



THE AUSTRALIAN POLL DORSET JOURNAL

VOLUME 54 / NUMBER 3

DECEMBER 2024



EWE BEAUTY Rene's stellar show

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE...



**BIRTHWEIGHT
ADVICE**
Page 10-11



DNA TEST
PAGE 12



**FULL SHOW
COVERAGE**
PAGE 24-30

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

What a year it has been, as I look back on the last twelve months, we have seen some changes in the lamb industry, some affecting more than others.

The ban on the live sheep export market has had a dramatic effect on our West Australian sheep producers and the flow on effect to the eastern states has been felt. I recommend all our members to continue supporting the 'Keep the Sheep' campaign and a suggestion to regions (and members) if they could write letters to the Minister of Agriculture and the opposition to reflect their angst on the ban and the dire effects it has on agriculture across the country. The APDA has already done this, and it was passed at our recent AGM to do so. Remember the possibility of a new government is the possibility for change.

Congratulations to all exhibitors and organisers at the recent Australasian Dorset Championship show and sale at Bendigo. Your sheep looked magnificent and the judging display that you put on for us all to watch is to be commended. It was a delight to be part of the judging team for the WFI champions of champions class and the quality of these rams and ewes was amazing. Congratulations to Yentrac and Rene stud. I have also had positive feedback on the APDA help desk which was set up at the show and Keryn enjoyed being able to assist our members and it was good to hear that it was very much appreciated by you.

As many of us have just finished our ram sales, and we head into joining our ewes, I must also bring to your attention the importance of being Brucellosis Accredited. In our September journal issue we included a very educational article on the subject and as Poll Dorset members it is within the Rules of the Association to be accredited; Rule 31, To start or maintain a registered flock with the APDA, all flocks must be part of the relevant Ovine Brucellosis scheme with the appropriate state authorities as of March 2021 flock return. I strongly suggest that for those members who need to take the necessary steps to become accredited, that now is the perfect time to do so, before annual flock returns are due.

The spring ram sales reports are incredibly positive across the country with many averages up on previous years and



clearances particularly good also. The demand for your rams is a reflection on the whole industry. Producers want quality rams; they want to produce great lambs, and they know that Poll Dorset sired lambs will put them in the best possible position to reach the results they want to achieve on their end product.

We are also seeing a demand for breeding ewes at the store sales and confidence in our industry even with the difficult seasonal conditions some producers have endured, which on a positive note again gives us the indication that these lamb producers are feeling very happy with the job, and where it is headed. And why not when the lamb market is improving weekly as the new flush of lambs hit the saleyards, with prices upward of 900c/kg seen at Wagga and Ballarat. The processors and restockers will pay a premium for quality bred Poll Dorset-sired lambs, they are the terminal breed choice by producers across the country.

The board will meet next on Thursday, February 27 and Friday, February 28. This is an earlier meeting than usual due to long weekends in WA and Victoria and working around Wagin Show dates. We try to reduce the costs of holding these meetings by not having any councillor travel on or near a public holiday where the costs are significantly higher to the association. Therefore, I encourage the regions to be aware of timing to hold your meetings prior to the council meeting to have the necessary time if needed to get any correspondence into the board.

Finally, from my family to yours, best wishes for Merry Christmas and may 2025 be a happy prosperous year for you all.

Tania King

PRESIDENT



THE AUSTRALIAN POLL DORSET JOURNAL

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Flock 2616

Est. 1977



**AP 210-23. Sire: T155-21
Junior Champion Cowra.
1st Bendigo and top price of
\$16,500 to the Camborn Stud.**



**AP 60-23. Sire: "Tex" AP 83-21
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CONTENTS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	3		
ACROSS THE PENS	5		
MEMBER NEWS: Letter to The Hon Julie Collins MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	6		
TREASURER'S REPORT	7		
SEPTEMBER BOARD MINUTES	9		
CALENDAR OF EVENTS	9		
TECHNICAL UPDATE: Birth weight EBV advice	10		
TECHNICAL UPDATE: Taking Samples from Deceased Animals: A Guide for Breeders	12		
BOWAN PARK RESEARCH FLOCK: 2024 Bowan Park Research Results	13		
MARKET UPDATE: Where Australian sheep meat fits in MENA	14		
MEMBER FOCUS: Always keep the client in mind	15		
BOARD MEMBER FOCUS: Damon Coats, Ilfacrombe Poll Dorsets, Donald, Victoria	17		
MEMBER NEWS: Sign of the times	19		
YOUTH YARNS: Young wool leaders tour China	20		
YOUTH YARNS: Sam Williams wins president's medal	23		
YOUTH YARNS: Young Stewards	23		
AROUND THE SHOWS: Rene, Yentrac share top honours	24		
AROUND THE SHOWS: \$16,500 ram tops Australasian Dorset Championship sale	25		
AROUND THE SHOWS: Third consecutive champion ewe win for Morton in milestone Poll Dorset year	26		
AROUND THE SHOWS: Finley High School reigns supreme with Poll Dorsets at Melbourne Royal Show	27		
AROUND THE SHOWS: EKKA show results	28		
AROUND THE SHOWS: Royal Hobart Show	28		
AROUND THE SHOWS: Perth Show	29		
SALE RESULTS	31		
SPONSORED CONTENT: How genomically enhanced breeding values are calculated	32		
ADVERTISING RATES	35		
ADVERTISER INDEX			
Shearwell	2	Valley Vista	16
Abelene Park	4	Derrynock	18
Zoetis	7	Glenore	22
Aberdeen	8	Neogen	34
Janmac	11	Ivadene/LSK	35
Stockscan	14	Bromar	36

ACROSS THE PENS

Many states have experienced highs and lows this past twelve months with adverse weather conditions, government decisions impacting live sheep exports and mandatory tagging. As we are now over the selling season, we do hope there were more highs than lows and that you all can find some positives to take into the year ahead.



WELCOME TEGAN TO THE TEAM

As you will now be aware, Patrick is retiring at the end of this month and we have welcomed Tegan Tingley to the team, joining Keryn Hendy and me in the office. Tegan will be learning all aspects of the APDA Database and will be able to assist members in the coming months once she has learned the system. She is also taking on the marketing role with the Journal so will be your primary contact moving forward.



CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

Our office will be partially manned over the Christmas and New Year break with all emails being responded to and phone calls returned as soon as possible. Don't hesitate to call us if you need any assistance at all.

Please enjoy a safe and happy Christmas and New Year and we hope to have a very successful 2025 with you all.

Margot Falconer

CEO & SECRETARY



Our cover: Don McKinnon, Derby Downs, Marong; Graham Gilmore, Tattykeel, Oberon, NSW; Tania King, Shellal, Koroit, Victoria; Laurie Fairclough, York Western Australia, and Scott Mitchell, Rene, Culcain, NSW, holding his champion of champion ewe, which was also the supreme exhibit at the Australasian Dorset Championships at Bendigo in September.

Letter to The Hon Julie Collins MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

By email

Dear Minister

Live export stakeholders are losing confidence in your government's ability to work in their best interests and those of the Australian agriculture sector, rural and regional communities that depend on the live sheep export trade. The decision to phase out the live export of sheep by sea will not only cause irreversible harm to our sector but also to Australia's trade and diplomatic partnerships in the Middle East.

On 1 March 2023 a letter was written to Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, advising that the commitment to phase out live sheep exports was a redline issue for the entire agricultural sector and the only outcome that would be acceptable is a reversal of the policy. This letter was requested for your government to listen – but we have not been heard.

As the leading meat breed sheep in Australia, we urge you to reconsider. The Australian Poll Dorset Association's 600 strong member base is urging you to recognise the damage this will do to our industry. We stand with the Keep the Sheep campaign as a ban such as this will be detrimental to sheep breeders in Australia.

Today, Australia is the world leader in the export of live sheep by sea. Banning sheep live exports from Australia will alter supply dynamics, however it will not change global demand. To meet religious and cultural requirements, markets will continue to source live sheep from countries that do not have the same animal welfare standards, so if the decision is being made on the grounds of improving animal welfare, the ban will be an abject failure. Live exports are regulated and continually improving, and the industry has changed and evolved in keeping with the expectations of not only sheep breeders but the general public as well.

Your government's appointed independent panel Chair, Mr Phillip Glyde, is quoted as saying: "...clearly this sort of policy change will adversely affect industry, so how do we make the best of it." The simple fact is a phase out will cause significant damage that was not even remotely considered when the Australian Labor Party developed the policy to phase out the live export of sheep by sea. While the panel has only been asked to provide recommendations on how

to implement the policy, Mr Glyde's comments highlight the sheer magnitude of adverse effects that the implementation of your government's policy will have.

The stated and likely reversal of this decision by the conservative side of politics should they gain government, will make the ban not only pointless but a very expensive and disruptive process for no gain.

Middle Eastern countries reliant on Australian live sheep exports are critical to diversify Australia's trading partnerships. They are crucial investors in Australia's future prosperity, and we have seen a twenty-fold increase in two-way investment in the past 20 years. The phase out policy will jeopardise trade deals Australia is pursuing in the region and will erode our reputation as a reliable economic partner.

Domestically the fallout associated with the policy announcement is already occurring with a devastating collapse in producer confidence and the sheep industry – not just in Western Australia, but nationally. National rural confidence has recently dropped to one of the lowest levels in two decades. More than half of Australian producers expect the agricultural economy to worsen over the next twelve months. Sustainable sheep and wool industries are the cornerstone of many regional economies. If people are forced to leave these industries, regional communities will be devastated.

This policy will cause harm. It will hurt Australian families and damage Australia's international standing as a reliable supplier of food and fibre and a trusted trading partner.

We simply cannot support or reconcile logic without a scientific basis of the phase out of a legitimate world-leading industry for purely domestic political purposes, and therefore cannot accept anything less than a policy reversal.

No doubt there will be activist groups and non-farming interests urging you to stay the course on this policy. An opportunity exists for you to do the right thing and work with Australian agriculture, not against it – as this is the choice you will be making.

The Australian Government must support Australia's global leadership on animal welfare and at the same time reinforce the point that long standing international friendships in the national interests are important.

We join with the voices of Australia Agriculture and ask your government to listen to us all.

