

BARWON



Poll Dorset and White Suffolk Stud

Spring 2011

Welcome

Welcome to our spring newsletter. We have actually had a real winter—the first for many years. May, June and July were very cold with little pasture growth. Luckily the good autumn growth and the condition of stock coming out of summer/autumn has helped get us through. It has also been very dry which has suited us here at Yerong Creek, but I know many areas not far away are crying out for a decent fall of rain. I hope by the time you read this the heavens have opened up.

The 2010 drop rams that will be presented for sale on 14th October (pictured below, in April 2011) are excellent examples of Barwon-type rams with sound structure, clean heads, excellent growth rate and covering off well on the three Ts—teeth, toes and testicles.



This will be the third year that Barwon's on-property spring ram sale will be held in October. Due to your requests we are moving to a morning sale, starting at 10:30am with the aim of avoiding the heat of the day. We hope the time change works for you and invite you to join us for a light luncheon afterwards.

I look forward to seeing you at the sale.

Mark Yates,
Studmaster.



Peter Cabot, Landmark Wagga Wagga and Mark Yates.

MARKETING

Keep your options open

There is a trend to look to extended contracts with a single buyer/processor as an opportunity to lock in prices and secure a market. While these contracts offer stability to a farm business for the length of the contract and remove price risk, they add production risk and take away the ability to capitalise on price rises.

It is sound advice in any business to spread your risk and adhere to the old adage 'don't put all your eggs in one basket.'

Before you commit to a contract arrangement, make sure you:

- Review the contract details carefully.

- Ensure your target product (eg weight of lamb) is achievable in all seasons and fits the rest of your farm business activities.
- Consider contracting only a percentage of your production to reduce production risk and enable you to capitalise on upward price movement.
- Get advice from a number of sources—not only someone who has a vested interest in the deal!

ANIMAL HEALTH

Mineral supplements

Rob Inglis, ELMS Manager, Elders

Like most mixed farming properties in south eastern Australia, Barwon relies on improved pastures for maximum dry matter production. Whilst having adequate to good levels of energy and generally high levels of protein, these high performance grazing crops and pastures can be deficient in, or have reduced availability of, certain critical trace minerals. To ensure progeny perform at their optimum, Barwon has enlisted the services of Elders Livestock Management Solutions (ELMS).

The ELMS Green Feed Block provides the basis for mineral supplementation on improved crops and pastures. The Green Feed Blocks provide maintenance levels of necessary macro and micro minerals resulting in better rumen function, and as a result, healthier, more productive sheep.

Additional supplementation of grain and associated concentrates is used where and when pasture nutrition is limited.

All ewes and rams at Barwon will be treated with Multimin® for sheep, prior to joining and lambing.

Multimin Injection supplements the essential trace minerals zinc, selenium and manganese. There is a high demand for these trace minerals at conception and parturition as they play a key role in follicle and sperm development and survival, embryo development, immunocompetence and membrane, hoof and skin health.

Barwon conduct regular parasite monitoring. This ensures sheep don't get "over drenched" which can compromise the efficacy of anthelmintics.



A 2010 drop Poll Dorset ram in April, a typical Barwon ram—clean head, sound structure (toes, testicles and teeth) with good carcase characteristics.

CUSTOMER FOCUS

Optimising eating quality of meat

Adapted from "The effect of nutrition and growth on sheepmeat eating quality", MSAS2 Tips & Tools, Meat Standards Australia

Nutrition in the lead up to slaughter is critical in defining sheepmeat eating quality. There is potential for good eating quality cuts from all sheepmeat categories—lamb, hogget and mutton—so it is important all animals are well nourished and managed.

Collagen

During periods of active growth, the 'turnover' of collagen (the structural protein that dominates connective tissue) increases. For this reason, the hardening of connective tissue is slower. With reduced hardening, the background toughness in meat will be reduced.

Pre-slaughter weight gain

For best eating quality, animals should be gaining weight up until slaughter. Good finishing optimises the amount of muscle, leading to tender meat.

