



THE AUSTRALIAN POLL DORSET JOURNAL

VOLUME 49 / NUMBER 1

MAY 2019



Next Gen Pick
POLL DORSETS

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE...



APDA
CONFERENCE
PAGE 12-15



COMMERCIAL
FOCUS
PAGE 18



WAGIN
WOOLORAMA
PAGE 21

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As I write this report some areas have received good rains and their seasons are well under way while other areas are still awaiting the Autumn break and hand feeding is still a daily necessity.

For those of us who lamb in April into dust you do wonder why we try to get lambs so early when dust and foxes are a constant menace.

We all run our programs differently and some times the season is with us and other times the season just refuses to co-operate.

I hope that all areas get the rain required and we can all put the past 12 months into the memory banks and move on.

Speaking of moving on (did you like how I did that), we have an entirely new secretariat and promotions team!

After much background work involving job descriptions, interviews and more double checking, we were able to appoint Margot Falconer and the ASBA as our new secretary. Patrick Falconer (ASBA) and Jamie-Lee Oldfield have been jointly employed to run our promotions and Journals.

Even at this early stage I believe we have exactly the right people in place now, and many of you may have already received a phone call from one of the team.

They are all go getters, and all members will notice a difference in their dealings with them.

They are more than willing to get on the phone with you all and most requests are able to be chased down very quickly, but I must remind you that a little patience at this early stage would be greatly appreciated as they all get to know their roles.

There are also substantial data entry errors that need to be picked up and sorted out from our prior system which is proving more disorganised than previously thought.

A huge thank you to all board members who put themselves out to be part of the process and ensure we got the right people.

Isabele Roberts must be singled out though for the amount of time and effort she put into the whole thing; as without her it wouldn't have been done as timely and professionally as it was.

The Poll Dorset Conference in Orange was a huge success with around 150 delegates listening to an impressive assortment of speakers.

They all managed to get their messages out in 20 minutes and didn't leave any gaps for snoozing.

The breeders in the room had plenty of well informed questions and received the answers they were after.

The demonstrations by sheep handling specialists and new technologies were in itself worth the trip north.

I can envision a few breeders checking the ewes with drones pretty soon; if we could fit them with night vision and a rifle to hunt foxes that would get me buying one ASAP!

Thank you to all the breeders who opened up their farms to visitors before, during and after the conference.

It was amazing to hear the different travel plans of breeders and where they were going to check out other breeders and perhaps new genetics.

A definite highlight was the dinner speaker Lawrence Balcomb. What an inspiration! When you blow yourself up, spend six months recovering in burns units, hospital and rehabilitation, then go back farming - that alone is an inspiration, but to come back with a much happier outlook than before the accident... it should make us all see the bright side of what we do.

Ruth Klingner and her team did a fabulous job with the conference and must be congratulated on a job well done. Who wants to do the next one in 2021?

The next few months sees a few challenges with flock returns and trying to get them right again. If you get a phone call or mail asking to double check your returns- it's not because you have done anything wrong, but information has slipped through the numerous cracks in our previous system and we are endeavouring to fix them. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

I am very optimistic in the future direction of the APDA, and now hopefully we all get rain and season starts well for everyone.

Damon Coats

APDA PRESIDENT



THE AUSTRALIAN POLL DORSET JOURNAL

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MARCH BOARD MINUTES

The meeting of the Australian Poll Dorset Association Board was held at Turners Vineyard, Orange 19-20 March 2019.

PRESENT & APOLOGIES

D Coats (President), I Roberts, G Armstrong, G Davey, P Cain, J Corcoran, R Davies, P Day, J Frost, A Rowett, A Scott, S Squiers, A Sutherland and M Falconer (Secretary).

C Garnett was an apology

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The financial statement and budget were presented and received.

The finance committee informed the board of the increased costs of the production of the Journal ranging from printing, layout, staffing and distribution. These have all been addressed and the Journal will be back within budget this year.

At the time of going to press, the board is in the process of buying a new database system to replace ARC. Members will be kept informed.

PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE

Jamie-Lee Oldfield and Patrick Falconer gave a presentation to the board with their thoughts on marketing and communication through the journal and the website for the next 12 months.

The following topics were discussed:

Journal - the new team is committed to bringing the journal out on time each and every issue starting with the May issue.

Advertising Spend - Group discussed best time to advertise certain elements like flock ram sales and general promotion of the breed.

The following motion was resolved:

"Two new marketing staff would work on a communications plan and it was recommended we allow new staff to do this and present in the near future"

Carried

MAJOR EVENTS FUNDING

Victorian State Committee – Funding request for live streaming

Naracoorte Hamilton Region – Lamb Baa

Adelaide Region – SA Sheep Expo

ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

The committee discussed the introduction of mandatory Ovine Brucellosis accreditation and the following motion was passed:

"Flocks registered with the APDA must be part of the Ovine Brucellosis accreditation scheme within their relevant state"

It is intended that this will be brought in for the 2021 flock return

Carried

MAJOR SHOW APPOINTMENTS 2019

Sydney Royal Easter Show – Will Milroy

ASBA Sheep and Wool Show – Wallace Binnie

Hamilton Sheepvention – Ben Prentice

Cowra Dorset Championships – TBA

Royal Adelaide Show – Ian Gilmore

Royal Melbourne Show – Rod Davies

Royal Canberra Show – Marshall Douglas

GENERAL BUSINESS

Website - Development of the new APDA website was put on hold as we were leaving the Adelaide Secretariat and ARC. The new website will be operational by the end of June.

Flock book - Errors were discussed and it was decided to employ a person to clean up the existing flock book information before the printing of the 2019 issue.

The following motion was passed:

"That we do what is necessary to make the registration data correct"

Carried

Launch of the inaugural WFI Champions of Champions - WFI are sponsoring this event with a prize of \$3000 awarded to the ram considered by a panel of judges to be the best Dorset ram in Australia.

AUSTRALASIAN DORSET CHAMPIONSHIPS

FRIDAY 6th - SUNDAY 8th SEPTEMBER 2019
REGIONAL EVENTS COMPLEX
Prince of Wales Showgrounds - Holmes Road Bendigo
Judging from 4pm - Friday
Ram sale 1.30pm - Sunday



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ACROSS THE PENS

MEET THE NEW TEAM

Margot Falconer - CEO & Secretariat



In late 2015 I was appointed to the role of CEO & Secretary of the Australian Sheep and Wool Show. This year's event in July will be my 4th Show and in that time I have enjoyed meeting so many breeders from around Australia and a fantastic group of sponsors, not just of the Sheep show but of the individual

breeds as well. Being appointed as CEO and Secretary of the Australian Poll Dorset Association has been another great learning curve in my life and I have been joined in the office by Sam Garland (admin and graphic designer) and my husband Patrick Falconer who has a similar background to me where customer service is a way of life and not a forgotten art. I am looking forward to the future with the APDA.

Patrick Falconer - Advertising Sales



I was born in the UK and at 18 decided to come to Australia to see the world and take 2 years to travel back. I never left. I started my media career with NBN 3 Newcastle then moved to other media organisations, always representing regional Australian TV networks. During that time I travelled with advertisers

around Australia and I have been lucky enough to have been to every state, territory and capital city. After a few years doing that and 7 years back in London I was asked to manage the Bendigo Chamber of Commerce which I did until 2016. I then volunteered to help out at the Sheep and Wool Show as well as working on my golf handicap and in late 2018 was hired for a few days a week and during that time we were appointed to look after the Poll Dorset Secretariat with my role concentrating on the marketing and Journal which brings us up to date.

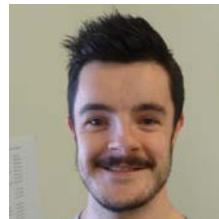
Jamie-Lee Oldfield - Journal Editor



I have been a rural journalist for over a decade, having grown up on a cattle station in far north South Australia where I developed a passion for livestock and telling a good yarn. I've held the position of livestock editor at two of the country's largest agricultural publications, The Land and The Weekly Times, working

across four states developing a great network of contacts in the industry. I have a particular interest in livestock commodity markets and write regular analysis pieces for Nine Agricultural Media. Since moving to a sheep and cattle property at Coolac in Southern NSW, I also work with livestock breed societies industry groups and government bodies on a freelance basis on projects such as social media coordination and implementation, promotions and copy-writing, publication creation and stakeholder relations and engagement. I look forward to catching up with you all.

Sam Garland - Administration & Graphic Design



Born and raised in Bendigo, I attended La Trobe University from 2014-2016 and was lucky enough to spend 6 months of my degree studying in San Diego, California in the latter half of 2015. Once I returned home, I worked part time assisting Margot at the 2016 Australian Sheep and Wool Show.

After attaining my Bachelor's Degree in Graphic Design, I worked for a local marketing agency from 2016-2019 before just recently returning to work for the Sheep Show. I now assist with both the Show and the Poll Dorset Association.

