



THE AUSTRALIAN POLL DORSET JOURNAL

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MAY 2021

**PREMIUM LAMBS
PREMIUM PRICE**



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PERFORMER**
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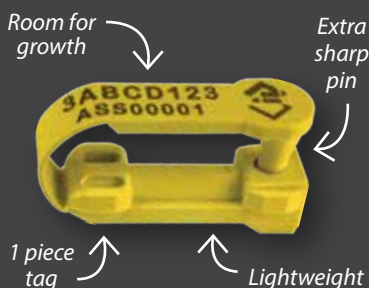
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



This one is going to be quick – I have a great stack of lambs born over night and they need tags ASAP! The mild weather and available feed in the paddocks is making it seem easy. Even our triplet lambs are thriving on their mums – though the mob does look like an out of control preschool most of the time!

I've been having a look at the break up of our membership and we have got such a great variety of people and commitments. This diversity is so valuable in the scheme of stability, innovation and the social aspect of our association.

Unfortunately due to the uncertainty of 2020, our bi-annual conference (which should have been in March 2021) was cancelled, and with it the opportunity for people to meet, discuss ideas and share experiences as Poll Dorset breeders. Your region meetings are a great place to do this, and I encourage experienced breeders to mentor our new members, to discuss topics that may be of value to others and to collectively take our breed forward.

It is great to see the number of schools that have a Poll Dorset Stud as part of their agriculture program. We have 13 studs (mainly NSW), that are breeding, showing and selling Poll Dorset sheep. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to develop animal husbandry skills, understand the lamb industry, learn about classing and breeding, and show preparation and exhibiting. To the APDA members who support these schools with advice and animals, thank you.

It is great to see young breeders starting studs. One new member looks like he might be trying to rival his father's merino stud! Welcome to all the new breeders, we love that you have decided to jump in to breeding Poll Dorsets.

2021 has a number of events and activities for our youth to be involved in. SA sheep expo (Adelaide) in April, NSW Youth Day (Cowra) in early August, Rural Youth Sheep Expo (online event), and a focus on the youth at the Australasian Dorset Championships (Bendigo) in late August.

Our core group of breeders sits evenly across a broad cross section of sizes of studs. Our Poll Dorset registered ewe flock is around 71,000 which produces and delivers over 26,000 flock rams into the lamb industry. Our dominance as a sire in the prime lamb sector has held firm relative to ewe numbers, with a few fluctuations in real numbers across areas most heavily affected by drought in 2018/19.

The 2020/21 selling season has been outstanding, with many ram lambs sold to fill the enormous demand for Poll Dorset genetics.

The post-drought rebuild of the ewe flock is rapid, and there are more farmers going into sheep than has been seen for years. There is confidence and excitement, and an enthusiasm to "do a good job" with the sheep. It is so good to see we are the terminal sire of choice – not just because it is the traditional choice – but because by using a Poll Dorset ram, the lamb enterprise is better!

We know we have a profit driving breed. We know we have a breed that grows fast, is easy to finish, provides consistent lambs, attract a premium price, and is in demand from the meat processors. And we know Poll Dorsets do all these things best. No wonder we have seen such a demand for our rams!

I would like to extend sympathy to the families of George Johnston and John Yates. Both men gave much dedication, skill and support to the Poll Dorset industry and it's members.

I hope you are all enjoying a good season, and I look forward to being able to get out and visit this year.

Isabele Roberts

PRESIDENT



THE AUSTRALIAN POLL DORSET JOURNAL

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- MAY 21-23** NSW State Sheep Show
- Dubbo
- JUNE 18-19** NSW Dorset Championships
- Cowra
- JULY 16-18** Australian Sheep & Wool Show
- Bendigo
- SEP 4-12** Royal Adelaide Show
- AUG 27-29** Australasian Dorset
Championships
- SEP 23** Royal Melbourne Show
- SEP 25-OCT 2** Royal Perth Show
- OCT 7** Royal Launceston Show
- OCT 21** Royal Hobart Show

ACROSS THE PENS

FLOCK RETURNS

Thank you to everyone who has completed their flock return on the database or returned to us via the post. Almost a third of flock returns are now completed and I ask those of you who are yet to do so to try and have them completed before late fees apply (June 8).

This year we will certainly have the flock book out sooner than 2020 and we can only do this with your assistance. If you need any assistance at all, please call the office, we are only too willing to help.



TOP OF THE DROP

Members of the Naracoorte Hamilton Region are invited to bring up to 6 rams to display to fellow members, commercial prime lamb producers and other interested members of the community at the Top of the Drop Exhibition and Family to be held at the Naracoorte Show Grounds in August 2021. Date to be confirmed.

SALE DATES

Please let the office know when your sale dates are confirmed so that we may publicise them on the Poll Dorset website. Our aim is to have an informative and up to date directory on the website at all times.

APDA BOARD

Most of the APDA Board met in person Bendigo in early March and the minutes are included in this issue of the Journal. Three members of the board joined the meeting via Zoom from WA and SA due to Covid restrictions. It was terrific to host the group in Bendigo this year over two great days and during that time we were joined by Brett Tindal from ACM and the team from Shearwell.


WRATTENBULLIE
ANNUAL POLL DORSET RAM SALE

MONDAY, 11TH OCTOBER 2021
1.30pm at Naracoorte Showgrounds

6
STUD RAMS

130
FLOCK RAMS

Wrattenbullie 200248

**Rod Davies 08 8764 6050**
Brad Davies 0438 266 732



Angus and Claudia Kirton, Bilbrooke, Walcha, NSW, sold 100 second-cross Poll Dorset lambs for \$228 and \$235 at Tamworth, NSW, in February. Photo: Stock & Land

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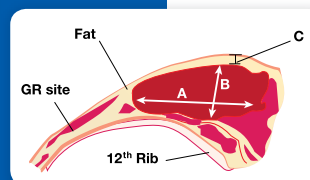
PROMOTIONS OFFICER REPORT

Planning our Promotions campaign figures highly at the last Federal Council Meeting.

Some of the highlight.

- **Regional Promotion Grants.** Double the funding available to Regions for these Grants. Funds for these grants come out of the Flock Ram Levy. This money is to be spent by regions on promoting PD in their region in any form of media that they wish. Please put your applications into the Office and get the money spent.
- **Stock Photos.** We are looking to create a library of photos to have on hand, so that they are readily accessible should the need arise. Photos of high resolution of lambs, ewes, rams, commercial lambs, farm scenes etc would all be good. Email the photos to office or to Jamie-Lee Oldfield and Sam Garland.
- **Vests.** Federal Council is extending the initiative of the Wimmera Mallee Region and the Victorian State Committee to supply free of charge, 1 vest per Stud. The vests are shower proof, navy blue in colour, zipper front and pockets. The PD emblem is embroidered on the front and studs can choose to have their name and stud prefix embroidered on as well. Contact the Office for more details.
- **Promotion Funding.** The promotional committee has compiled a plan for their spending for the next 12 months. This includes an increase in funding for all styles of media, especially social media. We are exploring new technologies and innovations in the way our members and clients research information and receive news. We would welcome any ideas from members that would enhance the profile of Poll Dorsets.

Alistair Sutherland



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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 10th & 11th 2021.

PRESENT & APOLOGIES

Isabele Roberts, Damon Coats, Tania King, Geoff Davey, Alistair Sutherland, James Corcoran, James Frost, Garry Armstrong, Andrew Scott, Rod Davies and Will Milroy.

Present via Zoom – Sascha Squiers, Andrea Rowett, Laurie Fairclough

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The financial statement and budget were received:

The following motions were resolved:

"That we reinvest term deposits"

Carried

"That we move our accounting system from MYOB to XERO"

Carried

"That we remove all old signatories from accounts and moving forward include Treasurer, Secretary and two executives as signatories"

Carried

PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE

The board was joined by Jamie Lee Oldfield and Brett Tindal from ACM. There was a detailed report and discussion on various promotional opportunities including Print, TV, Auctions Plus and digital. A new theme was developed for this coming year with the theme around Rapid Growth, Consistency and Premium Price. New artwork is being developed.

The following motions were passed

"That we proceed with the promotions campaign as outlined by ACM which includes both Print and Digital"
Carried

"That we commit to an advertising campaign up to a spend of \$10,000 with Auctions Plus"

Carried

"that we allocate \$10,000 for promotional products for regions"

Carried

"That Farm Gate Signs be reintroduced, if regions order them, we will print them and take to Bendigo Sheep Show for distribution, allocation of \$5,000".

Carried

MAJOR EVENT FUNDING

The following motion was passed

"That any region approved for funding last year and cancelled due to Covid be carried forward to this year"
Carried

Victorian State Committee – funding for live streaming

Armdale Poll Dorset Stud

83 years of stud breeding

Our success is measured by our client's success



Armdale's 2020 Autumn drop lambs pictured at 8 months.

