

BARWON



Poll Dorset and White Suffolk Stud

Winter

2008

Welcome

I hope the rain is falling as you read this newsletter. I know many areas have not had sufficient rain so I can only hope you get some spring rains to start some sort of a season for you.

At Barwon we have been very fortunate to have had some decent rains and our season is looking very positive at this stage. The crops are well advanced. Peter has been busy spraying weeds and spreading urea on the canola and some wheat crops.

We have fattened the last of the 2007 spring drop lambs on grazing cereals and selling them at around 22 to 25 kg for about \$4.80 to \$5.20/kg. This weight is a good target for our business.

This seasons rams are looking great and we have had some good results in the ring, at Dubbo and Cowra. We are off to Bendigo Poll Dorset Show and Sale in September, just prior to our annual spring sale.

As a ram breeder, my aim is to produce rams that help each of our clients make money—a product that satisfies your individual business needs, whether you are targeting suckers, heavy export lambs or somewhere in between.

We use Lambplan ASBV indexes in our stud breeding program, but also rely on visual appraisal and actual performance ie rams producing quality lambs with the desired target specifications.

Client feedback is also an important part of our selection criteria. At Barwon we take care to address the needs of our clients and work with them to ensure mutual benefit.

I believe we are all part of the prime lamb industry, in for the long haul, not here simply to make a quick buck.

On a technical note, Barwon is launching its website in late August. Find us at www.barwonstud.com.au

Please contact me if you have any enquiries, otherwise I hope to see you at our spring sale on 26th September.

Mark Yates, Studmaster.

Dubbo Champion White Suffolk

In April Barwon exhibited rams in the NSW White Suffolk Show at the Dubbo Agricultural Show.

Kubura 070063 was very successful winning Champion Ram and Reserve Champion Short Wool Ram. The ram went on to be Supreme White Suffolk Exhibit.

This was one of our most proud moments in breeding White Suffolk sheep. The judges commented on the massive, superbly structured ram—the photo says it all!



Kubura 070063 Champion White Suffolk Ram at Dubbo Show in April.

Dorset Show Results

Barwon exhibited three spring 2007 drop rams at the NSW Dorset Championships at Cowra in June, with each ram doing well in its class:

- Class 3–Kentish Downs Trophy. Performance ram under 1 ½ years machine shorn—4th
- Class 5–Gererdan Trophy. Ram under 1 ½ years old—4th
- Class 7–Balmoral Trophy. Ram under 1 ½ years old—8th or Commended

These three rams will be shown at the inaugural Bendigo Australasian Poll Dorset Show and Sale along with five of their brothers.

Feature Client

The Maslin Family, Beckom

Graham and Kathy Maslin, and their son, Ryan farm at Beckom, just south of Ardlethan in the heart of the Riverina. The season is treating them well at this stage, but it is the next couple of months that really count.

The Maslins have quite a large cropping program that includes grazing wheat and oats, some of the oats sown directly into a lucerne stand. They have had a lot of grazing value from the lucerne/oat mix and will lock it up soon for a hay cut.

In general the pasture paddocks, apart from the lucerne, were heavily grazed in autumn and early winter due to the late seasonal break, and with the cold conditions have not started to recover.



Ryan and Graham Maslin, Beckom at the 2008 Barwon Autumn Sale.

Graham is very pleased with this years lambs. He joins his Barwon Poll Dorsets to both Merino and first cross ewes. He trades Merinos and breeds his own first cross ewes.

For a change this year he has also joined a mob of Dorpers to the Barwon Dorset rams. They are yet to lamb but he believes they will produce some pretty handy lambs.

The lamb weight the Maslins target depends on the season. In a good season with plenty of good quality paddock feed they target heavy export lambs, greater than 24 kg.

If there is less feed about or the lambs are finished in the feedlot the target weight is 18 to 24 kg. The last lot of lambs sold averaged 22.1 kg.

The feedlot is used to wean lambs early and finish them, but only when the economics of feeding grain stack up. There are no feedlot lambs this year because there was no available grain from last years tough season.

Graham and Kathy sell lambs both direct to abattoir and through the yards. If the lambs are nice and uniform, with the right wool length and weight then they go direct to the abattoir. If the line is a bit mixed then they tend to be sent to the sale yards where they can be drafted up into a few smaller lots. Their stock agent helps determine the best sale option at he time.

The Maslins are feeling positive about the lamb market. With sheep numbers down, prices are likely to remain firm for a while yet. Probably not as high as they are currently, but prime lamb production should remain profitable.

Sires

The rams on offer for the Barwon spring ram selling season have been finished on grazing cereal crops, with access to feeders with barley, lupins and canola hay for roughage.

Rams were shorn in the first week of August, drenched with Ivomectin® and backlined with Magnum®.

Lambplan figures have been recorded and will be available to help you select the best ram for your enterprise.

Recently three stud breeders with years of experience inspected this years rams. They commented that the rams are of great Dorset type with heavy bone and plenty of length and muscle.

Let's not forget the White Suffolk. The same three breeders noted the spring 2008 offering of White Suffolk rams were large with excellent body length, depth and exceptional bone—great commercial traits for Merino and X-bred ewes.

