July 2015

Balmoral Victoria Sire Evaluation Group

Trial News

www.balmoralbreeders.com.au

Contents

Our Chairman - Tom Silcock

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

With the completion of another very successful field day held in April at Wando Estate and Mepunga and the final analysis of the 2013 drop completed, we farewell the host property of Wando Estate. We thank the team at Wando for their support and tolerance of the additional trial work carried out in conjunction with the AMSEA trials. The pedigree comparison trial at Wando, led to utilising Pedigree March Maker (PMM) last year at Mepunga, backed with DNA to pick up unmatched progeny. We have now moved on again with a total reliance on DNA for the next few years at Tuloona, being part of the new exciting AWI/AMSEA life time productivity trial our site has committed to. This trial is being used as a pilot for 4 trials that are planned for next year, as part of a national commitment to join 120 sires nationally. The ewe progeny will then be evaluated through their natural breeding life of 4 to 5 breeding years, comparing measurements with performance from immature, through to aged mature results. The 2013 site report is now available in printed form from Andrew Howells (Elders Hamilton) or Online www.merinosuperiorsires.com.au

The final report on the development of the Sapien in paddock, automated Walk Over Weigh (WOW) crate has now been delivered. Although not a commercial unit yet, it has been exciting to see the potential of this equipment develop. A new model is being committed to Tuloona, to be developed further, alongside trial evaluation over coming years.

We continue to welcome new members to our committee. We congratulate two of our younger ones, Elise Kealy and Dale Bruns on their recent engagements.

“Tuloona”–Host property 2015

Sean Harvey Manager at “Tuloona”

At Tuloona it’s been a slow start to the year with our annual rainfall only getting to 90mm, it is a surprise that we are looking at an average FOO of 1200kg over our grazing area and an average of 1500kg under the Sire mobs. All 3 mobs have responded well to the green feed with an avg CS of 3 or more over all management groups, scored by Tim Leeming. With our preg scanning now completed, we have a better view on how our sheep have performed this year across all different groups.

Mepungah Pastoral Company–Host property 2014

Nick Falkenberg Owner “Mepungah”

An on time Autumn break was very welcomed at Mepungah with rains arriving in the last week of April. We managed to get 100ha of Winterstar II sown before the break and as a result we have been grazing these pastures since early June. After a reasonably wet May, the rainfall seems to have slowed down with only a couple of significant rainfall events in June. Conditions have, however, been ideal for spraying capeweed and grubs.

On the trial front we monitored FEWC on the weaners every 10-14 days waiting to get counts higher than 200 EPG before conducting the worm resistance tests on each lamb in the trial. The counts remained low for several weeks following the Autumn then skyrocketed to 300+. I believe that at the time the sheep have suffered as a result of this but have recovered since. I think it would be fair to say that they lost up to 0.5 of a condition score.

The worm resistance testing was conducted on the 8th of June. 695 samples were “extracted” from the lambs. Many thanks to Amy Tierney, Hugh Jarvis, Dale Bruns for helping on the day. They were assisted by Kenny Burns and Arley Loughead of Mepungah.

The trial lambs are currently on around 1000kg/ha/dm

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone else involved in the sire evaluation trial and those who have helped collect data and process the stock. I would like to particularly thank Tom Silcock, Tom Waldron, Amy Tierney , Andrew Howells ,Pete Mecham, Hugh Jarvis, Dale Bruns and Michael Craig who are consistently on hand for help and advice. I also ask that you take time to read the list of sponsors on the rear page of this newsletter and consider using their services as without them the cost of running the trial would be significantly higher.

Nick Falkenberg

Mepungah Pastoral Co.