STOCKSCAN Gudair Vaccinated

Armdale is now being run as it's own entity by myself and our livestock handler who has extensive experience in the sheep industry.

**ANNUAL
RAM SALE
September
2021**

Shirley Armstrong
278 McCormacks Lane,
Marrar
Mobile 0427 275 126

MARCH BOARD MINUTES

Victorian State Committee - \$1000 for Breeders promotional workshop

Central West NSW Poll Dorset Youth Day funding \$1000

Albury Wagga - \$1000 for advertising

WA regional advertising – 1680

Discussion also took place on the Regional Advertising payments and for this year only those regions entitled to \$2000 may apply for \$4000 and those regions entitled to \$1000 may apply for \$2000.

WEBSITE

The office is working on a pricing structure for stud profiles to appear on the website – more to come on this in the coming month.

FLOCK REGISTRATION COMMITTEE

The following motion was passed –

“Only the breeder or an immediate family member can apply to have sheep bred from the initial registered sheep inspected for registration”.

Carried

“That from 2022 a revised fee structure will occur – Initial administration fee of \$120 with a levy of \$1 per ewe up to 800 ewes capped”.

Carried

“That new members fees apply from the first flock return after application”.

Carried

“That new registration guidelines pertaining to the four generation pedigree be adopted”.

Carried

New members endorsed were

- Lila Sharrock – Pinevite, flock no. 4651
- Paul & Lorraine Taber – Rock Abbey, flock no. 4652
- Kingston Park transferred from Bruce Rayner (deceased) to Roger and Mark Rayner.
- Deepdene Stud transferred to Garry Armstrong.
- Koorringal High School stud transferred to Junee High School.

The following motion was passed re local shows –

“That all local shows have the right to appoint a local judge should appointed judge be locked out by Covid”.

Carried

“That the board endorses and supports Bowen Park and future trials for the purpose of research and to benefit the Poll Dorset Breed”.

Carried

MAJOR SHOW APPOINTMENTS 2021

- NSW Dorset championships – Paul Brown
- Australian Sheep and Wool Show – Robert Grieve
- Sydney – Ken Williams
- Melbourne – Sascha Squiers
- Canberra (Cancelled)



1st Notice of Intent

On-Property Stud Dispersal Sale October 2021
(unless stud and property sold prior)

Rosewood Poll Dorset Stud, Rye Park, NSW

(30km north of Yass and 29km east of Boorowa). Founded 2005. Flock No. 4421.

**Stud lines: Majority Hildden,
with Tattykeel and Abelene Park.**

Mixed age ewes 6 yo & below x 320

2021 drop ram lambs x 120

2021 drop ewe lambs x 80

*Date and final numbers to be confirmed.
Expressions of Interest welcome.*



Ph: 02 6227 2228 E: mail@rosewoodpoll.com.au

Schools put Poll Dorsets on parade at Deniliquin



Winning Poll Dorset Group from Finley High School.



Finley High School with Champion and Reserve Poll Dorset ewe. This ewe went on to win Interbreed ewe of the show at Deniliquin.



Finley High School won Champion Poll Dorset Ram.



Champion Poll Dorset Ram went to Finley High School, with Reserve ram going to Moama Grammar School.



Schools Frensham, Mittagong; The Riverina Anglican College, Wagga Wagga and; Elizabeth Macarthur, Narellan all participated in the Goulburn Show with Poll Dorset exhibits.



PD Youth Sydney Royal judging debut

Courtesy of Billy Jupp, The Land

Joanna Balcombe may already have state and national junior judging championships to her name but at this year's Sydney Royal, she added a new achievement to her impressive resume. The 21-year-old judged at the pinnacle of NSW agriculture for the first time in 2021, taking the lead on the Suffolk, Hampshire Down and handler competitions.

Despite being new to the Sydney Royal, the Canowindra native whose family runs Cranbrook Poll Dorset stud, handled the pressure with aplomb. "I've probably been judging since the age of eight or nine and I've been doing proper judging since 2017," Ms Balcombe told *The Land*.

"I got involved because my family has got its own Poll Dorset stud and since a young age I've been going to shows to show sheep, so I got involved that way. I picked up a lot of judging techniques from the years showing as well as through all of the junior judging competitions as well. On top of that, I've had a lot of mentors help me along the way and they are all in Sydney this year, which is really special."

A mainstay of the junior judging system, Ms Balcombe said it was crucial to nurturing her love of judging. Junior judging has honestly been massive for me," she said. People have told me it's nice to have some younger judges coming through and I agree that we need that youth coming through. It's good that once you go through all of the junior judging competitions you begin to get jobs judging at this level as well. I've met so many great people through junior judging and you find that every competition you go to you will know someone."

Beginning this year's Sydney Royal with the handlers competition, Ms Balcombe said she felt it was important to give back to the next generation of competitors. You just make connections with people and I have done a lot of overjudging through it now and it's a really positive experience," she said. It makes me feel really proud to be able to come and help the school-aged kids who are doing it at the moment because it is a good way of giving back to those who helped me when I was their age."

Currently in her third year of an agricultural science degree at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, Ms Balcombe said she was hopeful of forging a career in the livestock sector. I wouldn't say I have a goal in mind as such, I would just like to be able to go to some of the other major shows across the country and the world to judge," she said.

"Over the past few years I've done quite a few smaller shows but this is the biggest show I've done so far, but if I was invited to go to some of the other big shows that would be amazing. I've always wanted to end up in the livestock field somewhere, whether it's running my own stud on the side or doing something else. It's always good having your stud there because you feel proud when you get to bring your sheep here, show them off and everyone commends you on them. I'd love to keep that going somehow."



Billy Sharpe of Amelie Poll Dorset stud, Uralla, had a great day out at the Walcha Show with his champion ram, Amelie 20-0009.



SPRINGWATERS

POLL DORSET STUD EST. 1979

Stud Ram Preview Day Friday 10th September 2021

An opportunity to inspect our top 20 elite stud rams. Also on display will be our 2021 retained sires and mature stud sires. This year all rams offered will be available at our on-property sale, featuring sons of **POCOCK** and **GUINNESS**.

Sale Date
Friday 1st October 2021

200 RAMS ON OFFER



Showing at Cowra Dorset Championships, Bendigo ASWS and Bendigo Australasian

Guinness SW22-18 and Pocock SW 66-16 semen available

Corcorans Plains, Boorowa, NSW
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Intention clear to retain breeding ewes

The February wool and sheepmeat survey, conducted by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and the Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), paint a picture of a flock rebuild based on the retention of breeding ewes.

As at February 2021, there were 41.3 million breeding ewes of which 31.4 million, or 76%, are Merinos. It is these breeding ewes that will drive the rebuild. As producers look to utilise more ewes to rebuild their flocks, only 30% are looking at buying in more external breeding ewes – most are looking to retain more replacement ewes, or reduce the number of ewes culled.

On a state basis, the results vary significantly, with ewes on hand in WA down 200,000 head since last year due to dry conditions. Also of interest was the drop in over 1 million breeding ewes in the Mallee/Wimmera region, as improved seasonal conditions drove farmers to increase their cropping operations, choosing to trade sheep rather than breed them. Other interesting results include:

- Of the 8,005,144 total lamb sales in the next four months, 41% will be Merinos, 25% will be pure meat breeds and 19% will be first cross.
- 66% of lambs on hand are Merinos.
- 71% of ewes joined were Merinos.

Demonstration Site applications open

Funding applications are now open for cattle, sheep and goat producer groups throughout Australia who are interested in running local projects to validate the on-farm benefits of research and development findings.

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) is calling for applications for its 2021-22 Producer Demonstration Sites (PDS) program, with applications closing on 12 May 2021. This includes Levy and Co-Contributor funding options for projects ranging from two to six years.

The PDS program aims to increase the rate of adoption of key management practices and technologies that improve business profitability, productivity and sustainability, through supporting livestock producers to work in peer-to-peer learning groups.

Producer groups wishing to engage in a Levy-funded PDS project can apply for up to \$25,000 per year, and producer groups wishing to engage in a Co-Contributor PDS project can apply for up to \$50,000 per year, both for the length of the project. Co-Contributor projects require producer investment in the project, which is matched by MLA Donor Company (MDC).

For full details of the Producer Demonstration sites (PDS) program and to watch the recording on a recent webinar about MLA's PDS program and how to set yourself up for success in the upcoming PDS call, visit the Producer Demonstration Site section of MLA's website.

Sheep Sustainability Framework Approved

Courtesy of Sheep Central

PEAK industry bodies have approved the first Australian Sheep Sustainability Framework and it was launched in New South Wales in April. The framework aims to benchmark the sustainability of Australian sheep industry — allowing producers and consumers to track the sector's performance — and is hailed as a world-first.

The framework was approved by its initiators — Sheep Producers Australia and WoolProducers Australia. It was developed by the Sheep Sustainability Steering Group, chaired by Professor in Livestock Systems, Bruce Allworth, in the Charles Sturt School of Animal and Veterinary Sciences.

