

Trial News

Elders Balmoral Victoria Sire Evaluation

Show Champions Enter the 2007 Trial Entries now open

Two of the three studs that have expressed an early interest in the 2007 trial were show champions in 2006. The Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association (AMSEA) are providing funding for Show Champions to enter Sire Evaluations throughout Australia to encourage these champions to prove their value by assessing their progeny.

Tuloona Pastoral Company Host Farm for 2007

Michael and Jane Craig of Tuloona Pastoral Services will again host the next Sire Evaluation. Michael heads up an impressive and dedicated fine wool enterprise at Harrow, Victoria. Each year Tuloona uses Laserscan® and Length & Strength testing to fine tune their traditional sheep selection processes to achieve the following aims:

- 16-18 micron stylish wool
- Tensile strength > 45NKT
- Less than 1.5 VM
- Low % mid-point breaks
- Low C of V

This year Tuloona will be joining 12,000 fine wool merino ewes in late February. The average rainfall at Harrow is 600 mm (24"), but we have fallen short of that the last few years. The ewes for this years trial are 3 YO ewes that were micron tested individually as 2YO to an average of 17.4 micron. For further information on how Tuloona is coping with the drought conditions see Michaels article on page 6.

Dates for 2007

The date for AI is provisionally set for 1 & 2 Feb 2007. This means that registration forms will need to be in by mid January. The semen for the trial would have to be available by the 24 January at the latest.

Interested in entering?

The registration form is on the back page of this newsletter and can be faxed to 03 5576 5051

Or contact any one of the EVSE committee members (contact details on page 5) or email manager@balmoralbreeders.com for further information.

Thank-you to our Sponsors and supporters

We would like to thank our sponsors and supporters (committee members and host farms) for their work in 2006. Despite difficult conditions the trial is still recording relevant data for merino breeders.

A Word From Our Chairman Tom Silock



As we endure one of the toughest seasons on record, it is great to see the positive approach from our committee and participants. We already have quite a number of entries for next year's trial including a couple of sheep show champions (maybe more). As a new member on the national AMSEA committee I'm pleased to be able to report that we have just got agreement to use an index in future that is more suitable for flocks 19 micron and finer, in a high rain fall high stocking rate and keeping a part wether flock. This report will give an equal balance on micron and fleece weight with a significant weighting also on staple strength and worm resistance. Our host properties are to be congratulated on the care of trial sheep in such difficult times and in particular Michael Craig's management of this year's lambs. We continue to enjoy a close working relationship with our key sponsors Elders. The participation of their personnel in our activities is a great sharing opportunity. We are looking forward to hosting our annual appreciation dinner to honour the help and support from our helpers and supporters. Next year's trial is planned to start with AI in February.

Arundale Host property 2004-2005



The 2005 drop lambs were born commencing 11th August 05 where a week of very inclement weather in the middle of lambing caused above average losses. The lambs were mulesed, marked and vaccinated at the end of September. In mid December they were weaned, drenched and received their 2nd vaccination. They were away to a good start after the above average spring and being imprint fed while on the ewes. We continued with grain and hay being progressively increased to meet their needs. They were crutched in February 06 and received their 2nd summer drench. Good rains in late June early July gave us hope of being a good year, but as we all know that was not to be. Very little since saw a reduced growth and bulk in the pastures and hardly any run off into dams. An extensive destocking program and the pumping of water from several spring-fed dams should see us through one of the toughest years on record. The only positive side has been the milder temperatures through winter, which has enabled stock to utilise the supplementary feed.

Barry Matthews

*Results for each assessment
from 1998 – 2005 are
available on request.*

*First assessment for the
2005 drop and the Second
assessment for 2004 will be
available by the end of the
month.*

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Elders Wool - Vic update

Elders would like to take this opportunity to give you an update on what's happening in the wool industry

Global auction of Australian wool goes online

Wool buyers around the world can now bid for Australian wool with just the click of a button. On Monday the 27th November Elders Global Auctions conducted its first global sale via the Internet in adjunct to the open-cry format, allowing buyers to participate from anywhere in the world. 20 buyers from Australia and China registered to bid, with 15 of these being active bidders throughout the course of the auction. An additional 30 parties logged on to view the Online Auction during the course of proceedings and resulted in an excellent result of 688 bales being sold.