2013 Drop Summary Results
Full results available in 2013 Drop Site Report – www.merinosuperiorsires.com.au

Breeders flock, Sire name	Number of progeny	Flock Breeding Values (deviations) GFW % A^	CFW % A	FD µm A	WT kg W	WT kg Y	WT kg A	Classer's Grade¹ Tops % A	Classer's Grade¹ Culls % A
Bundaleer, BDR021	37	4	5	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.6	-6	3
Connewarran, 0040	42	7	9	0.3	1.9	4.8	6.2	10	-8
Gringegalgona, 090960	38	0	1	0.0	2.7	5.0	5.0	8	-1
Hannaton Poll, 110001	42	3	3	0.9	1.2	1.9	2.7	5	-5
Hazeldean, 9.4752	30	-6	-7	-0.9	-2.4	-4.1	-4.4	-11	9
Kia Ora, 090130	40	5	6	0.7	-2.8	-2.8	-3.0	-4	-1
Leahcim Poll, 090918	40	-5	-5	1.2	0.7	2.2	2.9	-1	-8
Mount Yulong Poll, 110111	42	-1	-2	0.4	0.9	0.3	0.6	-9	9
Nerstane, 050010	36	1	1	-1.4	-0.6	-2.3	-3.5	-2	5
Nerstane, 100919	47	14	14	0.8	1.0	2.6	2.8	14	-6
One Oak No. 2, BL11-104	36	2	1	0.0	0.4	-0.9	-1.3	-8	-4
Roseville Park, 100038	30	-5	-5	-1.2	-1.0	-2.0	-1.8	5	-9
The Mountain Dam, 12/LE018	35	5	6	0.4	0.1	1.2	1.7	9	2
Tuckwood Poll, 101012	39	-1	-2	-0.3	4.0	7.5	8.4	15	-2
Yalgoo, 080068	44	-5	-4	-0.8	-0.6	-1.4	-1.6	0	8
Yiddinga, 195	34	2	2	-0.5	-1.1	-2.5	-3.0	-8	2
Kurra-Wirra, SR296 (Historical)	*26*	*-11*	*-13*	*-0.3*	*-1.0*	*-2.7*	*-3.7*	*-7*	*8*
Kurra-Wirra, SV885 (Historical)	*41*	*-4*	*-5*	*0.4*	*-2.2*	*-5.1*	*-6.2*	*-11*	*-2*

W = Weaning (42 to 120 days); P = Post Weaning (210 to 300 days); Y = Yearling (300 to 400 days); H = Hogget (400 to 540 days); A = Adult (540 days and old-er).
1 Classer's Grade is expressed as the percentage deviation of average Tops% and Culls%.

(Historical) Historical Sires evaluated under AMSEA's R&D project to validate the system of linkage in MERINOSELECT that has operated over the past 15-20 years. These sires were generally widely used 15-20 years ago and were selected for the R&D program based on their high ASBV accuracies. They demonstrate the progress the industry has made over that period.

Drafting 2014 progeny for the Field Day

Final Classing -Amy Tierney, Andrew Howells & Will Daly-

Pat Millear-"Stud Park South", Harry Youngman "Wando Estate" & Dr Paul Swan enjoying the Field Day