Yours sincerely

Margot Falconer

CEO & SECRETARY

TREASURER'S REPORT

Dear Members,

With our ram selling season at an end, it's time to take a look towards the coming year.

Accounting

As discussed at the AGM, a few changes have been implemented to streamline our accounting software system. The office has been reaching out to clear up discrepancies. To avoid further issues, please remember to include your invoice number when making EFT payments. If you have any queries, or issues with your accounts please don't hesitate to reach out.

DNA Tests

Please remember to DNA test and register your rams prior to flock return period. Delays in testing and registrations reduce the accuracy of our flock book. DNA results can take up to six weeks, with most providers having results back in half this time.

Sponsors

Please remember to support our Sponsors. Their contributions are an incredible benefit to our association, and we encourage you to reciprocate in kind.

Regional and State Secretaries

Applications for major event funding and regional advertising will need to be submitted prior to the February board meeting. The APDA secretariat will send out all application forms early in the new year.

For your region to be eligible to receive funding, you are required to:



- Have submitted audited financial statements for the previous financial reporting period
- Have a current regional committee

Thank you

George Carter

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2024 RAM SALE RESULTS

Thank you to all bidders, under bidders and sale attendees for making our 2024 annual ram sale a success. We would like to thank all our new and existing clients, sponsors and suppliers for all your ongoing support.

We achieved 100% clearance with an average flock ram price of \$1,860 across 180 lots, followed by a number of post auction sales.

Announcing our latest acquisition, Ivadene 230025, purchased recently for \$20,000. We're pleased to be adding this elite ram to our list of high indexing sires.



Enquire about semen packages!



IVADENE 230025

SIRE: Pepperton 200303
DAM: Ivadene 210045
SOD: Jewsharp 190432

Bwt	Wwt	Pwwt	Pemd	Pfat
0.49	12.83	19.89	3.39	-0.32
TCP	EQ	Lmy	Imf	Shrf5
169.51	164.44	4.41	-0.35	-0.95

Top 5% WWT, top 5% PWWT, top 10% PEMD, top 5% TCP, top 5% EQ, top 10% LMY.

HOVELL 230087

SIRE: Valma 200096
DAM: Hovell 210224
SOD: Felix 190919

Bwt	Wwt	Pwwt	Pemd	Pfat
0.53	14.31	22.52	3.86	-0.71
TCP	EQ	Lmy	Imf	Shrf5
178.68	174.74	5.16	-0.25	-0.57

Top 5% WWT, top 5% PWWT, top 5% PEMD, top 5% TCP, top 5% EQ, top 5% LMY, top 20% SHRF5.

Congratulations to these studs for purchasing some of our exceptional rams. We thank them for their trust in Aberdeen Poll Dorsets quality genetics.

- Tipperary purchased Aberdeen230323 - \$8,000.
- Ferndale purchased Hovell230091 - \$3,000.
- Kentish Downs purchased Hovell230100 - \$3,000.

For all ram, semen and ewe enquiries call Rod or visit our website!



Rod and Ange Frohling

"Oak Hill" 1517 Howlong Rd,
Burrumbuttock, NSW 2642

Ph: 0428 250 725 Email: info@hovellstud.com.au

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Brucellosis Accredited Y.012

SEPTEMBER BOARD MINUTES

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Prince of Wales Showgrounds at the Australasian Championships and the September Board meeting was held at Sheep House, both on Sunday September 15.

Please find below an edited summary of the meetings.

Election of Office Bearers 2024/2025

President – Tania King

Vice President – James Frost

Treasurer/Finance – FJ George Carter Chair, Tania King, James Frost, Liz Mann

Admin & Planning Chair – Liz Mann Chair, George Carter, Tania King, Isabele Roberts, James Frost

Promotions Chair – Brittany Bolt Chair, plus full board

Flock Registration Committee – Dan Roe Chair, Damon Coats, Tania King, James Frost

Research & Development – Andrew Gillett Chair plus full board

Motions moved at AGM

- (a) **to change the wording of the APDA Rules and Regulations to reflect the financial reporting requirements in line with Victorian Legislation**
– Moved by George Carter, seconded Isabele Roberts – Motion passed with 31 votes for.
- (b) **to move financial year from 1st July – 30th June to 1st May – 30th April**
– Moved by George Carter, seconded by Brittany Bolt, Motion passed with 30 votes for.
- (c) **Two Directors shall be elected by members from NSW and QLD, Two directors shall be elected by members from Vic, One director shall be nominated by members from WA. Remaining board positions may be filled from any state (12 board positions total).**
– Moved by Isabel Roberts, seconded by Liz Mann, Motion failed with 18 votes for - which was not 75% of the total available vote.

Finance Report

Treasurer George Carter spoke of the need for all regions to have funding requests into the office in time for the March board meeting next year, he also spoke of how well some of the shares are performing and that the board was keeping a close watch over costs. The Treasurer thanked the office for their diligence with the APDA finances. Geoff Oliver has asked for a full set of financials for next year's meeting.

It was Moved George Carter, seconded Gavin Vale that **financial report be accepted.** Carried

It was moved George Carter, seconded Andrew Gillett that **we appoint AFS and Associates to perform an Audit Review for 2025,** Carried

Promotions report

Isabele Roberts brought the members up to date with all promotions carried out during the previous twelve months and highlighted how well LambEx had been for the breed. Fiona Myers has now produced two Journals and is taking on more responsibilities with social media.

In the general business section of the AGM it was moved Graham Gilmore, seconded James Frost **that we send a letter to the minister for Agriculture and the opposition minister in support of the Keep the Sheep Campaign** – Carried.

During the APDA Board Meeting held at Sheep House following the AGM – it was moved George Carter, seconded Isabele Roberts that **any region that does not have a current committee, that their funds will be held in trust by the APDA, as is done with the Trophy Account,** Carried

The next APDA conference will be held in February 2026 with the Wagga region organising a large part of the event.

Flock Registration Report

The following new studs were approved at the meeting –

Armdale Park transferred to Sam and Maddy Armstrong

Greg and Jake Hamilton, Canowindra

NJH Poll Dorsets – Chris Rubie

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEB 21–23 Royal Canberra Show

MAR 7–8 Wagin Woolorama

APR 11–22 Sydney Royal Show

MAY 30–JUNE 1 NSW State Sheep Show Dubbo

JUNE NSW Dorset Championships Cowra

JULY 18–20 Bendigo Sheep and Wool Show

AUG 3–4 Hamilton Sheepvention

AUG 9–17 Ekka Royal Queensland Show

AUG 30–SEP 7 Royal Adelaide Show

SEP 12–14 Australian Dorset Championships

SEP 27–OCT 4 Royal Perth Show

SEP 25–OCT 5 Royal Melbourne Show

OCT 9–11 Royal Launceston Show

OCT 23–25 Royal Hobart Show

Birth weight EBV advice

Commercial sheep breeders are coming to terms with how to use Australian Sheep Breeding Values for birthweight to their best advantage. While chasing high growth has a clear incentive in terms of quick turnoff, those high growth rams often come with a high birth weight figure.

Rams with high birth weight ASBVs can cause dystocia, but it's important that low birthweight is not seen as a silver bullet to either eliminate dystocia or achieve lamb birth weights that offer the greatest chance of survival.

Moreover, it's the nutritional management of those ewes, depending on their litter size, during the latter stage of pregnancy, which plays an overarching role in lamb survival.

Research in a joint venture between Sue Hatcher, Makin Outcomes, Charles Sturt University and the Animal Breeding and Genetics Unit looked at matching birth weight ASBVs to flock fecundity for lamb survival.

The work was presented last year at the Association for the Advancement of Animal Breeding and Genetics conference.

It found that genetic improvement of lamb survival was "complicated", given that the ram with ASBV figures only contributed half of the genetics to the lamb, and flock management and the lambing environment also contributed.

While higher birth weight ASBVs were generally associated with increased lamb survival, this was dependent on litter size and the lamb surviving birth.

And here is the caveat.

The research found that commercial flocks that experience dystocia related issues should place an upper limit on birthweight ASBVs and should include lambing ease and gestation length ASBVs in their ram selection decisions.

The research recommended that these kinds of flocks would also need to manage ewe nutrition during late pregnancy, to ensure their single bearing ewes did not produce heavy lambs, or their twin ewes produce light twins

NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development senior research scientist Dr Gordon Refshauge from Cowra, NSW, said stud producers should know their clients' operations well to be able to advise what range of birthweight ASBVs were suitable.

"Genetically superior sires will grow faster at all levels of nutrition, but nutrition is the engine and wheels, and genetics is the steering," Dr Refshauge said.



Gordon Refshauge

"This suggests selecting lower growth sires (with lower birth weights) to ensure higher lamb survival is an effective strategy but the cherry on top is ensuring adequate nutrition and health to get them off the farm as quickly as possible.

"Stud breeders having meaningful conversations with their producers would know their clients' average litter size (fecundity) and season of lambing and the typical seasonal conditions at lambing.

"That would make it easier for them to advise what birthweight ASBVs were suitable for their operation."

In a ram lineup, high growth rates are considered important, but Dr Refshauge said the relationship between high growth rates and high birth weights was clear.

Inappropriate nutritional management ie letting ewes and especially single-bearing ewes, have too much feed leads to bigger lamb size at birth which can be an issue for young ewes, especially if rams with high birth weight ASBVs were used.

So, management of nutrition is vital.

But then lambs can also be too small, Dr Refshauge said, and lightweight lambs at birth were much more likely to die.

"Those flocks which have a high fecundity and bigger litter size would handle a ram with a higher birth weight ASBV than a flock that has a lot of singles," he said.

Advice from stud breeders becomes tricky, though, if clients are not scanning their flocks for multiples, or potentially not scanning at all.

If they weren't scanning, they could not manage the nutrition of single, twin or triplet bearing ewes differently, so there was the risk that sires with high birth weight ASBVs were used over single-bearing ewes, and if those ewes were allowed to get too fat, then there could be issues with dystocia.

"The birthweight ASBV is very helpful but it is not only the solution to lamb survival," Dr Refshauge said.

"So saying, an upper limit for birth weight for crossbreds could be 0.6 with the ideal 0.3-0.6, and 0.2 upper limit for Merinos.

"Birth Weight should also always be positive – avoid negative birth weight ASBVs."

