

# ***FARMING IN A DROUGHT PRONE REGION?***



## **ILE DE FRANCE NZ** APRIL 2017 NEWSLETTER

---

Dear clients and interested farmers

We are pleased to announce the ownership of Ile de France NZ and its satellite flock, Raggedy Range Ile de France, has changed to Robert and Jean Forrester in partnership with James and Lisa Thomson both located in North Canterbury.

Farm succession and restructuring led the Ponsonby and Rohloff families to sell this exciting new breed that is now gaining recognition as a meaty maternal that has outstanding constitution in regions subjected to regular summer droughts. It has been unfortunate that our location has been too far south of main regions where this breed excels. However enough ram buyers have reported huge gains in "days to slaughter" and the breed's ability to tolerate drought conditions being backed up by outstanding results for Growth (both pre and post weaning) and Resistance to Worms in the five Central Progeny Test flocks.

Both new owners have dry land farms and are clients of Ile de France NZ, James Thomson having started at our beginning with this breed.

We have every confidence that this breed will continue to progress in performance and functionality as the new owners are continuing with the direction and breeding goals we set in place after 2010. We strongly recommend them as your future supply of maternal breed rams suited to summer dry regions.

Finally the Ponsonby and Rohloff families sincerely thank those farmers who gave our Ile de France breed a go, have reported back so many encouraging results and have spread the word about this new breed.

Kindest regards

Murray Rohloff and Peter Ponsonby.

James and Lisa Thomson  
Island Farm, 1 Shipleys Rd  
Harewood, Christchurch 8051  
James - 027 471 3273

Robert and Jean Forrester  
1529 Omihi Rd, 3 RD Amberley 7483  
Robert - 027 441 0486  
Jean - 027 488 0487



Rams sold by private treaty on farm  
commencing November

Sale of Ram Lambs commencing March

[www.idfnz.co.nz](http://www.idfnz.co.nz)

## INTRODUCING ROBERT AND JEAN FORRESTER

We are excited to be given the opportunity to buy the Ile-de-France sheep stud with James and Lisa Thomson.

Robert and I have farmed in the Omihi Valley for 37 years. Omihi is prone to drought, along with an occasional snowstorm and flood. We have bought Composite and Romney Rams from the North Island for the last 15 years and they have performed very well for us. We won the 2013 National Hogget Competition after a couple of good seasons.

We have just been through 3 years of serious drought and along with most North Canterbury farmers, we have incurred big grazing and feed costs and lower stock numbers. We have always looked at new ways to try and improve our farm business and think that the Ile-de-France sheep have the potential to do this.

The sheep that Murray and Peter have developed are hardy, meaty maternals with exceptional growth rates. The South African and Australian genetics give the sheep an ability to perform in dryland conditions with lower feed quality. They also have an ability to bounce back after adverse weather conditions

We think they will do well in North Canterbury and have the potential to improve the productivity of farms in this area with their proven high growth rates, making that sprint to finish lambs before the dry sets in easier. This and the ewes' ability to scan well on minimal feed should make farming in North Canterbury more profitable and less stressful.

To keep moving in the right direction with these sheep, we will be relying on advice from the Rohloff and Ponsonby families and appreciate all the help we have had in the purchase and changeover of the flock.

## INTRODUCING JAMES AND LISA THOMSON

James and Lisa Thomson are excited to be part of the Ile de France stud's future.

Having made a pilgrimage to Lawrence for the past five years to pick up Ile de France rams, we are delighted to have the opportunity to purchase the stud, along with Jean and Robert Forrester.

With a long history of meat breeding and mid-micron wool, we consider Ile de France to be a very versatile sheep which are suitable as a maternal or terminal sire.

We currently run 2400 Ile de France x ewes at Island Farm and will increase numbers with the recent lease next door of The Birches, from Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust. These farms will comprise over 1300 ha of extensive, dry, riverbed type country between Christchurch airport and the Waimakariri River. Lambs must be sold early here and the Ile de France sheep have been able to deliver this.

Forty minutes north at Omihi we run 100 ha with three quarter Ile de France ewes to a terminal sire.

We run a very low input system and are impressed by the Ile de France's ability to improve sheep profitability and think there are more gains to be had. They are suitable for a range of geographical locations and climatic challenges (including drought) which we can give testament to!

We highly commend the Ponsonby's and Rohloff's fine work in establishing the Ile de France breed in New Zealand and would like to extend a big thank you for their generosity and support during this hand-over period.

Please feel free to drop in or contact us by phone or email, if you are interested in learning more about Ile de France Sheep NZ and we will happily oblige.

James and Lisa Thomson  
Island Farm, 1 Shipleys Rd  
Harewood, Christchurch 8051  
James - 027 471 3273

Robert and Jean Forrester  
1529 Omihi Rd, 3 RD Amberley 7483  
Robert - 027 441 0486  
Jean - 027 488 0487