Anthony & Robert Close "Kurra Wirra" at the Field Day

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2013 Drop Summary Results

Full results available in 2013 Drop Site Report – www.merinosuperiorsires.com.au

Breeders flock, Sire name	Number of progeny	Flock Breeding Values (deviations) FDCV % A^	SL mm A	SS N/ktex A	CURV deg/mm A	FAT mm H	EMD mm H	WEC % Y
Bundaleer, BDR021	37	-0.5	-2.7	0.7	0.9	-1.3	-1.0	9
Connewarran, 0040	42	-0.9	-0.8	0.3	0.0	-0.2	-0.2	-27
Gringegalgona, 090960	38	0.1	1.0	-0.6	6.0	-0.2	0.4	-43
Hannaton Poll, 110001	42	0.2	-1.1	-1.7	-2.2	-0.4	0.3	-32
Hazeldean, 9.4752	30	0.0	1.6	1.0	-1.8	0.9	0.2	25
Kia Ora, 090130	40	-0.1	1.5	1.1	-3.9	0.1	1.2	36
Leahcim Poll, 090918	40	-0.7	5.6	2.0	-4.0	0.5	0.9	3
Mount Yulong Poll, 110111	42	0.6	2.2	-2.7	-6.6	-0.9	-0.6	152
Nerstane, 050010	36	1.8	-6.8	-0.6	7.2	-0.8	-1.9	121
Nerstane, 100919	47	-0.2	10.4	0.4	-4.0	-0.4	-0.9	54
One Oak No. 2, BL11-104	36	2.3	-7.5	-3.1	-1.7	-0.5	-0.4	-8
Roseville Park, 100038	30	0.4	-1.8	-3.7	2.4	-0.5	-1.1	-19
The Mountain Dam, 12/LE018	35	-1.1	6.1	3.6	-1.1	0.5	0.6	-6
Tuckwood Poll, 101012	39	-0.5	11.0	-3.3	-5.7	0.1	0.9	-34
Yalgoo, 080068	44	-1.2	-0.8	4.1	4.5	1.6	1.1	-56
Yiddinga, 195	34	-1.0	-2.6	3.3	-0.3	0.9	0.2	-33
Kurra-Wirra, SR296 (Historical)	*26*	*-0.8*	*-9.2*	*2.0*	*9.3*	*0.7*	*0.6*	*24*
Kurra-Wirra, SV885 (Historical)	*41*	*2.5*	*-6.9*	*-4.6*	*0.0*	*-0.7*	*-0.6*	*-18*

(Historical) Historical Sires evaluated under AMSEA's R&D project to validate the system of linkage in MERINOSELECT that has operated over the past 15-20 years. These sires were generally widely used 15-20 years ago and were selected for the R&D program based on their high ASBV accuracies. They demonstrate the progress the industry has made over that period.

At the 2015 Field Day L:R Mick Leeming(Owner "Meeblok"), Steve Walker (Elders Banking), Nikki Armstrong (Elders LPA),
Richard Weatherley (Owner "Connewarren Merino Stud"), Barry O'Neill (Elders Banking) & David Whyte (Elders Branch Manager Hamilton).

2014 Drop Results to Date

Some early results are available for the 2014 drop. Whilst the full assessment will take place in April next year, these early results provide a useful indication on where the sires are lining up at this stage.

Breeders flock, Sire name	Number of progeny	Flock Breeding Values (deviations) GFW % P^	FD µm P	FDCV % P	CURV deg/mm P	WEC % Y	WT kg W	WT kg P	DAG Y
Anderson, 120103	38	-2	0.9	-1.4	1.1	-38	1.5	3.5	-0.6
Centre Plus Poll, 807300	43	6	0.5	0.1	-3.0	-5	1.6	2.6	0.1
Connewarran, 062097	34	3	-0.7	0.7	-0.6	-1	-0.9	-1.6	0.3
Donley Park, 090044	23	4	0.1	0.0	-3.3	59	0.3	0.1	0.0
Edale, 08E239	47	-3	-0.1	-1.0	2.3	-38	-1.8	-1.1	-0.2
Karowara Plains Poll, 110024	41	-11	-0.6	-0.1	3.5	-5	-1.4	-2.0	-0.3
Kurra-Wirra, 110784	30	-3	-0.3	-0.1	0.2	-32	-1.1	-2.0	-0.2
Leahcim Poll, 090918	34	-9	-0.5	0.3	-0.6	68	-1.1	-2.0	-0.3
Merinotech WA Poll, 100115	38	1	0.6	-0.8	-1.0	-39	0.8	2.2	-0.5
Mokanger, 000092	24	-5	-0.2	-0.7	1.6	-13	-0.7	-1.4	0.5
Mumblebone, 120431	42	-7	0.6	-2.0	0.0	-11	0.9	1.7	0.0
Nareeb Nareeb Poll, 120910	21	3	-0.4	1.7	2.3	10	1.0	1.0	-0.6
Nerstane, 100958	35	-2	-0.7	0.5	4.4	-10	0.4	0.3	0.0
Pooginook, 112469	37	0	-0.3	0.6	1.7	18	0.0	-0.1	0.5
The Mountain Dam, 11/RE017	34	8	1.1	-2.0	2.3	14	1.6	2.8	-0.3
Tuckwood Poll, 131023	34	6	0.2	-0.9	-7.4	-9	2.4	3.5	-0.3
Wanganella, 100019	38	4	-0.3	1.5	-2.5	-3	-0.2	-0.7	0.4
Winyar, 110710	37	-1	-0.7	0.9	0.1	55	-1.6	-3.4	0.9
Nerstane, 697 (Historical)	*33*	*4*	*0.4*	*0.9*	*2.3*	*17*	*-1.0*	*-1.5*	*0.3*
Pooginook, Jewel (Historical)	*32*	*5*	*0.3*	*1.8*	*-3.5*	*19*	*-0.7*	*-2.1*	*0.3*