Dr Refshauge said stud breeders should keep the limited use of scanning for multiples in mind, too, when giving advice.

He said the October 2023 Sheep Sustainability Framework on-farm insights report, which details the findings of a survey of more than 2000 producers, found 42 per cent of sheep producers were pregnancy scanning. Of these, 29 per cent were separating the twins for differential management.

"This 29 per cent is still not enough, keeping the relevance of high BWT sires in context as a risk without scanning for litter size," Mr Refshauge said.

"A further consideration would be the use of high fecundity genetics, such as multi-meat breed ewes, which easily have twins and triplets and these animals will be more suited to high BWT sires, especially if mated in autumn.

"The work suggests more caution is recommended around BWT and that we need to understand more clearly the suitable ranges for sheep types and environments."

Dr Refshauge said higher growth rates applied to all live lambs, and these are still the majority of lambs.

"So, a compromise to avoid high BWT can't come at the cost of high PWWT, but where the sweet spot is between BWT and survival isn't particularly clear," he said.

TECHNICAL UPDATE

“Ram breeders should continue to be urged to record Lambing Ease and birthweight of lambs and constrain BWT breeding values to moderate levels while emphasising PWWT and the other important economic traits in their breeding objective.”

Tim Leeming is a maternal composite breeder from Pigeon Ponds in Victoria and talks about balance when selecting rams on ASBV figures.

He’s run a big commercial operation and knows the value of breeding values, but overarching good management is more important, he said.

The dilemma of picking genetics with low birthweight ASBVs is the associated lower growth rate, and his highly tuned management means he’s happy to tolerate a slightly higher birth weight ASBV knowing he can tweak the lamb size by nutritional management of his ewes.

In his Paradoo Prime operation, ewes are scanned for singles, twins and triplets. Singles are treated as “Merino wethers” (lower nutrition/feed levels), while those carrying multiples are given the better paddocks, knowing the bigger litter size will decrease individual birthweights in that litter.

When his clients come to buy rams, he advises them to buy a “well balanced team”, rams that can produce good growth but can be used over any age of ewes, with nutritional management allowing lamb size to be manipulated.

“If there was a ram that was in the top 1 per cent for growth but comes in with a ASBV for birth weight of 1.7, then I wouldn’t use it but some people might,” Mr Leeming said.

But he also said that recording birth weights did not provide a clear-cut answer.

“You can have two lambs and one will be like a little pig with fat and muscle and one will be bony and lanky and they both

weigh the same,” Mr Leeming said.

“That’s why birthweight ASBVs are interesting and helpful but it is management which can have a big impact on lamb survival, combining the genetic information and the nutrition to produce a good size lamb that has the best chance of surviving.”

The message that stud breeders and genetic suppliers should be giving their clients, therefore, is that genetics play a role but it’s mostly about how those genetics are managed.

This is backed up by findings from Kahma Kelman, who was the lead author of another study, titled “Production factors have a larger impact than genetic selection for lamb”.

Dr Kelman, from Murdoch University in Western Australia, reported on a massive collaborative study that analysed weight data from more than 17,000 lambs over five years and across eight sites (the Sheep CRC’s Information Nucleus Flock).

It found that production factors had a greater impact on lamb growth than genetic selection, with the impact of site of rearing as much as double the impact of genetic selection and as much as nine times the impact of other production factors.

Selecting rams with low ASBVs is not necessarily the answer, but knowing the ASBVs of rams and making nutritional decisions based on litter size can provide improvements in lamb survival without drastically affecting the bottom line.

And as stud breeders, it’s important to be able to share this with clients for them to be able to achieve the best outcome in terms of more live lambs growing well.

Dr Refshauge’s take home message is clear.

“Use the evidence available to you to match the feed with the genetics, which means to know the BWT and LE ASBVs of the sires and pregnancy scan your ewes to match nutrition to the litter size,” he said.



QUIETLY BREEDING EXCELLENCE






2024 RESULTS

- **Top Priced Ram & New Poll Dorset Stud Record Lot 5 – \$13,000**
- Sold 170/180 Rams
- Poll Dorset Average \$1549

The 2024 lamb drop features several impressive Warburn 470 (TCP 144.47) ram lambs. Purchased for \$16,000 jointly in 2023, Warburn 470’s progeny feature the shape and growth we are known for. We will keep you updated on their progress.

Sire investments for the future include Mallee Park 255 (TCP 148) purchased privately in 2024 along with Kurralea 513(TCP 157) and Ivadene 217 (TCP 167.20), second sale top at \$15,000.

We believe these rams will continue to build on the strong foundation of many years of quality breeding at Janmac.

We look forward with confidence and optimism for our lamb industry.

Thankyou again to all who supported our successful 2024 Sale.

The Hausler Team

Taking Samples from Deceased Animals: A Guide for Breeders

Article by Dan Roe

In the world of animal breeding and genomics, obtaining a DNA sample is usually quick and straightforward. However, there are times when we may be unprepared or simply forget, and by then, the animal in question may no longer be alive. This scenario, more common than we might think, presents unique challenges. Fortunately, there are steps breeders can take to salvage a DNA sample, even under these circumstances.

It's important to preface this process with a cautionary note: while technology in animal genomics is constantly evolving, and lab processes are advancing rapidly, obtaining a DNA sample from a deceased animal always carries a higher risk of failure. DNA degradation begins immediately after death, making time the greatest adversary when attempting to retrieve a viable sample.

If the animal has been deceased for less than 24 hours, there are a couple of methods you can try to retrieve a DNA sample:



Using Tissue Sampling Units (TSUs)

If you have tissue sampling kits (TSUs) on hand, the process closely mirrors sampling from a live animal. It's best to take the sample from the ear, selecting an area with ample tissue and avoiding the main blood vessels. This method is straightforward and minimises contamination risk. Following the typical sampling process with a TSU increases the chance of obtaining a usable sample for DNA analysis.

When You Don't Have Sampling Kits Available

In cases where sampling kits aren't readily available, a more hands-on approach is needed.

First, harvest a small section of tissue from the deceased animal. Place this sample in a sealed Ziplock bag and store it in the freezer until you have access to sampling kits. Once you receive the kits, let the tissue fully thaw before proceeding with the sampling. Freezing causes cell expansion, which can damage DNA if sampled while still frozen, so ensuring a complete thaw is essential for preserving DNA integrity. After thawing, follow the same steps as you would with a live tissue sample.

Using Frozen Semen as a DNA Source

For animals with stored semen, this method provides another reliable source of DNA. To submit a semen sample for testing, simply send a straw to the genomics lab. Alternatively, if you have access to a blood card, you can defrost a pellet of semen in the centre of the card. Ensure the pellet has dried completely before sealing the card and sending it to the lab for analysis.

Bear in mind that testing labs typically charge an additional fee for semen samples, whether submitted in straw form or on a blood card. The extra cost reflects the additional labour involved in processing semen samples.

Although sampling from a deceased animal isn't ideal due to the rapid onset of DNA degradation, acting quickly and employing one of these methods can sometimes provide a viable DNA sample. By staying prepared with TSUs or knowing alternative methods, breeders can have a backup plan, helping to preserve valuable genetic information when unexpected situations arise.



2024 Bowan Park Research Results

Bowan Park Poll Dorset stud research flock is open to all members of the APDA and provides them with the opportunity to assess their flock genetics and benchmark them within the breed. The purpose of the progeny trial is to compare the performance of one sire to another in the same cohort of lambs. The lambs are all bred and grown together on the same farm, giving a unique situation where stud stock can be compared from birth through to slaughter.

The 2024 cohort is made up of 328 lambs bred by artificial insemination, plus 186 naturally mated backup lambs, all born within a 30 day period (May 1-June 30, 2024).

There were 16 sires included in the 2024 trial. Sire selections were made with criteria that ranged from high performers, show champions and pedigrees of untested genetics. Two sires are included as year on year link rams (Ridgehaven 190083, Tattykeel 150172 – both have been in previous cohorts), which enables comparison across cohort years.

Full reports are available on the website www.bowanpark.com.au



Angus Webb, Kanangra, Yerong Creek, and Andrew Gillett, Wunnamurra, Jerilderie, NSW.

On Farm Performance

The growth of the lambs is measured at regular intervals to show actual weight gain at different stages of maturity. The following results showed:

Heaviest lamb at:

- 4 weeks – 24.6kg liveweight;
- 10 weeks – 48.4kg liveweight;
- 14 weeks – 58.0kg liveweight;
- 17 weeks – 64.6kg liveweight.

Open Day

The drop of lambs was made available to view in late September. This provided an opportunity for the sire contributors and the general public to visually appraise the lambs in their sire groups.

Carcass Testing

A selection of lambs was sent to Gundagai Meat Processors on September 24, 2024, where carcass data was collected by UNE Meat Science. Results are outlined below, reported as averages per sire.

The sire contributors were also invited to see the lambs on the hook, which is an incredibly valuable experience.



Sire ID	Sire	# lambs	Empty Pre-Slaughter Weight (kg)	Carcase Weight (kg)	Carcase Dressing (%)	Carcase EM Fat (mm)	Carcase EM Area (cm ²)	Intra-Muscular Fat (%)	Shear Force (N)
1	Ridgehaven 220295	14	55.2	29.6	53.6	7.2	18.9	4.8	26.3
2	Gooramma 220064	13	54.2	28.5	52.6	5.7	19.6	4.5	33.9
3	Wunnamurra 220006	13	54.9	28.8	52.4	5.5	18.9	3.8	41.3
4	Shirlee Downs 220131	14	56.2	29.4	52.2	6.1	18.5	4.1	37.9
5	Shellal 200081	14	52.2	27.8	53.1	7.2	18.1	3.9	41.9
6	Allendale 220255	14	58.9	31	52.5	7.3	18.8	4.5	33.2
7	Armdale Park 220200	9	56.6	30.4	53.6	6.6	19.3	4.0	36.0
8	Bruan 220173	14	53.7	27.9	51.9	6.9	19.0	4.5	33.2
9	Springwaters 220091	14	54.2	28.3	52.1	7.1	16.6	4.3	35.8
10	Yentrac 220002	14	54.6	29.2	53.4	6.3	18.4	4.6	41.7
11	Warrawindi 220795	14	55.2	29.1	52.5	5.8	18.6	5.0	34.2
12	Linton 210245	14	54.4	28.3	51.9	7.4	18.0	5.2	29.9
13	Ridgehaven 220423	11	53.7	28.4	52.9	7.0	16.5	4.0	43.0
14	Aberdeen 220448	9	57.5	30	52.2	6.8	19.3	4.4	32.4
LINK 15A	Tattykeel 150172	7	52.4	27.8	53.1	4.9	18.5	3.6	37.6
LINK 15B	Ridgehaven 190083	7	60.6	32.5	53.6	7.2	20.4	4.7	34.6
Average		195	55.1	29.1	52.7	6.6	18.5	4.4	35.8

Market update: Where Australian sheep meat fits in MENA

Sheep meat is a culturally important item in the Middle East North African (MENA) region.