The overall aim of the online auction is to provide buyers with equitable access to Australian wool in an efficient and effective method and thereby create greater worldwide exposure for Australian woolgrowers' product. Not only will the online auction offer distinct advantages for registered buyers, its format will also allow woolgrowers and other non-registered parties to log on to observe the auction in progress. Only Elders woolgrower clients will be able to utilise the new wool marketing system.

The online global auction is one of many initiatives undertaken by Elders in recent times in an effort to generate new markets for Australian wool and at the same time create cost savings for wool buying customers.

Premier Wool Feature Sales prove a hit

Elders Premier Wool in Vic continues its growth at a rapid rate with some recent Feature Sales having great success. In the past 12 months Feature Sales have been conducted for Elite & Semi-Elite Wools, BioClip wool and more recently Organic & Eco Label Wool. These sales have achieved great results and more are planned in the future.

Professional wool producers continue to search for ways at how they can improve their business and their product for sale – from preparation through to the sale process – having a direct link with the people buying their wool and understanding where it is going and how it is being processed provides an invaluable head start.

Elders Southern Clip of the Year

Nareeb Nareeb Partnership at Glenthompson, are the winners of the prestigious 2005/2006 Elders Southern Clip of the Sale. They came up trumps out of the nominations of the 45 weekly sales.

For Nareeb Nareeb Partnership owners the Beggs family could have not been be more pleased with their first Elders Southern Clip of the year award.

Elders and Wooltrade

Elders clients now have the ability to offer their wool 24 hours a day, 7 days a week using Wooltrade.

Wooltrade enables you to set your nominated selling price. Elders can assist you in setting this price based on your wool measurements, the current market and your target price. Wooltrade is actively used by many of the local and international wool buyers and companies. This will allow you to take advantage of favourable market conditions immediately. Most wool types can be listed on Wooltrade.

For further information please contact your local District Wool Manager or your local branch.

On behalf of Elders Vic/Riv wool, thank you for all your support.

Regards,

Kym Gunn
Elders Portfolio Manager Vic/Riv



Summary of Results for 2004 drop 2nd Evaluation and 2005 drop 1st Evaluation

Significant changes in the analysis and report include the following:

1. Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) are presented now instead of Estimated Progeny Values (EPVs). EBVs are 2 x EPVs. These EBVs have been calculated by Sheep Genetics Australia (SGA). Many of the changes described below are as a result of this.
2. Body weight EBVs are now in kgs. Previously Body weight EPVs were presented in percentage units.
3. FEC is now WEC (Worm Egg Count) and WEC EBVs are in units of percentage reduction of eggs per

gram instead of -1 to +1 scale.

4. Yield EBVs are not calculated by SGA. However, SGA does calculate EBVs for curvature.

5. Four of the SGA MERINOSELECT indexes – 3.5%, 7% and 14% Micron Premium (MP) for Merinos and 10% MP+ SS +WEC for Fine Merinos – have been chosen as the base indexes for this site to provide combined measured trait results. A description of the production system on which these indexes are based and predicted genetic response after 10 years of selection follow:

Production system description

1. Merino indexes

- * self-replacing Merino flock
- * 19 to 23 micron adult ewes fleece (850c/kg clean).
- * adult wethers are not maintained to produce wool.
- * Surplus wethers and ewes are sold as store or meat sheep at yearling to hogget age at 44kg (\$45/head).

Table 1. 2004 drop 2nd Evaluation SGA MERINOSELECT Index Options, Classer's Grade and Fleece Value

