June 2017

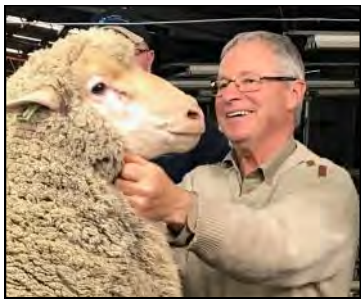
Balmoral Sire Evaluation Group

Trial News

www.balmoralbreeders.com.au

In this edition:

From the Chairman



This year has marked a number of momentous achievements for our Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association (AMSEA) trial committee.
Having hosted our biggest ever field day on March 24, displaying the largest number of AMSEA progeny at a field day in history. We also had our largest group of visitors to the day with more than 150 people attending.
On the morning of this year's field day, we hosted a very successful sheep selection workshop. This was oversubscribed and we have received numerous requests to run it again next year. All feedback from participants has also been very complimentary of both the presenters, as well as the content which covered all selection options available to breeders of today.
The Tuloona group are not only to be congratulated on their commitments to running our trials to date, but they have now committed to displaying not only all the 2015 & 2016 drop of ewes again in 2018, but also first F2 drop of ewe lambs bred from the 2015 MLP ewes.
It is pleasing to see a stronger representation of relevant equipment now showcased at our Field Day, with all trade site participants keen to participate again next year.

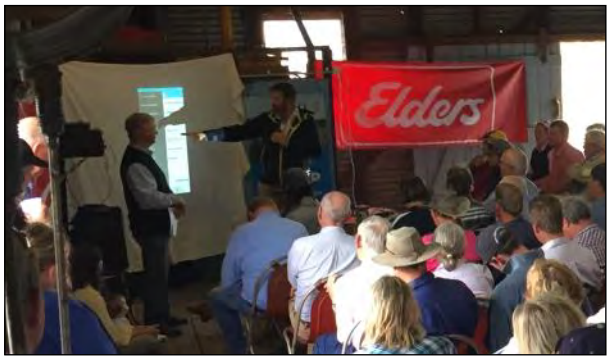
Lock our next field day date into your diary now! Friday, February 16, 2018.

We continue to welcome new members to our committee, replacing a number who have retired. A big thanks to my active executive, all committee members, sponsors, entrants and host properties that continue to provide the exciting opportunities to our group.
This strong support also enables our group to attract new cutting edge developments and technologies to trial and utilize, providing even further benefits to committee members.

No better examples of this has been the adoption of DNA to obtain pedigree and now the adoption of the Allflex TSU DNA sampling system. We look forward to promoting other new developments shortly.
Once again our site continues to host the biggest AMSEA trial run in Australia. We have now gone on to join another 20 sires in our 20th consecutive annual joining by our Balmoral Breeders group at Kooringal for this year's trial.
The ewe progeny from this trial will be evaluated up until their first lambs are weaned, providing a fertility analysis as well.