Balance Key to Sire Selection

The lamb industry has been rapidly adopting the use of LambPlan and Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) to assist with sire selection and improve lamb growth rates and carcass quality.

It is important to keep a balance in your selection criteria in order to maintain eating quality. Focusing on a single trait can inadvertently result in unforeseen problems.

Carcass indexes such as eye muscle depth (PEMD), post weaning weight (PWWT) and carcass plus (CAR+) are doing a good job but it should be remembered that they are no silver bullet and should be used in combination with *old fashioned* visual appraisal.

Research into leg bone length

Recent research, funded by the Sheep CRC and MLA, into selecting for extreme muscling or growth has shown selecting for these traits (PEMD and PPWT) individually is a recipe for disaster, and can be linked to shortening of bones and reduced eating quality.

Limb growth was compared in Merino x Merino; Border Leicester sire x Merino; Poll Dorset sire x Merino; and second cross (Poll Dorset sire x Border Leicester/Merino ewe. Poll Dorset sires were selected for high ASBVs for either growth (PPWT) or muscling (PEMD).

The Sheep CRC found clear differences in bone size of Poll Dorset X lambs from sires selected for muscling (PEMD) or growth (PWWT).

Interestingly they also found the leg bones of ewes were distinctly shorter than wethers by around 3% at 8 months and 9% as adults; and Merinos had

comparable adult leg length to terminal sire crosses, but with quite different proportions—longer lower leg and shorter upper leg.

Consequences of selecting for high muscling

Selection for eye muscle growth (PEMD) decreases the length of the leg bones and specific sire selection for muscling may shorten the legs.

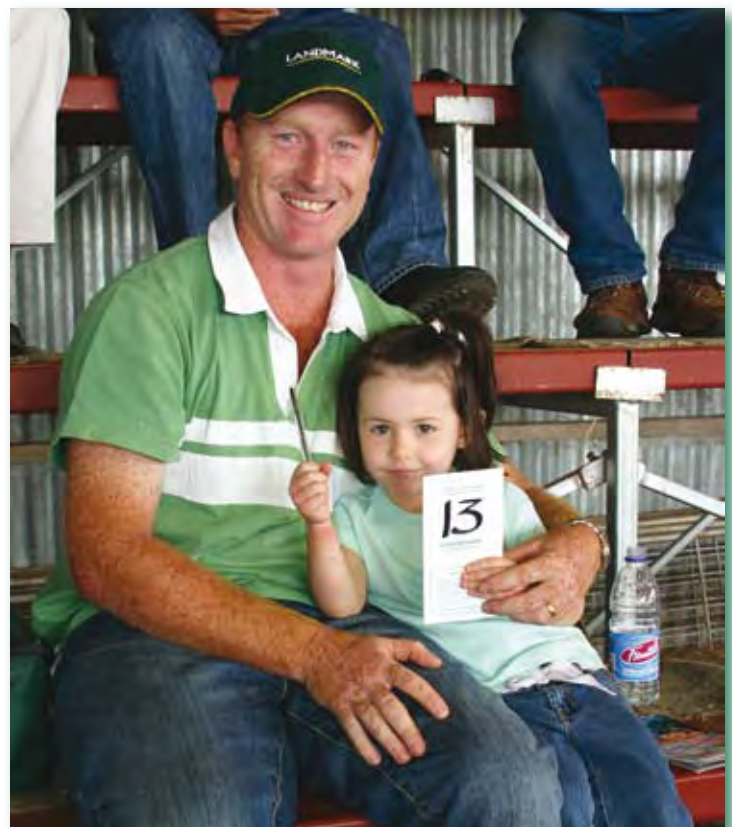
The carcasses of lambs selected for high muscling were also shorter along the spine, and had lower carcass bone percentage.

Single trait selection for muscling may have the consequence of shrinking the skeletal frame and this underpins the need to use a multi trait selection approach.

The MLA reports looking at all the figures in Lambplan showed there was not a major problem with overly lean animals, but the industry had to be aware of the issue.

Selecting for a balance between growth and muscling, and aiming for a fat score of two to three would ensure adequate fat coverage and high eating quality.

For more information on this research see the Sheep CRC website Practical Wisdom series: Quality Sheepmeat-bone growth and selection for muscling at <http://www.sheepcrc.org.au/index.php?id=1359>



Steve and Annabelle Bruckner, Ruby Park, at the 2008 Barwon Autumn Sale.

2008 Spring Ram Sale

Friday 26th September at 1:00 pm

Once again the Barwon Spring Ram Sale will be held on farm on the Friday after the Henty Machinery Field Days.



Come and enjoy a delicious lamb luncheon - smoked lamb rolls were served at Barwon's autumn sale by Jane Hunter (left) and Jane Yates (right).

Sale Offering

Barwon will be offering the following 2007 drop rams:

Poll Dorset—approximately 5 stud rams and 140 flock rams

White Suffolk—2 stud rams and 40 flock rams.

This years rams are equal and beyond the quality you have come to expect from Barwon.

Lambplan figures will be available on sale day.

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