



THE AUSTRALIAN POLL DORSET JOURNAL

VOLUME 50 / NUMBER 1

MAY 2020



MODERN POLL DORSET MERINO'S PERFECT MATCH

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THIS ISSUE...



NEW LAMB
RECORDS
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COMMERCIAL
FOCUS
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AROUND THE
SHOWS
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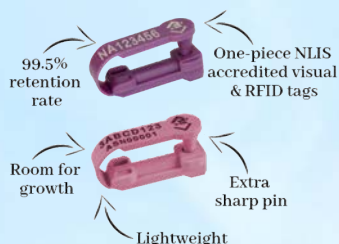
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



What a turn-around from the start of the year! We have grass and full dams and the prospect of a good season. I certainly hope that you all have a season of plenty, and feel the relief that it brings to a farming business and your families.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted so heavily on the world and the way it normally functions, and while we, as farmers, are less impacted on a day-to-day basis, we have to be prepared to make changes to the way we work. The agricultural shows and field days have been cancelled, and with it the opportunity to present our sheep to the public and potential buyers. We will all need to use other means to promote our sheep and sell our story.

The recent Bundara Downs sale is a good example where the use of online sales systems and technology can give excellent sales results, despite buyers unable to attend. The key advantage of online sales is that it can provide a much wider reach in your target market, where interested buyers can read catalogues, view video and photos, and gain a greater understanding of your sheep – and make a buying decision to come to you. I am always an advocate for physically inspecting an animal prior to purchase, but if our on-farm auctions have limited attendance due to social distancing restrictions, then online is the next best option. Prior to auctions, inspection days will become critical, and these are a great opportunity to get to know your clients and showcase your rams.

So this year will be different, but there are new opportunities too, and you never know, it might make your business stronger.

We are super excited to have the online registration database ready to release! Patrick from Apptastic has done a great job of developing a program for our specific needs. This first stage includes a member directory, registrations and transfers, a search capacity for registered rams, and the submission of your Flock Return. We have spent a huge amount of effort to make sure the data is as correct as possible, but we know there will be errors. Margot and Sam will make the animal corrections, so please contact them with any details that need to be edited. You may notice that on a few rams the registration number has changed. This, unfortunately, was necessary as there were quite a few situations in the historical data where two rams had been assigned with the same registration, or one ram had two registration numbers. We are relying on you to check the pedigrees and details are correct, ensuring the integrity of the data in the system. I hope you enjoy using the database and look forward to hearing your feedback and suggestions for what we can add to the system in the future!

I would like to commend Margot and her team on the job they have done over the last 12 months. They were thrown in the deep end but have done a great job of running an effective administration, despite the difficult situation they were handed. I am enjoying working with them all and look forward to helping get in place all the processes and policies they need to be efficient.

Jamie-Lee and Promotions Committee have developed a strategy to target the merino ewe section of the prime lamb industry. The Merino Ewe/Poll Dorset Ram enterprise has been proven to be the most profitable lamb enterprise per DSE. We need to make sure wool producers know how to make their businesses more profitable! This is especially important through the flock rebuild phase; we need to make sure Poll Dorsets are positioned as the best quality and greatest profit drivers in all aspects of our industry.

Enjoy the lambing season and the time at home with your families.

Isabele Roberts

PRESIDENT



THE AUSTRALIAN POLL DORSET JOURNAL

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MARCH BOARD MINUTES

The Board Meeting of the Australian Poll Dorset Association Inc. was held at Sheep House, 1/6 Merino Court, East Bendigo on Wednesday & Thursday, March 11, 12, 2020.

PRESENT & APOLOGIES

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

Apology received from L Fairclough, J Corcoran.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The financial statement and budget were presented and received.

The following motions were resolved:

“That a vote of thanks be sent to the ASBA for recognising and reigning in costs for the Journal and Flock Book”.
Carried

“That the APDA send notice to subsidiaries of the APDA which includes Meat Elite, Victorian State Committee and WA Region that they will be required to obtain their own ABN for the purposes of GST. The board will no longer be able to share their ABN. Regions will be asked to do this by July 1”.
Carried

“That the APDA increase Subscription fees to take effect with the Flock Return of 2021”. New fee structure will be tabled for discussion at the September Board meeting.
Carried

WA RAM LEVY

“That we attach a \$1 extra levy on the WA flock rams to be repaid back to the WA region”.
Carried

ADELAIDE MATED EWE LEVY

“That the mated Ewe Levy be collected by the APDA administration, the amount of 55cents per ewe for Adelaide region to be repaid back to the region.”
Carried

REGIONAL REBATE

A discussion occurred on whether the administration should pay GST on top of the Rebate. It was agreed that if a region is registered for GST, then it is applicable.

PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE

G Davey chaired this meeting in the absence of James Corcoran who had presented a detailed written report and telephoned into the meeting to discuss.

Meeting also discussed Show coverage plan submitted by Jamie Lee Oldfield and meeting explained that if states can cover 50% of the fee, the APDA will use Jamie Lee Oldfield to cover the other 50% of the cost. (Subsequent to this, many shows have been cancelled).

Jamie Lee Oldfield had presented a full marketing plan including show coverage.

Patrick Falconer submitted a new rate strategy for new advertisers in the Journal and an increase on existing rates of 5% but offer a 5% discount on booking three ads.

The following motions were passed -

“That we adopt J Corcoran’s marketing and promotions plan”
Carried

“That we adopt the marketing proposal and the contract to employ Jamie Lee Oldfield as Marketing and Communications Officer for the next twelve months”.
Carried

“That the discount offer for new advertisers (not advertised for at least five years) would be 30% discount off one ad of if they take three, third advertisement free of charge, limited up to a full page per issue.”
Carried

“That we adopt the promotions budget”
Carried

MAJOR EVENTS FUNDING

- Lambex – July 1-3 Melbourne (since cancelled)
- Adelaide Region – Adelaide Youth Day
- Central Region – Day at Werribee Sewerage Farm
- Hamilton Region – Sponsorship of Lamb Bar
- Hamilton Region – Feature show funding
- Victorian State Committee – Funding for a workshop
- South West Youth Day
- Australasian Championships – Editorial and advertising approved in the Journal

NEW BRUCellosis RULE

Discussion took place on where in the Flock Book this new Rule would be placed – it was decided that the new rule would become Rule 31.

The following motion was passed in relation to an Animal Registration Policy letter asking the board to consider tidying up Regulation 9 – Registration of Individual Sheep.

“That we add the words “by the breeder only” following the paragraph for regulation 9a. Full rule now reads All rams used in the owners Poll Dorset Flock or sold or leased or loaned to another breeder for use in his Poll Dorset flock must be individually registered by the breeder only”
Carried.

“That Regulation 9 have a new Regulation 9G – Rams sold as lambs at foot may be individually registered by the purchaser with a pedigree verification from and permission of the breeder. Registration cost to be paid by the purchaser with original stud prefix being used”
Carried

MARCH BOARD MINUTES

FLOCK REGISTRATION COMMITTEE

"That flocks 4642 – 4644 be accepted"
Carried

"That ownership of Kentish Downs Flock No. 336 be transferred to Craig & Karen Wilson"
Carried

"That ownership of Tymon Stud Flock No. 4469 be transferred to Brendan Mansbridge and Lydia Herbert"
Carried

MAJOR SHOW APPOINTMENTS 2020

- Royal Canberra Show – Tim Ferguson
- Sydney Royal Easter Show – Ken Williams
- ASBA Sheep and Wool Show – Robert Grieve
- Hamilton Sheepvention – Laurie Fairclough
- Cowra Dorset Championships – Noel Wilson
- Royal Adelaide Show – Damon Coats
- Royal Melbourne Show – Sascha Squires

GENERAL BUSINESS

WA Delegates raised the issue of high cost of travel for meetings.

The following motion was passed -

"That WA, SA & TAS delegates have travel reimbursed for conference council meetings"
Carried

Central Western NSW region submitted a letter focussing on research and development. After discussion the following motion was passed –
"That we set up a R & D Sub Committee, to report six monthly"
Carried

BI-ANNUAL CONFERENCE

As no region has volunteered to host the conference in 2021 it will not proceed.

ACROSS THE PENS

APOLOGY TO GOODEN FAMILY

We have just completed our first year as your Secretariat and what a year it has been. As many of you would know it's been a steep learning curve and we have made a few errors – most notably for me was the incorrect deregistering of Flock 57 Tara and for that I owe the Gooden family a huge apology. They had sent me their paperwork and paid their fees and yet I missed it and Pat has been wonderfully understanding and we thank you very much Pat.



APDA BOARD

The APDA board met in Bendigo in early March and the minutes are included in this issue – how fortunate to have been able to travel and get together at that time as less than two weeks later, the borders were closed.

APDA ONLINE DATABASE

By now you will have received "how to" instructions for the new online database. You should also have received or be close to receiving your printed version. Don't forget the office is here to help should you need any assistance whatsoever – we think you will find the online entry easy but if not, feel free to ask for help.