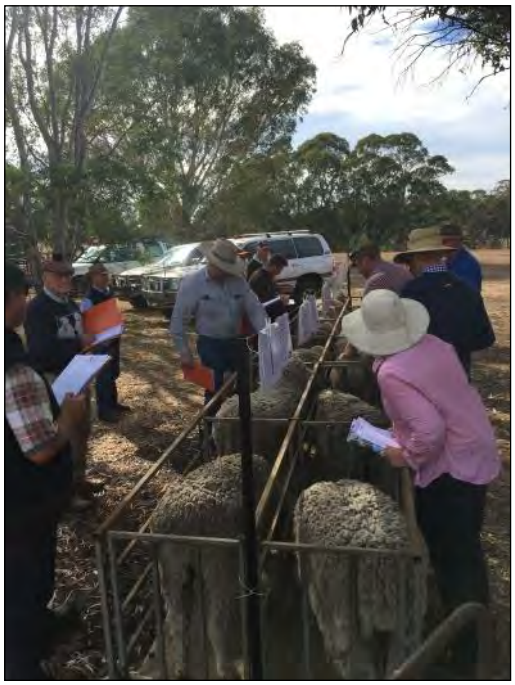
Tom Silcock

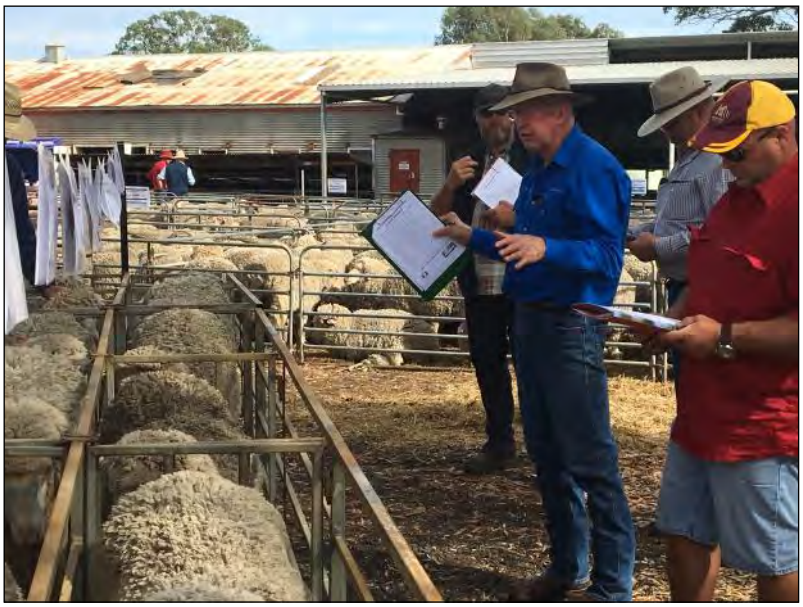
2017 Field Day — Friday, March 24, 2017
on property at 'Tuloona' Harrow