As a meat, lamb is considered a superior protein that is tender, juicy and tasty, making it a family favourite.

As a premium product, per capita consumption is low compared to chicken and fish but is notably higher in MENA compared to most countries in Europe, North America and Asia.

Total consumption in Australia's main MENA markets is forecast to increase at a compound annual growth rate of 2.3 per cent from 2023 to 2027, and from about 641,000 tonnes to 702,000 tonnes.

The region has significant demand for both lamb and mutton. Mutton is favoured over lamb in some sectors due to taste preference and cooking styles, such as in Oman, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Frozen mutton is also used by the catering sector in countries with significant numbers of migrant workers, where it competes with frozen bobby veal.

While the majority of the sheep meat market is commodity product in carcass form, premium lamb consumption and imports have been growing, particularly in Gulf countries, driven by tourism growth, a young population and higher disposable incomes.

Australia has been a key sheep meat supplier to MENA markets for more than 50 years, with high awareness and a strong, positive

reputation. Australian sheep meat is particularly appreciated for its consistently high quality, good taste and naturalness (Source: MLA Global Consumer Tracker).

More than half of Australian sheep meat exports to the MENA region are utilised in the foodservice sector. With disposable incomes among the world's highest, affluent consumers frequently enjoy premium dining experiences, many of which include lamb.

Lamb features on menus at mostly full-service restaurants as well as some casual ones, particularly in local and other Middle Eastern, Indian and Chinese cuisine establishments where it is found in various meat mains, kebabs, curries and wraps (Source: GlobalData Menu Intelligence 2022).

While lamb is among the proteins of choice when dining at top tier restaurants, there are opportunities to further develop premium lamb offerings, particularly in Western-style restaurants.

In markets with fast-growing tourism sectors such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, demand for Australian high value chilled lamb loin cuts in the high-end foodservice sector has been growing.

As the modern retail sector develops across the region, new opportunities for Australian premium, packaged and branded lamb products are emerging.

In most MENA countries, the majority of Australian packaged lamb is purchased from hypermarkets and supermarkets, while a significant proportion of unpackaged product, typically in the form of chilled carcasses, is sold through butchers.

Key retailers in the region where consumers purchase Australian sheep meat include Majid Al-Futtaim/Carrefour and Lulu (across the region), Spinneys and Choithrams (UAE), Al Meera (Qatar), Sultan Centre (Kuwait), Panda, Al Othaim and Danube (Saudi Arabia).

Regional home-cooking of sheep meat dishes tends to involve slow-cook methods (roasting or stewing), followed by grilling or broiling and are often heavily spiced. Traditionally, lean sheep meat has been favoured as best suited for use in traditional dishes. However, the eating qualities of Australian sheep meat are increasingly appreciated, particularly for grilling and pan-frying, where a higher fat content is desired.

While domestic sheep meat production is notable in the MENA-10 markets and will meet around three-quarters of consumption needs in 2022, production growth is limited due to various environmental constraints.

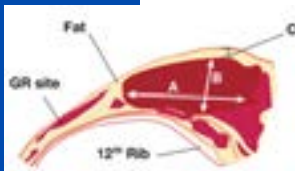
Hence, boxed imports will need to rise from about 173,000 tonnes to 205,000 tonnes from 2023 to 2027 to fully meet demand.

Australia is the region's largest sheep meat supplier with a 65 percent volume share in 2022–23. Recent years have seen a decline in volumes from India and an increase in products coming from the EU and South Africa.

New Zealand exports significant volumes of frozen bone-in lamb to Saudi Arabia and Jordan. India supplies mostly chilled mutton carcasses to the UAE and smaller volumes to Qatar and Kuwait.

In recent years, some European countries such as Romania, Georgia and Spain have become more significant suppliers, particularly of frozen mutton carcass and bone-in cuts. While still relatively small, volumes have been increasing from countries like Tanzania, South Africa and Ethiopia.

Source: Meat and Livestock Australia MENA market snapshot.



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Always keep the client in mind

West Australian Eric Heal might be retired officially from the stud world but he's still as interested as ever in the breed.

As a life member of the Australian Poll Dorset Association, Eric Heal has seen a lot in his decades of involvement with the breed.

Eric's father started the Dongadilling Dorset Horn stud in 1940 and in 1961 Eric purchased the first Poll Dorset ram.

Eric admits the ram, which he saw and then bought at the Royal Perth Show, caused some consternation because it was a poll Ram with good bone and meaty body not horned and carried a bit of skin colour.

"The Dorset Horns used to get hooked in trees and fences, and I knew it was the right thing to get the horns off (the sheep)," Eric said.

"It was the ease of handling too – we were also running a Border Leicester stud and they were very easy to handle, despite their bigger size, because they didn't have horns.

"But someone at the time said to me that by changing to Poll Dorset that I could be ruining all my father had done with the Dorset Horn sheep."

But Eric was focused on producing genetics that could offer quick growth and a good carcass at an early age, but also have good conformation.

The Heal family first started to sell some of their lambs over the hooks in the mid 1960 or as Eric calls it, by "weight and grade".

That undoubtedly helped in his breeding decisions "as we were paid for what we bred".

"As lamb producers, we don't get to set the prices (when delivering to abattoirs) so we need to be able to manage what we can control," he said.

Eric has watched as the market initially wanted a 16–20-kilogram carcass lamb, to now a heavier type, but said why Poll Dorsets excelled is that they were able to produce a range of weights with quality.

"There are Poll Dorset genetics out there that can produce carcasses from 18 kilograms to 28 kilograms," he said.



The use of the breed as a terminal sire, either over a first cross ewe or a Merino, and the high growth rates achieved were what set the Poll Dorsets apart, he said.

"Usually, Poll Dorset-sired lambs are three to four weeks ahead of the other breeds when it comes time to sell," Eric said.

"If you can get high percent of your lambs off as suckers, it's the cheapest production method you can use.

"Good growth rates and good carcasses mean money back in your pocket as a commercial producer but a lot of it does still come down to management."

Eric has loved his involvement with Poll Dorsets, not only in the way his clients have produced quality lambs, but also in the show ring.

Along the way, he's had a unique relationship with fellow stud breeders the Squiers family, who run Shirlee Downs at Quairading, WA.

In something that's rarely seen in the sheep world, the two studs worked in an informal partnership, where genetics were shared.

That's not to say there wasn't friendly rivalry at the shows, Eric said, where they were keen to take the top honours, but the ability to work closely with Shirlee Downs meant both studs benefited.

He's also been a judge and has inadvertently mentored others on how to be fair and respectful in the show ring.

"I watched the judging at the Adelaide Show one year and then after complimented the judge at the show," Eric said on the way she took time to inspect every sheep presented.

"I liked the way she did her judging and said so to her after she had finished and was surprised when she said that I had judged their sheep at that Melbourne Show and how much of an impression it made on them that you must give time to all sheep presented.

"They said that I had been fair and respectful to all sheep, not just the top animals, and that had stuck with them.

"That's the thing – someone has gone to the effort of bringing an animal to a show so you need to respect that effort and give constructive feedback."

He also made a bit of a stir at a Royal Melbourne Show when he brought out a tape measure to check the length of rams "as you can't accurately do this with your eye".

And when the time came for Eric to step back from breeding stud sheep, he said it was only natural that his carefully chosen genetics dating back to the original Dorset Horn stud, went to the Squiers family.

Eric said there's been many changes to the breed since he started. Poll Dorset sheep have become longer and cleaner in face cover and legs, he said, which have helped with the ease of lambing and management.

And he's just as big a fan of sheep as he ever was, believing they play an integral part in profitable farming operations.

"I know there is a push to cropping but crop is not all about profit and people need to eat (protein)," he said.

Eric is keen to pass on what he feels is the most important point for Poll Dorset breeders – be conscious of who you are breeding for.

"It is not about us (stud breeders) – it's about the lamb industry and what is best for that industry," he said.



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Damon Coats, Ifracombe Poll Dorsets, Donald, Victoria

How long have you been on the board and why did you join?

Damon has been on the board for 12 years and said he joined because he thought he could make a difference. He said it was hard to make a difference “on the outside” in terms of not being on the board so thought he would join. Mr Coat’s stud started in 1956 by his grandfather.

Where do you see the future of the Poll Dorset breed and how does it fit in with the modern lamb industry?

Damon said he saw a bright future for Poll Dorsets, especially with the rise in lamb prices. He believes if the breed is pushed in the right direction, it should be able to capitalise on the better lamb prices.

As a breed, genetics need to “keep the customer happy with what they are eating at the other end, so a focus on eating quality is important as well as fast growth rates so they can get to the end user as fast as possible but still taste good.

“If you are trying to sell a premium product, which lamb is, it has to taste nice or customers won’t keep coming back to buy it,” he said.

Growth rates are very important for producers, he said, to get the maximum amount of quality meat in the shortest possible time frame. Poll Dorsets are historically the fastest growing breed and still are, he said.

“The less time you can keep them on your farm, the better it is for the bottom line,” Damon said.

What are some of the changes you have seen which have benefited the breed in the past decade?

Damon said less wool on the points was something that had changed for the better with Poll Dorsets as well as more emphasis on figures. It has been more tweaking what was already a good product than major changes happening to the breed over the past few years, he said.

How does the breed make sure it stays relevant within the industry and ensure it is the first choice for prime lamb breeders?