SALES RESULTS

		STUD RAMS			FLOCK RAMS			STUD EWES		
STUD	STATE	SOLD	TOP	AVERAGE	SOLD	TOP	AVERAGE	SOLD	TOP	AVERAGE
Armdale - Armdale Park	NSW				34/62	\$1500	\$1070	90/110	\$850	\$465
Icon	VIC				29/29	\$1300	\$793			
Kentish Downs (Stage 1 Dispersal)	NSW							514/754	\$3900	\$404
Meltonvale	TAS				133/138	\$1900	\$1368			
Pembroke	VIC				47/47	\$2050	\$1178			
Ridgetop	WA				27/35	\$1100	\$824			

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY 24-26	NSW State Sheep Show - Dubbo
JUNE 14-15	NSW Dorset Championships - Cowra
JULY 8-10	WA Sheep Expo - Wagin
JULY 19-21	Australian Sheep & Wool Show - Bendigo
AUGUST 4-6	Hamilton Sheepvention
AUGUST 7	Poll Dorset Youth Day - Cowra NSW

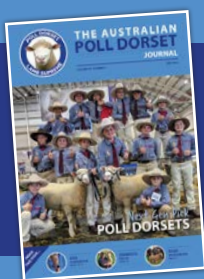
AUGUST 30	Royal Adelaide Show
SEPTEMBER 6-8	Australasian Dorset Championships - Bendigo
SEPTEMBER 21	Royal Melbourne Show
OCTOBER 10	Royal Launceston Show
OCTOBER 24	Hobart Royal Show

CONTENTS

President's message	3
March Board Minutes	4
Across the Pens - Meet the New Team	5
Calendar of Events	5
Promotions Officer Report	6
Sheep Industry Shorts	7
Youth Yarns	9
APDA Conference - What will the terminal sire look like in 2039?	12
APDA Conference - Tattykeel shares secret to decades of success	13
APDA Conference - EID only as good as the system you build	14
APDA Conference - Focus on the Feed	16
Commercial Focus	18
Show Results - Canberra Show	20
Show Results - Wagin Woolorama	21
Show Results - Sydney Show	22
News and Animal Health - Feed, heat and mobs impact lambing	24
News and Animal Health - New Lamb Definition	25
News and Animal Health - Pneumonia	26
Member Profile - Damon Coats	27
Life Member - Graham Oxley	28
Obituary - Vale Christopher Achalen Long	30
Advertising Rates	31

FRONT COVER:

The show team from St Lawrence Primary School at Coonabarabran with their Poll Dorset exhibits at the Sydney Royal Show.



ADVERTISER INDEX

Shearwell	2	Kurralea	23
Australasian Dorset Championships	4	Stockscan	24
Newbold	6	Ulandi	25
Janmac	7	Startect	26
Ridgehaven	8	Valley Vista	29
Armdale	9	Pepperton	30
Springwaters	17	Marocara	31
Derrynock	19	Bromar	32

PROMOTIONS OFFICER REPORT

In case some of you are unaware, we have a new promotional team. I would like to welcome on board Patrick Falconer and Jamie-Lee Oldfield to the promotions team.

In a nut shell, Patrick will be office based and Jamie-Lee will be our field operative. Already in the short time we have been working together, I feel we are all working well as a team and that the Poll Dorset breed are going to benefit from this new team into the future.



If anyone feels they have a good story about Poll Dorsets please let me or Jamie-Lee know.

There is still money available for Regions to promote the breed within your Region. I would like to think that each Region will apply for this, you know best what may work within your Region, some ideas that have been used before are radio, newspaper and stands at field days around ram selling season, you may have other ideas, think outside the box sometimes something new just may work.

Thank you to Ruth Klinger and her team for putting together a great conference at Orange in March.

Well it goes without saying that a lot of the country is dry, but Poll Dorset prime lambs are still selling at a premium in the market place, putting on more weight with less feed.

If you haven't had a big rain yet (like me) may one not be too far away for all of us and we can then get back to doing what we do best, growing prime Poll Dorsets on grass.

Geoff Davey

75th Annual On-Property Sale

Stud & Flock Rams - Stud Ewes

Friday 20 Sept, Gawler River

Inspect from 11am. Auction 1pm.

Enquiries always welcome.

Bill Close 0414 813 873
bill@newboldstuds.com

Craig McLachlan 0418 838 751
craig@newboldstuds.com

newboldstuds.com

SHEEP INDUSTRY SHORTS

Lamb market shows resilience

Meat and Livestock Australia data shows the National Trade Lamb Indicator averaged 656c/kg for the first quarter of 2019, the highest average for this period on record.

The National Over The Hook medium trade price averaged 666c/kg for the same period, also a record.

To gauge what would eventuate this winter, MLA's market information team looked at last year, and reported eastern states lamb slaughter in May 2018 averaged more than 400,000 a week, while the Eastern States Trade Lamb Indicator averaged 604c/kg carcass weight.

"By August, slaughter had fallen 31 per cent to average 280,000 head per week...(and) the ESTLI averaged 815c/kg in August, which was 35 per cent higher than the May average."

MLA said in the May to July period since 2003, the ESTLI has increased by an average of 29.3c/kg during the second year of extensive dry periods (2003, 2009, 2014),

"This is driven by an increase of 176c/kg in 2003, while 2009 remained firm and in 2014 the indicator decreased 85c/kg over the three-month period.

"However, in the May to July period in the year succeeding the last three major dry periods, (being 2004, 2010 and 2016), the ESTLI has risen on average 100c/kg.

Sheep CRC comes to an end

Cooperative Research Centre for Sheep Industry Innovation (Sheep CRC) will finish up on June 30, with its work set to add \$121 million dollars to the industry by 2029.

This is the estimated impact the Sheep CRC's 12-year genomics research program and DNA testing will have on productivity from 2015-2029.

Prof. Rowe said the impacts of faster genetic gain included increased livestock productivity, the breeding of animals more resilient to environmental risks, and the ability to select for product quality to achieve higher prices for meat and wool.

"The prediction of traits difficult to measure was a particular focus of the genomic analysis - but the end result of improving the design of the DNA test and taking advantage of new technologies for SNP chip analysis has resulted in decreased costs of testing and rapidly accelerating adoption."

"Over the last five years the price of genomic profiling has fallen from \$50 per test to \$27, and the number of tests has skyrocketed with 24,000 genotyping tests sold in 2018, plus a further 75,000 parentage tests."

International demand

At a time when drought has elevated supply, global demand for Australian beef and sheepmeat has been strong, supported further by a softer A\$ and new year tariff reductions in some markets. For the first quarter of 2019, sheepmeat exports surged 15 per cent to set a new record, while lamb exports rose to just over 73,000 tonnes shipped weight, an increase of 12 per cent year-on-year.

The US remains Australia's largest lamb market, recording a 29 per cent year-on-year increase to 18,000 tonnes shipped weight for January to March, compounded by short domestic lamb supply, while shipments of mutton and lamb to the Middle East increased 3 per cent.

SSJAN0010319



Quietly achieving excellence

"We are excited about the future"

- ✦ Founded in 1979 by our parents, Mac & Janet, the Janmac stud has reached the milestone of 40 years of Poll Dorset breeding.
 - ✦ With the application of a balanced breeding program & selection for traits like rapid early growth, length, muscling and clean points, Janmac has become a leading supplier of quality commercial and stud rams, with a steady increase in sales each year.
 - ✦ We have continually invested in top end rams from recognised leading studs, while also increasing use of elite homebred rams.
 - ✦ After success with select Kentish Downs sires, we recently added a large line of exceptional ewes from their first stage dispersal.
 - ✦ We are seeing the next generation become involved, with son Carl commencing his own stud with select Ulandi Park and Kentish Downs ewes.
 - ✦ Last year we had the personal privilege of Grant judging at the Melbourne Royal Show with son Carl as Associate Judge.
 - ✦ The greatest highlight of all continues to be the contacts and friendships we have made.
- As long term breeders, we have a sincere respect for the history of this amazing breed,
plus a clear focus on the future.*
- The Hausler family (Grant, Kerry & Carl, Bryce & Hannah)*

2019 Annual ram sale **Wednesday 2nd October** Approx 200 rams

Check our website for updates & sale information: www.janmac.com.au
Enquiries always welcome Contact: Grant & Bryce Hausler, Goroke, Vic
Mobiles - Grant: 0427 861 013 Bryce: 0427 861 031 Email: grant.hausler@bigpond.com





2019 ANNUAL SALE

Thurs 12th Sept Cudal, NSW

RIDGEHAVEN
POLL DORSETS

Bowan Park

POLL DORSET RESEARCH FLOCK

Bowan Park research flock has been set up to provide APDA members the opportunity to assess their flock genetics and benchmark them within the Poll Dorset breed.

Bowan Park is a registered stud, however all progeny is for research purposes only; no progeny will be available for registration or transfer.

The performance values to be measured are key commercial traits relevant to the Poll Dorset's role as a terminal sire – growth, muscle and fat measured on live animals, and yield and eating quality at carcase assessment.

The 2019 cohort are due to lamb in June, with results available December.

A nomination call for the 2020 cohort will be made in late September.

For more information visit www.bowanpark.com.au



Youth Member in Focus

Charlotte Close (Age 24)

Where are you from?

I live at Yackandandah, VIC but am originally from Finley NSW

What do you do for work?

Casual work at Childcare and Pet Caring

Why did you apply for the APDA Conference scholarship?

I've grown up in the Poll Dorset industry and never attended a conference before so I thought it would be a good opportunity to attend one to learn different ideas we could implement to improve the breeding strategies of our enterprise.



