

# The Long Black

New Zealand Lowline Breeders Newsletter No.5 May 2026

Greetings. What weather haven't we had lately across the country with sunny days, frosty mornings, rainstorms and winds. We love the change of seasons and autumn is a favourite but there's still jobs to be done to be ready for the cold that's coming. Michelle has put together a pre-winter check list to prepare for the roll into winter.

This time our interview is not about one of our members but about a North Canterbury vineyard with a side hustle of growing Lowlines for use in its high-end restaurant. We do, however, have a catch-up with Fiona Henschman, the ever-active NZLB chairperson.

And we offer some tips from the experts on giving vaccinations, and another of Michelle's entertaining word puzzles.

We're also running free advertisements for Lowlines for sale.

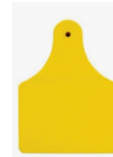
Any questions or suggestions please contact our editor, Michelle, at [michelle@ironcladstud.nz](mailto:michelle@ironcladstud.nz)

## Five good reasons to breed Lowlines

1. Quiet nature - easy to handle, good for smaller blocks and lifestylers.
2. Yield of meat - Lowlines have less bone to meat than bigger cattle, thus less waste, more efficient meat production. Flavourful, marbled meat.
3. Shorter gestation or pregnancy - Lowlines can calve up to 10 days quicker than bigger breeds. If using a Lowline bull to mate dairy heifers this means quicker calves and an earlier milk payment for the dairy farmer.
4. Size means easy calving, less pugging up of the ground in winter and more Lowlines to the hectare than bigger breeds (10 Lowlines to 6 bigger cattle).
5. Lowlines do very well on good pasture but also do well on lesser pasture - an advantage in droughts.



This is one of the learning sheets I use with the teenage cattle handlers as they get to know the Lowline breed. Showing Lowlines at A&P shows was Philip's passion and I caught the bug from him. It's a great way to promote the breed, give youth a chance to work with animals and open doors into agriculture as a career. This year makes 17 years Woolstone Park has done this. (K.W.)



## *Pre Winter checklist*

With winter marching closer it's time to have a check of the farm and your management strategies to help make the cold wet months easier to handle. Don't forget to make sure your gumboots don't have holes!

- Stocking rates - now is a great time to move on surplus stock. How that looks for everyone is different. It might be sending old cows to the works as culls. Selling surplus youngsters or putting a beast in the freezer. However you do it makes for less strain on feed through the tougher months.
- Feed reserves - Hopefully you had a productive spring/summer and managed to cut baleage or hay in plentiful supply to keep your hungry mouths happy. Do a quick calculation as to how much you will require and make sure to top up your reserves now while stock is available. It's a terrible feeling having hungry animals and there is no baleage left to purchase locally.
- Pasture management - lengthening grazing rotations, and managing stock behind an electric wire allowing grass time to regenerate. Applying fertiliser and lime while the soil is still warm for optimum growth. Pays to get a soil test done first to make sure you are applying what's required for your soil type.
- Weed management - pasture spray for unwanted weeds such as buttercup that spread quickly and compete with the desirable pasture your cattle require.
- Fence check - good idea to make repairs now to avoid hungry cattle pushing through or damaging inferior fences during winter. We all know how they like to get to that one extra blade of grass on the other side.
- Animal health check - yard up your stock and do a quick health check. Depending on your management this might involve administering any vaccinations that might be due, general body condition, foot health or an internal parasite drench. Of course if you are at all concerned with any of your stock call your local vet for assistance.

For those looking to calf over the next few months make sure you have started to think about required pre calving vaccinations and make note on your calendar when these should be applied. Order ear tags, Nait tags, and top up your cow/calf first aid kit for those times when basic help is needed for mum and bub.

## Raise a glass to Lowline beef

Twenty-six Lowlines wait impatiently for winemaker Nicholas Brown to turn up mid-morning to shift their electric break fence allowing them their daily move to lush clover and grass.