Damon said it was essential to make sure the quality of the product that breeders sold (rams) was as high as possible, which in turn meant the quality of lamb produced from the breed met or exceeded consumers’ expectations. It was important to always focus on those eating lamb and then work backwards. But at the same time, Damon said ram breeders needed to ensure sires they sold were structurally sound, able to work around and “do the job”.



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- * 122/122 flock rams – av \$2030

Stud ram purchases include:

- * \$11,500 – Kobyboyn Pastoral, VIC
- * \$10,000 – Camborn Stud, VIC
- * \$9000 – Mulgundawa, SA
- * \$6500 – Ulandi Park, SA



Derrynock 1398/23 - \$12,500
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Sign of the times

Commercial producers are the target of signs in saleyards

Reminding prime lamb breeders that Poll Dorset rams are a premier choice as a terminal sire has hit the saleyards.

Signs have been erected at a number of saleyards with the goal of putting Poll Dorsets front and centre.

Patrick Flanagan from Baluvelt Poll Dorsets at Coimadai, Victoria, has been one of the driving forces behind the saleyard advertising in Victoria.

There are currently signs at Bendigo and Swan Hill, with plans for another at Ouyen, while Poll Dorsets are also promoted as part of

a live static sign at the Ballarat saleyards, the biggest sheep and lamb selling centre in Victoria. They also run on the screen in the Ballarat sale yards, Mortlake saleyards and Barnawartha saleyards.

Mr Flanagan said the simple message on the signs "Australia's number 1 prime lamb sire" and the website address was a deliberate move to not over complicate the message.

"I thought it was a good idea to spend a couple of thousand dollars on signs that would be there where the commercial lamb producers could see them," Mr Flanagan said.

"You can spend the same amount advertising in a rural paper and the ad is in for a week and then it's gone, and a commercial producer may or may not see it.

"When there is a sign in the saleyards, it's where it needs to be for commercial producers to see it, and it lasts longer than a week."

The signs were funded by the Victorian state committee.

Mr Flanagan said privately run yards had been supportive of the signs, but it was more difficult to get them erected at council yards.

Never-the-less, the signs seem to be doing their job, he said.

"I had a new ram buyer come to me that had been using another breed and his lambs weren't being bought by the supermarkets," Mr Flanagan said.

"He got his agent to walk through the yards and the agent pointed to the ones being bought by the supermarkets and they were all by Poll Dorsets.

"That client could have walked out of the yards, and seen the sign, and it's a reminder of what the breed is and what it can do."



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Young wool leaders tour China

Two young Poll Dorset breeders had the chance to go to China representing broad wool producers as part of an Australian Wool Innovation tour this spring.

Brittany Bolt, Rockalong Poll Dorsets, Wagin, Western Australia, and James Carter, Linton Rams, Walcha, NSW, both grew up on properties running Merino and prime lamb The enterprises.

The Australian Future Wool Industry Leaders Tour was organised by Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) and was supported by a grant provided by the Australian Government's National Foundation for Australia-China Relations (NFAAR). Here are some of their observations from the 10-day trip to China to tour wool processing mills and attend the 35th annual Nanjing Wool Market Conference.

What did you learn about the use of short wool in China and the potential for sales?

James Carter: With Australia being the leader in wool volume produced globally, the Chinese manufacturers need the Australian growers and Australian growers need the Chinese to process and consume the wool. There is a growing demand for natural fibres and this has resulted in processors in China being asked to produce more wool products. There were comments from a processor that with strong wools, there is greater scope for investment/innovation due to most of the focus being on fine Merino wool historically.

Brittany Bolt: While most wool purchased by China is 20 micron and finer, used primarily for luxury clothing and activewear, we were re-assured that there is an increasing demand for broader wool and crossbred wool.

The Beast Home, a store that focussed on homewares (using broad and downs wool) also told a story and focussed on the customers experience when visiting. We all squeezed into an artist's exhibition in the garden, a Yurt, a traditional Mongolian



James Carter from Walcha, NSW, and Brittany Bolt, Wagin, WA, on the China wool tour

YOUTH YARNS

hut for travellers. The internal walls were covered with stylistic paintings and drawings depicting life as a Mongolian traveller. We then entered the homewares showroom, displaying pillows, blankets, décor, toys and chairs. Upstairs we saw where they host interactive activities for customers, hosted by an artist in residence that typically stays for one to two weeks at a time. On this occasion it involved felting designs using dyed cashmere. This area also displayed a video of an Australian wool grower and had samples of different types of wool and butts of combed downs wool.

Is there anything that the Chinese market did not want in terms of preparation, styles, microns out of the strong wool production from Australia?

James Carter: Contamination of medullated fibres in the wool and other contaminants that reduce productivity in the processing plants are things they really don't want.

What did the trip involve?

Brittany Bolt: The trip was thoughtfully planned by AWI, encompassing the production of a wide range of wool products. It was impressive to see the investment in technology and innovation across the wool processing sector to increase efficiency and scale of production. We were fortunate to see this across luxury apparel, outdoor and activewear as well as the value of broad wool in homewares.

What stood out in your visits to the mills?

Brittany Bolt: An interesting aspect of the mill tours was that most of the larger processors had a portion of their facilities dedicated to the provenance of wool, having decorated educational spaces fit for a museum display, sharing professionally filmed footage of Australian farms and the wide open landscapes. These were used for marketing, education and promoting a sustainable and "green" image. A bring home message: it reinforces that people are increasingly interested in seeing where their food and fibre comes from, and customers are more inclined to buy when a product aligns with their values and have a sense of connection to a story. It is important for us as producers to be proud of our practice and share more of what we do on farm to build trust and confidence with the general public, which will hopefully manifest into greater support for our industry and ideally attract a greater price due to our authentic stories. At the end of the day, they are sharing our on farm stories and footage to sell a product that we supply into,

when trust and value builds and demand increases, this will benefit us all.

Did you have the opportunity to present information?

Brittany Bolt: I was fortunate to be invited to speak on the panel at the Nanjing Wool Market Conference alongside Stephen Feighan (AWI General Manager Grower Services and Market Intelligence) to represent Australian wool growers and discuss my current research in feed efficiency and methane production being measured on all breeds of sheep across Australia and the how producers, researchers and AWI are currently working towards a sustainable future for the Australian sheep industry.

What messages do you have for strong wool producers after seeing what was happening in China?

James Carter: The Australian branding for wool is high class and is considered a quality fibre in China. During the visit to JHT Wuxi, on the production line they had branding stating that it had a percentage of Australian wool which further emphasises Australia as being a point of difference in the marketplace. There are currently many countries that produce strong wool fibre therefore there is an increase in competition in the market. By supporting traceability throughout the supply chain this will ensure that more Australian wool is being marketed as Australian wool under the Woolmark logo rather than just a bale of strong wool.

Brittany Bolt: Key learnings from the trip: a far greater understanding of the important relationships that AWI have built with our largest wool trading partner. Wool is a product perfectly positioned for the consumer, wool is highly versatile and valued as luxury apparel, daily activewear, and as homewares using broad wool. It has been very well marketed in China and each processor passionately spoke about the future of wool use in everyday life. I'd also like to acknowledge and thank Chris Patmore (Riverbend Poll Dorsets, Eneabba, WA) who nominated me for this opportunity. People like Chris, who advocate for the next generation and actively put forward learning opportunities through his networks are so valuable to the continuation of the industry by encouraging young people like myself. I wouldn't have known about this experience if it wasn't for him tapping me on the shoulder.





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Sam Williams wins president's medal

A junior Poll Dorset breeder has been recognised at a southern NSW show winning an inaugural award.

The Walbundrie Show committee decided this year to present the president's medal for the first time and it went to young Poll Dorset breeder Sam Williams, who runs the La Mar stud at Culcairn, NSW, with flock number 4653.

The president's medal celebrates excellent agricultural achievers, who innovate modern ideas to sustain the key industry in the local area, and have a willingness to share knowledge.

According to the information on the medal in the Walbundrie Show schedule, the medal's recipient must show a readiness to utilise proactive means of thinking to provide a new technology, or utilise the produce around them, to create a quality product.

The medal can involve entries in the show, but is not exclusive to entries with the only limits involving the broad aspect of the show.

The medal, which was presented to Sam during the opening of the show, was sponsored by the Bendigo Bank at Lockhart, NSW.



Young Stewards

The Poll Dorset breed may have been celebrating 70 years of the association but the average age of the stewards was much more youthful.

Head steward and announcer Mark Hill, Tarlee, has had decades of experience but Emi Hughes, Sampson Flat; Chelsea Wilkinson, Purnim, Vic and Emily Anderson, Adelaide were all in their first few years of ensuring the right sheep were in the right classes, handing out ribbons and ensuring the results board was updated.

Twenty two year old Emi who is on the Poll Dorset -Adelaide region committee said it was great to be a steward for the second year.

"I am really grateful that people have supported me and given me the chance to do it," she said.



She was juggling two roles - also the associate judge for the Poll Dorset ewes with judge Chris Marr, NSW.

Emi is no stranger to judging success having represented SA in the Merino sheep young judges competition previously.

Her PhD on laser physics may seem a world away from her other role- running the family's Bernalta Poll Dorset and Texel studs but she says "one day there may be some crossover".

Victorian young stud breeder Chelsea Wilkinson was also given the opportunity as a result of the SA Sheep Expo which provides a show stewarding experience.

"I was hoping to get it and came second but then they came back and said the winner couldn't come so I jumped at it," she said.

Her family run the Bright Side Poll Dorset stud at Purnim, Victoria.

The Year 9 student is commencing her certificate II in Agriculture next year and says it has been great meeting so many Dorset breeders from other areas of Australia and seeing their different bloodlines.

Adelaide based university student Emily Anderson has followed in the footsteps of her mother Vanessa who has been volunteering as a steward for 35 years.

"I have been coming here since I was six years old so it is kind of natural that I help out where they are short," she said.

"I have stewarded the Texels too since my grandmother used to breed them."

Emily - who is studying digital forensics - says she enjoys being around the sheep.

"I like being organised which you need to be and it is really nice to watch the judge go through the sheep and see what is in his head," she said.