Congratulations to Charlotte Close of Closeup Poll Dorset Stud who was awarded the Rabobank Young Breeder Scholarship, Charlotte is pictured at the National Conference with Rabobank's Mark Oosterveen & Adam Tomlinson. (Photo by studstocksales.com)

Before going to the conference, what was one thing you were hoping to gain from attending?

I was hoping to gain knowledge on different ways to improve our stud breeding program and new or improved practices to improve our flock so we can become more sustainable as we move into a future where climate change is going to affect how and what we can produce.

What are three things you learnt from the conference?

That to continue to breed animals for the future we need to breed an animal that will be resilient in our changing environment.

That it is important to have a clear breeding objective, that can be adaptable and innovative to enable a stud to have a unique selling point when targeting a market.

It was interesting to learn about the latest research on some common problems and diseases in sheep such as mastitis, campylobacter and pneumonia.

What topics would you like to see at the next conference?

I'd like to be kept up to date on where the latest research on the eating quality of lamb is heading and what traits we should be selecting to ensure we are meeting the needs of our target markets.

How will the things you learnt at the conference improve your flock management?

I learnt a lot from the presenters on flock management. As we have a small stud, we often don't have the chance to make use of the strategies that a lot of stud breeders do, so implementing some of the different techniques into our program could improve our success and returns. Things like DNA testing, data recording, utilising EIDs are just a few things I learnt about that could improve our program.

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Champion Ram &
Supreme Exhibit
Gundagai Show
Sire: Springwaters 66-16
'POCOCK'**

**Armdale Park 401-18(T)
1st June Drop &
Reserve Champion
Gundagai Show
Sire: Armdale 520-16**



ANNUAL STUD & FLOCK RAM SALE – Friday 27th September 2019 – 1pm

Garry and Catherine Armstrong
Mobile: 0427 275 134
email: gcarmstrong@activ8.net.au

Shirley Armstrong
Mobile 0427 275 126
email: nsarmstrong@armdale-armdalepark.com.au

STOCKSCAN
Gudair Vaccinated

Queensland Students keen to improve their performance

By Chris Rubie

Students from Calvary Christian College, Carbrook, Brisbane spent the weekend of February 9-10 working over some young ewes and rams at Chris and Meryl Rubie's Sovereign Poll Dorset stud at Warwick in South East Queensland.

The weekend was inspired by the team's dedication throughout the 2018 show season, culminating at the 2018 Toowoomba Royal Show. Their effort in presenting their team of sheep was outstanding and could not go unnoticed. It was easy to see the value in spending time with them on farm.

Nine students from the College's Agriculture branch accompanied by two teachers and parents attended the workshop. They arrived at about 10.00am Saturday morning and set up camp in the house yard. By 11.00am they were ready to get their hands on some sheep, so it was off to the shearing shed.

The rest of Saturday was spent trimming, handling and taking a guided tour through some of the theory and practical of the judging process under the eyes of Chris and Meryl and their son Brent. The small group experience enabled time to be spent with each student, helping and supporting each one's specific requirements. This environment enabled maximum benefit to all.

Saturday night started with a BBQ, or should I say BBQ and wind storm. It was all hands on deck hanging onto all corners of the tents and tables and chairs. When this subsided all enjoyed the finish of the BBQ (with only 1mm of rain).

Sunday morning commenced with a multiple choice theory test where each student (teachers and parents included) picked up some general knowledge about the sheep and lamb industry. First session following the theory was the student's choice and to our surprise almost all wanted more time trimming.

Following some trimming it was then time to line up four rams and set the students the task of judging. Each was given full opportunity to speak and all took on that with gusto. The day finished off with lunch and pack up and off home about mid-afternoon.

It was such a delight to have students so keen to learn and so well mannered. A credit to parents and teachers.

By the way the school had three representatives in the State Finals of the sheep judging at the Toowoomba Royal Show on March 28 – I am sure it is only a matter of time and they will proudly represent Queensland in a national final.



Back row :- Angela Haupt, Chris Rubie, Meryl Rubie, Rob Haupt.
Front row:- Aidyn Proctor, Brendon de Oliveira, Zane Taylor, Stefani Jenner, Brooke Bullas, Emma Haupt, William Haupt, Jamie Thomas, Hannah Haupt, Lisa Bullas.



Stefani Jenner and Zane Taylor with a very patient ram

Around the Shows

Toowoomba

Sovereign Poll Dorsets of Warwick, Queensland, took out all interbreed classes at the Toowoomba Show earlier this year, including supreme sheep of the show.



Amanda Watkins is coordinator of the YOUTH YARNS SECTION - if you have any ideas or contributions to make relating to youth involved with Poll Dorsets please contact her on 0417 581 059 or email youth@polldorset.org.au

Youth Member in Focus

Laura Banning, O'Connell, NSW

Age 18 years

What do you do for work?

I am currently working as a trainee, studying a certificate IV in engineering drafting as well as working at O'Connell Hotel and owner of a sheep stud (Yeramba Poll Dorsets).

Why did you apply for the APDA Conference scholarship? Before going to the conference, what was one thing you were hoping to gain from attending?

I applied for the APDA conference scholarship because I was interested in expanding my knowledge and understanding in regards to the sheep industry. With the opportunity to learn from others, hearing their different opinions and techniques I thought that it would be of value, allowing me to improve my own stud.

What are three things you learnt from the conference?

How to administer Gudair vaccine without creating lumps. The influence of technology in the industry. How generous and encouraging other stud owners are, sharing their vast knowledge and experiences with me.

What topics would you like to see at the next conference?

Topics that I would personally like to see at the next conference include; a more in depth talk on the nutritional requirements and benefits in relation to age, gender and breed of sheep. I would be interested to see a sheep autopsy as was planned to extend my knowledge of the anatomy of a sheep.

How will the things you learnt at the conference improve your flock management?

With the things I learnt at the conference I intended on improving my stud. My intention for Yeramba Poll Dorset Stud is continual improvement. I look to increase my flock in the coming years developing greater genetic diversity. It was also reiterated the importance of thorough and accurate record keeping which I will maintain to stay on top of.



Laura was the winner of the Step Up Financial Group Young Breeder Scholarship at this year's APDA Conference. (Photo credit: Ruth Klingner)

Around the Shows

Deniliquin

Finley High School took out the Interbreed Ram at Deniliquin Show with their Poll Dorset ram held by Jock Brain.



POLL DORSET YOUTH DAY

Wednesday 7th August, Cowra Showground

High School age - 25yrs. For more details contact Ruth on 0438 642 113

What will the terminal sire look like in 2039?

Story Courtesy of Kristen Frost, Nine Agricultural Media

The key to staying on top of the flock is keeping ahead of the game.

This was the key objective of the future for 150 Poll Dorset breeders when they came together in March at the biennial national conference held in Orange, NSW, hosted by the Central West region.

Enveloping the conference and it's futuristic approach was the question presented to speakers, "what will the terminal sire look like in 2039?"

The assignment gathered thought provoking responses, but nevertheless, ones that will need to be implemented if the breed it to progress successfully and remain an industry leader into the future.

Dr Stuart Barber, University of Melbourne, said the industry should be looking at an animal that is resilient in the environment and relatively easy care - a common theme that he doesn't believe will change in the next 20 years.

Dr Stuart Barber, a lecturer in veterinary science at the University of Melbourne who also runs a commercial Poll Dorset operation, said both the ram and ewe of the future were equally important.

He believes the industry should be looking at an animal that is resilient in the environment and relatively easy care - a common theme that he doesn't believe will change in the next 20 years.

"We have a really high-level product in the lamb industry, and I don't see that changing, but there will be more pressure in making sure that what we have is of consistently of high quality," Mr Barber said.

"When people eat it, it needs to be consistently juicy, flavoursome, with no toughness.

"We also need to keep the growth rates, but not getting animals that end up being 250 kilogram sheep."

But Mr Barber said as much as looking at the animal, it is also about looking at ourselves and how we manage our stock, including social licence.

"We have to make sure we have the licence from the 95 per cent of people that don't live on farms and don't know a lot about farms," he said.

"To make sure we share that story of what we do with those resilient and high quality sheep that we have."

According to Graham Gilmore of Tattykeel Meat Breeds, Oberon, NSW, the future is about genetics. He said "to look forward we have to look back".

"Looking back at rams (over 20 years ago) they show different attributes to what our bred has today. They were smaller and produced a lamb at a different weight," Mr Gilmore said.

"I am not saying producers go back to the future, what I am saying I think eating quality of the Poll Dorset ram in 20 years time will be extremely important as will genomics.

"The other thing that will be incredibly important is his conversion rate, or his progeny's conversion rate."

But the big challenge, Mr Gilmore said, will be how producers get that animal to perform on less feed, not more.

Known for his ability to look ahead is sheep industry representative Matthew Coddington of Roseville Park Merino stud, Dubbo, NSW.

He believes those in the industry may be able to change the breed a lot differently than what thought possible in the next 10 to 20 years.

"The 2039 ram needs to be one that is adapted to climate change - we have seen some very different scenarios with our weather patterns," Mr Coddington said.

"Feed conversion is very important as will be caping mature weight.

"There are things that happened in the last 10 years that we didn't know would be available to us, for example genomics."