The Lowlines, and Nicholas and his family, live on one of the three properties that make up the Black Estate vineyard in North Canterbury.

The cattle were added to the organic winegrowing operation two years ago when Nicholas's father-in-law finally realised a dream to have black cattle grazing at Black Estate, with the beef from the herd served in the Black Estate restaurant.



Rod Naish had a passion for marrying his background in horticulture and the next generation's passion for winemaking with cattle finishing. In autumn 2024, his dream came true when the first weaned heifer calves arrived to the Omihi property – but not before many family discussions and several visits over a couple of years to Woolstone Park Lowlines, 45 minutes drive south at Rangiora, to see the animals up close.

Rod, his daughter Pen (right), and husband Nicholas bought the first of the properties (the Home block of 16 hectares) in 2007 and have developed a bio-dynamic certified, award-winning wine-making operation, cellar door and restaurant. Netherwood (10 hectares) and Damsteep (16 hectares, and yes it is) were added in 2012 and 2015. The cattle are at Netherwood but Nicholas is keen to have the Lowlines at the other blocks also, including on the hill slopes of Damsteep.



The plan was always for the cattle to fit in with the family's philosophy of improving the land – low input, low impact. The wish to work in harmony with the land drives their bio-dynamic (certified with Demeter) approach. The Lowlines fitted the brief for adding to the land with manure and the benefits of close grazing without undue pugging – possible even in the limestone country of North Canterbury.

Nicholas, a novice when it came to running cattle, has become a convert, not only learning about pasture management and controlled grazing but also regenerative farming practices. The herd is moved every 24 hours at roughly the same time each morning so their digestion has a consistent, balanced, circadian rhythm. They are grazed hard behind electrical tapes to clean each small block, utilising the stalks as well as the grass and clover for a more balanced diet. They have a magnesium block and a copper block available, and a helping of bio char mixed with a hearty measure of molasses to help palatability.

It is hands-on management and they certainly seem to be thriving on the day we visit. They zip past the frost fans and under the electric tapes as Nicholas lifts them to provide access to



the next block. Only two of the original eight calves are left, with seven Woolstone R2s (bought in autumn 2025) and 17 weaner heifers bought this autumn.

Feeling their way with slaughtering the cattle for the restaurant, the first couple were done a little early. Waiting until the next few were a bit older produced better meat and fat, and bigger cuts. The animals are sent to Harris Farms' abattoir

at Cheviot, 30 minutes up the road, and the meat is hung and prepared by the Hurunui Farms butchery at Woodend, about 45 minutes down the road. The carcasses are hung for 10 days to two weeks.

Ollie Le Maitre (right) is the chef at Black Estate. He is happy to tell us how much he enjoys working with the Lowline beef. "It is a little softer in taste – absolutely flavoursome but almost a light roast beef taste. Not at all overpowering and too rich like some meat can be."



The menu promotes "regeneratively grown beef".

While the lesser cuts are used on the menu also, Black Estate has sold some of the mince in 500g packs to the public online. They have paused that for the moment as the demand overwhelmed them. "The mince sold out within a day," says Pen. "People just loved the story and that it's homegrown and organic."

The premium cuts sell quickly in the restaurant. When we visit for Sunday lunch on a sun-drenched autumn day, the beef element on the menu is a beef brisket croquette with zucchini pickles, aged gouda and chervil entrée. It is meaty and melt-in-the-mouth delicious.



The grapes from each of the three blocks produce a different character of wine. Nicholas is keen to learn more about whether grazing the cattle at the different blocks would similarly produce a different character to the beef.

He wants to grow the operation at a speed at which he can learn more and maintain control. And keep the cattle quiet and used to people. The next step is to work out the optimal herd size. This year Woolstone Park provided seven more weaners and the Rangiora High School farm helped to boost numbers, with Rod viewing and buying the school's heifer crop of 10.