2021 BI-ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The board has made the decision to not hold the bi annual conference in 2021 as no region has been in a position to volunteer to host this. If anyone has any ideas on how we could progress this, please contact the office.

OBITUARY – Roe Treasure

It is with sadness we share the news that Roe Treasure passed away recently after a long illness in her 70th year. Roe and her husband John owned the very successful "Elouera" Poll Dorset and Dorset Horn Stud from Cowra. Elouera Stud won many Champions at the Melbourne Royal and featured heavily in the Poll Dorset Breed. Most of the leading studs would have had Elouera blood in their Stud. Roe and John have been living at Forster since their dispersal due to John's Liver transplant 31 years ago. Roe is survived by John and their three children Matthew, Wayne and Elizabeth.

SALES RESULTS

		STUD RAMS			FLOCK RAMS			STUD EWES		
STUD	STATE	SOLD	TOP	AVERAGE	SOLD	TOP	AVERAGE	SOLD	TOP	AVERAGE
Allendale	SA	14/14	\$8000	\$4750	85/94	\$2400	\$1411	10	\$800	\$675
Ridgetop	WA	1			28	\$2200	\$791			

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

TBA	NSW Dorset Championships	SEP 19-29	Royal Melbourne Show
CANCELLED	Australasian Dorset Championships	OCT 8	Royal Launceston Show
TBA	APDA Annual General Meeting	OCT 22	Royal Hobart Show
TBA	APDA Board Meeting		

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PHOTOS & STORIES wanted for our Modern Poll Dorset - Merino's Perfect Match campaign.

With the upcoming lambing season ahead, we are seeking the best Poll Dorset x Merino photos and producer stories across the country. You or your clients can snap them on an iphone or camera, and send them into communications@polldorset.org.au. If your photo is featured, you will be the first to receive the 2020 Poll Dorset Promotion Cap. Trust us, it's worth it!

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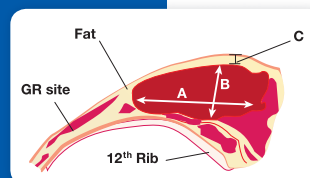
PROMOTIONS OFFICER REPORT

It goes without saying, the Australian Prime lamb industry witnessed a strong summer period. Dry weather for the best part of the Australian continent has also seen healthy conditions for lamb production and from numerous accounts, the reproductivity of the ewe flock has been well above average due to the robust management strategies implemented by producers during the summer months. Without directly quoting lamb and sheepmeat traders, the industry needs volume, it is a valuable characteristic of the Australian system, allowing access to the international market and ensuring Australian produced lamb continues to expand its global market share. While there has been a significant level of attention on the high export lamb market, the less spoken success story of the last 12 months has been the strong trade weight and store lamb market. The Poll Dorset breed has absolutely dominated this area, with processors, experienced buyers and traders still seeking the Poll Dorset cross lambs. The value of this trade should not be undervalued, it has allowed producers to offload lambs throughout the dry period, allowing better resources to be placed into maintaining the ewe flock and ensure we have a saleable product that is competitive on a global scale moving forward.

At the time of this report, the Covid-19 pandemic has dominated headlines, while the world comes to terms with the health and economic ramifications, from an Australian Poll Dorset perspective, there is a huge opportunity during these challenging times. As a breed, sometimes a push in the back is what is required to kick start initiatives which would otherwise be stalled. Over the coming months, the Poll Dorset Association will commence a new and exciting marketing campaign, this will see the breed advance in areas where expansion is critical. With the reduced exposure of viewing Poll Dorset genetics due to the pandemic, as the promotions chair, I will ensure the Poll Dorset Association does everything in their control to promote the sale of Poll Dorset seedstock throughout 2020.

Stay safe,

James Corcoran



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180rams, 15 Specially Selected Stud Rams, Prior inspection welcomed



"GUINNESS" Supreme Poll Dorset
11 months ASWS Bendigo

Heavy Muscling - Early Maturity - Consistency

Stud Ram Preview Day - Date TBA

Please call to arrange a private viewing of our 2020 stud rams anytime through out the year. Ram's for sale will feature the first drop of "Guinness 22-18" sons, as well as progeny by "Pocock" and 310-14.

rowleys@springwatersstud.com | www.springwatersstud.com.au | Dane 0422 560 361

Hildden Poll Dorset Stud

620 Bannister Lane, Bannister NSW 2580
Flock 1593

Hildden 110-19

Champion Poll Dorset ram and Supreme short wool exhibit Canberra Royal show.

Sire: Hildden 860-17 res junior champion Australasian Dorset Championships.

Dam: Hildden 224-17 supreme champion exhibit NSW Dorset Championship Cowra
and Supreme short wool exhibit ASWS Bendigo.



Semen
collected and
for sale

Annual on property ram sale Friday 6th November 2pm
Show team for private sale

Enquiries Welcome - Brian & Lorraine Frost, "Hildden", Bannister, NSW 2580
Tel (02) 4844 3134 Anthony - Mobile: 0408 689 857 James - Mobile: 0427 483 134

SHEEP INDUSTRY SHORTS

BOM weather outlook

According to the Bureau of Meteorology, the three months April to June are likely to be wetter than average for most of Australia (60–80 percent chance across southern and inland eastern Australia, greater than 80 per cent chance in central and northern WA, extending into the NT and SA). The likelihood of a wetter or drier April to June is roughly equal across the eastern Top End of the NT, northern Cape York Peninsula in Queensland, along the east coast of the mainland, and southern Tasmania. May to July is also likely to be wetter than average for much of western, central and southern Australia (mostly 60–75 per cent chance).

While recent rainfall over parts of eastern Australia has eased the dry in many areas, long-term rainfall deficiencies remain for many regions. Several months of above average rainfall may be required to increase streamflows and replenish water storages. This outlook shows some possibility of further relief in the coming months. Daytime temperatures for April to June are very likely to be above average across northern Australia, and along the NSW and Victorian east coast into Tasmania (greater than 80 per cent chance for most areas). However, southern WA, SA, western and central NSW and western and central Victoria are likely to have cooler than average days. April to June night-time temperatures are very likely to be warmer than average for most of Australia (mostly greater than 80 per cent chance).

Updated electronic National Vendor Declaration system released

A new, mobile-friendly version of the electronic National Vendor Declaration (eNVD) system is now available, providing an efficient and convenient platform to complete livestock consignments.

Developed by Integrity Systems Company (ISC), the updated eNVD has a user-centric design that is easy to navigate, removes duplication and can be completed on a mobile device or desktop computer by Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) accredited producers, feedlots and value chain stakeholders.

The updated eNVD is part of a suite of changes to the National Vendor Declaration (NVD) being rolled out in 2020, collectively designed to provide an easier, more efficient and cost-effective way for producers and supply chain stakeholders to interact with Australia's red meat integrity system.

The other changes include the release of updated versions of NVDs for all species in July and the decommissioning of the eDEC system at the end of the year.

To start using the new eNVD go to <https://envd.integritysystems.com.au> and log in using your LPA credentials.

For more information about the new eNVD system including FAQs, visit <https://www.integritysystems.com.au/>

Shows and events cancelled or postponed

This year will look very different for many stud breeders and industry members as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to force the cancellation or postponement of major events across the country.

Major sheep shows cancelled for 2020 include the Sydney Royal Show planned for April, the Australian Sheep and Wool Show in Bendigo in July and Hamilton's Sheepvention in August.

Australia's premier sheep and lamb conference, LambEx, will be postponed for 12 months, with a new date to be set for 30 June – 2 July 2021.

Conference Chair Georgina Gubbins says while it is disappointing for all involved, the decision has been made in the best interests of protecting delegates' health and our whole industry.

LambEx organisers are currently working with the Melbourne Showgrounds to lock-in arrangements for 2021 to secure spaces to host 1100 delegates and 10,000 square metres for exhibition and networking.

LambEx will keep industry updated through newsletters and the event website www.lambex.com.au

Changes to MLA's market reporting

There are changes to Meat & Livestock Australia's market reporting, in response to MLA's COVID-19 containment efforts.

The way Market Reports are developed will change, they will be written remotely and MLAs Livestock Market Offices will not be in attendance at the saleyards. Market reports will still be available and will still be generated according to ISO standards, they will rely on saleyard data being made available to MLA. Where data has not been made available to MLA, we will report that this is the case. The key differences will be:

- Market reports will be available slightly later than usual - the sale will need to be complete before MLA will have the sale data. The report will be written following the sale completion and after obtaining feedback from saleyard staff and agents
- The contents of the market reports will change slightly, with the major difference being that fat and muscle scores will not be available; and for sheep and lamb there will not be an estimated carcass weight or skin value
- There will be a further change to our service resulting from Market Reports being completed remotely. Existing cattle and sheep indicators will cease. The indicator charts/tools/values across the MLA web pages will no longer be updated. Existing Indicator reports will no longer be emailed, nor available on the website. All existing indicators include specifications that contain a combination of fat and/or muscle scores, dressing percentages (cattle) and estimated carcass weights (sheep) they will no longer be generated in their current form.
- The creation of a selection of comparable (but distinct in specification) indicators portraying saleyard-driven price trends and movements across both the nation and individual states.