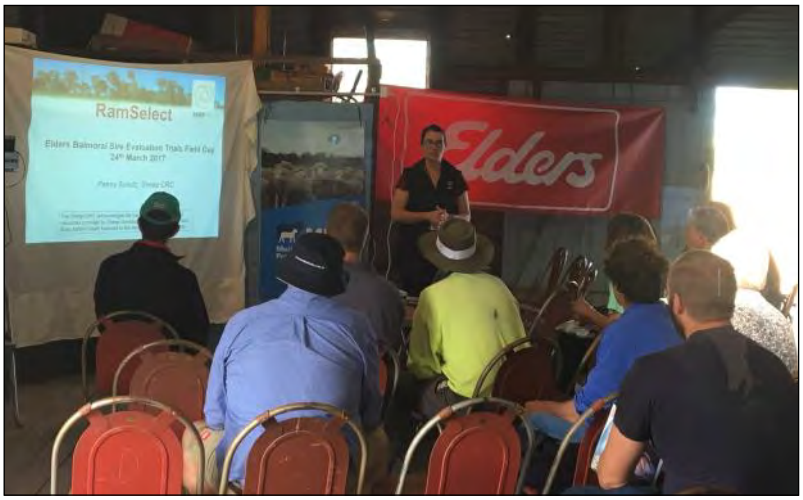


2017 Sheep Selection Workshop — Friday, March 24, 2017

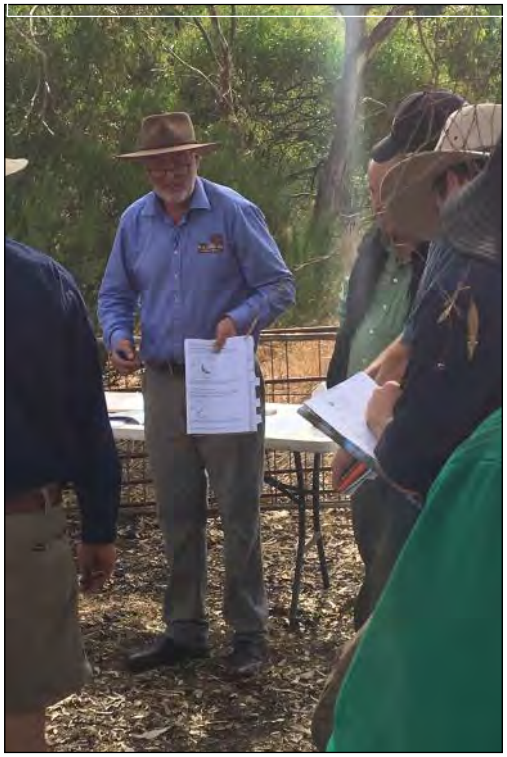
The sheep selection workshop held prior to this year's field day was a resounding success with the event over subscribed. Four speakers — Allan Casey, Advanced Breeding Services; Rob Close, Kurra-Wirra Merinos; Rob Russell, SheepScope and Penny Schulz from the Sheep CRC — each addressed difference aspects of sheep selection and gave those in attendance a good overview of how to use the different tools to select the right sheep for their operation. Handouts on sheep and ram selection from Allan Casey can be found on pages 10 and 11 of this newsletter, or downloaded from the Balmoral Breeders website at www.balmoralbreeders.com.au.







ABOVE: *Workshop participants begin classing sheep in the hands-on program.*
TOP LEFT: *Rob Russell explains to his workshop group about visual classing traits.*
LEFT: *Allan Casey discusses the EBVs and how they look in a physical animal.*
BOTTOM LEFT: *Sheep CRC's Penny Schulz explains how RamSelect and ASBVs can help with selection.*
BELOW: *Rob Close explains how to select sheep based on their wool traits.*



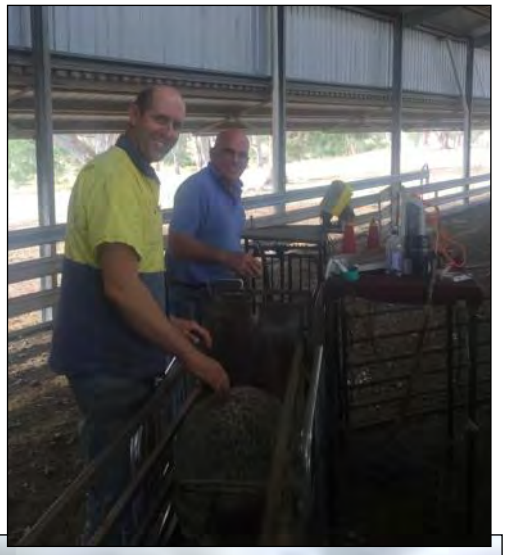
Trial property update
2015 & 2016 trials:
Tuloona Pastoral Company, Harrow

Michael Craig, owner, "Tuloona"

It's been a busy time at Tuloona since the last newsletter. The field day on March 24 was a great success, particularly the classing workshop, which was a suggestion from some of the younger members of the committee. Our thanks to those members who put up the idea and helped it be so successful.

Preparing for the field day did take a lot of physical work, along with the logistical challenge of drafting 1450 sheep 50 different ways. We are very fortunate to have committee members who freely donate their time for the good of the industry.

After the busy time for the field day, the following week the 2015 sheep were again re-drafted into their sire groups for the Group Classing Project on March 27 and 28. This group classing project (pictures on page 7) is an additional element to the wider MLP project and aims to compare the visual classing of young sheep by professional classers with the data collected over a sheep's lifetime to identify if either method is superior or the use of both is ideal. While AWI has identified a need for this trial in the industry, the additional stress and physical toll it has taken on the sheep has been noticeable.



Other on-farm activities have included the following:

2015 Drop:

Shorn March 29, body weighed and condition scored

First natural joining commenced on the March 31 for 5 weeks

2016 Drop:

Individual sheep classing & mid side sampling on May 2 & 3

Shorn May 8 & 9, body weighed and condition scored

Body weighed June 21 (avg 30.5kg)

From a seasonal perspective things are incredible, following an early break on the March 20 with 68m of rain, topped up with another 150mm over the next 10 weeks. The sheep are looking well and currently we are watching worm egg counts closely in anticipation of individual WECs to take.

