

## Importing Semen into NZ

Importing semen into New Zealand is both interesting and at times challenging.

Knowing what the Bio Security regulations are first and foremost as it is not possible to import from some countries due to health status issues. With the countries that semen is able to be imported from, certain health tests are required, animal quarantine standards need to be met and also the semen from the Bulls has to be collected, in most cases from a certified collection facility. These requirements are changed and updated from time to time depending on the changes to the disease status in the country that the semen is being imported from. All this needs to be confirmed with the supplier prior to placing the order.

Selecting bull or bulls men's any health issues need to be known, whether or not they are blue to go into quarantine for the required time and able to be collected at a certified facility and also meet all the health requirements.

Shipping is another issue and bringing in small numbers of semen straws as a single shipment is costly when import permit costs and customs duty are taken into account. We are fortunate in that we have an importer who combines small orders into one large shipment and the costs are shared across all the semen straws in the shipment. Some importers will not share shipments or bring straws in on behalf of someone else. On average shipping adds 30 to 40 percent to the cost of the purchase price of the semen.

Taking into account all the points above, I have found that I need to look at which Bulls are available about 10 to 12 months in advance of when the semen will be used. For New Zealand, this is in the spring with seasonal calving. Mating starts in late September or early October for most farmers and continues for about 10 to 12 weeks with the first 4 to 6 weeks being to AB sires as a general rule. Working backwards, the semen needs to be ready shipping by the end of June or early July at the latest. A confirmed order needs to be placed by March to enable advertising and deadlines for inclusion in the Sire Catalogues to be met.

For Guernsey New Zealand the selection is firmly done on Bulls that will meet the health and import requirements for importation into New Zealand. The individual traits are looked at and also whether or not they are able to have semen ready by the shipping deadline. If they don't meet these they are a possibility for next year.

We have concentrated on the GGBP Bulls to date as they are the future and most of the other importers in New Zealand don't import Guernsey semen from the UK.

I enjoy working with the English Guernsey Cattle Society on importing from their GGBP program and there is demand for the English style Guernsey here in New Zealand which is reflected in the high semen sales of the Bulls we import.