Professor Allworth said the framework incorporated the wool and sheep meat industries and has been developed following extensive stakeholder consultation and a review of what's important to the industry.

"While it was a challenge to integrate the two often quite different perspectives, it was important that we delivered a single industry framework. In the end, people are concerned about the way we manage our sheep and look after the environment, whether or not they are producing wool or meat," Professor Allworth said.

The framework has four pillars or themes: caring for our sheep; enhancing the environment and climate; looking after our people, our customers and our community; and ensuring a financially resilient industry.

Professor Allworth said about 60 different data points will be reported in the framework. The framework will allow the industry to better engage with everyone to show what they are achieving under these four themes. However, it is not just about what the industry is doing well, it is also about identifying areas for improvement.

The data provided in the framework will allow both the industry and consumers to track the performance of the Industry," Prof. Allworth said. "It is important that the figures are robust and seen as a reliable and independent assessment of the sheep industry's performance". The development of the framework was supported by Meat & Livestock Australia and Australian Wool Innovation.

New RMAC CEO

The Red Meat Advisory Council Board has announced the appointment of Mr Reith Parker as the new Chief Executive Officer for RMAC. Mr Parker has most recently been an Advisor to the Queensland Office of the Leader of the Opposition; a role requiring extensive stakeholder engagement and industry relationship management.

Prior to this Mr Parker gained experience in economics, trade and industry affairs with Sheep Producers Australia. He also has an academic background in agriculture, focused on regulatory risk in ruminant livestock industries. "Mr Parker's previous experience in navigating the vast and varying degree of stakeholder policies and views, all while delivering outcomes will be an asset to the red meat and livestock industry", RMAC said. Mr Parker will commence his role as RMAC CEO in mid-January 2021.

Improved seasons underpin flock rebuild

Courtesy of Meat and Livestock Australia

The national sheep flock is set to enter a significant rebuilding phase in 2021 on the back of improved seasonal conditions in key sheep production regions of eastern Australia, according to Meat & Livestock Australia's (MLA) 2021 Sheep Industry Projections.

Following two years of decline that saw the national flock reach historically low levels last year, the flock is now projected to increase 5% to reach 67.3 million head by 30 June 2021. In contrast to the eastern states, Western Australia is in a de-stocking phase due to drier conditions throughout 2020, which have limited available pasture and surface water. As a result, it is estimated that two million sheep were transported from Western Australia to eastern Australia last year.

MLA Market Information Manager, Stephen Bignell, said this year's flock rebuild would not be as pronounced as previous La Niña-induced flock rebuilds in 2010 and 2016. "Factors contributing to the slower predicted pace of the 2021 rebuild include starting from the lowest flock size in over 100 years, and the impact of the 2019 drought, which was the worst on record for some regions and prompted many producers to completely de-stock," Mr Bignell said.

Mr Bignell said provided favourable seasonal conditions continue this year, strong sheep and lamb prices are expected to remain, with smaller yardings also expected to persist. "Supply is expected to remain tight as producers retain their core breeding stock and ewe lambs, consistent with a significant flock rebuild. The rebuild will also see producers retain more older ewes than usual and many enter the market to purchase additional ewes," Mr Bignell said.

"Lamb numbers are forecast to grow due to increased marking rates, with Merino marking rates expected to reach 92% nationally. The improved nutrition of pregnant ewes, stemming from the abundance of quality pasture, will drive this forecast rise in marking rates. The bigger lamb crop predicted in 2021 will lead to a slight increase in lamb slaughter for the year, up 4% to 20.8 million head, as producers intend to retain a greater percentage of ewe lambs.

"On the back of improved eastern conditions, national lamb carcase weights are expected to rise 2% to average 24.4kg/head in 2021, up from 24kg in 2020. Continued growth in lamb carcase weights and the forecast rise in slaughter numbers underpin a 6% increase in lamb production to 508,000 tonnes carcase weight (cwt) in 2021. Sheep slaughter is expected to rise slightly in 2021, up 2% to 6.6 million head."

Looking at the impacts of COVID-19 on Australian sheepmeat, Mr Bignell said the greatest impact was the fall in foodservice demand, both domestically and globally, due to COVID-19 related restrictions. "As consumers were forced to eat more in the home, retail sales of sheepmeat rose, making up for much of the decline in foodservice demand," Mr Bignell said. "The global impact on demand varied greatly between markets, reflecting the length and strength of movement restrictions and the sheepmeat consumption patterns in individual countries.

"While the majority of Australian export destinations entered recessions in 2020, forecasts made by the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) in October 2020 indicate that 2021 could be a year of recovery, with global GDP growth expected to bounce back by 5.2%. However, consumers will certainly be impacted by ongoing repercussions from recessions, which could include tighter disposable incomes and reduced discretionary spending. MLA's projections have been prepared on the basis that the world enters a COVID-19 recovery phase in 2021 due to the development and deployment of various vaccine programs."

"Australian lamb exports are forecast to lift in 2021, up 10% to 290,000 tonnes shipped weight (swt), supported by a rise in both average carcase weight and slaughter levels. Mutton exports are forecast to remain steady in 2021 at 140,000 tonnes swt. Current forecasts indicate Australian live sheep exports may see a modest increase in 2021 on 2020 levels of around 2%."

Signs of Improvement in the US

Courtesy of Rabobank

US lamb prices are showing signs of life after declining or remaining static for much of 2020. This increase in price will help support local Australian lamb prices. Australian lamb prices have continued to trade in a relatively narrow band since January, with the ESTLI bumping around AUD8.40/kg. The ESTLI was sitting at AUD 8.27/kg on 11 March. Restocking activity continues to be evident with the price spread between restocker lambs and heavy lambs at some of the highest levels we have seen. Although the price spread between heavy lambs and Merino lambs is not as large, suggesting favor away from wool production. If the improvement in the US market, and strong export volumes to China continue, together with the ongoing limited number of lambs available, we expect prices to remain at similar levels through the month of April and into May.

Lamb slaughter numbers lifted slightly in March. The eastern states weekly slaughter numbers for the four weeks in March showed a 7% increase month-on-month. Despite the rise, numbers remain low, with March 2021 numbers down 1% on March 2020 and down 11% on the five-year average. NSW is responsible for much of the increase, with lamb slaughter up 23% year-on-year and up 11% on the five-year average. Such numbers, in contrast to other states, suggest the possibility that many Merino breeders have concentrated on lamb production through 2020, rather than rebuilding flocks.

Lamb exports in February (21,608 metric tons swt) continued to show the impacts of lower production, down 9% year-on-year. Interestingly exports to China jumped - up 48% year-on-year and we saw the highest volume of lamb ever exported to China in any February.

US lamb demand - Easter is traditionally the high point of the season for US lamb demand. Despite the US foodservice figures showing a 17% contraction YOY for February, US imported lamb prices are showing some signs of life. The average imported Australian rack price (in USD) for March is up 4% on February which is the first real increase since prices began to fall in 2019. With US government stimulus packages and the Covid vaccine being rolled out, lamb demand may start to recover, which would support ongoing strong Australian lamb prices.

Australian Lamb – From Rising Star to Star Performer

Courtesy of Tim McRae, AuctionsPlus

The Australian lamb industry over the past two decades has been a standout performer across the agricultural landscape. From a rising star in the early 2000's, the value of the industry has consistently increased year-on-year, underpinned by a determined focus on meat quality and optimising the consumer experience – both in Australia and through export markets.

Utilising ABARES gross value of production data for the past two decades, the growth of the lamb industry comparatively has been outstanding.

Valued at only A\$776 million in 2000-01, the lamb industry gross value of production is estimated to be worth \$3.6 billion in 2020-21 – an absolute growth of 364% over the two decades. Comparatively, the value of beef over the same period has risen 110%, sheep 171%, poultry 173%, while milk has experienced much flatter growth, at 39% (see figure 1).

Isolating sectors from sheep and lamb production, the growth in the lamb production value has been astounding, but also significantly, somewhat at the cost of the other complementary industries. While up 363% for lamb production, live sheep values have contracted 58% over the past two decades, while wool is down 3%. The value of sheep production (mutton) is up 171%, for the period. Thus overall, total value of production, including mutton, live, wool and lambs was an estimated \$7.17 billion for 2020-21, an increase of only 82% from the 2000-01 (see figure 2).