Sheep market price indicators (CV19) National - Provides three new unique indicators:

- Processor Lamb
- Restocker Lamb
- Mutton

All use average state-level monthly estimates of carcass prices calculated from the past five years.

Youth Members in Focus

Charlie O'Rourke, Mt Bathurst Poll Dorset Stud.

How old are you?

I am nine years old

Where do you live?

I live in Bathurst, NSW.

What is your favourite Poll Dorset's sheep's name?

Ram 66 is my favourite because he has a nice strong head.

What was the best thing about the helping your grandparents at the Show?

I like to help holding the rams and cleaning all the sheep, so they are show ready.

What do you want to be when you grow up?

I am not sure yet, but I like helping Pa with his Poll Dorsets' and going to shows with him.



Charlie O'Rourke, Mt Bathurst Stud, Pictured with Pa Greg Healey.

Ashley Cooper, Ashcharmoo Poll Dorsets, Aged 12 Charlotte Cooper, Ashcharmoo Poll Dorsets, Aged 10

How long have you had a Poll Dorset stud?

3 years, we started in 2017 with some ewes in lamb from Armdale and Armdale Park Studs

Where does your stud name come from?

Ash is for me. Char is for my sister Charlotte. Moo is because both Charlotte and I get moo in our nicknames from family, my Pop calls me, Ashamo and Charlotte has been Miss Moo since she was a baby. Our Nanny (Dads mum) is also called nanny moo because she loves cows.

What was the reason for getting Poll Dorsets?

On our way back from a weekend trip to Wyangala Dam I asked Dad if we could start a stud so we could show sheep, I'd shown cattle with my Cousins and liked getting everything prepared. We were originally looking at Aussie Whites but Grumpa had had Poll Dorsets when he was younger so suggested we look at that breed instead.

What are your goals for your stud over the next 10 years?

Produce the best sheep we can and breed sheep to suit our local market.

What's your favourite Poll Dorset related memory ?

Ashley: Getting driven into a gate by one of the Poll Dorset Rams in the sheep yards. Winning our first ribbon at the NSW Dorset State Championships in 2018 and winning Reserve Champion ram at Cowra Lamb Show in 2018.

Charlotte: The first lambs in 2017, because it was the first lamb of ours. I also like looking after the poddies, mum calls me Mary (had a little lamb) as they all follow me.

Tell us about where you study

Ashley: Im in yr 7 at Mulwaree High School in Goulburn

Charlotte: I go to Marulan Public School, I'm in year 5.

What is your favourite holiday destination? & Why?

Ashley: My favourite holiday destination is Carinda NSW, where I go bike riding and shooting with my dad at a friends property, because theres a lot of flat ground and lots of space to ride my bike

Charlotte: Batemans Bay, because it has a good beach..

What's an interesting /quirky fact about your home town?

Marulan is the only town in the world which is situated on the 150th Meridian

What is the top item on your bucket list?

Ashley: To meet Haiden Deegan who is a top American motorbike rider for his age.

Charlotte: Meet Sandi Brock from Sheepishly Me (Canadian Sheep Farmer, who has a Youtube Channel).

Who is your favourite Poll Dorset breeder?

Ashley: All the breeders we've meet have been very kind and helpful to us as we've started out but my favourite breeder is James Frost.

Charlotte: Garry Armstrong and his family.



Charlotte and Ashley Cooper at the Crookwell Show



Charlotte Cooper with a Poll Dorset lamb

YOUTH YARNS

Alice Frost, Hildden Poll Dorset Stud

How old are you

8

Where do you live

On Bannister Lane in Bannister, NSW

What is your favourite Poll Dorset's sheep's name?

Henry

Who named him Henry?

Me

Why Henry?

Couldn't think of anything else.

What was the best thing about the Crookwell Show?

Leading the sheep and winning a ribbon

What do you want to be when you grow up?

A Farmer



Alice Frost at the Crookwell Show

Amanda Watkins is the coordinator of the YOUTH YARNS SECTION.

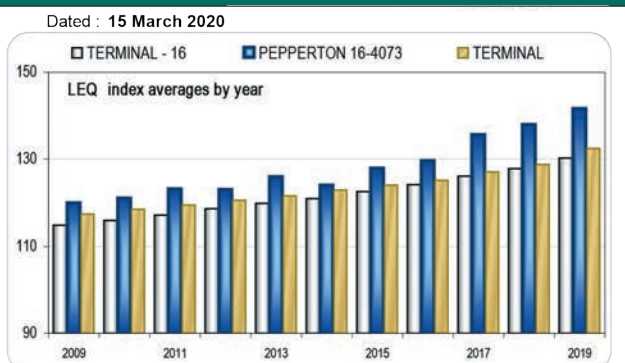
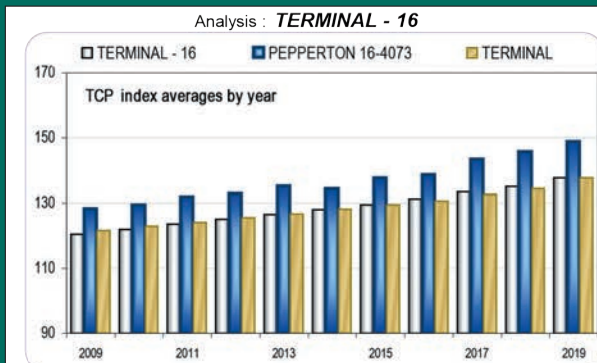
If you have any ideas or contributions to make relating to youth involved with Poll Dorsets please contact her on 0417 581 059 or email youth@polldorset.org.au

“Pepperton” Poll Dorsets

Performance genetics to spice up your breeding program!

Top phenotype with elite performance
Flock average TCP of 148.9 for 401head

But don't just take our word for it! Check out the independent Sheep Genetics rankings



★ Semen available in Pepperton 180339 TCP 169.3 LEQ 163.7 Top figured 2018 ram lamb on Lambplan

PEPPERTON
POLL DORSETS



Next Annual Sale Wednesday 21st October 1pm
Approx 100 rams at Elmore Events Centre



Enquiries always welcome: Roger & Dianne Trewick,
Pepperton Farm, Elmore, Vic **Ph:** 03 5432 6190
Mob: 0428 326 190 **Email:** peperton@bigpond.net.au
Website: peperton.com.au

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ARMDALE POLL DORSET STUDS

www.armdale-armdalepark.com.au

'QUALITY BREEDS QUALITY'



ANNUAL STUD & FLOCK RAM SALE

Friday 25th September 2020

Sale format and details to be advised at a later date in accordance with Covid 19 restrictions advised at the time.



Armdale Park 401-18
Sire; Armdale 520-16
Intermediate &
Grand Champion Ram
NSW Dorset Championships 2019

Our Keeper Ram for 2019
First lambs look very
impressive.

Garry and Catherine Armstrong

Mobile: 0427 275 134

Email: gcarmstrong@activ8.com.au

Shirley Armstrong

Mobile: 0427 275 126

Email: nsarmstrong@armdale-armdalepark.com.au

Winter supply shortfall to stoke prices

WHILE the future impacts of the current Covid-19 pandemic on all agriculture commodities is still unknown, sheep and lamb prices have started the year off historically strong.

In the second week of March, Meat and Livestock Australia's Eastern States Trade Lamb Indicator reached a record high of 962c/kg, and sat at 941c/kg towards the end of that month.

MLA has not been reporting its usual ESTLI since then because of restrictions on its marketing coverage.

Rabobank Australia's April Agribusiness Monthly shows all sheepmeat and lambs prices as above last year's levels as well as higher than the 5-year-average, however it did predict a downward trend as we headed into the second half of April.

As of April 15, MLA's revised Processor Lamb CV19 indicator sat at 943c/kg, with its Restocker Lamb CV19 at 720c/kg.

The figures are not directly comparable because of the altered CV19 indicators being currently produced by MLA, but as a point of reference, on the same day last year, the ESTLI was 715c/kg, with restocker lambs trading at 696c/kg.

Saleyard numbers jumped throughout March, which has put downward pressure on lamb prices, but MLA says "more useful rainfall and murmurs of recovery in China" have seen yardings ease.

"In recent weeks, producers opted to offload stock and take advantage of the high prices on offer, driven by growing market uncertainty," MLA reported.

"The winter months were already shaping up to see reduced processor throughput, as a result of the poor conditions that prevailed in 2019.

"However, the recent spike in saleyard throughput suggests the contraction could be amplified through winter. Should this align with an improved global economic outlook, there would be scope for lamb prices to move higher."

The rain-fueled drop in slaughter, as well as CV19 created trade disruptions, pushed mutton exports 15 per cent lower year-on-year in February, according to Rabobank.

"While there were large increases in volumes to the US (up 39 per cent), volumes to China dropped 63 per cent," the Rabobank April update said.

"Lamb exports were down 3 per cent year-on-year in February with the Middle East dropping 23 per cent.

"Lower oil prices and slower economic conditions are likely to have a large impact on Australian exports of lamb, given its premium positioning and as its key markets are the Middle East, the US, and China."