While the family-run operation's focus is on wine, the restaurant is a wonderful testimony to Rod's dream and the strength of family, and provides a high-end showcase for Lowline beef. We'll be back to try the carpaccio, the short ribs or the rump steak.

--Kay Worthington

## Vaccinations – a pain in the neck?

There's been a bit of discussion on Facebook groups lately about 7 in 1 or 5 in 1 vaccinations and abscesses forming at the injection site. Sharp needles, technique and site choice are key. Abscesses do tend to disappear after a few weeks. These infographics from Canada's Beef Cattle Research Council and the Australian Lowline Discussion page on Facebook are a reminder of good technique. It's not easy when cattle are moving about and have short necks.

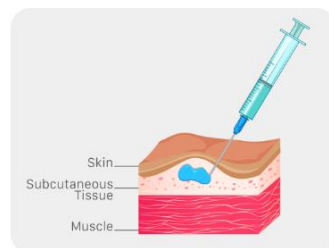


The Spinal column in cattle is part of the axial skeleton, protecting the spinal cord and providing structural support. The Jugular furrow houses the jugular vein. The Nuchal ligament provides critical passive support for the heavy head, allowing grazing without constant muscle effort.

### Routes of Administration (ROA)

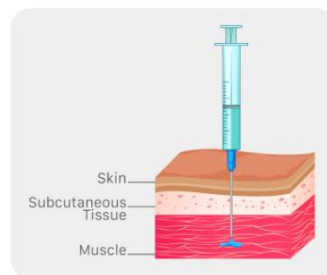
#### SUBCUTANEOUS (SUBQ)

Subcutaneous injections are placed **just under the skin** in the safe zone. The needle should be inserted at a 45-degree angle to the animal. Subcutaneous injections are generally less irritating and the preferred ROA, however, always follow label directions.



#### INTRAMUSCULAR (IM)

All intramuscular injections should be given in the neck muscle in the **safe injection zone**. The needle should enter at 90 degrees, or perpendicular to the animal, into the muscle tissue. Always follow label direction for ROA.



## Volume and Location

- ✓ Recommended maximum volume per injection site is **10 ml (cc) per site**. Increasing the volume of medication injected into one location impedes absorption and excretion of medication.
- ✓ Ensure a **hand-width between injection sites** when administering multiple injections.



## 1. Restrain & Prepare



- Restrain the cow in a head gate or squeeze chute.
- Use an 18 gauge, ½ inch needle.
- Fill syringe with ivermectin solution (dose as directed on label).

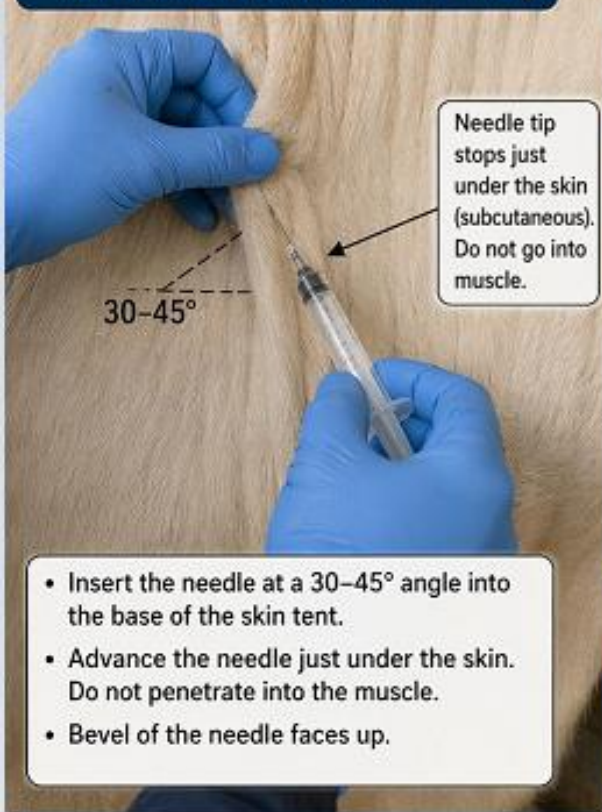
## 2. Tent the Skin



Midway between ear and shoulder, about 6 inches below the top of the neck.

