

Pallaton Raphno® case studies



RAPHNO® CASE STUDY

Property:	Waikoha Station
Farm Type:	Sheep and Beef
Hectares:	2500
Location:	Waikato
Name:	Rikki Thurston-Parris & Kate MacFarlane

Every year Waikoha Station plants approximately 60 ha of summer crop, typically leafy turnip, in order to provide a finishing feed for their lambs over the summer months. Last season, Rikki & Kate were presented with an opportunity to use 22 ha of Pallaton Raphno® as part of their lamb finishing system.

Like many farmers throughout New Zealand, spring and early summer were very challenging months with very wet then very dry conditions. Rikki managed to get the

crops planted in early-mid October, which meant feed was available prior to Christmas – fortunate timing given the dry spell in December and early January. To alleviate the feed pinch they were faced with, Rikki and Kate decided to move 2200 lambs on to the Pallaton in late December. “Being able to graze Pallaton from as early as 50 days after emergence meant we were able to hold onto lambs that otherwise would have been sold to a deflated store market,” Rikki said. With the dry spell continuing into January, Rikki and Kate were able to hold onto these lambs for an extra 6 weeks, which were then off-loaded into a recovering store market with an extra 90c/kgLW and also sent lambs to the freezing works.

During the dry period, Pallaton was stocked at 100 lambs/ha, while the leafy turnip was stocked at 60 lambs/ha due to the shallow root system and slower growth potential in the dry. They were impressed with how strongly Pallaton recovered after the dry period compared to the

leafy turnip. Following the dry spell, rain arrived, and the Pallaton was rotationally grazed a further 3 times over the summer. In autumn, they decided to sow Winter Star II annual ryegrass through the crop to provide additional high quality dry matter for the winter months. They plan to feed this from late May through to September to finishing cattle and grazing hoggets.

Local Sales Agronomist Kyle Gardyne worked closely with Rikki and Kate, and noted the key to their success was the excellent grazing management strategies. “They always grazed the crop at around the 4-5000 kgDM/ha mark (knee height) when the crop had mostly leaf and petiole, as opposed to too much stem. This ensured optimum regrowth potential of the crop and excellent utilisation for lambs,” says Kyle. After seeing the potential of what Pallaton can do for their farm system, in what was a very challenging summer both with extremely dry and then wet conditions, Rikki and Kate have expressed they will be planting all Pallaton this coming year.