He said breeding more things such as Omega 3's to meat, and health benefits that we might be able to find from new technology moving forward are all important.

Other key topics dominating discussions at the conference were breeding programs with emphasis on key objectives, climate change and low rainfall.

Alongside this was marketing stud stock, latest research on mastitis, campylobacter, brucellosis, summer pneumonia and lamb survival.

Central West region secretary, Ruth Klingner, said attendees at the conference had provided her with positive feedback.

"Everyone seems to have got something out of it as well as have a good time," Ms Klingner said.

"The forum at the end of day two was a terrific opportunity for breeders to speak their thoughts.

"It was an opportunity for the attendees to network with each other, the speakers and other industry professionals, share knowledge and I believe it put the breed in a good place moving forward into the future."



Conference attendees look over the rams at Ridgehaven stud, Cudal, who hosted different industry providers for an interactive field day during the event.

Tattykeel shares secret to decades of success

GRAHAM Gilmore has three rules for breeding some of the best sheep in the business.

Linebreeding. Linebreeding. Linebreeding.

The current statesman of Tattykeel has seen 44 consecutive stud sales at his Oberon operation, and they are far from fading.

His breeding philosophy is one he picked up as 15 year old after sitting down with Gus Taylor of Lindsbury stud.

"He told me why he was so successful and he said it was because of linebreeding," Mr Gilmore told the National Poll Dorset Conference in March.

A fair few very successful years later, and Graham said that "simple linebreeding philosophy" has been key to it all.

"It identifies where we are going wrong and allows us to cement desirable traits," Graham said.

"I am not suggesting this is for everybody, you need numbers to do it - to give you an example in the chicken industry 400 chooks out of a single line is what they look at, if they fall under that they are in trouble... it's just basic genetic diversity.

"The reason for doing it is to concentrate superior genes from outstanding individuals."

Graham said he had certainly seen the industry change a lot in his time.

"Things change and to make the change the way we do it is we do it slowly, so that we hold the change, and that is through concentrating particular genes out of particular lines in families," he said.

"We do things like mating superior rams to half siblings. A ram by a particular sire joined to ewes by the same particular sire.

"It tells you where you are going wrong, rather than where you are going right.

"That is something we use all the time, it is something I have passed onto James and Ross and in all the breeding operations we do we do quite a bit of this - we look at the worst animals to see where the faults are - I am not talking genetic faults, not talking all the ones we have to cull...I am talking about problem in pastern or some small issue that all animals will have certain things in their background that you want to get rid of.

"Our way of getting rid of it is identify it through linebreeding."

Tattykeel has been a predominately closed flock for about 15 years, with only small amounts of semen introduced.

Graham said while they did keep an eye on making sure inbreeding coefficients didn't get too high, they did need them high enough to produce heritability.

"Linebreeding is used to get the benefits of inbreeding whilst reducing the risk - inbreeding is uncontrolled."

This meant correct pedigrees were important, Graham said.

"There is no such thing as every pedigree being perfect, but it is important to know what those animals are in the background."



James Gilmore walks APDA conference attendees through sheep on display. Photo: studstocksales.com

This is reflected in his perspective on where the future prime lamb sire is headed.

"To look forward we have got to look back - I would never have imagined 42 years ago I was going to be bald - but if I had have looked at my grandfather I would have known why I was going to be bald - because it is genetics

"I believe in the future eating quality will be something the Poll Dorset of 20 years time will be extremely important and the other thing is conversion rates, or his progeny's conversion rates.

"The reason I say this? The chicken industry 30 years ago had to feed 2.6kg of grain to get 1kg of chicken.

"Today they feed 1.3kg to get that same amount - and they have done that with genetics

"The bottom line is that 10 years ago took 60 days to get chicken to slaughter, today it is 31 - in 10 years.

"I think genomics is going to be a huge thing, eating quality and big challenge will be how we get that animal to perform on less, not perform on more, and I think we are all guilty of breeding sheep that perform on more high protein and we should be breeding sheep that perform on less."

While producing stud sires is still a trademark of Tattykeel, Graham said like a majority of the industry, the money was made from commercial ram sales.

"(We want to) offer clients a consistent and highly repeatable product," he said.

"For the commercial breeder they are looking for a reliable product as well.

"The commercial breeder if he wants to make the most out of his breeding operation needs to be able to get some hybrid vigour into those animals he sells.

"(They are) looking for rams that last, don't break down, and hold their condition when they are out with ewes, and most people want to be able to hit any market.

"While some people will sell a lot of suckers one year, another year they'll have to hold lambs and want to be able to hit any market they need."

EID only as good as the system you build

ELECTRONIC identification tags will only be as valuable as the system you build around them.

This is according to Centre Plus Merino Technology and Data Analysis manager Mark Mortimer, who says producers need to have a clear idea of what they want to get out of EiD.

“What data do you want to collect? What are you going to do with it. How are going to do it?,” he asked.

“More importantly, when you get it (data) back home, what are you going to do with it?”

“(If) you’ve gone to all that effort to gather all that data and when you get it back home you aren’t actually going to change anything you were doing before, why have you done it?”

“You need to have all those solutions solved up front... I don’t mean you need to personally go out and learn how to do that, it might be through a service provider, it doesn’t matter how, but you need to have thought about that and have a solution before you buy.”

Speaking at the bi-annual Australian Poll Dorset Conference at Orange, NSW, last week, Mr Mortimer said the power of electronic tags were the management system they were used in, and the data they could give back at key times of the year.

EiD tags are now mandatory in Victoria and are being adopted in a growing number of sheep operations, with stud breeders especially finding ways to utilise them in their operation.

Mr Mortimer gave about 150 Poll Dorset breeders, many of who were already using electronic tags is some form, an overview of how EiD was making flock information available to him when he needed it most.

“All of our assessments we do throughout the year use electronic tags,” he said.



Industry software and technology representatives visited Ridgehaven Poll Dorset Stud at Cudal to showcase management tools to Poll Dorset breeders during their national conference.

“When we class the ewes all that information we have gathered throughout the year is available back to us – the scanning, the pregnancy results, we can see what the lambs did – the history of that ewe is available to us while we are classing not later on.”

As well as using EiD to collect weight and carcass data, Mr Mortimer said they used it to quickly identify animals which had been picked for DNA testing, and to collect and label samples for testing, such as worm egg counts, removing the need to read tags.

“Most of it is mental fatigue, when we are reading tags, reading tags is your job, whatever data you are gathering with that is almost the byproduct, reading tags is really hard work,” he said.

“Once you move over to electronic tags your mind is free to actually spend its energy working on the job you are doing, so if you are classing or assessing you haven’t worn yourself out reading tags all day.”

When adopting EiD, the most important steps were to learn to use the software and hardware ahead of time, and to have solutions for data sharing and utilisation before buying into a new system.

“You’ll find is a common theme when people start using electronic tags, they’ll pull the manual out while they have the sheep in the yards,” Mr Mortimer said.

“There is no base level knowledge when you go to electronic tags - if I buy a ute or a tractor generally I can get in it and drive it because the knowledge from the old one I had is transferable, so there is no base level knowledge.

“And you don’t just need to know your system, you need to know the system of your contractors.”



Mark Mortimer, Centre Plus Merinos, Tullamore, NSW, presents to 150 Poll Dorset breeders at the bi-annual conference held in Orange last week.

APDA CONFERENCE



About 150 delegates gathered at the Highlands Heritage Estate in Orange for the bi-annual Australian Poll Dorset Association National Conference, held over three days in March, coming from all sheep producing states.



Tattykeel Poll Dorset Stud also hosted conference delegates, presenting to them a wide variety of stock for their viewing.



The Central Western NSW Poll Dorset Association committee which organised and hosted the National Conference.



APDA attendees visited the MASTERyard feedlot site and got an insight into trials being done on feed efficiency.



Isabele Roberts and her family welcomed conference attendees onto their Ridgehaven Poll Dorset Stud at Cudal for an industry field day, where producers got to view the Ridgehaven sheep as well as new technology and animal health practices from industry.



A number of studs from the region presented their sheep to producers at the Canowindra Showgrounds during the National Conference.



Conference attendees were welcomed onto Mt Bathurst Poll Dorset stud at Black Springs to during the conference, to view their sheep.

Focus on the feed

FEEDING for profit in the short-term, and finding the most efficient genetics for the future, are the main aims of Will MacSmith's MASTERyard.

The custom-built lotfeeding trial site can hold 500 sheep, and is helping the MacSmiths and the wider industry make more informed decisions when it comes to feeding and selection.

The site at Cudal is measuring feed intake, daily weight gains and behavioural trends to get a picture of each sheep's overall performance.

Each individual feed tub weighs its contents as a sheep approaches and as it leaves to establish how much they have consumed.

Electronic identification tags connect this consumption with an individual animal, and the computer connected to each feeder sends that information to the cloud.

Every second feeder has a liveweight platform, so body weight throughout the day is also measured.

Mr MacSmith (pictured at the site), speaking to the National Poll Dorset Conference attendees when they visited his property and trial site, said each day they get a summary for each animal showing their tag number, how many times and kilograms they ate, their body weight and how long they spent at the feeder.

"We can see environmental effects, looking at things like shade, heat, rain, temperature changes and looking at the impact that has on animal performance," he said.