	MERINOSELECT Index Options				Classer's Grade %			Price	Fleece Value
	Merino			Fine	Tops %	Flocks %	Culls %		
Sire Identity	3.5% MP	7% MP	14% MP	10% MP + SS + WEC				cents/kg clean	\$/fleece
Broxborne Park A172 *	110	95	83	77	30	59	11	949	\$34.79
Cressbrook 99-677	94	93	95	102	23	74	3	994	\$33.23
Gringegalgonia A3M0070/99	108	108	106	118	25	68	8	1019	\$35.34
Hannaton Jonny Blue	112	111	107	106	40	40	19	994	\$34.48
Havilah North 01.0413	112	115	114	112	17	57	26	1018	\$36.06
Identity withheld at owner's request	140	148	146	128	31	66	3	1078	\$38.51
Identity withheld at owner's request	116	108	99	96	54	37	10	981	\$35.79
Kerrsville NB20856	72	75	82	83	9	65	26	973	\$31.31
Kurra-Wirra SR 1263	86	88	91	100	47	44	9	1045	\$34.44
Melrose RB3262.02	96	91	89	89	10	73	18	989	\$34.33
Merinotech 021530	117	120	120	126	22	66	13	1053	\$36.45
One Oak B114	91	90	90	84	30	46	24	980	\$33.02
Pleasant Park Red tag 212	95	101	107	89	36	52	12	1082	\$36.03
The Mountain Dam 96/NI011 *	125	120	111	107	25	57	18	1003	\$35.92
The Mountain Dam 99/NL112	73	73	78	74	20	54	27	1004	\$32.47
Toland White 597	110	107	103	106	11	73	16	1014	\$35.46
Wooltech 0126	44	59	79	83	7	64	30	1035	\$32.00
Average	100	100	100	100	25	59	16		

2. *Fine Merino indexes*

- * self-replacing Merino flock.
- * 19 micron or finer adult ewes fleece (1300c/kg clean).
- * 30% of adult sheep are wethers maintained to produce wool.
- * surplus wethers and ewes are sold as store or meat sheep at yearling to hogget age at 40kg (\$40/head).

Predicted genetic response

3.5% MP Merino

Fleece weight	high gain
Fibre diameter	maintain
Body weight	moderate gain
Other traits	maintain

14% MP Merino

Fleece weight	maintain
Fibre diameter	high gain
Body weight	moderate gain
Other traits	maintain

7% MP Merino

Fleece weight	moderate gain
Fibre diameter	moderate gain
Body weight	moderate gain
Other traits	maintain

10% MP + SS + WEC Fine Merino

Fleece weight	moderate gain
Fibre diameter	moderate gain
Body weight	small gain
SS	moderate gain
WEC	moderate gain
Other traits	maintain

6. SGA indexes are different from the previous standard Ram-power indexes, and those calculated for this report do not include no of lambs weaned (NLW) in the index.

7 Fleece value calculations are based on one year of prices, not 3 years, as Woolcheque no longer lists 3 year average prices. Note that fleece values do not always rank

sires in the same way as indexes do. This is because indexes include EBVs for traits that are not used in the calculation of fleece value, and *vice versa*. For example, in the 2005 drop fleece value results, the sire Windarra 010838 has a high fleece value, but not exceptionally high index values. This is largely because this sire's progeny had well above average staple length. This affects wool price, but not index values.

Site reports are in the process of accreditation by AMSEA, prior to printing and release. If anyone would like any further explanation of the summary results released here, please ring me on 03 55 743 298.

Sue Jarvis

Table 2. 2005 drop 1st Evaluation SGA MERINOSELECT Index Options, Classer's Grade and Fleece Value

Sire Identity	MERINOSELECT				Classer's Grade %			Price cents/ kg clean	Fleece Value \$/fleece
	Merino			Fine	Tops %	Flocks %	Culls %		
	3.5% MP	7% MP	14% MP	10% MP + SS + WEC					
Connewarran 30134	98	99	99	88	17	58	25	943	\$19.41
Goodwood 0056	112	116	117	119	6	81	13	963	\$20.37
Goodwood BW1143/01	108	114	117	106	12	79	9	963	\$19.95
Gringegalgaona ZAC0011/01 *	112	105	97	102	24	76	0	931	\$19.89
Hannaton 202	92	98	103	99	18	65	18	959	\$18.76
Hazeldean Zachary 0.12946	104	102	101	117	10	79	10	951	\$19.58
Kilfeera Park 3.21	107	100	94	71	16	79	5	931	\$19.29
Kilfeera Park 6.275 *	76	66	63	73	0	72	28	884	\$17.49
Kurra-Wirra BLK38	90	91	94	81	18	61	21	955	\$18.51
Nerstane N78	113	113	111	117	43	52	5	1186	\$24.90
One Oak OO No 2 3001	105	101	97	92	17	75	8	943	\$19.74
Ruby Hills 0188	73	81	92	95	3	69	28	963	\$17.76
The Grange 201112	124	126	124	122	19	63	19	966	\$20.84
The Mountain Dam SN77	84	82	83	91	13	70	17	923	\$18.26
Windarra 010838	103	106	109	106	19	62	19	1227	\$24.67
Average	100	100	100	100	15	69	15		

