



## Pfizer New Zealand

**Farmer:** Nigel Watson  
**Location:** Parapara, Wanganui  
**Stock Type:** Sheep/Lambs

Two years into their new farm property on the Paraparas north east of Wanganui, Nigel and Laura Watson, like many farmers on harder breeding country are feeling positive about the new farming year.

Strong prices, average grass growth and excellent stock health all bode well for farmers on such traditional breeding country that has had its share of tough conditions. This included a lingering drought in 2008 that saw ewe numbers plummet to all time lows, and continue to fall in the seasons afterwards.

Nigel acknowledges even this season has been a “summer of two halves”. Fortunately the better half has been the second half, helping set the farm up for autumn through tugging, and ultimately winter feed reserves.

Their optimism is reflected in the significant investment Nigel has decided to make in capital stock on the farm this year. He and Laura are moving away from the Romney flock he bought with the farm as a going concern, to modern Perendales. Renowned for their free moving ability, good constitution and easy care management he sees them well suited to the steeper country they farm upon. Nigel invested in 700 five year old ewes to mate to Perendale rams this autumn.

He also bought four Cheviot rams to mate to his best 350-400 Romney ewes, from which to select his replacements from for the coming season. They will end up with 500 Perendale ewe lambs on hand soon, to bring the total to 2700 sheep altogether including 2200 ewes and 500 hoggets.

His optimism about the coming season has also been buoyed by a crop of lambs that grew well and he managed to move off earlier than usual, despite the challenging dry conditions early in summer.

This was in part helped by his decision to try Pfizer’s new combination drench Startect®, only in its first season on the market. The fact Startect has a new and unique active Derquantel within it meant the claims of its high efficacy made good sense to Nigel - worms have not been exposed to the active before, so resistance has not developed.

However for him the real proof was in the flesh and blood of this year’s store lamb crop.

“To be honest, we were rapt with how it went. The lambs were cleaner, there were hardly any dags, compared to last year when I think every second one was daggy.”

Nigel drenched 2500 lambs using Startect, including the Perendale lambs he bought in, which set them up for a good start. He also opted to use it as a quarantine drench on the 700 bought in ewes.

The first reality of how effective the drench was came when he sent 88 lambs away to the works on December 8<sup>th</sup> and they killed out at 16kgCW. "Last year we didn't kill any until early January."

He also got the first cut of 472 store lambs away in December, 2-3kg heavier than last year's.

"They weighed in at an average of 29.6kg, across a range of 28-32kg – last year's mob looked heavier, but these ones simply weighed up better overall." The second mob of 1340 quit in January averaged 30.8kg and were off the farm three weeks earlier than last year.

Getting the stores away early makes a big difference.

"Life is a hell of a lot easier. We don't have those lambs sucking up pasture, and every day you lose pasture it is just that much harder to grow it back again as you move through the season."

Colder weather early in autumn can cut grass growth back quickly, so the Watsons have managed to build a good reserve ahead for autumn tugging, and have some security going in to winter.

Nigel intends to use Startect as a pre-winter exit drench on the replacement Perendale lambs he bought in, to provide a final clean out of any residual parasites and ensure they have minimal parasite load before heading into winter.

Previously Nigel had used a combination drench, and says he is considering conducting some FEC tests to monitor what other drenches may still have good efficacy.

Modelling conducted by AgResearch, on novel combination drench activity, has predicted that the Startect combination could have significant benefits for farmers. Abamectin formulated together with the new active, derquantel, should protect derquantel and delay resistance emerging to both actives. This could extend the effective life expectancy of the combination, particularly if it is used while resistance to abamectin remains very low.

"Startect is a dearer drench, but the results we have had with it more than make up for that. It will definitely continue to be part of our drench programme from here on."

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