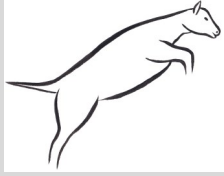


R & N BEATTIE
PARTNERSHIP



Pihepe™

Naturally Nurtured

THE STORY

Attributes of

Pihepe sheep

- Organic
- Easy care
- Natural
- Hardy
- Healthy
- Tasty
- Ethical
- Graceful
- Agile
- Tough
- Resilient
- Friendly
- Happy
- Intelligent

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From Pest to Precious - Farming Pitt Island Wild Sheep



They buy the property and a ride on mower; and he thinks it's Christmas for a month! When cutting the grass becomes a chore, its time to get some sheep"

Conventional sheep are high cost, hard work. *Pihepe* sheep are **low cost, easy care.**

"We have named these Sheep Pihepe to reflect the link between the origins of the Pitt Island wild sheep and how these unique New Zealand sheep have been nurtured in a natural environment.

We've succeeded in nurturing them from their feral roots, to becoming part of our family"

Roger & Nicki Beattie

Pitt Island Wild sheep have been thriving in a challenging environment untouched by man for 170 years.

Guided by nature, and now roaming free on the Beattie Family organic farm and lifestyle block, *Pihepe* Pitt Island wild sheep portray

the essence of easy care ethical farming.

"Typically lifestyle block owners are made up of a professional man who's wife's Uncle used to own a farm. They enjoyed childhood visits to the farm and are looking to re-create those experiences and memories.



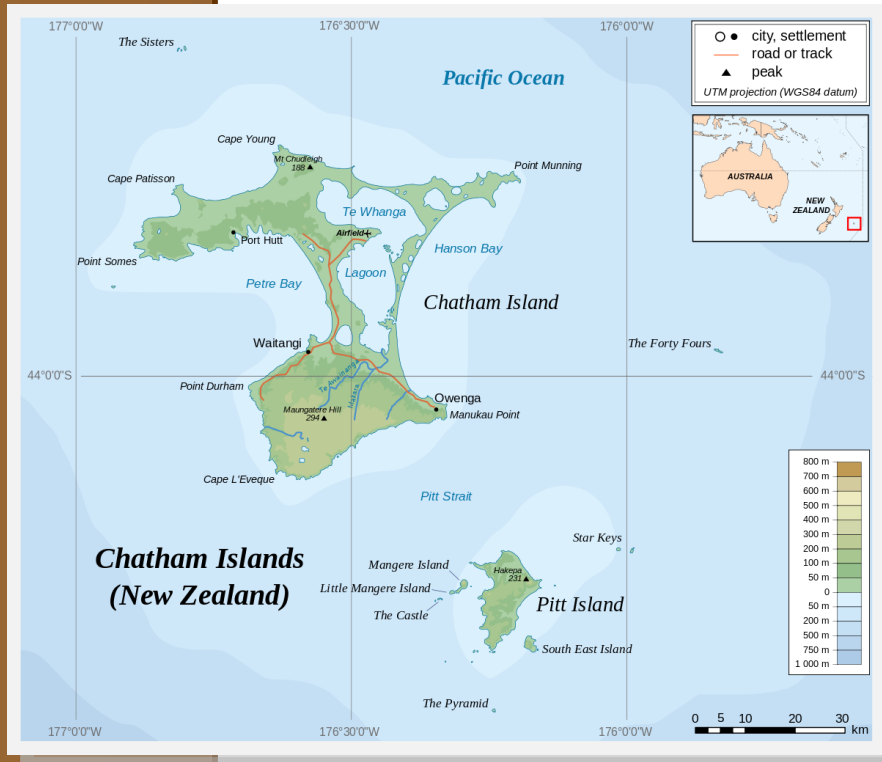
Pihepes run free across this rugged, rolling country on Banks Peninsula.

Lucas Bay

Grazing the impressive cliff tops and down to the sea; wild southerly winds billowing through perennial grasses and herbs.