Article courtesy of Cath Miller, Stock Journal

Rene, Yentrac share top honours

A ewe bred by the Mitchell family from Rene stud, Culcairn, NSW, took top honours as the supreme exhibit at the Australasian Dorset Championships in Bendigo in September. The Australasian show drew more than 260 entries from across the eastern seaboard and Tasmania, all vying for broad ribbons.

After earlier being awarded the grand champion ewe sash, Rene Adele 422-23, at 17 months, went on to take the major broad ribbon, capping off a stellar year for the stud.

Rene stud principal Scott Mitchell said he did not have a specific expectation for the ewe but he knew he had a good team to take to the championships.

"I just didn't know whether the judge would like my sheep or not," Mr Mitchell said.

"We also won the champion ram lamb which was terrific.

Mr Mitchell said the supreme exhibit had been a special ewe since it was a lamb.

"I've only got four ewes in the show team and we kept a pretty close eye on them since they were lambs."

Adele 422-23 will go into an embryo transfer program, along with Rene's other prize winning ewe which scooped the pool at Cowra, NSW.

The ewe was sired by Valley Vista 155, which won the supreme exhibit at Bendigo in 2022.

The ewe was out of a home-bred ewe.

Judge Graham Gilmore from Tattykeel at Oberon, NSW, said he was looking for weight, body depth, spring of rib and breed type.



Associate judge James Burchan, judge Graham Gilmore, Tattykeel, Oberon, NSW, Sam Armstrong, Marrar, NSW; and Rob McCartney and Kaie Shapcott, Yentrac, Tatura, with the supreme champion ram at the Australasian Dorset Championships.

"I was not looking for the extreme, taller, longer, lankier sheep - they are not my style and everyone knows that and no one will be surprised at the type of sheep I have put up," Mr Gilmore said.

"In saying that, my champion ram and champion ewe are extreme enough - they are big sheep but they are balanced.

"A lot of the bigger-framed sheep went back to the pen (without a ribbon)".

Mr Gilmore said anything extreme "doesn't work".

"If you are extreme in scale, it is normally skeletal, it's not muscle," he said.

"To get a lamb off quickly, the people that make the most money now are the ones that get their suckers off quickly, they want tight wool, deep bodies, wide animals with good strong heads and breed type.

"I've been in this thing all my life and I know what rams do the job, so that's the type I select for and I found them here today."

Mr Gilmore said the champion ewe won over the champion ram for her balance.

"By balance, her athleticism is better than the rams - her structure on her legs and shoulder placement was superior to the rams but they were both good sheep," he said.

"Judging is only an opinion and as long as you can back your opinion over why you have done it, then you are right and you can't make everybody happy."

The grand champion ram sash went to the McCartney family's Yentrac stud from Tatura. The grand champion ram, Yentrac 25/23 came up through the competition, first winning the class for rams born after April 1 and machine shorn not more than 28 days before judging, before winning the senior Poll Dorset sash and then the grand champion award. The same ram then went up against champion rams from other competitions to be judged the champion of champions for the 2024 showing season, an award which carried a \$3000 prize.

And while the grand champion ram from Yentrac scooped the pool, wins from others in the show team meant it finished runner up in the most successful exhibitor rankings, only behind the Frost family's Hillden stud from Crookwell, NSW.



Boc Seaman, Adnbo, Crookwell, NSW and Brian Frost, Hillden, Crookwell, NSW

\$16,500 ram tops Australasian Dorset Championship sale

A ram from Abelene Park stud at Tamworth, NSW, sold for \$16,500 to top the Australasian Dorset Championships sale.

Of the 37 rams from 14 studs put up for sale in the multi-vendor offering, 23 sold for an average of \$5913.

Marshall and Brett Douglas run the Abelene Park stud and said the top-priced ram was recognition of the work put in by their late father Max, who died in March, 2023.

"It means a lot to the whole family to be able to continue on with something he was so passionate about, we seem to have inherited the passion for the breed," Mr Douglas said.

"He was on the original committee for this show and founded the stud in 1977."

Abelene Park 210-23, the top price ram of the sale, tipped the scales at 130 kilograms, was 13 months old and was sired by Tattykeel 155-21.

While not taking any of the major broad ribbons at the ADC, Abilene Park 210-23 did have a broad ribbon to its name, after winning the junior champion sash at the NSW Dorset Championships at Cowra, NSW, in June.

Buyer Roger Wilkinson, Camborn White Suffolk and Poll Dorset stud, Pooncarie, NSW, said the ram gained his attention because of its breeding and bloodlines, as well as its phenotype.

"We've based our stud on a lot of Tattykeel blood and his sire is from Tattykeel so that ticked a box," he said.

"I thought he was quite mature for his age considering he is an August 2023-drop ram."

Abelene Park sold two other rams for \$10,000 and \$9500 at the sale.

The grand champion ram, exhibited by Yentrac Prime Lamb Sires, Tatura, sold for \$10,000, while the reserve champion intermediate ram from Andbo Poll Dorset stud, Crookwell, NSW, made \$5000.



Joe Scott, Valley Vista, Coolac, NSW, and Rob McCartney, Yentrac, Tatura



Roger Wilkinson, from Camborn stud at Pooncarie, NSW, with the top price ram bred by the Douglas family, Abelene Park, held by Marshal Douglas, Tamworth, NSW

Third consecutive champion ewe win for Morton in milestone Poll Dorset year

Morton stud maintained its stronghold over the champion ewe title in Poll Dorset judging winning it for the third consecutive year on Sunday.

There was loud applause from the crowd as NSW judge Chris Marr, Geredan stud, Araluen, pointed Rabobank's Chris Dufty in the direction of the ewe being held by Jack Davidson.

Making it even more special it was the 50th year of Morton showing at the Royal Adelaide Show and 70 years since the Australian Poll Dorset Association was formed.

Morton's last three champion ewes were all sired by the same Mullinger Park ram, 528/19.

"It is like winning a third premiership, this (Adelaide Show) is the premiership in the ag industry," Jack said.

Mr Marr said he could not go past her for her femininity, neck extension and a beautiful carcass.

"She has a magnificent topline with tremendous support on the spine that allowed the muscle definition in that area," he said.

"I know she is carrying that foot, which is an injury that I am sure will heal so I am not going to hold that against her because she has so many good attributes that the Poll Dorset breed has and needs to continue for the future."

Morton co-principal Emily Davidson said the win was even more exciting in one of the driest seasons on record.



Jack, Scott, Molly, Lachie and Emily Davidson, Morton stud, Lucindale, South Australia, with the supreme champion Poll Dorset exhibit at the Royal Adelaide Show, where Poll Dorsets were the feature breed.

"It is a year where the sheep have been tested in their genetic potential," she said.

She was pleased Morton had reached 50 years showing in Adelaide and said they had enjoyed growing up showing Border Leicester sheep with her parents John and Chrys Corbin and now showing as both Poll Dorsets and Borders as a family with her husband Scott and children Molly, Lachlan and Jack.

"Showing has an important role to play as far as seeing where you are at with other sheep studs and comparing different genetics to what you have and most importantly is the friendships with everyone in the shed from the other breeders to the stewards- it is just lovely," she said.

The Morton ewe edged out a ewe from the Allendale stud, Bordertown - which was part of the stud's winning pair of ewes.

"When she was there by herself she commanded so much attention," Mr Marr said.

Tim and Marianne Ferguson, Mallee Park, Hopetoun, Vic, were given the nod for their first grand champion ram at Adelaide in about five years coming as exhibitors.

The May-drop son of Braun 26, Mallee Park 230255, caught the eye of Mr Marr as his senior champion. The ram weighed a thumping 142.5 kilograms and had a 52mm EMD.

"He is there at his peak, he is a very, very complete ram, he is beautiful up on his feet with a lovely open head and beautiful body and really hard to fault," Mr Marr said.

Mr Ferguson said he would retain the ram which had been the reserve champion at the Ballarat Sheep Show earlier in the year.

"We are very strong on cleanliness of points at home which he has shown and the carcass is good on him without being too heavy up front," Mr Ferguson said.

Junior champion ram was awarded to Allendale 230345 also exhibited by Alastair and Jayne Day.

Mr Marr said the July 2023-drop stood out with its "refinement in the back end and walking tremendously well".

"He is a ram with beautiful bone and Dorset characteristics and beef where we need it," he said.

Its other scan included a 47mm eye muscle depth and 10.5mm of fat.

Reserve junior champion went to the Shepherd family's Mullinger Park stud, Kybybolite with an August drop-which also had an outstanding EMD of 51.5mm and weighing 114.5kg.

"His sire was lot 21 in Rod's last sale in 2022 and caught my eye, he was just a flock ram but Rod got him registered and we both used him. We got this fella and Brad won the June class with another son," Brett Shepherd said.

Allendale stud also claimed the reserve senior champion ram broad ribbon with a ram that stood second to the Mallee Park champion in the ram under 1-1/2 years, May-drop class.

Mr Marr heaped praise on the from exhibitors a "beautiful line up of sheep that were in tremendous condition for the season SA is experiencing".

"I was looking for sheep with quick growth, muscling and not overdone but at the same time having and has to be structurally sound or it will not be able to walk around the paddock," he said.

Allendale stud continued its stellar run as most successful exhibitor after also winning the breeders group and sire's progeny group with Allendale 19003 progeny.

Article courtesy of Cath Miller, Stock Journal

Finley High School reigns supreme with Poll Dorsets at Melbourne Royal Show

Finley High School, Finley, NSW, dominated the Poll Dorset competition at the Melbourne Royal Show with champion ram and champion ewe showed by high-school representative Charlotte Rafferty.

The year 11 student, who comes from a farming background but plans to go into nursing after finishing school, said she felt "pretty good" about the day's results.

"I feel like we all worked as a team, and we all worked together and did what we did together," she said.

Finley High School agriculture teacher Gary Webb said that it was just chance that Charlotte was the handler on the end of the rope for both champion ram and champion ewe.

"The animal that was on the end of the lead for Charlotte seemed to be the one that had the success," he said.



Charlotte Rafferty, from Finley High School, Finley, NSW holding the champion ewe at the Royal Melbourne Show, with judge Peter Russell from Donald, Victoria.

"Charlotte is a very good handler of livestock because she's got a very gentle, soft demeanour and the animals really respond to that.

"They respond well to the way that Charlotte handles them."