"(We are) looking at the genetic side so individual animals - we have got ewe lambs with nine sire lines in there so looking at any correlations with particular sires for example or ewes themselves and using that to make more breeding decisions later on.

"Then also the feed side so looking at different feed products, how they are performing on those particular products... behaviour things we can pick up from when they visit on different feeds so you can really start to look at how certain feeds are performing from a feed efficiency point of view but also on introduction and you can look at them for the whole period of feeding."

The most interesting aspect for Mr MacSmith is the genetic potential, he said, and he was now testing his operations ewes at the site.

About 15 progeny from nine different sire lines with full pedigree were being tested for feed efficiency and that information was being overlaid with the traditional data they collected on farm.

"The hope is to find the really efficient ewes, so if it does get tighter we have these ewes that do all these outputs and their outputs are increasing and their inputs are less... we are (then) a lot more resilient because we can run a lot more per hectare because those ewes are doing it a lot more efficiently or we can justify feeding them because they eat 50 per cent less than these current ewes would," Mr MacSmith said.

The live weight platforms built in mean animals do not have to be handled during the duration of feeding, and therefore the data is not influenced.

On average sheep are going to the feed troughs 30 times a day, measuring their weight at least 10, and the computer uses a median of those weights to establish daily weight gain.

"What we found when we had a five-stall prototype was every time we handled them, they would not put on any weight for three to five days," Mr MacSmith said.

"So, if we wanted to capture a lot of body weights, we were ultimately altering their feed intake data and growth performance because we were trying to get the weight off them.

"It wasn't kilos consumed they would drop off, it was just they would plateau with their body weight and then take off again, so if we were doing it once a week it would just interfere too much.

A weather station at the site also adds data to the sheep's performance, and Mr MacSmith said changing temperatures or wet weather could make a big difference.

The type of feed they were using in their own lotfeeding or containment feeding operations had changed considerably since analysing data from the trial site, Mr MacSmith said.

Previously they had transitioned lambs to a full ration over 21 days, but had witnessed a cold front turn the lambs away from the feeders at 22 days, and when they got back onto feed a couple of days later, their efficiency had changed markedly.

When they went off the feed the top three performing lambs were eating 1.6kg, and after two days off they ate 3kg from that point on but became the worst three performers of the trial.

"Traditionally would have looked at them and said they were shy feeders or non performers, but actually they were our top performers and we made a mistake in the way were feeding them and we cost ourselves those lambs."

Observing the impact of watering points and temperature are on the cards for future trials at MASTERyard, but so far Mr MacSmith said from what he has seen so far it does make a difference.

"We can't increase animal performance but we can limit it by letting it (water) get dirty so just tipping it once a day is enough to keep them at their genetic potential intake.

"I have seen it that if I don't tip that trough and it is dusty...their (feed) intake will drop off a little bit."





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Poll Dorset producer's pick to perform on feed

Lotfeeding makes sense – and dollars – for Walla Walla farmer.

Feedlotting his entire drop of Poll Dorset sired lambs has proved profitable for Trevor Barber.

The Walla Walla producer runs 1300 first-cross ewes, joining them to Poll Dorset rams in April.

"We lamb in September when we have got the most feed and sell at a time of year when prices are best - it is very hard to finish (on pasture) at winter time," Trevor said.

"We put every lamb in the feed lot and they make good weight - I like the mathematics of first cross ewe with second cross lamb - for us that has been very profitable."

Trevor sources Border Leicester-Merino ewes from the local area, either direct from breeders via Auctionsplus or from the Corowa special ewe sales, while his rams come from the Roberston's Ferndale stud.

He relies on his breeder to pick the best rams for his operation, as long as they are from a multiple birth, which he says assists in his 130 per cent lambing rate, along with getting ewes to the right condition score for joining.

Lambs get weaned onto stubbles from the operation's cropping program at the end of December, then grain is introduced as supplementary feed.

Lotfeeding the lambs allows Trevor to utilise existing pastures as well as targeting heavier sale weights for his lambs in a shorter time period.

"We get the paddocks down to 15kg/ha (of dry matter) and then destock those paddocks and the go into the feedlot for 10 to 12 weeks," he said.

Trevor grows Canola and cereals, mainly wheat, which he also grazes while still maintaining the desired yield for the crop.

"We always finished grazing by the end of July to get maximum production – every year, even a good year, you always going to run into a feed shortage in autumn – so it's pretty simple to reduce your numbers at the beginning of April when it is really at the critical time," Trevor said.

"And selling in the winter time you do get rewards because there is a supply shortage.

"We aim to make the two systems work together, the stubbles might not be the greatest feed source but you do get something from them and it increases output.

"I have a heavy stocking rate in the spring time and that tends to increase the clover content in the pasture – which is a positive for when I rotate them back into crop from a disease point of view and from a nitrogen point of view."

Last year Trevor produced 1400 lambs, with the lightest 150 entering the on-farm feedlot in the middle of February and the remainder going in at the beginning of April.

"This year we have 50 per cent of the lambs contracted, on average we send 80 per cent straight to abattoir and 20 per cent to saleyards – I try to sell as many as I can knowing the price before they leave the farm.

"Last year was an exception, but 90 per cent of the time better off taking a price before you sell them."

This year Trevor has 1350 lambs in the feedlot and is targeting a 24 to 29kg carcass weight for the first turnoff.

The lambs are getting fed lupins, triticale and some oats grown on the property, with a mineral additive, as well as cereal straw.

The lambs are on self-feeders, but Trevor says cleaning water troughs every day is crucial to lamb health and weight gain.

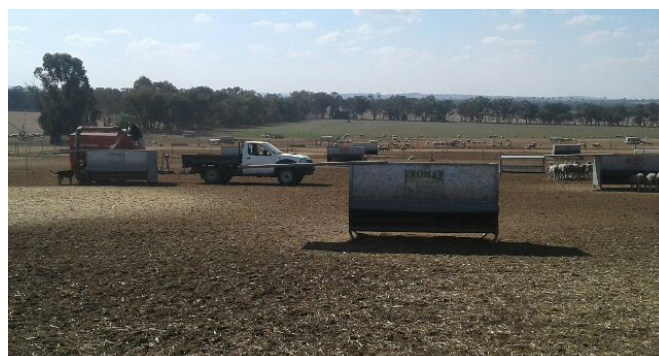
"To me the most important figure is feed conversion, if you get under 5 to 1 you are certainly making money – I try to get a 4.5 (to 1) feed conversion," he said.

"Because you got 50 per cent yield, if the cost of feed is \$550/tonne, and you are getting \$7/kg, that's the profit.

"Once they are in the feedlot the drought becomes inconsequential – the rewards are there for feeding sheep."

When it comes to choosing Poll Dorsets, Trevor said the perception of them being the premier rams had proved to be the case in his operation.

"When you pick something with such good results why would you change?" he said.



Trevor Barber at Walla Walla lotfeeds all his Poll Dorset sired lambs from April, allowing him to sell when prices peak in winter.

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Canberra Show

Interbreed

Supreme interbreed short-wool exhibit:

Valley Vista Poll Dorset Stud, Coolac, NSW

Fred Eldering Memorial Trophy for supreme group:

Valley Vista Poll Dorset Stud

Poll Dorset

Champion ram:

Valley Vista Park Poll Dorset Stud, Coolac, NSW

Reserve: Valley Vista Poll Dorset Stud

Champion ewe: Valley Vista Poll Dorset Stud

Reserve: Rene, Culcairn

Most Successful Exhibitor: Armdale Park, Marrar

MUSCLE development and growth rate were on show in the Poll Dorset judging at the Canberra Royal Show in February.

Judge Marshall Douglas of Abelene Park stud at Woolomin commended exhibitors on the lineup's "tremendous carcass traits and growth for age, even given the difficult season".

"The muscle content right through the sheep, combine that with good shape and growth rates were probably the things that stood out most to me," he said.

This was further highlighted when a Poll Dorset took out the Supreme Short Wool Exhibit of the Show.

Champion Poll Dorset ewe, exhibited by the Scott family of Valley Vista Poll Dorset Stud at Coolac, NSW, was selected from the woolly class, and went on to win Supreme Ewe, before taking home the top prize.

The ewe, Valley Vista 334-18, was described by Mr Douglas as an "outstanding balanced ewe" and as having "the right balance the right stance, cleanliness, great shape".

Reserve champion ewe was exhibited by the Rene Stud at Culcairn and Rene 807.18 was half of the winning bare shorn pair of ewes.

Scott Mitchell of Rene described the ewe as "very hard to fault" and came from a Rene bloodline the stud had been working of for a few years, with the ewe's sire and grand sire being Rene bred and kept.

"We've been focussing on the structure, get width of loin through our stock - nice and square in the legs and having a good loin and still keeping that Poll Dorset type in the breed," he said.

Champion ram was won by Valley Vista Park 60-18, exhibited by Joe, James and Luke Scott of Coolac, NSW.

Mr Douglas said the champion, drawn from the shorn class, was "very complete".

"(He's) got a lot of structural correctness to him, good balance, paraded very well on legs and feet and overall he's an exceptional sheep now and will remain so as he goes through his life," he said.

Reserve was bare shorn winner Valley Vista 59-18, again from the Scott family, and Mr Douglas said all rams in the class had exceptional growth for age and a maturity pattern he was looking for.