Drought Management at Tuloona

After close to an inch of rain on the 23rd of September we thought we were going to at least have “some kind of spring”. We couldn’t imagine that only 3 weeks later we would be seeing ourselves buying hundreds of tonnes of grain and our livestock income halve. How did it all happen so quickly, and were we being proactive or simply over reacting to our drought situation, we believe the answer is at night, how well we sleep. In the second week of October as all the silage paddocks died, we realized we were ending the spring with ¼ of our normal dry feed carry over. We already had enough fodder reserves for half our stock, and after valuing all the stock the options were;

1. Either sell our retained profits (i.e. our stock) for close to nothing,
2. Or double our bets and develop a drought plan that focused on securing enough feed for a May break, while also having key exit strategies for a failed autumn.

Perhaps foolishly we chose option two. Ironically after a lot of preparation we now view this summer as a huge challenge and potentially very rewarding if we can get through it with minimal mortalities. So what is our drought plan?

Drought Plan in Action

1. Weaning Sheep, Early Feeding & Condition Scoring

Our average weaning weight for the Sire Evaluation Progeny was close to 26kg, and over our 7200 fine wool merino weaners we averaged around 24.5kg for 8 to 12 week old lambs. As the season came crashing down we looked at the options of early weaning, but decided against it as we had nothing to wean them onto, and instead focused on train feeding them

on their mothers. We did not wean until at least 80% of lambs were on the feed trail. The strategy appears to have worked well and did not unduly affect our ewes as their average weights at weaning were around 54kg with 85% in condition score 3, the other 15% were removed and are being fed accordingly. All sheep were being fed by mid November and the skills learnt in RIST’s “Life Time Wool” program will be put to good use as all ewes will be condition scored every 6 weeks with the goal of not letting our ewes fall below 2.7 to maintain good conception rates, thereby targeting our “expensive” feed to the most needy, not the most greedy.

2. Feed Reserves and Costs

With over 3000t of silage and half our grain requirements in hand we decided in early October to source the additional feed requirements with beans from South Australia at \$350/t and pellets (12 ME, 16 Protein) at \$361/t delivered. Pellets were perhaps chosen a little rashly as the thought process behind the decision was that if we came to May or June and it still hadn’t broken then there was a high probability that Australia would have to import grain, and because of quarantine restrictions we would have to buy this grain in the form of pellets. Additionally frosted cereal crops were purchased to cover the dry matter deficit, while some of our own crops were cut for Hay. With 22,500 sheep and 950 head of cattle (36,000 DSE) the total cash “fodder cost” of the drought is below.

The actual opportunity cost would be close to double these figures if we valued our fodder reserves at prevailing market prices, but we choose not to do this as those reserves have already being expensed in previous years in anticipation of these types of events, unfortunately Autumn 05 left us short on fodder. The gain we would make by selling our reserves at current prices would be offset by the huge losses we would make in selling our stock in the current market.

\$ Cost of the Drought

	March Break (feed until 1 st May)	April Break (feed until 1 st June)	May Break (feed until 1 st July)
Cost Per DSE (ewe 1.3 DSE, Cow 12 DSE)	\$8.60	\$11.60	\$18.90

3. Containment Zones & Trialing Coating Sheep

By early December 30% of our sheep will be in containment zones leaving weaners and ewes to rotate over the remainder of the property, while cattle will be semi-contained on troughed water in sacrifice paddocks and fed a maintenance roughage and Ani-Pro diet. The sheep containment zone stock will consist of the following;

1. Two year old Spring Shorn Wethers to be fed a wool growing maintenance ration of 2.5kg Barley and 2kg of roughage per week to maintain them at condition score 2 +.
2. One Year old winter shorn ewes that are not being joined as maidens and are being fed a slightly higher protein diet to allow bone development to continue their growth at over 2.5 condition score. A third of these sheep have being coated (1200) to allow an internal trial to be conducted on the merits of coating 16 micron sheep in a containment zone situation.