W = Weaning (42 to 120 days); P = Post Weaning (210 to 300 days); Y = Yearling (300 to 400 days); H = Hogget (400 to 540 days); A = Adult (540 days and older).

(Historical) Historical Sires evaluated under AMSEA's R&D project to validate the system of linkage in MERINOSELECT that has operated over the past 15-20 years. These sires were generally widely used 15-20 years ago and were selected for the R&D program based on their high ASBV accuracies. They demonstrate the progress the industry has made over that period.

More photos from the 2015 Field Day at Wando Estate

Amy Tierney (Elders Casterton) & Richard Currie

A great crowd attended the 2015 Field Day at Wando Estate

Andrew Michael from "Leachim"

Tom Silcock & Dr Paul Swan

AWI / AMSEA Merino Lifetime Productivity Project

2015 Elders Victoria Trial Update

Executive Officer Australian
Merino Sire Evaluation
Association
Ben Swain

2160 ewes were AI'd at "Tuloona",Harrow on 23-26 March 2015. 90 ewes were joined to each of the 24 sires entered in the trial.

At the time of AI the ewes were on a raising plane of nutrition and presented in forward store condition. A sample of the ewes were independently condition scored pre AI with an average of 2.9.

Ewes were pregnancy scanned by Mark Jenkinson on 19 May 2015.The following scanning results were recorded for each sire group.

	Singles	Twins	Pregnant Ewes	Total Foetuses
Billandri Poll, 130087	52	7	59	66
Bogo, 111424	51	2	53	55
Bundaleer Poll, 13V741	57	4	61	65
Bundilla, 111265	44	1	45	46
Centre Plus Poll, 207316	45	4	49	53
Darriwell, 130941	51	8	59	67
Greenfields Poll, 130599	43	10	53	63
Glenpaen, 120042	47	6	53	59
Hazeldean, 000043	59	3	62	65
Kurra Wirra, SR5681	60	2	62	64
Leahcim Poll, 090918	67	1	68	69
Leahcim Poll, 123153	44	4	48	52
Mokanger, 120092	37	3	40	43
Moojepin, 100248	54	0	54	54
Merinotech WA Poll, 100081	54	7	61	68
Mumblebone, 130389	60	2	62	64
NareebNareeb, 130380	55	3	58	61
Nerstane, 130467	54	6	60	66
One Oak No2, R56	62	5	67	72
Roseville Park, 140019	47	0	47	47
The Mountain Dam, ESA004	50	7	57	64
Tuckwood Poll, 121021	54	4	58	62
Yalgoo, 120043	55	5	60	65
Yiddinga, 130374	56	4	60	64
Grand Total	**1258**	**98**	**1356**	**1454**

In total 62.8% of ewes were scanned in lamb. Total number of foetuses represents 67.3% of ewes AI'd.

The pregnancy scanning rates fell short of what was anticipated. Particularly the low number of twin bearing ewes.As a result the project management team has been focused on ensuring maximum survival of the lambs through to weaning. In order to achieve this outcome, the following actions have been undertaken.