"The ram on top handled very well, well balanced, clean, well set up in the back legs, all that together got him above some pretty good rams."

Speaking after the judging, Mr Douglas said despite the weather, the outlook for the coming year was positive for prime lamb producers.

"The thing on everyone's mind is the season, travelling across a bit of the state recently it gets very patchy, lot of areas are doing it hard, so those factors are going to influence the lamb markets of course and also the sheep," Mr Douglas said.

"But I think just on weight of numbers the lamb market should be very strong this year and for those producers that are in a position to finish their lambs I think they will get well paid for them."



Champion Poll Dorset Ewe at Canberra Royal is won by Valley Vista 334-18 (wooly) and reserve to Rene 807-18 (bare shorn pair of ewes). Judge was Marshall Douglas, Abelene Park Stud, Woolomin.



Champion Poll Dorset Ram at Canberra Royal won by Valley Vista Park 60-18 (shorn class). Reserve to Valley Vista 59-19 (bare shorn class). Judged by Marshall Douglas, Abelene Park Stud, Woolomin. The Bob Ramm Memorial Trophy presented by Jamie Ramm, Bo-Bar stud, Braidwood.

Wagin Woolorama

Interbreed

Supreme interbreed champion short wool ewe, ewe and exhibit: Brimfield Poll Dorset stud, Kendenup

Poll Dorset

Champion ram: Sandown stud, Perenjori

Reserve: Curlew Creek Poll Dorset stud, Gnowangerup

Champion ewe: Brimfield

Reserve: Curlew Creek

Story Courtesy of Courtney Walsh, Farm Weekly.

A Poll Dorset ewe reigned supreme at the interbreed judging of Wagin Woolorama for the second year running this year.

The grand champion Poll Dorset, an outstanding ewe from Max Whyte and Gail Cremasco's Brimfield stud, Kendenup, was placed on top.

Shane Baker, Booloolo White Suffolk stud, Baringhup, Victoria, commented on behalf of the judges.

"The supreme exhibit is an excellent example of the Poll Dorset breed and was the more complete sheep when it came up against the champion interbreed ram," Mr Baker said.

"The ewe had fantastic length, muscle right down through the hindquarters and had the style you want to see in a good ewe."

The July-born ewe was Brimfield bred and was commended for its femininity and smoothness when parading, beating a ewe from Curlew Creek stud, Gnowangerup, for champion Poll Dorset ewe and a ram from Sandown stud, Perenjori, for grand champion Poll Dorset.

The 10 Poll Dorset studs were judged by Australian Poll Dorset Association president Damon Coats, Ilfracombe Poll Dorset stud, Donald, Victoria.

Mr Coats said the supreme ewe sired by Brimfield 55516 was a tremendous example of the Poll Dorset breed.

"I thought both of the young ewe entries which I placed up top were very similar but the Brimfield ewe had the muscle right the way through to push her forward," he said.

"She stands beautifully and parades well, she's got a great, feminine head on her and has plenty of potential. "But that isn't taking anything away from the ewe in reserve – I thought they were a tremendous pair of ewes but the champion came out on top as the more complete sheep at the end of the day."

A very correct Sandown Poll Dorset stud ram from Perenjori was awarded the champion ram sash.

The Sandown ram had come from the ram under 1yo class, beating out quality entries from Shirlee Downs stud, Quairading and Curlew Creek stud, Gnowangerup, with the judge commending the quality right through the top end of the young ram class.

In the end it won champion ram over a strong Curlew Creek entry from the scan class which came in as reserve champion ram.

"This was a hard decision but I went with the Sandown ram because it stood out with muscle where you want it and plenty of style with big, raw scale about him," Mr Coats said.

"Taking nothing away from the ram in reserve – it had a great clean face and plenty of scale as well. "I'd happily take either ram home with me and this level of quality is a credit to the breeders."

The champion ram was a late-May drop lamb, sired by Sandown 318 which had won the production class at the IGA Perth Royal Show in 2016.

Brimfield kept coming at the top end of the Poll Dorset judging for the group classes, winning both the group of one ram and two ewes and progeny group classes over challenges from second place getter Shirlee Downs in both.



The champion Poll Dorset ram was exhibited by the Sandown stud, Perenjori, pictured here with sponsor Elders stud stock representative Michael O'Neill (left), Les Sutherland, Sandown stud, Perenjori, judge Damon Coats, Ilfracombe Poll Dorset stud, Donald, Victoria and handler Lachlan Sutherland, Sandown stud, Perenjori.



The supreme interbreed champion exhibit and champion interbreed ewe in the British and Australasian breeds judging at this year's Make Smoking History Wagin Woolorama was the grand champion Poll Dorset from Max Whyte and Gail Cremasco's Kendenup-based Brimfield Poll Dorset stud. With the ewe were stud principal Max Whyte (left), award sponsors Michael O'Neill, Elders stud stock and Wendy Gould, Farm Weekly, with Trevor Thomas, Brimfield, Kendenup.

Sydney Show

Interbreed

Supreme prime lamb ram and exhibit:

Tattykeel Poll Dorset Stud, Oberon

Supreme prime lamb ewe:

Tattykeel

Peter Taylor Memorial Perpetual Trophy for supreme group:

Tattykeel

JA & MY Gilmore Perpetual Trophy for supreme pair:

Tattykeel

Poll Dorset

Champion ram:

Springwaters Poll Dorset Stud, Boorowa

Champion ewe:

Tattykeel

POLL Dorsets continued their interbreed dominance at this year's Sydney Royal Show, sweeping all five of the top broadribbons.

The Gilmore family's Tattykeel stud from Oberon represented the breed, which was the feature at this year's event, and came away with supreme interbreed ram, ewe and exhibit, as well as the top group and pair of the show.

The supreme exhibit Tattykeel's senior and grand champion Poll Dorset ram was 180068, drawn from the pair of rams, showing milk teeth only, shorn class.

Judge Will Milroy, Range View Poll Dorset at Pipers River, Tasmania described the ram as "a beautiful ram, very hard to fault, nice beautiful Dorset head, smooth through the shoulders right through the topline through the loin and muscling down the hindquarter, very good on his feet".

The ram was a twin sired by Tattykeel Jackpot, a NSW State Sheep Show champion, and its grandsire on both sides was Tattykeel Torque, which had also been a champion at the Sydney Royal, the ram went on to be supreme interbreed exhibit of the show

The reserve senior and reserve grand champion Poll Dorset ram was exhibited by the Rowley family of Springwaters stud at Boorowa.

Mr Milroy said the ram, Springwaters 22-18 drawn from the ram showing milk teeth only, bare shorn class, was a moderate type, very thick through the body with a very good hindquarter.

Dane Rowley said the ram was sired by Abelene Park Investment, a ram the stud purchased for \$24,000, and it had already been used in the stud.

Springwaters 22-18 also won the production class, judged on growth, muscle and fat, as well as on the show mat. The ram weighed 135kg, had 9mm of fat and scanned a muscle depth of 55 and width of 103.

In the ewe classes Mr Milroy said Tattykeel's champion ewe was well balanced, had a very good Dorset head and was chock full of meat.

The ewe, 180016, had the same sire as the grand champion ram, and went on to be sashed supreme prime lamb ewe of the show, as well as being part of the wining interbreed group along with her full embryo transfer sister.

Reserve champion Poll Dorset ewe was exhibited by the Scott family of Valley Vista stud at Coolac.

The ewe, VV334-18, was also supreme interbreed exhibit at the Canberra Royal earlier this year, and Mr Milroy said "for a ewe of that size she's got a huge amount of meat and width of loin, holds her style and presence very well".

Mr Milroy said he found the meat characteristics and Dorset type he was looking for in every class.

He said the meat in the hindquarter, width and length of loin, early maturity and moderate type were stand out traits across the sheep in the breed.

And as for the lamb industry, Mr Milroy said it was looking positive if everyone could get a bit of rain.

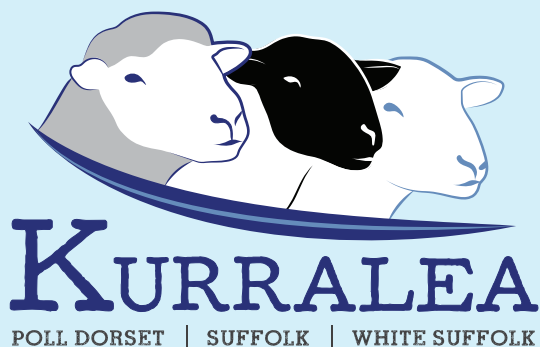
"Everybody needs a break, a good break right through, and get the lamb numbers back up, but when lambs are making over \$7 a kilogram now it is exciting times for the lamb industry."



Dane Rowley of Springwaters stud at Boorowa with the reserve grand champion Poll Dorset Ram, and James Gilmore of Tattykeel at Oberon with the grand champion Poll Dorset Ram, which went on to win supreme interbreed exhibit of the show.



Valley Vista stud, Coolac, exhibited by the reserve champion Poll Dorset Ewe, held by James Scott, while Tattykeel stud, Oberon, won the grand champion Poll Dorset Ewe, which was also the supreme prime lamb ewe of the show.