MLA reported lamb exports were 5 per cent lower year-on-year for March, but were still at their highest volumes since October last year.

"Importantly, the resurgence of China supported exports as their foodservice industry regains some life," MLA said.

"Global lamb prices are likely to come under some pressure over the next year, as the premium priced protein is challenged by the emerging tough economic conditions around the globe. "Lower oil prices and air-freight disruption could potentially undermine demand out of the Middle East.

"Australian lamb, which often captures premium positioning in high-end foodservice in many markets, is feeling the impact of restaurant closures.

"Growing demand outside the foodservice channel in many markets, and a demand bounce-back in China, will be critical for sheep meat in the coming months."

ABARES March 2020 outlook for sheep and lamb said in 2019–20 the national sheep flock is expected to contract to a 115-year low, as "dry seasonal conditions and high saleyard prices provide an incentive to maintain high rates of turn-off".

"The ratio of ewes in the national flock has strongly increased since 2012–13. This is a result of high lamb prices and dry seasonal conditions providing an incentive to turn off non-breeding stock.

"The high proportion of ewes in the national flock will help to maintain lamb turn-off if prices remain high, and accelerate flock rebuilding when demand eases and seasonal conditions improve.

"An end to drought conditions is likely to enable flock rebuilding, but high prices are expected to encourage high rates of turn-off."

The CV19 pandemic has hit exports to China in the short-term, but ABARES points to competition from New Zealand and the US as future challenges.

"Competition from New Zealand in China is likely to increase because high prices provide an incentive for flock rebuilding and increased lamb production.

"Australia's national flock is significantly larger than New Zealand's, but New Zealand's flock productivity (measured in lamb production per ewe) is significantly higher because of the greater prevalence of meat breeds and a more favourable climate for pasture growth.

"Any expansion of the New Zealand sheep flock is likely to remain constrained by the profitability of dairy production."

Eastern states lamb slaughter



New year, new lamb records

Lamb prices reached new highs again earlier this year, with Poll Dorset sired lots breaking saleyard records.

Bendigo 24 February

A new Bendigo Livestock Exchange and national lamb saleyard record of \$360 was set for 88 extra heavy shorn Poll Dorset cross lambs on Monday 24th February. Estimated at 38-39kg cwt from Ellis Nuttal & Co clients, A. and B. McIntosh from Wanalta, this weight would have made the lambs about 910c/kg carcass weight. They were purchased by Southern Meats at Goulburn.



With the \$360 lambs at Bendigo were, from left, Ellis Nuttal & Co's Rupert Fawcett Snr, seller Adrian McIntosh and auctioneer Rupert Fawcett Jnr. PHOTO: ACM.

Ballarat 25 February

A day later, Kevin and Jean Guthrie and family of Dean set a new national lamb record when TB White & Sons sold their pen of Poll Dorset-cross heavy export lambs to \$380/head on Tuesday 25th February at Ballarat's Central Victoria Livestock Exchange. They were purchased by Southern Meats, Goulburn. Kevin Guthrie told Australian Community Media he didn't know how long his record would last but said "they were magnificent bloody lambs". He bought the lambs at Bendigo last October-November and finished them on grass, lucerne and rape. T.B. White and Sons livestock manager Xavier Bourke, added that the record setters were estimated to dress around 40kg and were aged around 10 months.

Ballarat 4 March

A week after the new record was set, another pen of Poll Dorset-cross lambs topped the sale at Ballarat at \$378. These lambs also hailed from Dean, and were sold by Brian and Danny Maher, trading as Precision Production, having been offered through TB White & Sons. Danny Maher told Australian Community Media the high prices helped make up for the times when his family had lost money on lambs bought to fatten. Mr Maher said his first-cross Poll Dorset lambs were about 11 months of age and would have dressed around 40-plus kilograms.



Danny Maher and son, Tommy, Precision Production, Dean, with their \$378 heavy export lambs at Ballarat. PHOTO: ACM.

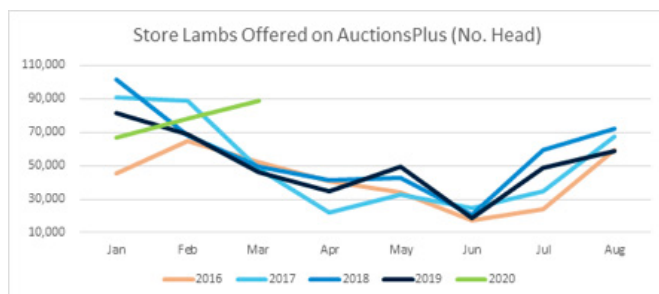
2020 So Far...

Courtesy Tom Rookyard, AuctionsPlus

2020 has been unlike any year in living memory. After 2019 which saw growers faced with floods and bushfires at the bookends of the year respectively; and was the warmest and driest year on record. 2020 has opened with widespread rain across the Eastern States of Australia. The intense drought particularly impacted sheep and lamb growing regions of the Central West, North West Slopes and Plains, and South West Slopes and Plains of NSW, which saw record numbers of sheep and lambs offered online on AuctionsPlus. In addition to the rain, 2020 see's growers faced with a totally different challenge in the form of Coronavirus COVID-19. COVID-19 has hit every continent across the globe and is seen as the potential trigger to a global recession. Economies are taking a battering and governments are locking down whole regions and state borders, as the world struggles to stem outbreaks of the virus. Below is analysis of the Crossbred Store Lamb market online on AuctionsPlus for 2020.

Driven by premiums in the market, there is a rising trend of growers setting up on-farm feedlots. With money to be made and growers learning from the drought, integrating a feedlot and finishing lambs into their enterprises is becoming the norm. There is an abundance of information available between feed lotting field days, expert advice and online social media groups.

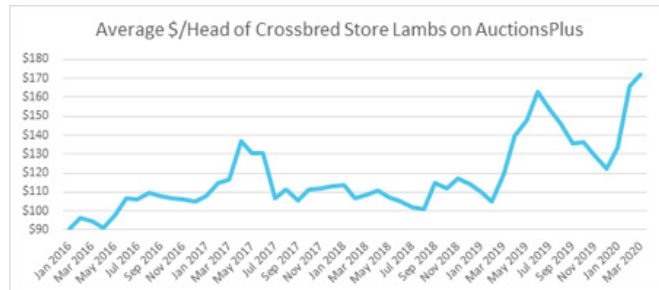
Listings online on AuctionsPlus have shifted significantly, traditionally the store lamb numbers slow during in the Autumn and Winter months, to then rise into the Spring. However, 2020 has seen 230,000 crossbred store lambs offered online, a 19% rise on 2019.



At a regional level, South West Victoria has seen the largest growth, with 42,000 head offered, 160% growth on 2019. While the Southern Tablelands, Central West and Monaro regions of NSW have all seen growth of 95%, 36% and 27% respectively. After the drought and widespread rain in the Northern regions of NSW listings have fallen by 50% in the Northern Tablelands and 52% in the North West Slopes and Plains of NSW.

A combination of record prices and market uncertainty has seen growers happy to 'take the money and run', driving record listings. The current average price for Crossbred Store Lambs, as of March 2020 sits at \$172. In 2019 the market reached a peak in June at \$163; while 2018 and 2017 the peaks were November (\$117) and April (\$130). With widespread rain throughout NSW, the state has become a force in the market. Aug 19' drop 44kg mixed sex composite lambs from Grassdale, VIC in mid-March sold for \$212/head sold to a buyer in the Riverina of NSW; while Sept/Oct 19', 41kg 2ndX Poll Dorset wether lambs from Dirranbandi, QLD at the end of March sold for \$190/head to a buyer in the Central West of NSW.

37% of store lambs offered online on AuctionsPlus from Jan-March 2020 have sold to buyers in the Central West and Riverina of NSW, a rise of 2% for both regions compared to the same period in 2019. While Northern VIC and Lower South East of South Australia has seen a drop in number of head purchased of 3% each.



While the lamb market is in a strong position, more and more businesses are standing down employee's or even shutting their doors due to COVID-19. Leading to uncertainty of where livestock markets will head short term. However, in the medium to long term the need to feed a growing population should quell fears. The sheep flock is at a 104 year low and the cattle herd a 25 year low, seeing prices remaining high domestically. The lack of protein as a result of the African Swine Fever should see demand for Australian meat in a favourable position.

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Impacts of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) for the Sheep Industry

Courtesy of Sheep Producers Australia

Sheep Producers Australia (SPA) is committed to supporting the sheep and red meat industry throughout the COVID-19 response and recovery, to help producers work safely and plan business operations in the changing environment.

The situation is constantly evolving, and we understand these are uncertain times. As an industry we are committed to continuing to support our sheep producers and broader agriculture industries, whilst upholding the highest standards of health, biosecurity and animal welfare throughout the supply chain.