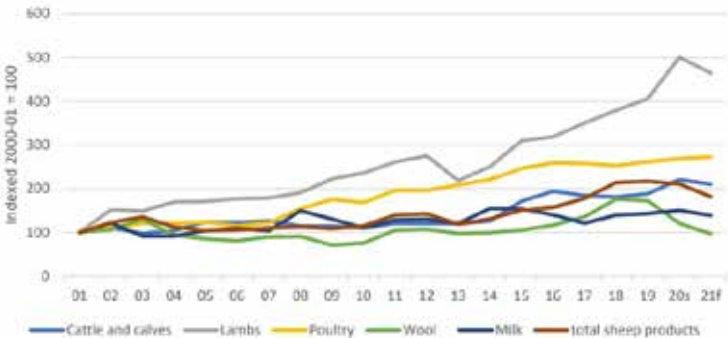
The Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) forecasts released last week, continue to point to strong returns for Australian lamb and sheep producers through the medium term, even with prices forecast to edge back from recent highs. With lamb prices forecast to average 751c/kg cwt for the current 2020-21 financial year, ABARES has forecast prices to slip back to average 699c/kg cwt by the 2023-24 financial year – a 7% decline over the three-year forecast period.

Contributing to the decline in prices over the three-year period will be higher lamb supplies, driven by a rise in the national sheep flock. The clear intent to rebuild flock numbers through 2020, in the wake of previous years of drought in 2018 & 2019, will provide the impetus for the supply growth in following years. In comparison to the current 2020-21 year, with lamb slaughter estimated to hit 20.1 million head, slaughter in 2023-24 is forecast to be 6% higher, at 21.4 million head, rising to 22.2 million head by 2025-26.

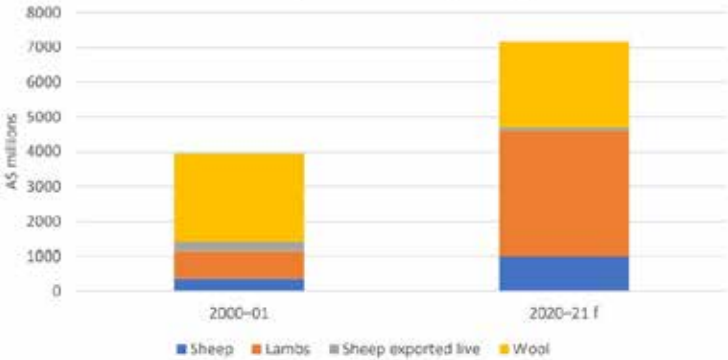
Facilitating the rise in lamb slaughter over the period will be a larger and growing national sheep flock, rising from a forecast 65.3 million head in 2020-21, to 72 million head by 2025-26. Of interest, the national sheep flock is estimated to have fallen to 62.7 million head in 2019-20 – the lowest annual flock since 1904.

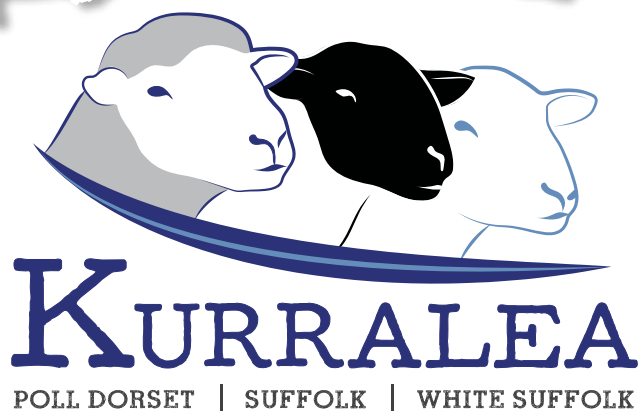
For AuctionsPlus, the continued growth in the Australian lamb industry has corresponded with additional supplies being offered over the past five years. For the past calendar year, approximately 3.1 million head of sheep and lambs were offered exclusively online, compared to 2.6 million head in 2019 and 1.9 million head in 2016. Comparatively, Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) annual saleyard survey showed that 14.2 million head of sheep and lambs went through physical saleyards in 2019-20, with Wagga the largest individual selling yards, at 2.03 million head.

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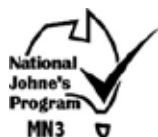


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AUSTRALASIAN DORSET CHAMPIONSHIPS

ADC 2021 heads back to Bendigo

After an online-only event in 2020, the Australasian Dorset Championships will be back in Bendigo this year on a new date, but with the same high-quality offering. Running from August 27 to 29 at the Regional Events Complex, organiser Ian Furze said he expected the sale would feature a strong representation of the best Poll Dorset studs in Australia.

The 2021 Show is set to host over 250 entries over 48 classes beginning at 1pm on Friday 27th and continuing from 9am on Saturday 28th followed by the Exhibitors Dinner at the Rifle Brigade Hotel. The annual ram sale will be held on Sunday 29th at 1.30pm via live auction and AuctionsPlus.

Beginning in 2008, the 'Australasian' has forged a reputation as one of the highest quality Poll Dorset competitions and launched the inaugural Champions of Champions in 2019, for ram champions across the country to compete for the unofficial title of the best Poll Dorset ram in Australia. This competition, won by Tattykeel, is expected to return in 2021 with the generous support of WFI.



The champion rams from the following shows will be eligible to compete:

- Sydney Royal Show
- Campbelltown Show
- NSW Dorset Championships – Cowra
- Victorian Sheep Show – Ballarat
- NSW Sheep Show – Dubbo
- Australian Sheep & Wool Show – Bendigo
- Wagin Woolorama
- Australasian Dorset Championships - Bendigo



2019 WFI Champion of Champions Poll Dorset ram winners Graham and James Gilmore, Tattykeel, Oberon, NSW, with judges Damon Coates and Sascha Squires, WFI's Holly Rowlands and judge Isabele Roberts.



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Carbon neutral from paddock to plate

Courtesy of Meat & Livestock Australia

The links in the lamb supply chain between the Simpson family's 'Binginbar Farms' and the dinner plate are very few. Sourcing lambs from across the nation, the Simpsons then finish them for processing at Thomas Foods International's Tamworth facility, for which they were the largest single lamb supplier in 2019. From there, the lamb is destined for local and international dinner plates.

The Simpsons have directly reached out to their consumers to understand the value of provenance data in ensuring that quality meat is produced in a safe, ethical, and sustainable manner.

"Our family has always aimed to run a sustainable business that leaves our children with a property in better condition than when we took over. Now, after understanding exactly what our customer is after in red meat, that goal has expanded to having a carbon neutral operation," Nathan Simpson said.

"With the number of lambs we can finish, we've got the potential to develop a certified carbon neutral lamb brand, something we started exploring about five years ago and, while there are a few challenges we have to work through, it can be achieved."

Taking steps towards carbon neutrality

Binginbar Farms has already taken steps to set the foundations for their carbon neutral brand. **Step one** being to develop a digital system for tracking individual animals to provide full provenance.

Working with MLA Donor Company in its Producer Innovation Fast-Track program, the Simpsons developed an online platform to record all on-farm animal data for interpretation, analysis and quality assurance. Data is matched with processing and grading feedback from Thomas Foods to identify ideal performers.

Hitachi also worked with the Simpsons to further digitise and automate farm management through developing technologies to monitor troughs, water and pumps, measure pasture growth and provide weather, market and other paddock management information.

Step two was to do a carbon account through MLA's pilot carbon accounting research project for an average year of pasture, crop and meat production for their enterprise. These are Nathan's key learnings from the pilot:

Maintaining a high level of ground cover is essential for building soil carbon, encouraging biodiversity and maximising carbon sequestration. In consultation with their agronomist, the Simpsons aim to maintain a minimum of 600kg of dry matter per hectare as a baseline. Recommendations for the level of groundcover that should be retained in different seasons and environments can be found here.

Pasture needs to be high-quality with good density to maintain high growth rates in animals while improving soil carbon. The Simpsons are aiming to maintain a strict rotation of six to 10 years of pasture followed by annual crops for no more than six years before going back into pasture. Advice from developers of current Australian Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) soil

carbon projects suggests that the best possible sequestration levels are achieved by maintaining well managed multi-species perennial pastures. To support producers who are using these systems as a tool to build soil carbon, MLA is investing in projects to demonstrate the scientific basis of links between sequestration and different pasture systems as part of ongoing CN30 activities.

Because of the method used by MLA in the pilot carbon accounting workshops (estimating stored carbon from publicly available vegetation datasets in accordance with Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Accounts) trees planted pre-1990 were not included in the Simpsons' carbon account. According to MLA, the use of technologies such as remote sensing and improved modelling of vegetated areas may enable producers to include all stored carbon attributable to their properties in their carbon account in the future.

Focus areas for the future

The next steps in the Simpsons' carbon neutral branding strategy involve the following focus areas:

Animal performance. Animals that convert feed with the greatest efficiency to reach target weights will be identified to inform future purchasing decisions. "We'll target second-cross lambs because their growth rates are better. Due to the drought, we haven't been able to be too picky and generally we can't control the genetics used by breeders," Nathan said. On-farm trials using feed additives that reduce induction periods, accelerate weight gains and reduce methane emissions are also in the pipeline.

Managing ground cover. To ensure that crops can be sown into standing stubbles without disturbing soils and losing soil carbon, the Simpsons have upgraded their seeder (purchasing a Janke tyre drill with coulter openers on 250mm row spacings).