- Pinch a tent of loose skin on the side of the neck in the area shown.

## 3. Insert Needle (30–45°)



Needle tip stops just under the skin (subcutaneous). Do not go into muscle.

30–45°

- Insert the needle at a 30–45° angle into the base of the skin tent.
- Advance the needle just under the skin. Do not penetrate into the muscle.
- Bevel of the needle faces up.

## 4. Inject & Withdraw



- Depress the plunger completely to deliver the full dose subcutaneously.
- Withdraw the needle.
- Gently press a cotton ball to the site.
- Dispose of needle and syringe properly.

## Kaitake Lowlines update

This autumn I have gone from bull collector to bull seller, much to John's relief as he has to feed them all winter at Weld Road.



Kaitake Triumph has been sold to Lowrida Stud, the first bull sold to a stud, and newly weaned Kaitake Wizard (named by grandchildren) has been sold to a local dairy farmer in our Jersey club, another first for me. He will be used over heifers with Jersey bulls and hopefully will become a firm favourite without the "spicy" temperament some Jersey bulls develop. He should be okay for heifers for several years.

So far his temperament is amazing. While the truck driver and I stood in the corner of the yard having a chat, young Wizard (below) took himself past us and up the ramp into the truck. The flabbergasted truck driver shut the open gate behind him and said, "Well, that's never happened before."

Kaitake Ute was sent to the works as he was smaller and the same truck driver said he picked him up and what nice quiet bulls Lowlines seem to be.



Kaitake Warrick is by himself and seems fine. I intend to keep handling him in the yards to keep him super-friendly. He was seen by Kay Worthington and her group of students and parents when they visited for the Beef Youth Camp held by the Stratford A&P recently. As much as it is my dream to show a bull, the show season is right in my breeding season and I expect Warrick to have a herd of unrelated girls here and I'll be busy with the dairy herd being bred to AB then too. But handling sets him up for a career in breeding as an easily handled bull – and you never know, someone else might show him in the future.

Unfortunately, Kaitake Volley, who was my pet last year, is recovering from a severe leg injury and will be culled when sound. It's a risk we take as they live as a mob in a fairly, gnarly sidling, which is why six bulls is not too many at all.

*– Fiona Henschman, NZLB chairperson*





## 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)

### She was a big girl

Fiona Henschman sent Kaitake Smilie, a rising 5-year-old purebred Lowline cow, off for slaughter earlier this year. She returned an impressive carcass weight of 350kg, worth about \$3000. Fiona had given her every chance to get back in calf but Smilie eventually ran out of time. Fiona didn't weigh her as she left the farm but estimates she was probably about 600kg.



### Royal Agricultural Society conference

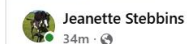


On June 26-28 the Royal Agricultural Society annual conference will be held in Christchurch. NZLB is a breed society member of this organisation which oversees shows and also acts as a lobby group for agricultural interests. The RAS also fosters a youth programme encouraging young people into the industry. Kay Worthington will be attending the AGM and breed societies meeting as the Lowline delegate and is happy to raise any issues you want. Feel free to email her at [woolstone@scorch.co.nz](mailto:woolstone@scorch.co.nz)

### Trans-Tasman friendships



The tea towel designed for the NZ Lowline Breeders group annual meeting in February attracted over 30 orders from NZ members. Two or three of the Michelle Millar-designed towels were sent to our friends in Australia.