Agriculture and Food Supply Essential Services

The Federal Government has reassured industry that their priority is to ensure food security of Australia and that agriculture will be recognised as an essential service (26 March). Minister Littleproud notes:

- Australia's food production and supply chain will not be affected by coronavirus shutdowns.
- As far as the Commonwealth is concerned, food production and supply is an essential service.
- That means State-imposed border shutdowns will not affect agricultural supply chains.
- Each State Government will determine the essential services classifications and border requirements for their region as new public health measures are introduced. The situation in each state is different, so while national consistency is preferred, it may be appropriate for different measures. States are currently working through this and may take some time to clarify.
- A letter from RMAC on behalf of members has been sent to State Ministers outlining the need for the scope of supply chain services to be classified, and seeking assurance that at a local level there is the capacity to allow those supplying goods and services to the red meat and livestock sector be given free passage through any border restrictions as part of any essential services exemptions.

Agricultural Business Management and Planning

Sheep producers should consider options to prepare their businesses and make contingency plans. This could include:

- Reviewing the farm biosecurity plan procedures around farm visitors and hygiene practices for staff. This should include enacting measures to reduce the risk of exposure to families and staff. Consider international visitors or people returning from overseas, and implement self-isolation procedures if family or staff are unwell.
- Consideration of potential impacts on the business and ability to operate, such as reduced or limited labour. This should include:
 - An assessment of any contracted services and workers who may have to modify their operations to comply with government requirements.

- Contingency planning for managing livestock if you or other people who care for your livestock become sick, or restrictions make it difficult to maintain existing arrangements to manage them.
- Maintain a good dialogue with suppliers of farm inputs to understand their ability to supply product during this time.
- Read up on the Fair Work Ombudsman resources about COVID-19 and Australian workplace laws.
- AgVet chemical availability
 - While many Australian production systems rely on imported chemicals, COVID-19 is not currently impacting access for the horticulture and grains sector. This may change if international trading arrangements slow as would be the case for other imported commodities.
 - While some sectors of the market are experiencing a shortage of some chemicals, the herbicide glyphosate is the most topical, this is due to low stock levels on hand during the drought coupled with the significant spike in demand from the unexpected but welcomed recent rain events.
- There are some short-term issues in accessing raw materials from China but these are expected to resolve as international trade stabilises.

On Farm COVID-19 Management

- Protection the health and welfare of our people is critical – family, staff, contractors, suppliers etc - here's some ways you can look after yourself from the Cattle Council of Australia
- Keep people off your farm if they don't need to be there
- Isolate anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms and seek medical advice
- Only leave your property if it's essential
- Only visit sale yards if essential for buying or selling stock
- Keep a 'social distance' of 1.5 meters from others wherever possible
- Keep kids at home and use e-learning options instead of going to school
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water – especially if you have been off-farm, have had visitors or have been handling animals
- Isolate anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms and seek medical advice
- Make sure staff thoroughly wash hands with soap and water before starting work
- Where possible, change the way staff work so they can keep a social distance (1.5 meters)
- If possible, provide food and drinks for staff so they don't need to go into town
- Disinfect things staff regularly touch, such as tools, fuel bowsers, switches and tractor cabs.
- Ensure staff know how to prevent the spread of infections and are acting accordingly
- Ask staff returning to work from quarantine to get a doctor's clearance

Saleyards

The Cattle Council of Australia, Sheep Producers Australia and Wool Producers Australia are backing industry-wide steps to keep saleyards open while preventing the spread of COVID-19 coronavirus.

Saleyards are an essential part of the red meat supply chain and need to keep operating to assure the supply of high-quality meat both in Australia and overseas.

Cattle Council President Tony Hegarty said saleyard operators, agents, buyers, processors and

producers had agreed to keep anyone out who doesn't need to be there.

"Only essential saleyard and agency staff, accredited agents and registered buyers with a true

intention to purchase livestock should attend the sales in person," Mr Hegarty said.

"The wellbeing of our people and the community is our top priority as we face the coronavirus.

"Sales are going ahead but some could be delayed while new measures are put in place.

"We need to make sure our industry keeps running and we keep red meat in butcheries."

Sheep Producers Australia Chair Chris Mirams said the new restrictions would protect workers and ensure producers continued providing high-quality meat to consumers.

"Reducing the people at saleyards will reduce health risks for agents and buyers," Mr Mirams said. "This means they can continue their essential role moving stock through the supply chain while maintaining the maximum level of buying competition

"Agriculture is an essential industry and all parts of the supply chain need to function so we can keep feeding our domestic and international customers."

Woolproducers Australia President Ed Storey said anyone without a legitimate reason to be at a saleyard will not be allowed in.

"There will be new systems put in place to make sure the new rules are followed," Mr Storey said. "We are doing this to make sure we can still buy and sell animals and stay open for business, keeping the agricultural supply chains operating.

"If it is not necessary for you to be at the saleyards you shouldn't be there. Those that are there

need to practice social distancing as best they can.

"The best way to get a feel for the market right now is go online or give your agent a call."

Air and Sea Freight

Sheep Producers Australia (SPA) supports the appointment of an International Freight Coordinator General and a \$110 million dollar promise by the Australian government to fly Australian red meat to our global partners. COVID-19 has presented

significant logistical challenges for airfreight of Australian meat and livestock with limited outbound aircraft resulting in significant increases to airfreight charges. SPA is seeking to further understand shipping and air freight constraints regarding supplying international markets. This has been largely affected by the reduction in passenger flights that would normally be carrying cargo. The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) is currently in discussions with operators to identify a solution. The Australian Meat Industry Council, the peak body for meat processors, is also in consultations with the Australian Peak Shipping Association to try and work out solutions to air and sea freight issues

Domestic Markets

Producers will have noted the large increase in supermarket and butcher shop sales with the disruptions in the international markets there is no doubt some product is being diverted to the domestic sector. The food service sector will be suffering but the overall picture is of an increase in domestic sales, at this point. Pricing, whilst remaining strong, may be volatile due to the competing market forces.

International markets

Volumes to international seem reasonably consistent, even with consumers switching from food service purchases to supermarket. The current bottlenecks for Australia will include shipping arrangements with both shipping and air freights experiencing disruptions due to cargo and passenger flows. The Australian Livestock Exporters' Council (ALEC), exporters and the Department are working to ensure live export trade can continue as measures are put in place to manage the daily change of COVID-19.

Australian port restrictions for people disembarking and the need for two-weeks of self-isolation, is limiting the availability of Australian Accredited Veterinarians (AAV) and accredited stock-people to keep the trade operating at the standard we pride ourselves on. To assist with workforce supply, LiveCorp has made arrangements for an alternative pathway to accelerate stockperson accreditation, where appropriate skills and experience are demonstrated.

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) has also announced it will fast-track accreditation for AAVs to ensure animal welfare is upheld on vessels.

How can SPA Help?

If you are dealing with or predicting any issues that require escalation to a national approach, please Contact Bonnie Skinner on 0412 472 710 or via email bskinner@sheepproducers.com.au.



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Bowan Park Poll Dorset Research Flock 2020

Lambs from the Bowan Park Poll Dorset Research Flock 2020 cohort will hit the ground this month, with the following sires used in the program. The 14 rams include Karawina 810445, Supreme Champion Sheep of Melbourne Royal in 1982.

Nominated Sire	Sire	Sire of Sire	Sire of Dam	Nominated by
Shirlee Downs 170123	Gloroy 090567	Pollambi 072025	Shirlee Downs 100040	Sascha Squires
Kurralea 180140	Kurralea 140241	Kurralea 110011	Kurralea 110011	Sascha Squires
Wunnamurra 170303	Bundara Downs 156930	Hillcroft Farms 130497	Wunnamurra 090065	Andrew Gillett
Wunnamurra 160298	Wunnamurra 090065	Pine Avenue 060050	Kennedy Creek 110544	Andrew Gillett
Pepperton 180339	Bruan 170146	Hillcroft Farms 130156	Marocara 150049	Roger Trewick
Karawina 810445	Karawina 740180	Yaralla 720050	Karawina 730113	Isabele Roberts
Rangeview 170107	Hillcroft Farms 130497	Hillcroft Farms 120028	Pollambi 130052	Will Milroy
Faraday Park 170020	Sunnybanks 100033	Kurralea 070542	Sunnybanks 100023	Paul Day
Springwaters 160066	Springwaters 140310	Palana 120116	Springwaters 100550	Dane Rowley
Hildden 170860	Armdale-150267	Armdale-120224	Tattykeel-120070	James Frost
Hildden 160780	Hildden-150040	Hildden-140400	Tattykeel-120408	Damon Coats
Derrynock 170809	Derrynock 160841	Pollambi 130052	Derrynock 120052	Samantha Kelly
Gooramma 180682	Gooramma 160308	Gooramma 140270	Windermere 130049	Brendan Mansbridge
Yentrac 110169	Penrise-080140	Kurralea 040809	Yentrac-070105	Marshall Douglas

KEY DATES

December 2019 AI conception

May 2020 Lambing

August 2020 Open Day - Cudal NSW
Carcase Assessment-TFI Tamworth

September 2020 Data published

Lambs sired by Karawina 810445 in 1983



Karawina 810445: Supreme Champion Sheep of Melbourne Royal in 1982



Prime product complimentary to Merinos

YASS sheep producer Frank Kaveney describes using Poll Dorset sires in his Merino operation as both “complementary” and good for “cash flow”.