A decade of tree planting. More than 100ha of non-arable land has been identified for tree planting, with 15ha sown in 2020. Species (river gum, box, casuarinas and kurrajongs) were chosen for persistence, fast growth and being indigenous to the region. Nathan acknowledges the many benefits of tree planting, not just in terms of carbon, and said that one day the practice could support entering biodiversity offset schemes that lift the value of non-arable areas of the farm. While fences are initially required to exclude livestock from tree planting areas, Nathan plans to allow stock to access these areas once trees are established.

A worthwhile commitment. Nathan said that moving towards carbon neutrality isn't a simple process, but that it does offer many returns. "It's not easy and requires planning to improve your net carbon position. The other thing I've learned is that you have to be profitable in the first place. Just planting 15ha of trees cost \$10,000," Nathan said. The cost included labour, fencing and trees and Nathan said the returns are measured in increased biodiversity, improved conditions for livestock, aesthetics and improving the landscape in non-arable areas.



Poll Dorsets deliver premium price

Lambing down 8500 Merino ewes is no mean feat, but it is made easier by being confident in the outcome. How? By joining them to Poll Dorsets.

Mal Hungerford manages Merrill, a sheep operation in a locality of the same name between Gunning and Crookwell in NSW, which is one element of a five-property family farming business. Primarily in the Merino game, the operation breeds ewes on its other properties, and when they hit five years of age, they head to Merrill.

Those ewes are all joined to Poll Dorset sires, with a majority of the lambs turned off direct to a lamb finisher before ending up at Coles for processing. Mr Hungerford has been running the operation since 2015, and says a focus on the right rams has been pivotal to success.

"Our aim is to keep 2000 lambs to finish when the season permits, with the remainder sold as stores at 30-35kg. The operation was looking for a way to value add older Merino ewes - instead of buying in lambs all the time - and it seems to work well," Mr Hungerford said.

"We had to buy some ewes in this year because we were understocked - we have bought young ewes - some from Western Australia and South Australia - wherever we can get them that wool matches with those we breed, being 16 to 18 micron. We joined about 2000/2500 on 1st January, and the remainder on 1st April for a spring lamb - that's only to spread it out a bit, and we grow 200-300ha of oats a year so it takes advantage of that as well."

All ewes at Merrill are scanned for multiples, with empty ewes joined again, creating a third lambing period each year. "The target for the ewes is to get them to 3-score condition, and rams in as good as nick as you can get them - they have lucerne for a month before going out to work, and then lucerne/barley ad-lib when they come out, as some go back in again. We are joining at 1.2 per cent this year, but we usually aim for 1.5 per cent. And usually only scan about 5 per cent drys overall so that is working well," Mr Hungerford said.

Mr Hungerford said when he started at the operation, there were a range of rams being used, many unsuitable for the frame size of their Merino flock. He turned the buying focus to Poll Dorset rams with low birth weight and high post-weaning weight Australian Sheep Breeding Figures, and has since sourced rams from Rowallan, Bendick Murrell and Kentish Downs, Little Billabong.

"When you are lambing 6500 ewes at once you can't be everywhere, and the low birthweight lambs are going well, they take off at marking age and get a good start," Mr Hungerford said. "The early lambs in a good year get to 30kg plus at weaning at three months of age, and if the timing doesn't work out for sending them direct to the finisher, we put them on AuctionsPlus and have no trouble selling them - they have such a good name, that as soon as you offer them up they sell. Once you do it a few times you end up with repeat customers and that is a big thing - they know what they are getting."

Ewes are running on predominantly improved pasture - a phalaris, cocksfoot and clover mix, and pastures are being

renovated each year, with oats planted for the winter and brassica for the summer. "We put early (lambing) ewes onto oats after marking until weaning, and then brassica is planted in August so when we wean the first week of December they go onto Brassica if they don't get trucked straight out," Mr Hungerford said.

There are very few 2020 drop lambs left at Merrill, thanks to a bumper season and an abundance of feed. "We sold some four weeks ago, they all weighed at 34kg and made \$174, which is pretty good money for a store lamb without shearing costs, etc," Mr Hungerford said.

"The last couple of years we've bought ewes already in lamb to non-Dorset rams and our main buyer won't take them as they then won't take them at Coles. Poll Dorsets are easy to sell - everything will sell when there aren't many about, but when everyone's got lambs you want to be selling the best lambs."



Putting your best foot forward when it comes to social media

Courtesy of Angus Australia

Do you have a social media profile set up for your business? If not, it's not a bad idea!

Social media is an excellent way to advertise your business, without the splurge on marketing resources. All you need is your phone and access to the social media applications of your choice.

While social media is an excellent way to capture your seedstock or commercial business on farm, there are a few things to remember when utilising your social media as a marketing resource.

If you are establishing a social media page with the intention of utilising it to help advertise your cattle and give your potential buyers a look into your life on-farm, you need to keep in mind that while you want to capture the heart of your business, you have to remember the importance of keeping a professional image to your brand.

A business social media page is a representation of your enterprise. While you can use your social media to express yourself and have a bit of fun, don't forget that your audience is vast, so you don't want to share anything that doesn't represent your brand or business well.

While many of us don't really have a professional camera handy, in this day and age some pretty great photography can be captured with a smart phone.

But this doesn't mean just any old iPhone photo should be used on your business Instagram or Facebook. If you are photographing or videoing your cattle, you have to ask yourself, 'Does that the photo best represent your herd?'

By comparison, if it were to go into the newspaper, would you be happy with the photo? If its blurry, for example, and doesn't show what you are trying to communicate well, does it need to go up?

Being slightly picky about what you post can be an excellent way of curating your feed to not only capture the essence and intrigue of your business but can also work to better represent your top-quality herd when it comes to sale time.



There are plenty of tips for some great livestock photography that you can capture on your smartphone:

Timing in the day:

While some moments are understandably "you've got to be there" situations that have to be captured then and there (e.g. a funny moment, or equally a pretty cute one), when it comes to capturing general photos of your herd, there are some golden hour times that you should try and hit to get a great image. Ideally the couple of hours after sunrise and the couple of hours before sunset are best, with the sun behind you. You want to avoid the sun being directly above you.

If you've zoomed in quite a lot to capture a photo at a distance

Unfortunately this can compromise the quality of the image. Adding to this if the lighting isn't great, then your beautiful Angus animals can just look like little black marks. If possible, try to avoid maximum zoom in from a distance, because more often than not, the audience isn't seeing the excellent view that you are.

Practice makes perfect!

Obviously, while these are just tips to give you a hand, just capturing some great moments on farm is an excellent start to your social media marketing and practice makes perfect. Keep going, keeping in mind these tips, and good luck!



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(photo taken after rams used for 2021 joining)

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110/20	11.9	18.6	-0.6	2.6	158.4	154.1	D 33
405/20	12.0	19.3	-0.5	3.5	159.0	148.0	D 400
876/20	11.6	18.6	0.3	3.2	151.2	147.5	F 494
57/20	10.8	17.2	0.2	3.4	158.5	162.5	L 625



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Guide to Sheep Genotyping for Breeders

Courtesy of Sheep Genetics Australia

KEY POINTS

1. Parentage testing is available to all sheep breeds.
2. The benefit of higher density genomic testing for ASBV's varies between breeds. Sheep Genetics staff can make sure you get the best value from genotyping.
3. For genotypes to be included in the Sheep Genetics analysis for ASBV's you need to have submitted your data to Sheep Genetics with pedigree and some trait records.
4. Contact a MLA approved sheep genotyping lab. A list of approved labs is on the Sheep Genetics website www.sheepgenetics.org.au/Breeding-services/Genomics. Discuss your requirements with your genotyping lab.
5. Collect samples. Follow sampling instructions carefully to avoid contamination so failures are minimised.
6. Provide an electronic file including sample ID, animal ID, Sheep Genetics ID (SGID), sex, year of birth and animal type (sire, dam, progeny) to your lab.
 - Provide a complete list of the sires and dams you used. We need this list to assign parents to your animals.
 - Check your file carefully for duplicate animal and sample IDs. Make sure there is a record for every sample.
 - Always use a 16 digit SGID to identify the animal where possible. You will only get breeding values if you use SGIDs.



7. Send the electronic file and samples to your genotyping lab.
8. Your genotyping lab will place your order with Sheep Genetics/MLA and process the samples.
 - If you have questions regarding the timing of your genotyping, contact your genotyping lab.
9. Once the samples are processed Sheep Genetics/MLA will run the parentage analysis and return the results to the genotyping lab.
 - You will receive parentage information from your genotyping lab.
 - If you have any questions regarding your parentage results, please contact your genotyping lab.
10. Enter your parentage results into your software and submit data to Sheep Genetics to be included in the genetic evaluation
11. Higher density genomic test results will be included in the following MERINOSELECT or LAMBPLAN evaluation runs.
 - Animal data (pedigree and performance records) must be submitted with corresponding SGIDs to contribute to ASBV's.
 - Do not send your higher density genomic results to Sheep Genetics. Sheep Genetics/MLA will already have these and will include them in the evaluation.