The school's agricultural program has been in place for over 30 years, Mr Finley said, but the success of this year (as well as last year) is a real kudos for the enduring commitment of the students and supporters of the sheep stud operation.

"It's just validation for sticking at what we've been doing for so many years," he said.

"When we started, typical of schools, you really struggle and you spend a lot of time at shows.

"It's validation for our breeding program and the support that we've had over many years."

He highlighted the Frost family from Hillden Poll Dorset stud, Bannister, NSW, who have supplied genetics to the high school.

"They've supported us for 11 or 12 years now, supplying their genetics, the best that they've got, and that's absolutely paying dividends with our success at the shows.

"We get to stand up with the top breeders when we go [to the shows].

"It's showing that what we've been doing has been working."

With 33 students and seven staff members on deck at the show, Mr Webb expressed gratitude for the support of the Finley community.

"It's a massive effort," he said.

"We're just really grateful for the support we get from the school and community who help us do it.

"We're here right now, but we have a lot of people in the background who are helping us bring these things to fruition."

Judge Peter Russell, Donald, said the supreme champion - a 162-kilogram ram that recorded a fat depth of 9.5 millimetres, a muscle depth of 68mm, a muscle width of 123mm and an eye muscle area of 64.4 square centimetres - was "a good, well-balanced ram with good eye muscle... who moved well", and that his "length of loin was good".

"The bigger ram [of the ram champion competitors] stood out and caught my eye," Mr Russell said.

"The supreme champion is a stand-up ram, but that's not to take anything away from the ewe either.

"He stands out."

The "very thick ewe", who was not weighed, was a leader in the school's selection, Mr Webb said, due to her muscle depth.

"[She's] very meaty, right through the topline, deep down into her hindquarter," Mr Webb said.

"She's quite a correct ewe, her thickness, the amount of muscle that she's carrying.

"She certainly wasn't the tallest ewe out there today, but the muscle she carried brought her over the line."

Article courtesy of Riley Wilson, Stock and Land.

EKKA show results

Champion Ram: Millennium, Mount Whitestone, Queensland

Reserve Champion Ram: Silverdale, Inglewood, Queensland

Champion Ewe: Millennium, Mount Whitestone, Queensland

Reserve Champion: Millennium, Mount Whitestone, Queensland

Supreme Ewe: Millennium, Mount Whitestone, Queensland

Supreme Sheep of Show: Millennium, Mount Whitestone, Queensland



Matthew, Olivia, Quinn and Lorelei Franklin with their champion of champion ewe.

Champions of Champions of Queensland

(Supreme Ram, Ewe and Breeders group of all the major shows in Queensland).

Champion of champions ram: Sovereign Poll Dorsets, Warwick, Queensland.

Champion of champion ewe: Millennium, Mount Whitestone, Queensland.

(with the ewe lamb that clean swept EKKA).



Matthew Franklin, Millennium, Mount Whitestone, Queensland; j Judge David Bondfield and Chris Rubie, Sovereign Poll Dorsets, Warwick, Queensland, with the champion of champion of champions ram and ewe at the EKKA.

Royal Hobart Show

Judge: Rob McCartney, Yentrac, Tatura, Victoria

Results

Ram not exceeding 1-½ years: Lyndowns 1, Sunnybanks, 2 Killara 3.

Rams shorn pen of two: Killara 1, and champion.

Ram shorn within 28 days: Sunnybanks 1, Killara 2, Maccelslie Park 3.

Ram shorn born on or after August 1 previous year: Sunnybanks 1, and reserve champion, Maccelslie Park 2.

Ram Lamb: Killara 1, Sunnybanks 2, Killara 3.

Ewe shorn exceeding 1-1/2 yrs with own progeny: Killara 1.

Ewe in wool not exceeding 1-1.2 yrs: Killara 1.

Ewe shorn not exceeding 1-1.2 years: Sunnybanks 1 and reserve champion, Killara 2.

Ewe shorn within 28 days: Killara 1 and champion.

Ewe lamb: Sunnybanks 1.

Group one ram and two ewes: Killara 1.

Mervyn Weston trophy: Killara.

R.A.Hughes Supreme Poll Dorset exhibit: Killara (champion ram).



Perth Show

Judge: Isabele Roberts, Ridgehaven, Cudal NSW

Champion ram - Tipperary, Walkaway, WA

Judge's comments: It has a beautiful balanced carcass throughout, volume in its hindquarter and loin (Ram by Tipperary 2100209)

Reserve champion ram and champion ram lamb - Stockdale, York, WA

Judge's comments: The lamb has incredible growth for age, beautiful balance and structure,

Carries muscle from his shoulders right through to the backend. He is what the prime lamb industry needs.



The champion Poll Dorset ram at the Royal Perth Show was exhibited by the Tipperary stud, Walkaway, WA. With the ram were judge Isabele Roberts, Ridgehaven Poll Dorset stud, Cudal, NSW and Tipperary co-principal Randal Levett and his son Callum.

Grand champion and champion ewe - Brimfield, Kendenup, WA

Judge's comments: This ewe is so well put together, and a great example of the breed,

Has great balance, smooth frontend, excellent leg structure, beautiful head, standout ewe in the line up. (The ewe was by Brimfield 942-18 which was the interbreed champion ram at the 2019 Perth Royal Show).

Champion ewe lamb - Shirlee Downs, Quairading, WA.

Judge's comments: Good front end and back end, lovely little Poll Dorset head, good muscling throughout.



With the champion Poll Dorset ram lamb and reserve champion Poll Dorset ram at the Royal Perth Show, exhibited by the Stockdale stud, York, were stud co-principals Belwyn and Brenton Fairclough and their children Harry (left) and Piper.

AROUND THE SHOWS



Don McKinnon, Derby Downs and manager Lachlan Bailey, Marong, at the Australasian Dorset Championships at Bendigo.



Mark Yates, Barwon stud, Yerong Creek, NSW, and Graeme Hibbard, Bendigo, at the Australasian Dorset Championships at Bendigo.



Harry Frost, 10, from Hillden at Crookwell, NSW, was the junior champion handler at the Australasian Dorset Championships in Bendigo.



Tim Ferguson, Mallee Park, Ouyen, with the WJ Dawkins trophy presented at the Royal Adelaide Show, with Bill Close and Hugo McLachlan from Newbold stud, Gawler River, South Australia.

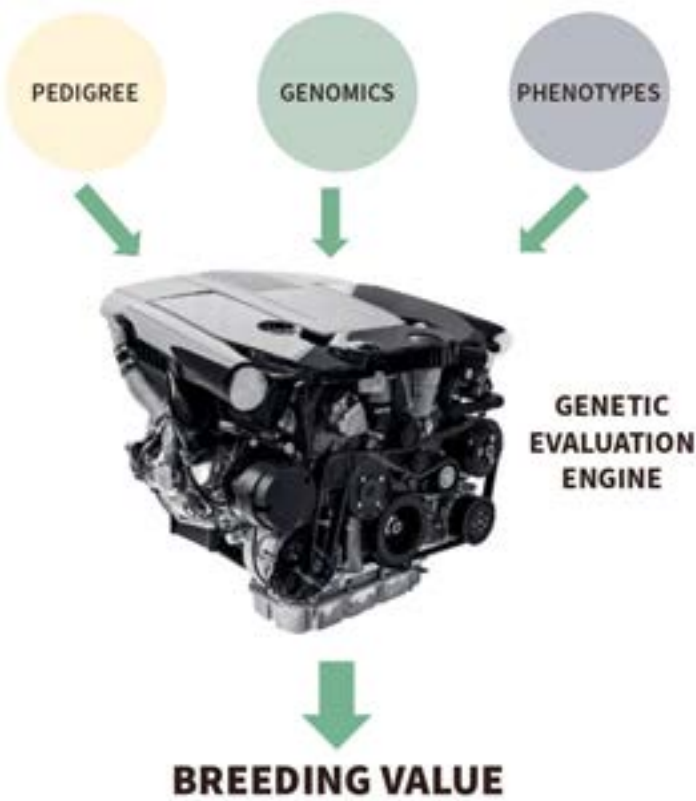
SALE RESULTS

STUD	STUD RAMS Sold	STUD RAMS Top	STUD RAMS Average	FLOCK RAMS Sold	FLOCK RAMS Top	FLOCK RAMS Average
Aberdeen/Hovell	8	\$8,000	\$3,560	180/180	\$ 3,500	\$ 1,830
Allendale	12/12	\$7,500	\$3,575	84/11		\$ 1,374
Andbo				60/60	\$ 6,000	\$ 2,254
Armdale				80/80	\$ 3,300	\$ 1,723
Ashbank				83	\$ 3,100	\$ 1,928
Ashcharmoo				32/39	\$ 1,800	\$ 1,218
Australasian Dorset Championships	24	\$16,500	\$5,913			
Bocoble				6/10		\$ 1,000
Cobana				30/46	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,060
Coedale				70		\$ 1,440
Cranbrook		\$15,250		60/60		\$ 2,472
Estjam				35/44	\$ 4,400	\$ 1,271
Fairbank				47/54	\$ 2,800	\$ 1,323
Glen Devon				85/91	\$ 3,000	\$ 1,160
Glenore				75/90	\$ 3,000	\$ 1,292
Gooramma		\$23,000		136/136		\$ 3,456
Hillden	14/16	\$10,000	\$3,714	111/136	\$ 2,500	\$ 1,540
Ilfracombe				72/90	\$ 3,800	\$ 1,129
Ivadene	17/17	\$20,000	\$5,528	70/70	\$ 2,800	\$ 1,748
Jackson				49/49		\$ 1,391
Jewsharp				147	\$ 3,000	\$ 1,540
Kentish Downs			\$5,200	150/158		\$ 1,555
Kurralea		\$6,250				\$ 1,548
LSK	7-Jul	\$11,200	\$4,857	117/117	\$ 2,500	\$ 1,645
Maccelslie Park				13		\$ 869
Mulgundawa	2	\$3,000	\$2,700	100	\$ 2,800	\$ 1,200
Mullinger Park				185/186	\$ 2,300	\$ 1,479
Narranmore		\$3,800				
Newbold			\$5,500			\$ 1,575
Paxton				77/106		\$ 1,313
Pinewalla				80/110	\$ 4,000	\$ 1,602
Ridgehaven				142/145	\$ 3,500	\$ 1,925
Rowallan				138/138	\$ 2,900	\$ 1,910
Shellal				98/126	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,218
Springwaters		\$12,500		216/216		\$ 2,414
Stone Lea				60	\$ 2,200	\$ 1,268
Sunny Banks				25		\$ 1,200
Tattykeel		\$25,000			\$ 3,000	
Ulandi Park	5	\$7,000	\$5,100	129	\$ 2,200	\$ 1,085
Valley Vista				117/150	\$ 4,200	\$ 1,360
Wrattenbullie		\$10,000		130/130		\$ 1,600

How genomically enhanced breeding values are calculated

Genomic selection in seedstock animals most commonly involves the inclusion of genomic profiles in existing industry genetic evaluations, such as those conducted by BREEDPLAN and Sheep Genetics, to calculate genomically enhanced breeding values.