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Feed, heat and mobs impact lambing

"IN 2015 a report submitted to MLA (Meat and Livestock Australia) suggested the cost of pre-natal mortality was valued at about \$540 million to the industry."

Lambing rates will likely to be hit even harder than usual in 2019, impacted by the ongoing drought across much of the country and prolonged hot weather early in the year.

NSW Department of Primary Industries livestock research Gordon Refshauge said fertility and lamb survival were significantly influenced by heat stress, nutrition and mob sizes.

In relation to the study above about the cost of pre-natal mortality to the industry, Dr Refshauge told the National Poll Dorset Conference that "the greatest economic return that could be found for improving lamb survival from other studies shows that lifting survival of twin lambs is where return on investment will come from".

He showed statistics stating that 50 per cent of sheep producers still weren't scanning their sheep, for reasons including they didn't see the value; it was too technically difficult; and they didn't have the number of lambing paddocks.

Of the half of sheep farmers that are scanning, only 31 per cent of those were scanning for multiples - so that return on investment is coming from a small sector of the industry, Dr Refshauge said.

"Tell your clients to pregnancy scan," he added.

"The sooner ewes can be scanned the better, as feed can be matched to suit single and twin bearing ewes, and there may still be time to rejoin dry ewes - shortening day lengths give ewes a natural lift in fertility and ovulation rates."

It has been widely reported by pregnancy scanning contractors so far this year on the east coast that percentages were down, particular when joining coincided with the record temperatures reached in January.

"Ewes experiencing nine hours of 41°C temperatures lose 100 per cent of embryos up to three days old," he said.

"The highest risk conditions are hot days coupled with hot nights as sheep cannot lose heat from the body."

Studies show that when days were 32 degrees and warmer, and the number of those days increased, fertility declined.

And when it came to joining, the condition of the ewes was also crucial.

"Ewes should have a condition score of at least 2.5 prior to joining, ewes in a poorer condition are less likely to conceive," Dr Refshauge said.

"Two weeks on improved feed prior to joining for ewes scoring less than 2.5 will lift fertility and ovulation rates for those leaner ewes.

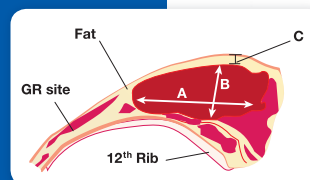
"Twin-bearing ewes which conceived in low body condition will need improved nutrition from mid-pregnancy or the health of the ewe and lamb production can be impaired."



Dr Refshauge also told conference attendees about a lambing density trial done on 85 farms over three years, that showed that the less ewes the better, and lowering a mob size by 100 ewes could see that mob mark 4 per cent more lambs.

The amount of feed in the paddock also influenced lambing outcomes.

"If you have more than 2.5 tonnes of dry matter it will have no effect but if feed is limited to 400kg of dry matter or less and you are trail feeding on a regular basis the effect is 6 per cent (less lambs)," he said.



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New Lamb Definition

THE definition of lamb will officially be changed as of July 1 this year, after industry consultation led to endorsement by the Australian Meat Industry Language and Standards Committee.

Sheep Producers Australia's Stephen Crisp said industry, federal and state governments had been working to amend legislation and regulations with the new definition.

"All going well, those amendments will be passed in the first half of this year, with the new definition ready to take effect from 1 July 2019."

The new definition - "young sheep under 12 months of age or which do not have any permanent incisor teeth in wear" - is consistent with the New Zealand understanding.

"The current definition 'A female, castrate or entire male that has 0 permanent incisor teeth' means producers have no warning light about when a lamb stops being a lamb - the moment a permanent incisor erupts, that lamb is downgraded to hogget," Mr Crisp said.

"Producers will have less than a month from the time of eruption to when permanent incisors are in wear - but at least they will have a signal and time to adjust to that signal."

The process for checking whether lambs comply with the new definition will be via a visual inspection - the same process used to verify lambs against the current definition.

In coming months, relevant members of the Australian Meat Industry Language and Standards Committee will inform their respective red meat sectors of the changes and how they can apply the new definition.

Agriculture Minister David Littleproud said this change meant farmers would be able to sell animals as lamb after teeth had popped through.

"Lamb will continue to be called lamb even if the animal has permanent incisor teeth, so long as those teeth have not begun to wear," he said.

"This brings us into line with the definition in New Zealand and it makes sense to have the same definition as our competitors. Why would we hand the Kiwis an unfair advantage?"

"In Australia, lamb had previously been considered to have grown into the less lucrative "hogget" or mutton as soon as incisor teeth were visible.

"The new export definition is now in the Export Control (Meat and Meat Products) Orders 2005 and matches New Zealand's and our own new AUS-MEAT definition.

"It also brings clarity to the definition—growers will now clearly see when a lamb becomes a sheep, when there is visible wear on the incisors."



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Pneumonia

Story courtesy of Kristen Frost, Nine Agricultural Media

The extreme shifts in temperatures in Australia can see summer temperatures hit 40 degrees celsius or more, then drop dramatically and rapidly as cold fronts roll in.

These temperature extremes are challenging, and one common finding during summer, particularly in young stock, is pneumonia.

And recent work carried out by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) shows the cost of pneumonia in Dorset flocks is relatively higher than the overall national flock average.

Yet in Australia there is no registered vaccine for summer pneumonia in sheep.

Dr Stuart Barber, a lecturer in veterinary science from the University of Melbourne, speaking at the National Poll Dorset Conference, said the key environmental influences that exacerbate the problem are dust, flies, animal stress, unbalanced diet and inadequate shelter for livestock.

He said no single organism causes summer pneumonia, however we commonly see mannheimia haemolytica present, which is known to be carried in the throat of lambs.

"When lambs get stressed in the summer, when we have big changes in the weather or we perform stressful practises like shearing, crutching, drenching or dipping, that is when we start to see outbreaks of the disease," Dr Barber said.

"It is also often associated with another bacteria called mycoplasma."

He said when pneumonia hits the animal we are likely to see a rapid decline in their health.

Signs to look out for are a rapid weight loss, reduction in appetite and coughing.

But the subtle early signs can make the disease difficult to identify.

"It's even harder to pick up in sheep in full wool because it is more difficult to see weight loss," Mr Barber said.

"Early symptoms can rapidly progress to severe pneumonia with the animal struggling to breathe, which can lead to death."

In terms of prevention, an appropriate antibiotic injected intramuscularly or intravenously is recommended as soon as the disease is recognised.

But in Australia there is no current registered vaccines for sheep even though a vaccine is available for cattle against both viral and bacterial causes of summer pneumonia.

"As producers we should look at reducing stress, increase shade, and decreasing dust in yards," Dr Barber said.

"When they get dust down their throats that reduces their chance to clear the bacteria from their lungs."

He suggests watering livestock yards to reduce dust when animals are being handled and moving stock in early morning or late afternoon, when temperatures are lower, to reduce overall stress and to avoid having them in yards in full sun.

VACCINE is registered for cattle in Australia, and further trials on efficacy and safety are needed to get it registered for sheep. Some veterinarians are prescribing it off-label, and if producers can discuss with their own vet for advice if they have problems with the disease - don't use it without seeking advice.

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Damon Coats

AUSTRALIAN Poll Dorset Association President Damon Coats is focused on pushing the breed into the future.

He believes the lamb industry is only going one way for the next decade, and that is up.

And to keep as the preferred prime lamb sire for that industry, he aims to breed a Poll Dorset with quick growth and good muscle.

Damon runs the Ilfracombe Poll Dorset stud at Donald in Victoria's north west his clients are split 50-50 between running Merino ewes and running first-cross ewes.

"Most of them come for the high growth figures and high muscle figures - I don't feed my rams any supplementary feed during the year, they are paddock reared and presented and come with a guarantee and don't seem to have any problems with breakdowns - my main marketing tool is they are fed naturally to breed naturally," Damon said.

"The biggest thing my clients have been pushing for as long as I remember is cleaner faces and legs - grass seeds were a big issue when I first came home - if there is sign of wool on their face I'm not interested.

"The sheep aren't as tall as they used to be - as we've added muscle we have increased length.

"And they definitely have a better hind quarter then they used to have, and more fat cover then they did for a few years."

Ilfracombe sires are selected using Australian Sheep Breeding Values through LambPlan, but Damon said if he found something he like outside that system he wasn't afraid "to dabble in it".

"I also go to shows, and get to as many people's property as I can throughout the year to see what they are producing," he said.

About a third of Damon's 320 stud ewes are artificially inseminated each year for an early April lamb, with the remainder dropping from the first week of May for month, giving Damon a three-week gap to sow crops.

"I make sure that my ewes are in good condition when they join, and have an active fox control program in March because they continually give me a hard time - lose up to 10 per cent of lambs to foxes," Damon said.

"I only join for five weeks, I don't drag it out - any younger ewes get another opportunity and lamb again in July, but the older sheep if they don't get in lamb they are gone.

"Any lambs that I have to help get culled, and so do their mothers - I am down to two or three a year and those are usually multiples - I have a no keep policy on anything that gets pulled."

Damon also produces cereal crops on his property, but said the profitability of the sheep operation meant the livestock got priority.

Selling 150 rams a year, Damon said 100 are offered at his annual on-property sale held on the first Monday of October each year, while the remainder got privately.