12. Who to contact with common queries:

Query	Genotyping Lab	Sheep Genetics
To get animals genotyped	X	
To get a flock code		X
For info about parentage testing, ASBV's, Flock profile testing, genetic conditions and recessive genes.	X	X
To change IDs, submit further sires/dams for parentage testing.	X	



Poll Dorset DNA Testing – Easy, Accurate and Affordable

Courtesy of Neogen

DNA testing is a fast and efficient method for Poll Dorset seedstock producers to obtain critical data for identifying elite, high-performance animals from an early age.

DNA test results from Neogen's Sheep GGP 50K DNA test are combined with Sheep Genetics records to predict Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) for critical traits including birth weight, weaning weight, eye muscle depth, fat depth, and carcass weight.

Neogen Australasia's Territory Manager for South Australia and Western Australia, Dan Roe, said embarking on DNA testing for the first time might seem a daunting task, but assured breeders it was in fact an easy and affordable process that could deliver significant improvement in a flock through better selection at joining time.

"DNA testing is a fast and reliable way to read the genetic code that determines sheep performance," Mr Roe said. "Knowing the genetic merit of animals at a young age can guide selection and breeding decisions and shorten generation interval in the flock.

"The first step is to look at your breeding objective and identify what sort of DNA test is the best option for you – in terminal breeds the Sheep GGP 50K is a popular test as it feeds into the LAMBPLAN system.

"Having visually identified the pick of a drop, a DNA test can then be used to identify which animals to keep and which to cull from your breeding program. As a result of adding genomic testing to the selection process, breeders can achieve an increase in their ASBV accuracies of between 5% and 30%."

Neogen operates Australia's only local livestock genomic testing laboratory in Queensland and is commercially delivering the range of tests developed by the former Cooperative Research Centre for Sheep Industry Innovation (Sheep CRC).

Through ASBVs the Neogen Sheep GGP 50K test reports on the key drivers of sheepmeat eating quality with values for lean meat yield, intramuscular fat and shear force – traits that are otherwise impossible to measure without post-slaughter measurements.

Mr Roe said getting started was as simple as ordering a sample kit from sheepdna.com.au or by contacting your local Neogen Territory Manager.

Neogen offers three sample methods for samples to be submitted to the lab, with tissue sample units (TSUs) the preferred method for its ease on farm and its reliability during laboratory processing. Blood cards and semen are the other accepted methods.

"When you have received your sample kits it's time to head out to the yards and physically take the sample.

"Using TSUs as your sample method will allow you to sample as early as birth allowing you to be able to get your data sooner rather than later."

Taking a sample using a TSU is as simple as loading the TSU into the applicator and taking the sample from the middle of the ear, making sure that the TSU has been sealed and then placing it back in the box and recording the animal's visual ID alongside the TSU number.

After taking samples, producers need to complete two pieces of paperwork: the Sample ID Form and the Submission Form for submission to Neogen.

"The Sample ID Form needs to be printed and completed and put in the post with your samples," Mr Roe said. "The Submission Form is an excel spreadsheet, which records your animals' visual and SheepGenetics ID numbers along with the TSU barcodes, and needs to be emailed to naa-sheep@neogen.com.

"When your samples have been entered on to the SheepDNA database you will be invoiced for the tests."

Genotyping is completed within three to four weeks from the time the samples arrive at the laboratory.

An additional one to two weeks should also be factored in for the results to be processed through the LAMBPLAN analysis (data runs are conducted on the 1st and 15th of each month).

Results for GGP 50K tests will be seen on the animals' LAMBPLAN data, if parentage has been requested; these results will be emailed to you by the Neogen SheepDNA office.

"If you have been thinking about DNA testing sale or show animals, now is perfect time to start to ensure you have the results back in time for inclusion in your stud catalogues," Mr Roe said.

For more information visit www.sheepdna.com.au or contact Dan Roe at Neogen on 0447 639 552.

TSU Fast Facts

- TSU collection is different to ear notching as each TSU tube contains a liquid buffer solution that preserves the sample.
- To get started you'll need an applicator and TSU tubes, these can be sourced from Neogen.
- TSU applicators are designed so every animal gets its own cutter to reduce chances of contamination.
- The TSU self-seals as you take the sample and each TSU tube has its own unique ID code on the side that can be cross-referenced to the animal's ear tag number. No two TSUs carry the same ID code.
- It is important to record the TSU ID code AND the animal's ID as you collect samples.
- The advantages of TSUs are:
 - Processed 6 times faster than blood cards*
 - More efficient on farm
 - 99% success rate*
 - Reduces the chance of a sample mix up
 - Half the failure rate of blood cards*
 - Limits potential for sample contamination
 - Consistent sample size and quality
 - Less double handling of samples

**on average, may vary depending on test requests & times of year etc*

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Sheep flock decline under the microscope

It is no secret that the Australian sheep flock has been in continuing decline since the 1990's. Although producers have seen reasonable returns from meat and wool in recent years, the industry continues to see sheep numbers reduce.

In order to highlight the key drivers of the flock decline, Sheep Producers Australia (SPA) commissioned the "Sheep Supply" Project. Made up of four components, the project aims to qualify the global demand for Australian sheep-meat and the opportunities for investing in programs that enable increased sheep-meat supply.

"We instigated the project due to concerns about our ability to supply a consistent volume of sheep and lamb to the processing sector and maintain Australia's position as a major supplier of sheep meat globally," said SPA's CEO, Stephen Crisp. "Understanding the drivers of flock decline is vital when making policy decisions to support the rebuild or restructure of the Australian sheep-meat industry."

Animal Health Australia (AHA) and Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) are assisting SPA in managing the different components of the project, which utilise both data science and social science methodologies.

The project includes a global demand forecast for 2030, conducted by MLA's Global Insights team, an analysis on flock decline to understand causational factors which have caused the flock to increase or decrease in the past, and an overall data and insight analysis where a skills-based steering group will determine strategic priorities from all data collected.

The fourth element of the project relies on qualitative social science analysis to explore the demographics of current and past sheep producers and provide an insight into the attitudes of producers at different points of their production career.

To deliver the social science research element, AHA and SPA have engaged Dr Roger Wilkinson, Dr Geoff Kuehne and Dr Neil Barr. With more than 80 years of combined experience researching farmer decision-making and farm sector restructuring, this team of researchers has a deep understanding of sheep production systems and the farming community.

"We are excited to be working with such a strong team of researchers to identify the social factors which are influencing the decline in sheep numbers" said AHA's Executive Manager Biosecurity and Animal Health Systems, Dr Simon Humphrys.

"The research team will be seeking input from current and past sheep producers across Australia through in-depth qualitative interviews, and we encourage all those who are approached to participate in this vital research."

Interviews for this research were set to commence in April 2021.





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Lakeside Park PD wins supreme champion

Courtesy of Lynette Carew-Reid & Jessica Whyte, Farm Weekly

Grand champion Poll Dorset ram, interbreed ram and supreme exhibit: Lakeside Park, Aldersyde

Res champion Poll Dorset ram: Shirlee Downs, Quairading

Champion interbreed group: Leween, Narrogin

Champion Poll Dorset ewe: Brimfield, Kondonup

Res champion Poll Dorset ewe: Dongadilling, Quairading

SOME great stories played out as champions were sashed at the 2021 Make Smoking History Williams Gateway Expo last weekend and one of the more exciting was the contest for the Supreme champion sheep in the British and Australasian breeds' section.

The judging included a stretchy, well muscled Poll Dorset ram that had already been a class winner and reserve champion ram at the Make Smoking History Wagin Woolorama last month. Judges Laurie Fairclough, Stockdale studs, York and Rivers Hyde Kohat stud, Ongerup, applied some good old basic commercial thinking to help them make the decision to award the top prize to the ram.

As spokesman Mr Fairclough said the ewe was outstanding in her presentation but once they put their hands on the ram, they could feel the carcase, and with the sheer amount of muscling, the meat, along with its commercial attributes, it had the slightest advantage.

The ram was bred by long-time breeder Wally Mills' Lakeside Park stud, Aldersyde, who in his later years has teamed with Stephen Eales from Popanyinning to manage and run his sheep alongside his own Elspeth Poll Dorset stud.

The judges' decision was backed up by the Lakeside ram's impressive set of Australian Sheep Breeding Values that showed a Terminal Carcase Plus of 152.2. The ram, ear tag 117/20, by Valma 492/18, also had +11.46 weaning weight, +17.3 post weaning weight and +2.7mm eye muscle breeding values and had proven early maturity attributes when it weighed 54.5 kilograms at 13.5 weeks of age.