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AWI / AMSEA Merino Lifetime Productivity Project 2015 Elders Victoria Trial Update contd:

Twin bearing ewes were drafted off at scanning and are being run separately to give preferential treatment.

On 24 May 2015 the ewes carrying single foetuses were drafted into either a heavy or light condition mob. The light condition ewes were given preferential treatment with the aim of increasing their condition to be in line with the heavy condition ewes. This will help ensure the light condition ewes have a better chance of rearing their single lambs. A substantial number (approximately 1/3) was targeted in order to ensure that all sire groups were represented.

On 19 June 2015 all ewes were individually condition scored by Tim Leeming. At that time the following averages for each group were recorded.

Single Bearing Ewes – Light Condition	3.00
Single Bearing Ewes – Heavy Condition	3.04
Twin Bearing Ewes	3.13

As can be seen from the above, the light condition ewes have improved in line with the heavy condition ewes.

“Tuloona” has enjoyed a good break and start to winter. As such there is ample feed on offer and the ewes are continuing to improve. They will be again individually condition scored pre lambing.

Lambing is set to commence on 19 August 2015. One week prior to lambing the 2 current groups of single bearing ewes will be split into mobs of approximately 200 for lambing. The ewes will be allocated to lambing groups to ensure that all sire groups are represented in each paddock.

Lambing mob sizes is based on Lifetime Ewe Management principals and is designed to ensure maximum lamb survival.

Lambing paddocks have been selected and are currently being prepared.

Based on the above process, a good lambing is expected. Lambs will be DNA sampled 2 weeks after lambing commences from which pedigrees will be calculated. At that stage we will know exactly how many lambs each sire group has.

The agreement between AWI and AMSEA for the 9 year project has now been finalised and signed by both organisations. Attention now turns to securing a further 3 sites for joining in 2016. Once that is completed AMSEA will be seeking nominations for sires to be entered in those trials.

Extract from the final report "Walkover weighing and commercial pedigree options", PDS trial funded by MLA, AWI and Vic DEPI.

Executive Summary - Walkover weighing

The collection of sheep body weights is a very important tool to monitor and manage sheep performance and health. A manager's ability to make proactive decisions based on accurate objective continuous real-time information could improve productivity, profitability and animal welfare outcomes. This project attempted to demonstrate the ability to achieve these outcomes in a large commercial Merino operation. Walk over weighing (WOW) systems allow real time body weight information to be automatically transmitted directly from the paddock to the manager. This continuous flow of information without the need to muster the mob to yards and manually weigh each sheep allows real savings in time and labour as well as reduced stress on the animals and associated possible production losses.

The 2013 drop lambs that were used in the pedigree identification project above were used in the WOW project after they were weaned. The lambs were weaned on the 24th December 2013. The WOW system was installed and became operational on the 6th March 2014. Overall, 39495 weights were collected for 767 lambs (mob total 772 lambs) over 79 days during the period 6th March 2014 to 29th August 2014.

During the above operational period, data was collected in the paddock, transmitted to Sapien Technology in Melbourne, analysed and uploaded to the internet where it could be accessed by smartphone the following day. This was a fully automated system where information collected on one day was able to be accessed by smartphone the next. This was a successful "end to end" result for the WOW system and allowed information on individual and mob performance to be accessed easily by smartphone in real time. The major problem for the trial is that the weights transmitted did not correlate when compared to the actual manual weights. We believe these inaccurate weights resulted from a combination of poor crate design, software and hardware weigh data difficulties and the whole system not being robust enough to cope with the environmental conditions (significant mud build up during winter) and ability to be moved and reconstructed frequently as the mob changed paddocks (portability).