Mr Kaveney runs Tallawong Merino stud as well as a large-scale commercial operation, and is increasing his return on hectares managed by including Poll Dorsets in his operation.

He runs up to 12,000 Merino ewes on land both owned and leased, and says his operation has to be run on a strict commercial basis to ensure a positive gross margin, especially on the lease country.

“We have to look at the dollars per hectare and we probably outdo the best cropping (farms) in the area, grossing up to \$2000/ha,” Mr Kaveney said.

Up to 3000 of those Merino ewes, culled out of the main flock, are joined to Poll Dorset rams to lamb down in July.

Those lambs will be turned off by the end of November, usually sold to finishers through the Yass store market.

“The Poll Dorset over the Merino ewe is a very profitable enterprise and the advantage of selling them as stores is the carrying capacity - I can have that ewe back to one DSE by the summer and autumn, when we are at our lowest capacity, and not worry about fattening lambs,” Mr Kaveney said.

“Country that would have been considered years ago as Merino wether hills, now we super them up (apply fertilizer) and run a breeding ewe in the springtime, whether that is joined to Merino or Poll Dorset.

“From an economic point of view it runs rings around a straight Wether Merino operation, increasing the gross margin per hectare.

“I’m getting ewes in rough hill country to produce a lamb worth \$120, which is roughly two fleeces plus costs, but they are almost at the same DSE as wethers.”

Using the Poll Dorset sires compliments the Merino flock on several fronts.

It allows Mr Kaveney to introduce cash flow into the business at a different time of the season.

The second-cross lambs are ready to turn off the ewe in just four months, allowing the operation to utilise a peak pasture growth period to its full potential, and then lowering stocking rates again by the time the feed curve heads in the other direction.

The Poll Dorset lambs sell for a higher value as stores than the Merino lambs, Mr Kaveney says it usually works out to be about \$120 for second-cross compared to \$80 for Merino lambs of the same age.

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STUD RAMS

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FLOCK RAMS



Tag No: 190528. Sire: Valley Vista 170058.
Sire of Dam: Leenala 160150. DOB 12/07/2019



Tag No: 190587. Sire: Kentish Downs 170472.
Sire of Dam: Hilden 160730. DOB 30/07/2019



Rod Davies 08 8764 6050

Brad Davies 0438 266 732



COMMERCIAL FOCUS

"The Poll Dorsets demand a pretty good value as stores and by turning them off it lowers the risk (of the season cutting out) - you are better off taking the money and running," Mr Kaveney said.

However fattening the Merino wethers and selling them off the following spring does achieve a good return - and by turning off the second-cross lambs early, more Merino weaners can be kept on.

"With the wool off their backs there is more upside in fattening the Merino weaners when they average \$110 for carcase and \$80 of wool - Merino weaners are undervalued as stores, so the upside on fattening the Poll Dorsets is less than Merinos."

Mr Kaveney chooses Poll Dorset rams for the second-cross lamb arm of his operation because of their superior carcase shape, and buyer demand.

"I always buy top of the tree Poll Dorset rams and that definitely has benefits - I am strongly against people using budget back of the yard Poll Dorset rams - I'd rather buy something that is guaranteed and if I have to average \$1800 for rams, it's worth it," he said.

Mr Kaveney buys rams on good muscling with narrow shoulders and head, looking for long sires that aren't too lean.

And he puts good lambing results down to a focus on nutrition and ewe management, keeping them on an even plane of nutrition and ensuring a maximum 3.5 condition score.

With a focus on maintaining a high stocking rate Mr Kaveney said this wasn't usually a challenge, however with the autumn off to a great start he will be managing his ewes closely for the final trimester.



Frank Kaveney, Tallawong Pastoral Co, Yass sold 797 Poll Dorset/Merino lambs for \$126 in 2017. PHOTO: ACM



Frank Kaveney, Tallawong, Yass sold 370 Poll Dorset/Merino lambs weighing 38.5kg for \$126 in 2018. PHOTO: ACM

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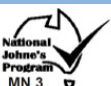
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PEMD 3.7	PFAT -0.4

Sire **Marocara 49-15**
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Why should I scan for multiples?

Courtesy of Kirstie Anderson, Agriculture Victoria, Benalla

Scanning for multiples can help producers to make decisions that better address individual ewes' requirements, rather than the mob average.

By scanning for multiples, you will be able to do the following:

- Tailor your twin- and single-bearing ewe management, considering their different energy requirements. Managing ewes using scanning data means that you can allocate lower-feed paddocks to single-bearing ewes and consider reducing mob size for twin- or triplet-bearing ewes. Targets for merinos and maternal ewes (see accompanying article) are that twin-bearing ewes should be 0.3–0.6 of a condition score higher than single-bearing ewes at lambing. This can improve lamb survival rates and minimise dystocia, by optimising the birthweight of both twin and single lambs.
- Be more flexible in poor and good seasons, by prioritising resources (feed, shelter, labour) to the different groups of ewes. In some seasons, it will provide selling (or buying) opportunities to manage the feed and cash resources you have available.
- Plan for the future with good data on the number of lamb fetuses present at scanning. Combined with your expected lamb survival rates, this can be used to estimate likely lamb marking results and therefore plan sale numbers. It also helps to identify where losses may occur in the reproductive cycle.
- Identify ewe fertility at a given time, which can be used to class groups of ewes for marketing.

Things to consider

- Running ewes based on pregnancy status can be more labour intensive, with more mobs to manage. You may also need to plan your paddocks to cope with more, but smaller, mobs of ewes. This could require investment in infrastructure (temporary fencing and water) and labour, depending on your current set-up.
- If twins are lambing in large mobs or under high stocking rates, there is increased potential for mismothering. It is important to keep this in mind if this is the only way you can manage your mobs of ewes.
- Scanning for multiples is much more useful than scanning for dry ewes only if the ewes are managed differently or the information is recorded for future use. For example, the number of fetuses can be used to estimate the number of lambs present at marking. Although this is good to do, the real benefit is from differently managing the ewes based on their pregnancy status.
- Contractors should be encouraged to 'come clean and go clean', in line with your farm biosecurity plan. They should also fill in your visitor log.

Using electronic identification in pregnancy scanning

A number of pregnancy scanning contractors offer individual animal recording using electronic identification (EID) technology. You can also record pregnancy scanning results using your own EID collection equipment.

Why use EID to collect data?

- Data collection is quicker and more accurate than extra drafting or marking ewes, and a permanent record of the data is created, without the use of temporary sprays or raddles. If drafted mobs get mixed, EID records can be referred to for redrafting.
- Multiple traits can be recorded simultaneously – for example, the number of fetuses and their age (early/mid/late or 1st/2nd cycle).
- Traits that indicate reproductive performance can be recorded across the production cycle – for example, condition score at joining and pregnancy scanning, and lamb rearing results across years. This can help to identify the ewes that meet your breeding objective.
- Potential barriers to using EID for data collection
- Recording of pregnancy status can be slower if some of the ewes don't have EID tags. If untagged animals are present, have a plan to apply tags efficiently. This will help maintain a smooth flow of sheep.
- EID equipment such as a panel reader and indicator can be expensive if used infrequently. Consider using your contractor's equipment or borrow items if you don't intend to use the equipment for other things. Having someone who can operate the technology present on scanning day is essential.

How to scan for success with EID

Joining

Join for no more than two cycles (35 days) to optimise scanning accuracy. Ensure that joining dates are correct, and rams have not had access to the ewes outside the joining period. If an extended joining period is necessary, rams should be removed after two cycles for 2 weeks before being re-joined.

Pregnancies in this second joining period can then be identified on a follow-up scan. At removal of rams, contact the contractor to book in scanning, so the ideal date can be identified, and the contractor's travel costs are minimised.

Also arrange with the contractor who will supply the EID equipment, and discuss their equipment and crate set-up.



Matthew Ipsen using EID during pregnancy scanning.

ON FARM

Scanning

Ninety days after the rams were introduced is the optimum timing for scanning for multiples, although it can be done from day 80 through to day 100.

Shading caused by developing bones reduces the accuracy of scanning for multiples after day 100. Ensure that ewes are off feed and water for at least 4 hours before scanning and are not given any supplements (e.g. grain, hay, silage) the day before scanning.

It is important that scanners can set up in good yards, and that there are enough people to ensure a steady flow of ewes to the scanning crate.

If supplying EID equipment, ensure that it is fully charged, with spare batteries or alternative power sources available, if necessary.

Collecting EID data at pregnancy scanning

Contractors can link the EID tag and pregnancy status while the ewe is in the crate. This is the most efficient and accurate method if all ewes are electronically tagged. It is simple to collect multiple traits using this method.

Ensure that the next sheep's EID tag is not read until the current ewe's scanning result is recorded. Reading tags out of sequence will affect the accuracy of the records.

This can be avoided with correctly tagged animals, crate functionality and good yard design to ensure that only one sheep is in the crate at a time.