The big prize of the day was the Farm Weekly two-wheel motor bike and all seven breeds taking part at the show were represented by a group of two rams and two ewes in the contest.

Again, it was a great story with the Shepherd family from Narrogin scribing another chapter in their 2021 book of success. After winning supreme sheep for the first time ever at Woolorama they followed it up by winning the motorbike at the expo.

Family spokesman Tim Shepherd said this year had been the most successful they had ever had in the show ring and he attributed it to the support from customers who allowed them to make the right decisions in pushing, year after year, to get more muscling into their breeding.

The champion ewe was won by a Brimfield stud ewe bred by Max Whyte and Gail Cremasco, Kendenup.



The supreme champion interbreed sheep of the Williams Gateway Expo held by Stephen Eales, Popanyinning with judges Rivers Hyde, and Laurie Fairclough.



Max Whyte and Gail Cremasco, Brimfield stud, Kendenup, hold their champion Poll Dorset ewe with judge Laurie Fairclough, York.



The Shepherd family, Leween Poll Dorset stud, won the champion interbreed group for two rams and two ewes.

Tattykeel take clean sweep in interbreed

Courtesy of Lucy Kinbacher and Billy Jupp, The Land

Supreme prime lamb ram and exhibit: Tattykeel, Oberon, NSW

Supreme prime lamb ewe: Tattykeel

The JA&MY Gilmore Perpetual Trophy: Tattykeel

The Peter Taylor Memorial Perpetual Trophy: Tattykeel

A powerhouse Poll Dorset team from Tattykeel stud at Oberon couldn't be beaten in the meat and dual purpose sheep interbreed judging, claiming a clean sweep of all championship ribbons of the Sydney Royal Easter Show for the third year running.

Judges Joanna Balcombe (NSW), Kevin Cronk (NSW), Marshall Douglas (NSW), Bron Ellis (Victoria), Harold Manton (South Australia) and William Milroy (NSW) all awarded the Poll Dorset entries from the Gilmore family their top points in the supreme ram, ewe, pair and group classes.

A 12-month-old ram who was said to "own the show" caught everyone's eye from the moment his 145 kilogram frame stepped on the mat and subsequently went all the way to the supreme prime lamb exhibit award. Named Masterclass, his growth for age and structural correctness was hard for any of the other breeds to beat.

Speaking on behalf of the judges, Marshall Douglas, Abelene Park Poll Dorset, Woolloomin said the ram's length of carcase, particularly from the loin, was what got him over their supreme ewe. "I think when sheep grow as fast as this pair has you can see the development of these sheep at such a young age, their leg structure has to be impeccable to carry those weights at young ages," he said. "These two have got that structure and I think particularly for the ram, it will hold him in good stead for a long life."

The embryo-bred lamb by Mastermind was used in the stud at nine months of age and had the fastest 50-day, 100-day, 200-day and 365-day weights ever recorded on the Tattykeel property.

"At six months of age he was 96 kilograms," Tattykeel's James Gilmore said. "So there is rapid growth there but he is just so balanced and carries it. One of the judges commented they thought he had an extra rib or two...the length of the ram is pretty incredible."

Not since 2016 has a ewe overcome the ram for the supreme title, he said. "She was an unbelievable ewe too and I don't know what it takes to beat the ram but she has come up against this bloke who is the type of ram you don't have every year," Mr Gilmore said. We would have loved to have had every Dorset breeder in the country here this year because you want competition, it makes you better."

Their Poll Dorset ewe who topped her interbreed class was a milk tooth, shorn female and was again the clear winner from all the judges.

The Peter Taylor Memorial Perpetual Trophy for one ram and two ewes was awarded to Tattykeel as did the J A and M Y Gilmore Perpetual Trophy for the best grand champion ram and ewe combination.



Graham and Kirsty Gilmore, Jack Healy, James Gilmore and Dan Rayner of Tattykeel stud at Oberon with the supreme prime lamb exhibit of the Sydney Royal. Photos: Lucy Kinbacher



James Gilmore with the champion interbreed ewe of the Sydney Royal.



Graham Gilmore, Jack Healy and, James Gilmore with the The Peter Taylor Memorial Perpetual Trophy interbreed group.

Poll Dorsets pivotal in China Breeding

Courtesy of Russ Davis

Russ Davis from D&D Consulting Group has spent the last five months, consulting and managing an exciting and innovative sheep project, in the community of Huanxian in Gansu Province, China. Huanxian is about 1200km from Beijing near the Gobi Desert. The climate is extremely harsh, with winter temperatures reaching -30 degrees.

The project is being developed in partnership with local farmers, the Chinese Government, and private enterprise, to improve the quality and quantity of sheep meat produced in China. Approximately US\$27 million has been invested in two farms. One with a capacity to hold 40,000 sheep and the other 32,000 sheep. All the sheep are housed in huge sheds with state-of-the-art facilities and modern technology. The sheds will soon be operating at full capacity.

\$1million has been invested in a robotic feeder that distributes food to the sheep three times a day. Good hygiene practices are vital, and a misting system is used to sanitise the shed. Sensors alert automatic fans to kick in when the air ammonia levels reach nine parts per million. It only takes seven minutes for a complete change of air in the sheds. All the sheep are on gratings and the pens are scraped out twice per day. The manure is collected, composted, and then sold to farmers as fertilizer. Fresh water is available at will. Nothing goes to waste.

The breeding ewes are based on a traditional Chinese breed called "Hu". They are a highly efficient, fat-tail Romanov breed suited to the region. Hu have been bred for their meat.

The first objective of the farm is to produce FX ewes that will be sold to small producers and farm collectives. The Chinese eat approximately 13.2kg of sheep meat per year with the level increasing by 25 per cent this year due to weak pork production. All sheep meat is called "mutton". The prime cuts are frozen, then sliced for "hotpots". Traditionally the Chinese boil their meat. Every part of the sheep, except the hooves, is eaten including the offal – nothing is wasted. A leg shank may be served up to the table with the hoof still attached.

The second objective of the farms are to produce prime lambs for the domestic market. This is where the Poll Dorset comes into its own as the Terminal Sire. The best growth rates come from Poll Dorset second cross lambs with daily weight gains of 400+ grams per day. Lambs are weaned at 15-20kg. Ram lambs are sent to the feedlot and sold entire. Ewe lambs are classed and divided up according to quality, weight, and other breeding parameters. Lambs are sold into the domestic market at 50kg live weight and bring the equivalent of A\$300 at an average of 25kg dressed. Sheep are fed on TMR consisting of 16% protein mixture from corn/wheat/silage/oaten hay. The product from these farms are aimed at the elite end of the Chinese market. All the breeding ewes are artificially inseminated. As the numbers grow local farmers will be allocated breeding ewes to take to their own farms.

The ewes lamb in their pens. All the ewes are electronic tagged and monitored constantly for performance. Survival rates records are kept and sit at 87% for tw/tr and 97% for singles, at the moment. The wool is a by-product and is sold locally but of little value. Sheep are shorn in their pens, standing up with

the shearer going from pen to pen. The shearers shear between 100-125 per day, so it takes a long time to shear all the sheep.

The Chinese Government has a five-year plan to revitalize agriculture. All land is leased in China and supported by the Government. This is a massive and ambitious project with Poll Dorsets playing a very important part.



AI teams in China



Robotic feeder in action



Chinese style shearing



First-cross Poll Dorset lambs

New breeder's Oxford A&P show accolade

Courtesy of Sally Rae

Grace Frahm is among a new generation of enthusiastic young Poll Dorset breeders in New Zealand. Grace (18) has established the Carleton stud on her parents' farm at Oxford in Canterbury. Dick and Ann Frahm have been breeding Poll Dorsets since 2005; they own the Gracebrooke stud, named after their daughters Grace and Brooke.

Grace has always been interested in being part of the sheep operation and she cited her father as being an inspiration to her. "He loves his farming, I love my farming as much. He's everything I want to do in the future," she said.

She finished school last year and was passionate about pursuing a farming career. She hoped to own her own farm one day somewhere in the South Island. Grace's stud was started when her father bought 31 ewes from fellow Canterbury breeder Dave Martin - and then told her he had bought them for her.

"I was in a bit of shock, I didn't know what to say. I was pleased to be able to have my own stud and do everything that Dad did," she said. The ewes were run in with her parents' flock and, while she was at boarding school during her first lambing, he kept an eye on them.

In April, Grace entered her first show at Oxford and was placed third with a ewe lamb, third with a ram lamb and also won the ram lamb class, with that entry going on to win reserve champion Poll Dorset ram. It was a good day for the Frahm family as Dick and Ann won champion Poll Dorset with a 2-tooth ram, which went on to win supreme champion purebred sheep of the show.