Genomically enhanced breeding values enable more accurate selection decisions, earlier in an animal's life, and for additional traits and animals, and ultimately, greater genetic improvement.



This edition of talking genomics discusses how genomic information is incorporated in the calculation of genomically enhanced breeding values within the BREEDPLAN and Sheep Genetics genetic evaluations.

Single step genetic evaluation

The manner in which genomic information is included in industry genetic evaluations is often referred to as a 'single-step' genetic evaluation, reflecting that genomic profiles are analysed simultaneously with other sources of information (e.g. pedigree, phenotypes), placing appropriate emphasis on all available sources of information, to calculate a single, genomically enhanced breeding value.

A unique feature of single-step genetic evaluation is that breeding values can be calculated for both animals with, and animals without, genomic profiles. This differs to some earlier approaches that could only handle individuals with genomic profiles.

Likewise, in contrast to some earlier approaches, a 'genomic breeding value' is not calculated in a single step genetic evaluation, only the overall, genomically enhanced breeding value that is published.

Analytical approaches for incorporating genomic information

There are a number of different analytical approaches for incorporating genomic information in the calculation of breeding values within a single-step genetic evaluation. The BREEDPLAN and Sheep Genetics Evaluation utilise a 'relationship' approach known as GTBLUP.

In the relationship approach, the incorporation of genomics is about 'animal relationships'.

In a simplistic form, a breeding value is calculated by a) estimating the relationship between an animal and the other animals in the genetic evaluation, and b) using the performance information that has been collected for the animal and the animals to which it is related to predict an animal's breeding value.

The more closely an animal with a phenotype is related to the target animal whose breeding value is of interest, the more influence that its performance has on the breeding value being calculated.

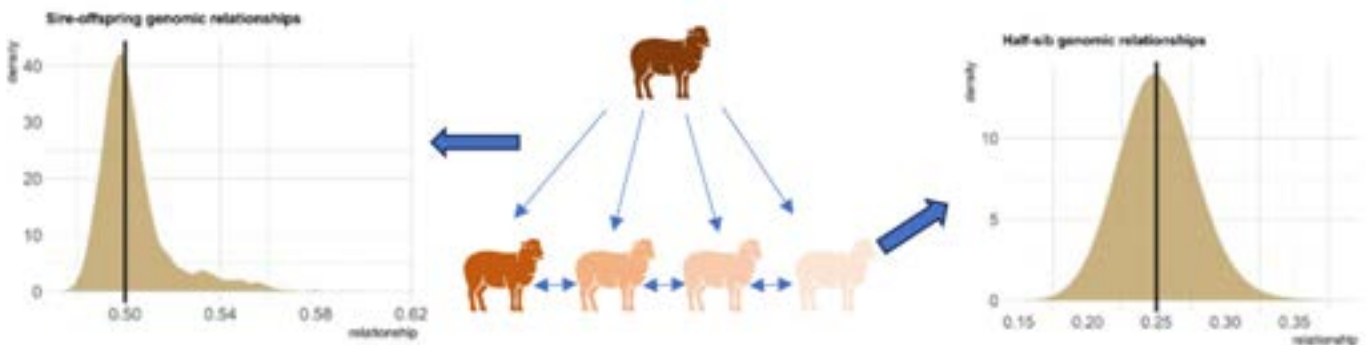
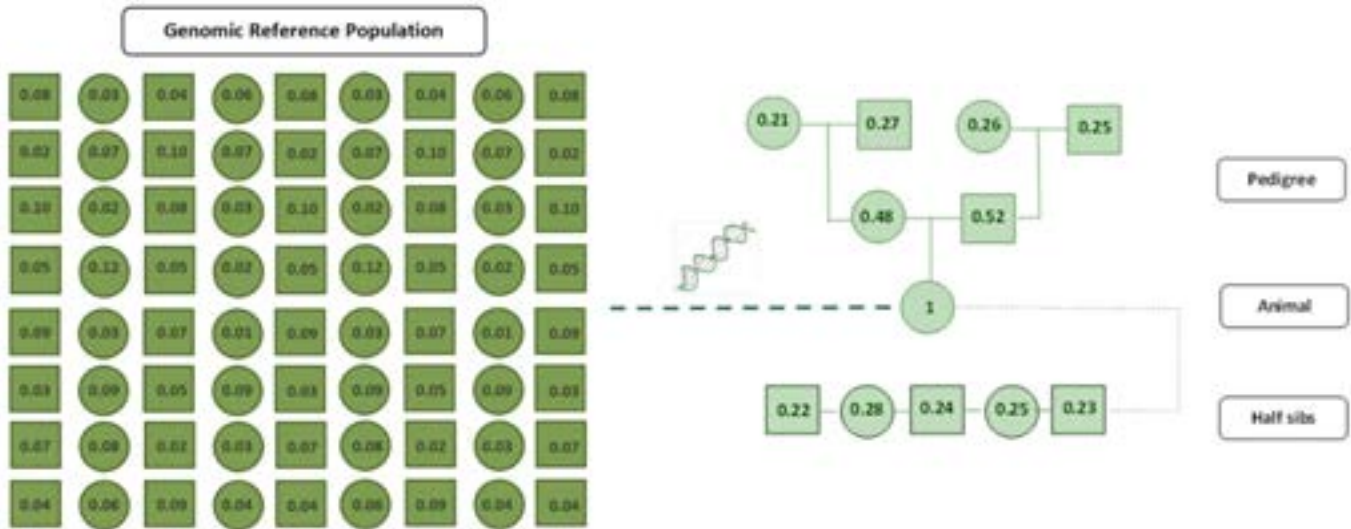


Figure 2. Example of relationships between animals in a traditional genetic evaluation. Based on pedigree relationships, the animal is estimated to have 50 per cent of genes in common with each parent, 25 per cent of genes in common with each grand-parent, and 25 per cent of genes in common with each of its half siblings.



In traditional, pedigree based genetic evaluation, the relationships between animals are determined by pedigree alone. (Figure 2)

In a genetic evaluation that incorporates genomics using the 'relationship' approach, the relationships between animals are determined by combining pedigree and genomic information.

Utilisation of genomic relationships, being the genetic relatedness between two animals based on their genomic profiles, improves estimation of the relationship between animals in the genetic evaluation, and ultimately results in the calculation of more reliable breeding values.

Genomic relationships enable:

- the relationship between animals to be estimated when no, or incomplete pedigree information is available;
- a more precise estimate to be made of the genetic relationship between two animals who are related by pedigree. i.e. rather than assuming an animal has 25 per cent of its genes in common with each grandparent (based on the law of averages), genomics assesses the random shuffle of chromosomes the animal has inherited to provide a more precise indication of the proportion of genes that an animal has in common with each relative;

- the relationship between animals unrelated by pedigree to be determined, and any performance information that is available on these animals to be used in the calculation of the animal's breeding value. eg pedigree may indicate that two animals are unrelated, but in reality, genomics indicates that they share a proportion of genes in common. This is particularly advantageous as it allows the performance information of animals in the genomic reference population to be utilised in the calculation of an animal's breeding value.

Genomic relationships in practice

The real-world examples below demonstrate how utilisation of genomic relationships improves the estimation of the relationship between animals in a single step genetic evaluation.

Based on pedigree information, the sires would be estimated to have a relationship of 0.5 with each of their offspring. Similarly, the sire's offspring would each be expected to have a relationship of 0.25 with one another.

Genomic testing reveals that while, on average, these relationships are correct, the relationship between the sire and each individual offspring differs, and some offspring are more closely related to each other than they are with others.

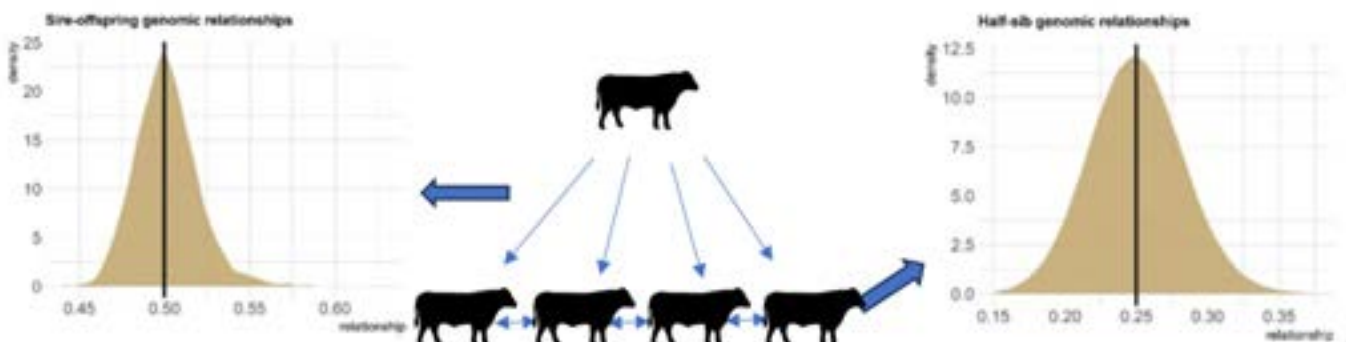


Figure 3. Example of relationships between animals in a single step genetic evaluation. Utilisation of genomic relationships enables a more precise estimate to be made of the relationship to each animal in the pedigree, while also enabling the relationship to be estimated to animals in the genomic reference population.

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