Some data collection systems can be programmed to require a linked EID tag and trait result before accepting the next tag.

Collecting EID data after pregnancy scanning

The alternative to collecting data at point of scanning is to identify scanning results via draft or visual markers (spray/raddle) and then record the traits against EID tags once pregnancy scanning is completed.

Using a gate to draft ewes into groups based on pregnancy status can be particularly useful when the contractor does not have EID capability or when a significant number of ewes to be scanned are not electronically tagged.

However, if groups are accidentally mixed in the yards before data are recorded, information collected during pregnancy scanning will be lost. It is also challenging to record fetal age unless a system of spray/raddle marks is used or ewes are drafted in many directions.

It is important when collecting data after scanning to be mindful of the ewes' total time off feed and water and consider time and labour implications.



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1. Meat & Livestock Australia Limited. Priority list of endemic diseases for the red meat industries, March 2015. 2. Graham Lean and Associates (2009). Cost benefit analysis of Eryvac in commercial sheep flocks. Zoetis data on file. Zoetis Australia Pty Ltd Level 6, 5 Rider Boulevard, Rhodes NSW 2138. © 2020 Zoetis Inc. All rights reserved. April 2020. ZL0655



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Lifting lamb survival

HIGH scanning rates are a great measure of potential, according to Bayer Grow's Rick White.

But managing nutrition through pregnancy to marking is the indicator of the amount of potential you are utilising on-farm.

"The pub talk is generally around what scanning rates are being achieved, with a lot of focus on joining and getting good conception rates, but marking percentage is a bigger indicator of productivity of a flock," Mr White said.

Mr White, a large animal vet and livestock agronomist, says a focus on managing ewes through pregnancy could have a big impact on lamb survival.

"Now that you have scanning results, what are you going to do with them?", Mr White asks.

"The biggest impact we can have on lamb survival is improving the birth weight of the lamb, because all data shows low birth weight increases risk of lamb not surviving through to marking.

There is an important loss of production between the number of lambs scanned to the number of lambs marked, Mr White said, with most of the losses occurring in the first week of life.

"Birth weight of the lamb is directly linked to the body condition of the ewe - ewes in better body condition have heavier lambs and therefore better lamb survival," he said.

"The significance of that is higher for twin bearing ewes and less so for single ewes - single bearing ewes tend to have high birth weight and survival anyway, but twin lambs tend to be smaller.

"So the focus should very much be on twin bearing ewes having good body condition approaching lambing.

"Twin bearing ewes have much higher energy requirements and therefore need to get preferential access to feed or higher feed rations."

Mr White said the sooner you act after scanning, the more time you have to ensure ewes lamb down at the target body score condition.

"We should be targeting a 3 score body condition or better for twins, but you can't change body condition overnight," he said.

"If they need to gain more than half a score on, that is going to take longer than 30 days.

"But it is easy for single ewes to have too good of body condition, which reduces lamb survival in that group.

"You can't run them in one group as you will be overfeeding singles and overfeeding twins - and if you aren't scanning for multiples it is impossible to meet the different requirements of the different groups.

"The whole idea of scanning isn't to just predict how many lambs you are going to mark but to manage different groups appropriately to maximise lamb survival."

Mr White said the other thing producers should consider during lambing time was the supplementary feeding procedure.

"If you have to supplementary feed ewes through lambing, if pastures are not going to meet requirements, it is important to establish the feeding process and behaviour of ewes before lambing starts," he said.

"Switching feeding methods shouldn't be done right on the point of lambing - you see disasters if people make a big switch suddenly in the middle of lambing because you upset the behaviour of ewes and cause mismothering.

"Have your feeding schedule in place two to three weeks before lambing starts and stick to whatever system you are using."

Appropriately assessing body condition and pasture availability is crucial to carrying out the right management of lambing ewes, Mr White said, and recommended the Lifetime Ewe Management Course (LTEM)

The LTEM training program was developed by Australia Wool Innovation and Rural Industry Skills Training, and has been delivered to more than 4000 sheep producers across the country.

"I support producers attending a LTEM course if they haven't done so...it teaches good skills in body condition scoring and different requirements of ewe groups, as well as assessing pasture, what different types of pasture provide and what gaps need to be filled with supplementary feeding," Mr White said.

"I do find crossbred and british breed producers can be dismissive of LTEM because it does have a Merino focus, but people can still learn a lot of skills and can adapt them to their programs."



Hildden tops the lot in Canberra

Courtesy of Stephen Burns, The Land.

Interbreed

Supreme interbreed champion ram and exhibit:

Hildden, Crookwell, NSW

Supreme interbreed group of three: Hildden

Poll Dorset

Grand champion ram and exhibit: Hildden

Reserve ram: Valley Vista, Coolac, NSW

Champion ewe: Close-Up, Finley, NSW

Reserve ewe: Hildden

The 2020 Royal Canberra Show attracted a very strong contingent of Poll Dorsets for judges Tim Ferguson, Mallee Park Poll Dorsets, Hopetoun, Victoria and associate Callum Burrell, Canterbury, NZ.

Coming out of the pairs class, they gave the nod for breed championship to the young ram exhibited by the Frost family, Hildden Poll Dorsets, Crookwell.

"We had already picked him out in the pairs," Mr Ferguson said. "With his growth, bone structure and overall finish, he is a credit to the breed and the breeders. He has terrific sire appeal, correctness of structure and complete carcass shape."

The reserve champion ram was shown by the Scott family, Valley Vista Poll Dorsets, Coolac.

"He is a good ram with a great topline but just doesn't have the sire appeal of the champion although he has tremendous structure and is correct," Mr Ferguson said.

The champion Poll Dorset ram from Hildden went on to be awarded supreme interbreed exhibit of the show.

At 10 months it weighed 134 kilograms, having been 72kg when weaned at 16 weeks onto crop, where he gained 630 grams per day.

Hildden's James Frost said his family had already used the ram as a sire and were eagerly looking forward to seeing his lambs on the ground.

Mr Frost said his supreme shortwool ram was a son Hildden 860-17 who was reserve junior champion at the Australasian Dorset Championship Show and Sale held in Bendigo in 2018.

"That ram is proving to be a good sire in our stud and we have a lot of very good lambs coming along by him," Mr Frost said.

"The supreme's dam was the supreme exhibit at the 2018 Dorset Championships at Cowra and supreme short wool exhibit at the 2018 Australian Sheep and Wool Show at Bendigo."

In the ewe section, competition was once again strong with judges awarding the Poll Dorset championship ribbon to the woolly milk tooth ewe exhibited by Closeup, Finley.

Mr Ferguson said it was very tight judging the ewes because of the evenness of each entrant but he and Mr Burrell thought the entrant from Closeup had the edge when it came to production potential.

"There is a lot of potential for such a young ewe," Mr Ferguson said. "Going forward she is going to be a cracker."

Close-Up's Gordon Close said the champion ewe was a daughter of Graythorn 101-15 whom he bought in the dispersal sale of the Graythorn stud, which had celebrated 50 years of breeding in 2015.

The champion ewe was named Helen in honour of Helen Gray who dispersed the Graythorn stud after the disappearance of her husband in 2015.

"I text Helen with the results during the show and she was ecstatic with our success," Mr Close said. "For a May drop ewe, she is the first to be eligible for entry to the Australasian Dorset Champions of Champions to be held in Bendigo in August."

The reserve champion ewe was shown by Hildden, and again graduated from the pairs class.

"She is nice balanced ewe, well muscled and correct," Mr Ferguson said.



James, Brian and Anthony Frost of Hildden stud with Supreme Interbreed Exhibit and Grand Champion Poll Dorset Ram of Canberra Show, Hildden 122/19



Charlotte Close with the Grand Champion Poll Dorset Ewe, Closeup 007/19

Poll Dorsets Supreme at Wagin

Courtesy of Tamara Hooper and Lynette Carew-Reid, Farm Weekly

Interbreed

Supreme interbreed champion ram and exhibit:

Shirlee Downs Poll Dorset stud (ram), Quairading, WA

Champion interbreed ewe:

Brimfield Poll Dorset stud, Kendenup, WA

Poll Dorset

Grand champion ram and exhibit: Shirlee Downs stud

Reserve champion ram: Shirlee Downs stud

Champion ewe: Brimfield stud

Reserve champion ewe: Brimfield stud

A solid line-up of 51 entries from five studs battled it out in the Poll Dorset judging at Wagin Woolorama.

When the breed entered the ring at the commencement of judging on Friday, judge Brett Shepherd, Mollinger Park Poll Dorset, White Suffolk and Suffolk studs, Kybybolite, South Australia, had his work cut out.

The title of grand champion and champion Poll Dorset ram went to a sire exhibited by the Squiers family's Shirlee Downs stud, Quairading, WA.

The impressive ram, which is sired by Wrattenbullie 295/17, started on its run to the top when it placed first in the first class to enter the ring at 8am – rams under one year, showing milk teeth.

Mr Shepherd said the ram immediately caught his eye when it entered the ring among 11 other entries in its class and set the standard for the rest of the Poll Dorset competition.