A new weigh crate was designed by the steering committee, constructed by Proway and installed on site on the 24th February 2015. This has resolved the structural, mud build-up, and portability issues previously experienced. A new scale head and data transmitter were also installed with the new crate however to date some software difficulties have not yet allowed continuous transmission of accurate weights. We believe with further development these difficulties will be resolved and a complete system will be commercially available in the near future. Much interest has been shown in the above projects by producers at Sire Evaluation Field days, Balmoral and Bendigo shows, Lambex 2014 and newsletters and newspaper articles. The ability to remotely monitor weight gains and losses from the paddock allows proactive management decisions and could therefore improve productivity, sheep health and profitability.

Debbie & Steve Milne

Project Managers, Steve and Debbie Milne
Richmond Hill Agribusiness Pty Ltd

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Vet & Ag Consultants | Parasite & Feed Analysis

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Dr Steve Cotton

Worm Update

Livestock Logic has tested the individual WEC samples from the Sire Evaluation sheep for some time, and in June we conducted ~2100 individual sire worm egg counts for clients across western Victoria. I thought it was a timely reminder to discuss the importance of breeding and/or selecting sires for worm resistance.

First, we must consider the difference between "resilience" and "resistance". Resistance is defined as the initiation and maintenance of responses in the host that suppress the establishment of worms and/or eliminates burdens, whereas resilience refers to the ability of the host to survive and be productive even when infected with worms. Resistance to worms is genetically independent of resilience and dag (or propensity to scour). That is, selecting for any one of the three will have minimal impact on changing the prevalence of the other two. Worm resistance is inherited as a dominate trait with heritability estimates ranging from 0.2 to 0.43 Douch *et al* (1996). It is often referred to as a "moderately heritable" trait, whereas resilience only has a heritability of 0.05 to 0.14 (NZ Beef and Lamb R & D Brief 34, 1999). It is because of this, one would expect to make faster progress in breeding for resistance compared to resilience.

Breeding from sires and/or ewes with higher WEC and showing less visible signs of infection (resilient animals) may result in progeny that are more capable of tolerating a worm infection (less production losses as a result of worm infestation) however, these animals will still be contributing to pasture contamination. On the contrary, selecting sheep for a lower WEC ASBV means that these sheep have a stronger immune response and are able to expel adult worms, reduce the number of eggs laid by adult females and fewer larvae are able to develop into adults, all leading to reduced pasture contamination.

Woolaston and Eady (1995) examined the degree of variation in resistance to worms in Merino sheep, using over 57 bloodlines at 6 different locations across Australia. The authors showed that most genetic variation occurred within flocks (85%) whereas variation between bloodlines was small (9%). This work suggests that most improvement in selecting sheep for resistance to nematodes can be made by selecting individuals for resistance from within a given flock rather than selecting a whole flock or bloodline. It is, however, important to breed a balanced animal as Eady *et al.* (1998) demonstrated that breeding for production traits such as body weight, fibre diameter and clean/greasy fleece weight would lead to unfavourable correlated responses in WEC of approximately 1%/year. The same author also demonstrated that WECs could be reduced by 69% by selecting young Merino sheep for resistance to *H.contortus* (Barbers Pole Worm), however, these selected lines had a significantly lower fibre diameter and produced 9% less clean wool compared to the control group.

Continued over page

Worm update contd:

If WEC is an important trait you are looking to select for, consider selecting for worm resistance while balancing other traits. Use ASBVs rather than raw WEC data as the raw data does not account for environmental differences or pedigree data and consider selecting the WEC ASBV that corresponds to the period where you see high WECs on your property, such as weaning (WWEC) or post weaning (PWWEC).

ASBVs incorporate all of the available pedigree and performance data of the sheep and its relatives throughout Australia, making the genetic estimate far more accurate than raw measurements alone which can only assess WEC performance of the individual ram on one day compared to only the mob of sheep is running with. The calculation of ASBVs removes environmental effects that will obscure a sheep's breeding value, including birth type, dam age, nutrition and management. It is also important to note that selecting for DAG ASBV is independent of both resistance and resilience and should be selected in conjunction with WEC ASBV if you are looking to reduce animal pre-disposition to flystrike. Increased dag levels can also be a function of nutrition and other factors unrelated to worm infection.