The growth rate in the two weeks prior to slaughter should be at least:

- 100 g per day for cross-breds
- 150 g per day for Merinos.

Muscle tissue comprises soft muscle fibres surrounded by stronger connective tissue fibres, which increase in toughness as the animal ages. Poorly nourished animals that are losing weight will

use muscle fibres to nourish the rest of the body, but the connective tissue fibres remain unchanged. Consequently, poorly finished sheep are likely to produce tougher meat.

What to feed

Research has shown that the type of finishing system has little effect on eating quality, provided sheep are gaining weight before slaughter and they are finished to a fat score of 2 or above.

The exception is diets that are very high in cereal grains fed for long periods (eight weeks), which may cause eating quality problems.

Fat levels

Good nutrition prior to slaughter so animals reach a fat score of at least 2 guarantees adequate intramuscular fat levels. If intramuscular fat falls below 3% meat becomes dry and lacks flavour. Typically, the loin of a prime lamb finished to a fat score of 2 or 3 has around 4 or 5% intramuscular fat, which is a good balance.

Muscle glycogen

Glycogen is animal starch or sugar and is held in reserve for vigorous muscular activity. Good finishing optimises muscle glycogen levels at slaughter leading to better:

- colour;
- flavour; and
- shelf life.

Glycogen is optimised by a combination of good pre-slaughter nutrition and minimising stress in the immediate pre-slaughter period.

Every animal has a certain amount of energy contained in its muscles in the form of glycogen. Once the animal is dead, the muscle glycogen is converted to lactic acid, which causes pH to fall.

Nutrition provided to the animal produces glycogen, then factors that use up energy, such as exercise or stress use it up. Animals will always be using glycogen and the factors that reduce glycogen levels will always be present in some form, but it is important to minimise their impact.

Low levels of muscle glycogen in the live animal cause high pH meat, which when compared to low pH meat:

- lacks flavour;
- is visually unattractive;
- is tougher;
- takes longer to cook; and
- does not keep as well.

Good finishing nutrition reduces the risk of slaughter animals developing high pH.

Again, weight gain of at least 100 g per day in cross-breds and 150 g per day in Merinos will reduce the risk of the high pH condition in sheep with a normal concentration of glycogen in lean muscle tissue. The normal and ideal concentration in sheep is around 1.5 g/100 g of lean muscle weight.

Maintaining muscle glycogen

The rate of glycogen loss from muscles is increased when nutrition is poor and animals are stressed—usually as a result of poor handling during mustering, yarding and transport. So maintain nutrition and minimise stress in the two weeks prior to slaughter.

Reducing pre-slaughter stress

Some ways to consider reducing stress include:

- Minimising the use of dogs during mustering prior to loading
- Adjust trucking times to match favourable weather conditions. Dramatic changes in temperature during transport, such as a cold snap or heavy rain, will cause undue stress.
- Reduce the time between muster and slaughter, where practical. Transport and lairage principles for meat quality focus on two factors—minimising stress and reducing the time until slaughter. A compromise between minimising carcass weight loss in transport and processor requirements for clean stock should be made.
- Ensure at least two weeks between shearing and slaughter to manage the stress as a result of the shearing process.
- Maintain hydration pre-slaughter. Dehydration can reduce muscle weight and eye muscle area, with preliminary data suggesting a possible 3% loss in carcass weight. So ensure stock have access to water during curfew, transport and lairage periods.

2011 Spring Ram Sale

Friday 14th October at 10:30 am



L to R: Mark Yates, Jan and Nev Lubke, Jindera, Jarrod Slattery, Landmark and Aaron Seaman, Elders with the top priced ram at the 2011 autumn sale.

Sale Offering

R. Yates & Co. will be offering over 180 specially selected rams
Approximately 140 Poll Dorset and 40 White Suffolk
Lambplan figures will be available on sale day or one week prior by request.



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Selling Agents



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