"For such a big sheep he is just so correct," Mr Shepherd said. "He was so well-balanced, I knew he was going to be hard to beat. He was very smooth through the shoulders, stood and paraded very well."

Competing against the champion ram from Shirlee Downs for the grand champion ribbon was the champion Poll Dorset ewe exhibited by Max Whyte and Gail Cremasco, Brimfield stud, Kendenup.

"The champion ewe from Brimfield, has a very smooth topline and strength and depth in her legs and loin," Mr Shepherd said.

The ewe which is by Brimfield 555/16 was a previous broad ribbon winner at the 2019 Perth Royal Show and added the title of Woolorama champion Poll Dorset ewe.

Mr Shepherd's decision to award the Shirlee Downs ram and the Brimfield ewe his champion ribbons were justified later in the day when they were selected as the interbreed champions.

The coveted title of supreme sheep of the show went to a Poll Dorset ram. Mr Shepherd said he was buoyed by the results of the interbreed competition that saw his decisions from earlier in the day solidified when the ram became the supreme champion ram of all breeds and ultimately the supreme champion British and Australasian sheep.

This year Woolorama was supported by 30 studs showing 307 entries and representing seven different breeds.



The champion interbreed ewe was exhibited by the Brimfield Poll Dorset stud, Kendenup. With the ewe were stud principals Max Whyte (left) and Gail Cremasco and sponsors representatives Tim Spicer, Elders and Wendy Gould, Farm Weekly.



The Brimfield stud, Kendenup, exhibited the champion Poll Dorset ewe. With the ewe were judge Brett Shepherd (left) and Brimfield co-principal Gail Cremasco.



Representing joint sponsors, Elders stud stock manager Tim Spicer (left) and Farm Weekly business development and sales manager Wendy Gould, were with Sascha Squiers, Shirlee Downs stud, Quairading, holding his family's supreme champion British and Australasian breeds exhibit and champion interbreed ram at the 2020 Make Smoking History Wagin Woolorama.

MLA Strategic Plan 2025: The sheep perspective

Consultation with industry is a critical component in the development of Meat and Livestock Australia's five-year Strategic Plan. In early March, MLA brought together representatives from across the sheep industry supply chain in a workshop to explore their priorities for the next five years, within the context of MLA's strategic planning co-design framework.

Here is an overview of what they told us were some of their key issues. During the workshop, each of these issues was examined to better understand the problem the sector was trying to solve.

Original issue	Problem to be solved
New workforce and access to labour	Different skills will be required across the supply chain into the future. How do we change the industry narrative to ensure it is attractive?
Sustainability across the supply chain, as perceived by the customer and/or consumer	How do we change the industry culture and demonstrate leadership around practice change to ensure our consumers keep seeing our product as natural and green?
Sheep supply and lamb survivability	How do we optimise current and use novel production systems to ensure supply can meet demand?

Original issue	Problem to be solved
Changing community expectations, particularly around live export and lot feeding	How do we ensure our practices meet with future community expectations?
Traceability and biosecurity, and how these link to market access	How can we evolve our systems so that they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are simple to use have a clear and understood value proposition support both industry and customer needs?
The rising cost of inputs into production	Cost of inputs are high across the supply chain – reducing profitability and competitiveness, so how can we optimise the things within our control?

A clear theme emerging from the workshop was the need for a whole-of-supply chain approach to addressing the new and different opportunities and challenges the red meat industry is facing.

Specifically for the sheep sector, MLA would like to know:

Do you agree that the areas outlined in this article reflect the key challenges for the sheep industry?

Do you have further suggestions for solutions to address these challenges?

Have your say by emailing your response to strategy2025@mla.com.au



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Long-time breed inspector recognised by Poll Dorset Society

Courtesy of Catherine Miller, Stock Journal

A long-time breed inspector at shows has been recognised with a distinguished service award from the Australian Poll Dorset Association for more than three and a half decades of upholding the breed standard.

Geoff Poyner who ran the Morecambe stud at Nullawill, Vic, until its dispersal in 2014 was the chief testicle tester at the Royal Melbourne Show, Hamilton Sheepvention and Bendigo Sheepbreeders for many years.

"If a ram doesn't have firm testicles or they have lumps and bumps on them it doesn't matter how good they are," he said.

After dispersing the stud he moved to Strathalbyn to be closer to his daughter and grandchildren and quickly became involved in the Royal Adelaide Show as a breed inspector here.

Mr Poyner said it was a big thrill to be presented with the award by APDA president Damon Coates.

"If I can help the breed by doing inspections and keeping the standard up I feel honoured to be able to do that," he said.

Mr Poyner is a life member of the Vic Poll Dorset state branch and served on the federal committee from 2010 to 2014.

He has long had a fascination for sheep genetics.

"When I was starting out I was fortunate to come across Lyle Stewart at Melbourne Royal Show who said to me sheep breeding takes generations, it could be one it could be three or sometimes it is eight generations to get the breeding right," he said.

"The first year I produced a really good ewe I thought this is easy but the next time I put the same ram with the ewe and got a cull."

Mr Poyner has seen some big changes in the breed.

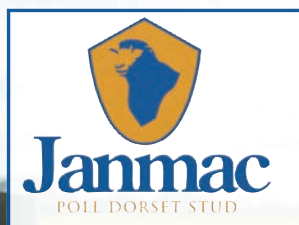
"When I first started 70 kilograms or 80kg was a big ram at 18 months and now you have got rams 140kg to 150kg so," he said.

"in some ways they are getting too big but if you are trying to get rid of that sucker lamb at 16 to 18 weeks you need that early growth to be turning off a 22kg carcass lamb."

These days he has swapped sheep breeding for breeding finches and budgies.



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Frank celebrates 50 years of Fairbank

THE Poll Dorset breed's unofficial Tasmanian reporter-on-the-ground Frank Badcock is modest about his sheep breeding success.

But anyone in the business will know running a successful stud for 50 years is about as successful as it gets.

Frank started the Fairbank Poll Dorset Stud in 1969, with the purchase of ten cast for age mated ewes from the Wynyard stud of Table Cape Farm, Wynyard, Tasmania.

Fairbank now runs about 250 ewes and hosts a ram sale on it's Hagley, Tas, property annually.

Frank, a fourth generation stud sheep breeder, says son Chris is now at the helm - but Frank is still never too far from the action, especially on the show floor.

Frank had a Poll Dorset scrapbook while he was still at school, well before buying any sheep, but it wasn't long after that he selected his first ewes.

"I had a mate who had a Poll Dorset stud, and they were receiving a lot of publicity in the 60s - I wanted to start a stud that was mine from the start and didn't take over from the previous generation, that was my main motivation," Frank said.

"In the early years most of the Tasmanian Poll Dorset rams were sold to WA, that was the main market, but for the past 30 years it has been selling mainly back into Tasmania."

Frank's Fairbank stud was one of the first in Tasmania to begin using Lambplan, and he points to it as one of the biggest changes in the industry since he started out.

"When I first started the benchmark was royal show champions, now it is performance recording and Lambplan figures ," he said.

"When it (Lambplan) was first available I was right there on the job straight away. It was a no brainer to get in on the ground floor and use that as part of the selection criteria.

"But it is still always structure first, that's where the show ring is important; it keeps your eye on the structure, then figures second.

"Showing sheep has been part of my life since 1964 with our Southdowns - a few Poll Dorset rams were shown at the Perth Royal in the 1970's and on the odd occasion at the Melbourne Royal but generally just the Royal Launceston and Hobart Shows each and every year."

The other game changer for the breed and Fairbank over the past 25 years has been the widespread use of artificial insemination, Frank said.

"This has allowed the use of rams that otherwise would not have been available," he said.

"Poll Dorset breeders are pretty good at adapting to markets pretty quickly - it is easier now to change the type, whether you want more muscle or more growth you can do that in almost one generation these days."

When it comes to his sheep, Frank continues to aim towards a medium frame animal with good structure, narrow shoulders and a well-filled back hindquarters.

The shoulder-set is of specific focus to Frank, who says this is key to avoiding lambing issues, rather than lowering birth weights too drastically.

"If we get too low on birth weight we lose survivability - it is more important to have shoulder structure correct then extremely low birth weight," he said.

Frank is hesitant to talk up his achievements from 50 years in the Poll Dorset game, of which there have been many, but he will say it is "satisfying that we can continually sell 80 to 100 rams a year, and have been doing that for quite some time".

Frank spent 20 years on the Australian Poll Dorset Federal Council, and enjoyed his time on the board representing Tasmania and making long lasting friendships.

He's also spent many years being what he describes as the "unofficial Tasmanian reporter", sending through show and sale results for the Poll Dorset contingent on the Apple Isle, and still now keeps those on the mainland up-to-date with the latest going-ons.

Frank was awarded an Australian Poll Dorset Association Life Membership in 2015



Frank Badcock at the 2019 Royal Launceston Show with Champion Poll Dorset Ram.



Frank Badcock with the Fairbank 2007 Tasmanian Ram Lamb of the Year. Photo: Davies Brothers Pty.Limited (Tasmanian Country)

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