Grace admitted it was a nerve-wracking time as she waited for the results. "It was a bit terrifying having to go up against Dad," she said. But she was very proud to see his ram scoop the top accolade. In 2018, Grace was a junior judge for Warwick Boon, from the Lochaire stud, at the New Zealand Agricultural Show in Christchurch. While that was also something of a nerve-wracking experience, it was also an "amazing" opportunity and she learned a lot from him, she said.

Her father had also judged at a few shows and she sometimes "tagged along" with him and the pair exchanged their opinions about the entries. She hoped to enter some stock judging competitions once she had built up some more knowledge around wool.

Grace hoped to build up her stud numbers and eventually breed good enough rams to be able to sell them at sales.



Grace Frahm, at Oxford A and P show, with her ram lamb which won reserve champion Poll Dorset ram.



Dick Frahm at Oxford A and P show with the supreme purebred sheep of the show a 2-tooth Poll Dorset ram.



Poll Dorset halfbred lambs sold up to \$151 at Martin Murray's Maryburn Station lamb sale near Tekapo, NZ in January

Central Vic Family Day

Courtesy of Jan MacDonald

Champion Ram Lamb: Hillend Partners (Poll Dorset).

Champion Ewe Lamb: Hillend Partners (Dorset Horn).

Champion Lamb: Hillend Partners (Poll Dorset Ram Lamb).

With no shows for 2020, Victorian Central Region members decided to turn their annual family day into a mini event. Six breeders brought a total of 20 lambs (including a couple of

foundation breed Dorset Horns) to the sheep pens under the elms at Victoria Park, Daylesford on Sunday 28 March. After a picnic lunch and gathering of 23 members, John Harbour then judged the lambs in several classes.



Champion Ram - Hillend



Central Victorian Region APDA also awarded their inaugural Certificate of Appreciation 2021 awards for outstanding contribution to the region to Laurie Thompson, Darryl MacDonald, Gordon Oliver, Geoff Oliver and Eddie Davis (pictured) as well as Helen Sheehan, Peter Cain and Janet MacDonald.

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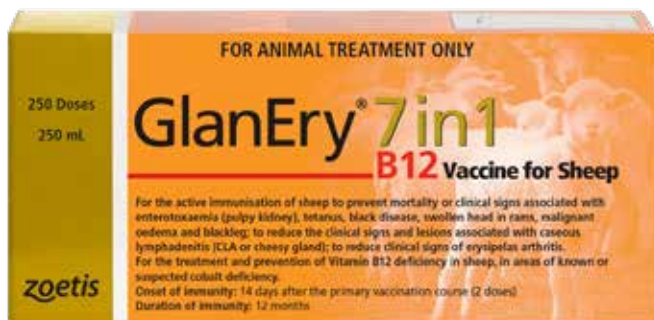
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Dr Kelly Graham, Associate Director of the Zoetis Livestock Veterinary Team is really excited about the addition of Erysipelas protection into the Zoetis Glanvac 6 in 1 range. Kelly indicated that, 'Erysipelas arthritis, caused by the bacteria Erysipelas rhusiopathiae, is the most common cause of lame lambs on farm and results in significant losses both on farm and at the abattoir. Losses on farm are due to culling, poor growth rates and reduced trading options if animals are unfit to load, and abattoir

losses are associated with trim, reduced carcase weights and potential carcase condemnations.'

When asked where these bacteria come from, Kelly said 'Erysipelas is found all over Australia and it can persist for a long time in the environment, including in water. It is carried on to a farm by many ways; from introduced sheep i.e. sheep that are chronically infected, by feral pigs, and a variety of other native animals, in fact over 30 species of wild birds and at least 50 species of wild mammals are known to harbour Erysipelas, as well as cattle, dogs, kangaroos and mice. All these animals and birds provide an extensive reservoir, as a source of environmental contamination. So, given this bacterium can survive in the environment and is carried by a range of animals, contamination on any farm can change from year to year, therefore if a farm doesn't experience infection one year it does not mean it won't experience problems in subsequent years.'

The most recently published annual report (2018 – 2019) from the National Sheep Health Monitoring Project, representing the abattoir findings of approximately 8.7 million sheep inspected across Australia, showed a high percentage of sheep lines had evidence of arthritis. Erysipelas arthritis is definitely a significant issue in Australia.

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RECIPE

Pappardelle with Braised Lamb Ragu

SERVES 6 - PREP TIME 30 mins - COOKING TIME 180mins

INGREDIENTS

Marinade

- 1 litre dry red wine
- 2 sprigs rosemary, torn
- 2 fresh bay leaves
- 2 sprigs thyme, torn
- 10 black peppercorns

Ragu

- 1 x 2kg lamb shoulder, cut into 8 pieces
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 small brown onion, diced

- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 celery stalk, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 litre vegetable stock

Pappardelle

- 50g butter
- 1 lemon, zest finely grated
- Extra virgin olive oil
- 100g young Pecorino Sardo, freshly grated
- Fresh pappardelle pasta

METHOD

For the Ragu

1. To make the marinade, combine all the ingredients and add lamb to the bowl. Cover and refrigerate for 24 hours, turning 3 or 4 times so that all the meat has time to marinade. Remove lamb from the fridge 1-2 hours before cooking and set aside in a cool place to come to room temperature.
2. Remove lamb from marinade and pat dry. Dust meat in flour and shake off any excess. Heat half the oil in a large frying pan, add half the lamb and cook for about 4 minutes, turning as needed to brown each side as much as possible. Transfer meat to a baking dish, skin-side down. Fry remaining lamb, adding a little more oil if necessary.
3. Preheat oven to 180°C.
4. Add remaining oil to the pan. When hot, add onion, carrot, celery and garlic and cook over a medium heat, stirring occasionally until soft and starting to colour, about 5-7 minutes. Add marinade, bring to the boil, reduce heat and

simmer for 5 minutes. Add stock and return to the boil.

5. Sprinkle lamb with salt and carefully pour vegetables and liquid over it. Cover tightly with a double layer of foil and place in oven for about 2 hours, until meat is tender enough that you can break it apart with a spoon. Remove dish from oven, take the meat out of the dish and, when cool enough to handle, break the flesh off the bones in large chunks and set aside. Discard the bones.
6. Place baking dish on the stove over a high heat and bring to the boil. Skim off any fat that rises to the surface, remove bay leaves, rosemary and thyme stalks and boil until reduced to the thickness of pouring cream. Add salt flakes and pepper. Remove from the heat, return meat to the sauce and stir to combine well. Cover and keep warm.

For the Pappardelle

1. Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil, add fine sea salt then pasta and boil for about 3 minutes, until tender. Strain well, retaining some of the cooking water.
2. Add pasta to most of the sauce and toss for a minute to coat well. Add butter, lemon zest, a drizzle of olive oil and toss well to combine. If it's a bit dry add a couple of tablespoons of reserved cooking water and stir it through.
3. Serve in large pasta bowls and sprinkle with Pecorino. Serve with remaining sauce in a separate bowl for those who like their pasta extra saucy.

Recipe by
Giovanni Piliu

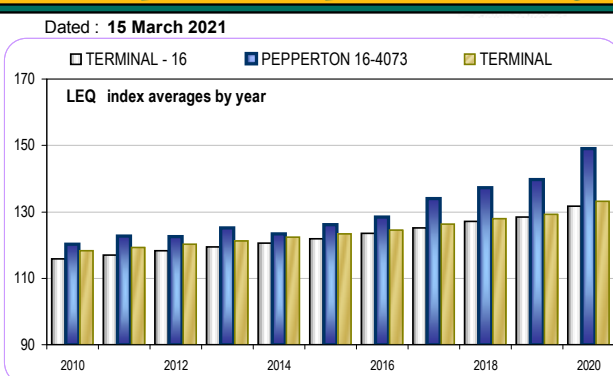
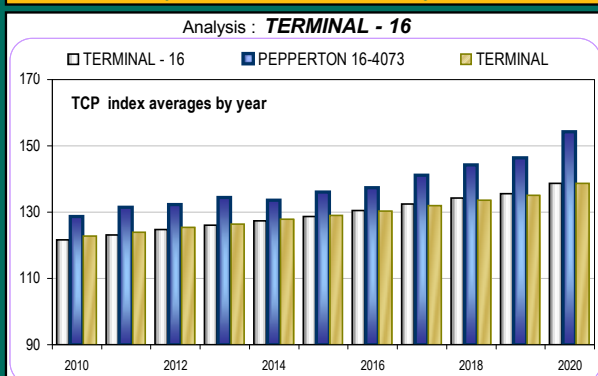


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The team at Janmac wish to sincerely thank all of those who supported our 2020 annual sale in such difficult circumstances.

Despite a trying lead up to the sale we were rewarded with a record stud ram average and a new top price of \$11,250 paid for a Janmac stud ram, Lot 20, 190025; purchased by the Kelly family, Zacman Poll Dorset Stud, Binnun, SA.

We are excited by this year's young sires including Rangeview 007, two new Ulandi Park sires and Janmac 021-19, our highest growth rate ram ever.

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