From the Worm Logic Lab – June 2015

WEC Report

Egg counts are surprising similar in May and June this year

A staggering 2/3 of 239 mobs of weaners and 3/4 of 250 mobs of mature age sheep tested in May and June this year had a WEC below 130 epg, which is clearly below the suggested drench trigger level. There has to be some advantages with a long dry summer and no carry over dry feed combined with the above average pasture growth rates in the Southern Grampians Shire during May and early June.

In paddocks with low FOO (<800 Kg DM Ha) can expect WECs to rise in July

Use WEC to make informed decisions with respect to drenching requirements and also to assist in paddock selection for your lambing ewes. For example, you would avoid lambing maiden ewes in paddocks where you have had counts above 200epg in last 2 or 3 months and/or have used a drench capsule

2015	May (159 mobs)	June (80 mobs)
% >400 (urgent drench req^{d})	2.5%	3.3%
%> 200 normal drenching trigger	15.7%	16.3%
% < 130 epg - clearly no drench required	68.6%	60.0%

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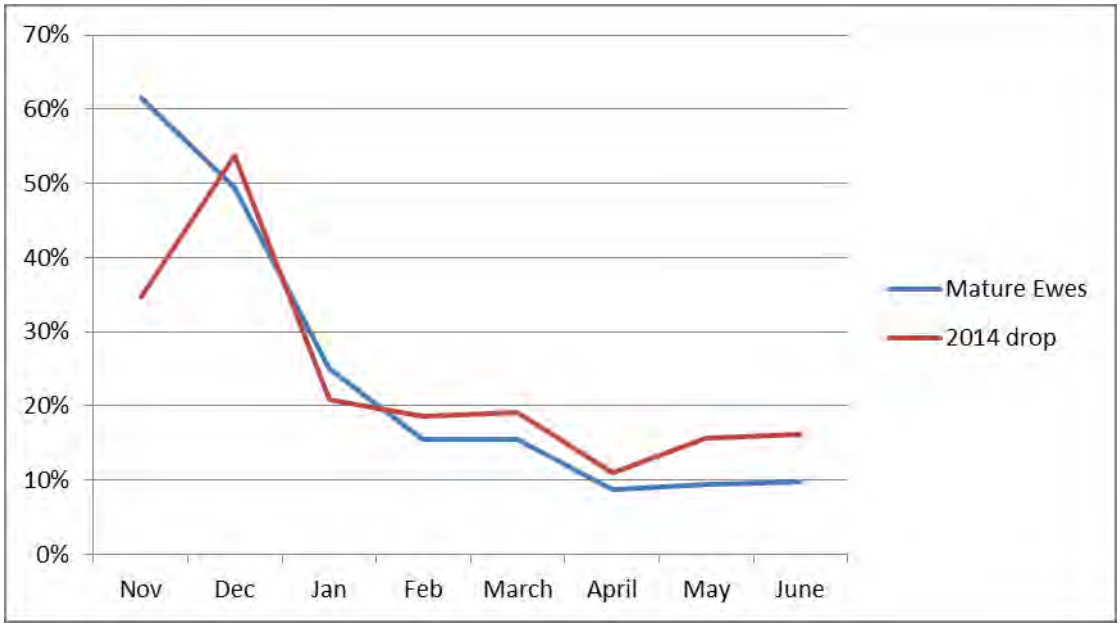
Worm update contd:

Graph 1: Recent (May & June 2015) WEC results for Weaners from Livestock Logic Laboratory



We would encourage anyone that has not completed a drench resistance test in the last three years to consider monitoring weaners now as counts could begin to rise as the cold wet weather sets in.

For advice or discussion on sheep worms, resistance testing or worm egg counting, please call the office on (03) 5572 1419.

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Australian National Merino Sire Evaluation Association Executive Committee (AMSEA)

Tom Silcock	(Chairman) VIC	Ben Swain	Executive Officer
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Bill Sandilands	WA Yardstick	Phil Toland	VIC North East Victoria
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