333ha of stunning New Zealand country and home for Pihepe sheep

Origin of the Pitt Island Wild sheep



Lying 12 miles south east of New Zealand's Chatham Island, Pitt Island is as far away from civilisation and the big cities as you can get.

It is the most southern and the most eastern Island in the world.

The Pitt Island Wild Sheep flock originates from Saxony Merinos brought to the Chatham's by Baron von Alsdorf in 1841.

Pitt Island is 6,500ha and was named after William Pitt, 1st Earl of Chatham



Roger Beattie's Story...

I first heard about Pitt Island Wild Sheep when I was about 13 years old. There were a couple of brothers from the Chatham Islands at Marlborough College's boarding hostel, who told intriguing stories of hunting wild sheep and cattle from Pitt Island.

I had a yearning to go to the Chathams some day. It wasn't until I skipped sitting finals at Canterbury University in 1975 and did a shearing course instead, that going to the Chathams got closer.

After two weeks of huge quantities of food, good company and expert instruction by two Wool Board

instructors at Burnham Military Camp, I passed as a learner shearer.

A couple of weeks later I answered an advertisement

"I fell in love with the Chathams"

in the Christchurch Press for a shearer to go to the Chatham Islands. As I was the only applicant, I got the job. With a little help I shored 100 adult Romney wethers on my first day. I could call myself a shearer and now had a reputation to live up to.

I shored for four Tuanui families and the Pearce's that year. They were encourag-



ing, tough, demanding but fair. They didn't overpay me - compared to mainland New Zealand rates - but then I was carted, watered, fed and entertained at no extra expense.

For two more years, the Tuanui's got some return on their investment and I had a carefree wonderful time. I fell in love with the Chatham Islands. I was turning into a "Good Keen Man". This was my way of life.

When I met Jim Moffett he



Dancing *Pihepe's*

offered me a job culling the wild sheep and shearing his Romneys on Pitt Island. I jumped at the offer.

I asked all the Chatham Islanders I came across the secret to mustering Pitt Island Wild Sheep, as many had had a go. I got as many different replies as the number of people I asked. My father, being a 'dog man', sent a dog out and I employed a friend to help. The Moffetts had done some work on building temporary yards at the back of the Glory Block, 3500 acres of undulating grass, cliff, native bush, scrub and fern country.

Jim was serious and wanted to cut the number of wild sheep drastically. The Glory Block was running 3500 big Romney wethers, 500 plus cattle, as well as 5000 plus wild sheep (along with a goodly number of wild pigs). All up, there were something like 10,000 stock units, a high stocking rate considering the amount of grass country, and that it was unfertilized and unfenced (except for a reserve to the south and another in the middle). These wild sheep were in intense competition with farmed stock on a mixed bag of grass, scrub, fern, swamp and cliffs.

Jim and Lindsay Moffett, Joe Dicks and others had built a wild sheep trap next door to the southern end reserve. We mustered a number of

wild sheep into this well-constructed set of temporary yards – but the more we tried to muster them in the more difficult it became.

We developed quite a sophisticated mustering system. We would start at the northern end of the cliff section by firing a rifle to start the sheep moving along the cliffs.

This was very steep country and in the many times we did this job, not once did I see a Pitt Island Wild Sheep lose its footing and fall.

When we got to the end of the cliff area with the southern reserve bounding it on the south side it proved very difficult to encourage the wild sheep to climb the reasonably steep slopes up to the rolling country above. The one thing that made them move was a strategically placed chainsaw with-

out a blade or muffler. It made a hell of a noise. To see a 1000 head of Pitt Island Wild Sheep move uphill in unison was a truly incredible sight.

Musterers at the top on horseback would carefully guide the sheep towards the holding paddock. We had to get all the elements just right.

If anyone got out of line, or slightly ahead, or put on too much pressure, the mob would explode out, in every direction. Mostly the result was we either got a handful of sheep into the yard – or we got none.

It was both incredibly frustrating when we didn't get the sheep in, and incredibly rewarding when we did.