Peter and I have always had a soft spot for New Zealand and its people, hence why we have visited there many times.  
Today we got the loveliest of surprises in the mail with this tea towel and card from the North Island New Zealand Lowline Breeders.  
This very active Group of Breeders exhibit what a Promotion Group can do to further the interest in our Lowlines cattle.  
Thanks to the Group for sending this gift to us. The towel will always be placed in a prominent position (never to be used) in our kitchen.

## Out the gate ... well, not quite



Someone might be regretting her life choices. The Lowlines are standing by with advice but it took a tractor (pretty sure the


Lowlines thought the tractor meant hay) and a helpful dairy farmer neighbour to get Miss Murray Gray loose. She is a super quiet cow, with very long legs, thankfully.

## How heavy is Kaitake Warrick?



A group of Rangiora High School students visited Kaitake Lowlines at Newall while on a trip to Taranaki for the Stratford A&P Assn's Beef Youth Camp in mid-May. Five students and five accompanying adults listened to Fiona H. tell about breaking in her farm and her seven-year journey to getting it just the way she wants it. And about her start in Lowlines and marketing their beef. The students also worked with Kaitake Warrick, a nine-month-old bull Fiona is breaking in. The competition to estimate Warrick's weight was hotly contested and won by the Rangiora rural studies teacher on the trip, Gillian Koster. Now it's your turn to estimate, with the help of some photos. Answer later in the newsletter. No asking Fiona. (K.W.)

**Saleyards:**



Ironclad Stud

# *Heifer* *Sale*

August/September 2025 born heifers available  
DNA proven, BVD screened clear, recently  
weaned, current 5n1 vax and drenched

For futher info contact:  
[michelle@ironcladstud.nz](mailto:michelle@ironcladstud.nz)

Ads are free. Contact Michelle for inclusion in our next newsletter due out in spring.

*Lowland Park Beef proudly offer*  
**FOR SALE**

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**Black Ridge  
Unquestionable (RC)**  
DOB 10.10.2023  
May 2026 weight 574 kg  
Purchased at weaning for his outcross  
genetics and fast growth  
Extremely rare recessive red coat carrier



**Lowland Park Tassie**  
DOB 8.9.2022  
May 2026 weight 684 kg  
Fast growth and moderate weight  
bull with a hip height of 119 cm



*Unquestionable*

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Both mature bulls and very quiet  
BVD Free  
Vaccinated with 5-in-1, BVD and Lepto 4-way  
Fertility tested proven sires  
Both part of our improving Lowlines for beef programme where everything is  
measured  
\$4500 plus GST each  
Contact MI & TJ Wilkinson, Lowland Park Beef ph 0274 322 448 or  
mattania37@gmail.com

**Bull for sale:**

8-month-old weaner Lowline bull - **Black Ridge  
Watchman**

Currently recorded but can be registered if required

Sire: BBQ Ranch Titan

Dam: Lotus Qori

Located in Hawkes Bay

**Also a lovely selection of weaner heifers available  
and one R2.**



I will also be selecting two or three breeding cows for sale after calving,

Contact Rachel at [eastgatefarming@gmail.com](mailto:eastgatefarming@gmail.com) or 02102519995 for more details

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Pre winter farms



Find the following words in the puzzle.  
Words are hidden ↑ and ↓ and → and ← and ↘

- |                |             |            |              |
|----------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| ADMINISTRATION | GROWTH      | LOWLINE    | ROTATIONS    |
| BALEAGE        | GUMBOOTS    | MANAGEMENT | THERMALS     |
| COLD           | HAY         | OVERPANTS  | TOUGH        |
| DESTOCK        | HEALTH      | PASTURE    | VACCINATIONS |
| FEED           | HUNGRY      | PLENTIFUL  | WEATHER      |
| FENCING        | JACKET      | PRODUCTIVE | WEEDS        |
| FERTILISER     | LENGTHENING | REGENERATE | WET          |
| GRASS          | LIME        | RESERVES   |              |

**Answer:** Kaitake Warrick was 282kg when weighed on May 18.