4. The Break & Next Year's Plans

If it doesn't break when expected (late April) we have exit strategies for selling our stock off shears and have secured interest rate agreements in case of having to buy additional feed in June. Hay will be useful to feed out if there are periods next autumn or winter where it is too wet to feed grain on ground.

Also hay may be required to reduce risk of hypocalcaemia (Calcium deficiency) in late pregnant ewes and cows. We have allocated 5kg per DSE of Dry Matter that we have to have on farm come the autumn break to alleviate either of these problem should they occur.

Why do all this? The hope is that next year we will be able to turn our excess stock off during a tight supply period in the winter. We will be decreasing our stocking rate in the spring which will allow us to replenish our fodder reserves. We now know that our fodder reserves are invaluable. You might say it can't happen again, but it all comes down to one thing; how well you sleep at night. What ever your strategy is for managing drought you have to be confident and comfortable with it.

Michael Craig

Tuloona Pastoral Company, Harrow, Victoria

Thank-you to our Sponsors

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of our sponsors and appreciate their participation. Please support these businesses.



AMSEA Central Test Sire Evaluation - Sire Registration Form

1. Central Test Sire Evaluation site details for the ram being entered

- i. The Site & Drop being entered Site: _____ Year of Drop: **2007**
- ii. Other Sites & Drop the ram has been entered in: _____
been entered in. _____

2. Ram details

- i. Ram's common name (including flock): _____
- ii. Ram's year of birth: _____
- iii. Ram's ear tag or record number: _____
- iv. Ram's 16 digit code (if known): _____

3. Owner details - Owner and contact for inquiries about the ram, plus owner(s) permission

- i. Owner: _____
- ii. Contact's surname: _____
- iii. First Name: _____
- iv. Address: _____
- v. Town and Postcode: _____
- vi. Phone and Mobile: _____
- vii. Fax: _____
- viii. Email address: _____
- ix. Does the Owner(s) of the ram at the time of entry give permission to enter the ram into this CTSE site:
Yes **or** No (circle) Owner(s) signature: _____ Date: _____
- x. Does the Owner(s) of the ram give permission to publish the ram's results in Merino Superior Sires:
Yes **or** No (circle) Owner(s) signature: _____ Date: _____
- xi. Does the Owner(s) of the ram give permission to publish the ram's results in Sheep Genetics Australia:
Yes **or** No (circle) Owner(s) signature: _____ Date: _____

4. Breeding details - only fill in (iv) to (ix) if different to details in 'Owners details' above

- i. Breed of flock: _____ (eg. Merino or Poll Merino. If other breed give details)
- ii. Breeder: _____
- iii. Flock Code: _____ Registered: _____, or Unregistered
- iv. Breeder's contact surname: _____
- v. First Name: _____
- vi. Address: _____
- vii. Town and Postcode: _____
- viii. Phone and Mobile: _____
- ix. Fax: _____
- x. Does the Breeder of the ram give permission to enter the ram into this CTSE site:
Yes **or** No (circle) Breeders signature: _____ Date: _____
- xi. Does the Breeder of the ram give permission publish the ram's results in Merino Superior Sires:
Yes **or** No (circle) Breeders signature: _____ Date: _____
- xii. Does the Breeder of the ram give permission to publish the ram's results in Sheep Genetics Australia:
Yes **or** No (circle) Breeder(s) signature: _____ Date: _____

5. Pedigree details – OPTIONAL

- i. Sire of Ram entered: _____
- ii. Sire of Sire of Ram: _____

Note: Sires entered will be included in the AMSEA database and managed by AMSEA.

6. Signature of Entrant

I believe all the above details to be true.

Date: _____

7. CTSE Site Committee representative

I have checked all required details are listed.

Date: _____

Fax to 03 55765051