. 4. D 283 days. 5. A Magnesium 6. 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> ribs.