"We only started the on-property sale in 2012, it took nearly 60 years...I had three to four clients wanting to buy the best rams every year and it was too hard to sort out so I said you can sort it out yourselves with whose got the biggest checkbook," Damon said.

Ilfracombe was established by Damon's grandfather in 1956, and he took it over from his father in the 1990s.

When it came to his time with the Australian Poll Dorset Association, he wanted to make sure the breed wasn't resting on its laurels.

"I thought the breed was stagnating - it had been a long period of not much change in marketing and I thought it was time for some fresh faces on the board," he said.

"Complacency got us for 20 years, we thought we were going to roll along as normal and we allowed new breeds to get up and going when they didn't have to, and we are paying the price for it now."

Damon said the Poll Dorset breed needed to continuing breeding for easy care.

"A sheep that doesn't require crutching or help at birth and can be marketed on that, as well as muscle, consistency and yield," he said.

"Seasonal conditions are giving the ram market a problem... ram prices are sustainable at the rates they are, but it is just a numbers game with low ewe numbers and the wool market causing Merino guys to breed more Merinos for wool then prime lambs... it is not a bad thing, just means you have to adapt a little bit.

"The challenges are going to be based around Vegan activists and consumer perception of what we are doing - got to get a clean green image out there and show we actually care about what we are doing - whether we like it or not we are getting challenged in that area."

Damon said the lamb industry was "all up", with international and domestic demand likely to push prices higher for the next 10 years.

Graham Oxley

Graham Oxley was “mad keen on sheep” from a young age – and when you listen to him talk now, you would assume not much has changed on that front.

He started doing voluntary inspections at sheep shows from a teenager, and has been breeding sheep and contributing to the Poll Dorset and wider lamb industry ever since.

“My dad had a Dorset Horn stud originally and in very early days, about 1953, we bought a ram from Valma stud in Tasmania to start Poll Dorsets and progressed from there,” Graham said.

And progress he did, both with his own Wyndamah Poll Dorset Stud and the breed, becoming a delegate on the Victorian committee in 1974 and going on to serve more than a quarter of a century on the national board.

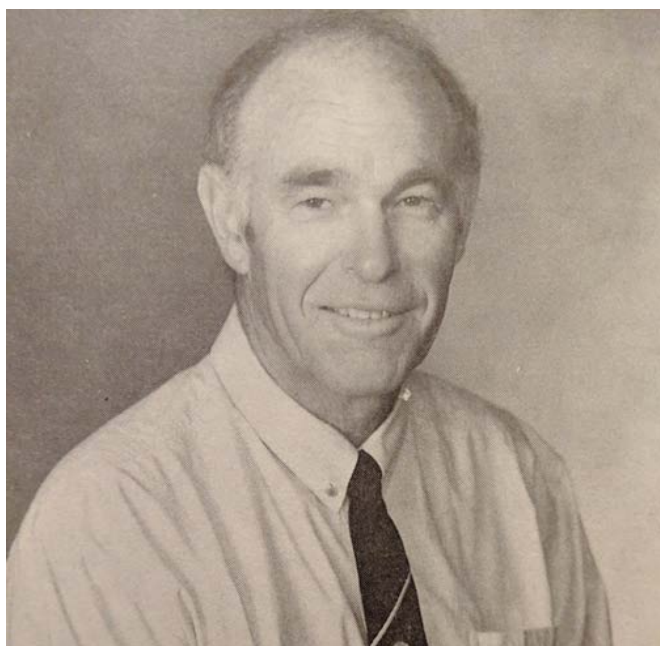
In 2018, he was awarded an Australian Poll Dorset Association Life Membership.

“I enjoyed my time with Poll Dorsets and trying to lead and educate...help younger breeders take a direction – it’s been a great ride and to be recognised as a life members sits a little hat on top of that,” Graham said.

During his time as chair of the Victorian Poll Dorset Association, Graham developed an industry focussed field day, and kept his focus on the commercial end of the business throughout his career.

“That was focussed on educating breeders on the need of the commercial producer – my focus was always on the industry, even though I was heavily involved in the stud – and I believe that has been lacking since,” he said.

When running the stud at Tongala in the Goulburn Valley, Graham began providing genetics for lamb trials at the Victorian Government’s Rutherglen research centre.



Graham Oxley was Australian Poll Dorset Association President in 1996-97

“They were trying to design new cuts of lamb and new ways of cooking, then taking that into Prahran (Melbourne) on Saturday mornings for taste testing and I thought that was the end result we should have been looking for,” he said.

“They had chefs, housewives and processors involved in design of these trials which was a great learning process, the focus was on the industry end of it.”

Graham said these trials then proceeded to Armidale University, where the first catscan was converted to provide data on sheep before slaughter.

“It proved a lot of things being done at the start of Lambplan while retaining stock and it progressed as I went along too – it was an amazing ride to be involved in,” he said.

Trials were run across several different sites over a number of years with the same genetics, comparing different breeds, Graham said, trying to prove what was the best breed for the lamb industry.

“But it finished up that best within a breed was best for the lamb industry...one of our particular rams 101 – he led the trials on all sites four years in a row – the younger rams coming through weren’t able to top him, he was an absolute stand out sheep that we had bred for industry for growth rate, yield and fat depth on those yields – that gave me an enormous amount of pride,” he said.

The bigger client base Graham developed after moving the stud to Pental Island near Swan Hill was one his greatest achievements within his business he said, because it was based on processor demand.

“That was a real feather in my cap at the time - to have a processor come to me to see what the focus was because they were seeing lambs go through their works yielding like crazy,” Graham said.

“Their attitude at the time was if they could raise the yields for the whole 12 months – just 1 per cent – was worth \$7 million to them per year, just that extra 1 per cent of yield on lambs so it was a massive change to have people focussing on yields, and to actually have Coles come to us and try to understand what we were trying to do.”

Graham also grew his on-property sale from 130 rams to more than 280 rams – once averaging \$1050 across 282 rams.

“That was driven by processor interest and the information they were forwarding back to our clients that became their clients and to have it driven from that end was enormous,” he said.

“My attitude was put a dollar in your clients pocket and he will become a very loyal client.”

Graham said using Lambplan to identify traits within the flock and act upon those decisions much earlier than they could before helped them target genetics for their clients target markets.

“In 1990 the first across-flock figures came out, and we were always picking off the top 20 of the ram lambs in the flock... those lambs at 10 weeks were averaging 42kg at weaning... our top 22 lambs averaged 54kg (when we dispersed) so from 1990 to 2010 difference was 12kg at weaning,” he said.

“To be involved with the foundation of Lambplan and get the opportunity to see much deeper into the lamb industry then the average stud breeder and average farmer gets to see was an amazing trip.”

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CHRIS bred Poll Dorset sheep for 58 years and his contribution to the breed, especially in his home state, was honoured with a life membership from the Tasmanian Poll Dorset Association last year.

The Tasmanian branch of the Poll Dorset association mourn the loss of fellow breeder and friend Chris Long. Chris founded the Orden Stud in 1961 with ewes from the late Alan French, Glenalan stud. In 1968 Chris won his first Champion Ram at the Royal Hobart Show. His family had strong links to this show and he continued this serving 50 plus years on the stud sheep committee. In 1996 the show recognised his contribution awarding him a certificate of appreciation, presented to him by the then governor of Tasmania Sir Guy Green. He served on the Tasmanian branch of the Poll Dorset association for many years and last year was awarded life membership of the Tasmanian branch. Chris' other love apart from the farm and family was flying. He held a pilot's license for many years and enjoyed flying with family and friends often flying to the main land. Chris was a real character and quick witted, his smile and banter will be missed by all. Chris is survived by his wife Veronica, son and daughter in law Daniel and Anita and two grandchildren Audrey and Henry.

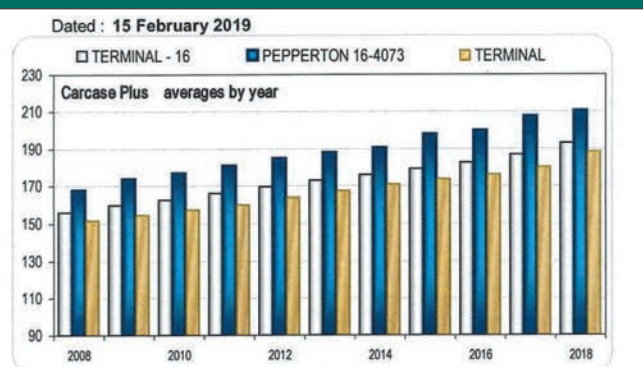
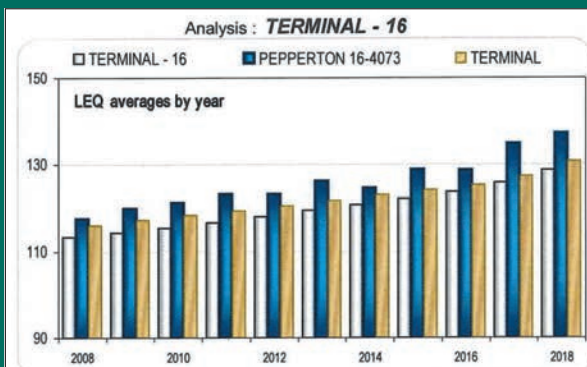


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