The wild sheep mustering consumed our every waking hour, and our dreams and nightmares. We strategized, planned and built new types of fences. We got more musterers and built different sheep traps in different areas. We chased them off their home country and then let them escape back home only to have it set as traps that we closed after they had passed through.

I also worked with the wildlife service, especially Brian Bell, on culling the wild sheep in the central

“To see 1000 head of Pitt Island Wild sheep move uphill in unison was a truly incredible sight”



Combining the elegance of simplicity with a natural ability to survive

Rogers Story Concluded.

wildlife (bird) reserve on Pitt Island. Towards the end of the culling project when we had succeeded in reducing the numbers by 50%, I started to appreciate that they are an incredibly tough sheep.

In the winter the grass was grazed like a bowling green, yet every ewe hogget had a lamb.

The Pitt Island Wild Sheep were very agile and there was no sign of any foot problems. There were never any lambing problems. They all had clear faces and they lambed early – from end of May onwards. By Christmas the lambs were nearly as big as their mothers.

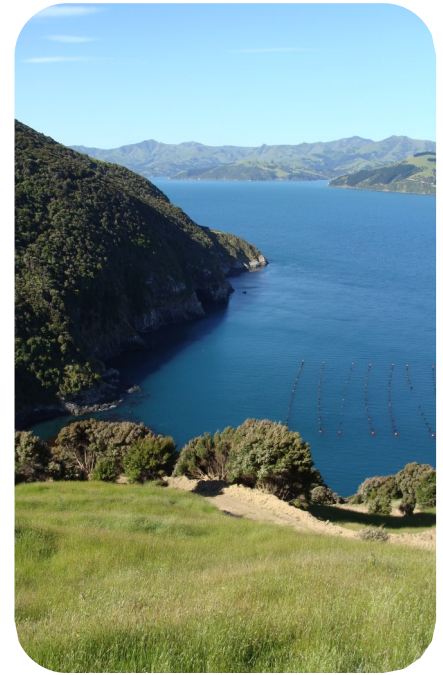
The wool seemed to grow to a certain length and then stop with a number looking like they were self-shedding or part self-shedding. The Pitt Island Wild Sheep were

really good mothers. If a sheep had a newborn lamb it would not leave that lamb even if you rode on horseback right up to it. Within an hour the lamb would be able to run with its mother and escape wild pigs or skua gulls.

**“Pitt Island
wild sheep were
really good
mothers”.**

After spending time paua diving, I got married, left the Chathams, and in 1992 my wife and I bought ‘Kowhai Vale’ on Banks Peninsula (opposite Akaroa). We’ve since extended this to include Ataahua, Lucas Bay, and Lansdowne Valley.

In 1993 with the Kowhai Vale property purchased we flew out eight PIWS ewe lambs and two ram lambs. From 1994 onwards we purchased any and every Pitt Island Wild Sheep that we saw advertised for sale in mainland New Zealand. If I was in any doubt about the genetic purity of any animal bought, it was culled.



Our *Eyris Blue Pearl* marine farm, off Kowhai Vale

The numbers bred up every year and for the next five years I introduced new rams to the mob. By this time they were running wild over most of Kowhai Vale.

In 2001 and 2002 we bought another 500 Pitt Island Wild Sheep, mostly in-lamb ewes, from Pitt Island. Now, in 2013 there are over 2000 *Pihepe* Pitt Island Wild sheep at Lucas Bay; as well as our family flock on our Lifestyle Block in Lansdowne Valley.

These are truly incredible sheep. We have succeeded in nurturing them from their feral roots to becoming part of our family.



Stephanie Beattie with ‘Lucy’; matriarch of 4 generations of wild sheep on our lifestyle block at Lansdowne Valley



R&N Beattie Partnership

‘Beyond Organics’

PO Box 1790
Christchurch
New Zealand

Phone (home): +64 3 322 6112
Phone (office): +64 3 377 0365

E-mail: info@rnbeattie.co.nz
Web: www.rnbeattie.co.nz