Trial sheep at 'Tuloona' enjoying some green pick in early June 2017. ABOVE: 2016 trial progeny. BELOW: 2015 trial progeny. TOP RIGHT: Tuloona manager, Sean Harvey (left) and Steve Milne, Richmond Agribusiness, undertaking Fat and CS on the 2015 trial progeny.

Elders Balmoral 2015 trial
Adult assessment report

**Note: This is an excerpt of the 2015 Adult Assessment final report. To view the full report, download online from www.blamoralbreeders.com.au, or collect a hard copy from the displays at Bendigo Sheep Show or Hamilton Sheepvention. Additional copies of the report can be mailed or emailed by contacting the committee secretary.*

Table 1. AMSEA Index Values and Classer's Visual Grade

The index values reported are based on measured traits FBV performance with varying emphasis on fleece weight, fibre diameter, body weight, staple strength and worm egg count. See 'Index Options' (page 9) for more information on the indexes presented in the table below.

The highest performing sires for each trait (trait leaders) are highlighted by shading. Each sire is listed for Classer's Visual Grade and the same four indexes at all site evaluations.

Sire Code	Breeders flock, Sire name	Number of progeny	AMSEA Index Values				Classer's Visual Grade	
			Dual Purpose Plus	Merino Production Plus	Fibre Production Plus	Wool Production Plus	Tops % A^	Culls % A
1	Billandri Poll, 130087	41	88	97	96	102	0	-5
2	Bogo, 111424	50	104	99	104	97	26	-19
3	Bundaleer Poll, 13V741	54	97	98	103	93	-14	5
4	Bundilla, 111265	37	135	123	105	131	-17	12
5	Centre Plus Poll, 207316	44	102	102	109	96	-9	3
6	Darriwell, 130941	49	96	110	105	110	-10	-2
7	Glenpaen, 120042	49	81	107	110	101	-15	29
8	Greenfields Poll, 130599	48	94	107	105	108	8	-9
9	Hazeldean, 11.43	56	121	118	108	123	13	-5
10	Kurra-Wirra, SR5681	48	73	89	98	88	6	4
11	Leahcim Poll, 090918	59	88	73	80	74	-9	17
12	Leahcim Poll, 123153	40	106	84	85	87	-15	3
13	Merinotech WA Poll, 100081	55	119	110	114	104	19	-12
14	Mokanger, 120092	37	104	110	111	106	-27	36
15	Moojepin, 100248	48	140	105	89	118	-9	14
16	Mumblebone, 130389	29	87	78	82	80	10	3
17	Mumblebone, 130850	27	105	90	85	92	18	-12
18	Nareeb Nareeb, 130380	45	74	99	100	98	1	-15
19	Nerstane, 130467	44	82	105	106	104	24	-11
20	One Oak No. 2, R56	57	90	89	90	95	-11	0
21	Roseville Park, 140019	34	92	92	93	93	-10	-8
22	The Mountain Dam, 11/ESA004	57	100	90	93	91	-5	0
23	Tuckwood Poll, 121021	48	119	118	104	120	17	-6
24	Yalgoo, 120043	57	101	102	113	92	9	-10
25	Yiddinga, 130374	49	106	105	109	99	2	-12
	Average performance	46	100	100	100	100	28	19

Table 2. Major Measured Traits and Classer's Visual Grade

Sire Code	Breeders flock, Sire name	Number of Progeny	Flock Breeding Values (deviations)										Classer's Visual Grade[1]			
			GFW %		CFW %		FD µm		WT kg				Tops %		Culls %	
			Y^	A	Y	A	Y	A	W	P	Y	A	P	A	P	A
1	Billandri Poll, 130087	41	9	6	9	6	0.8	0.9	-0.1	-0.8	-2.4	-2.7	16	0	-3	-5
2	Bogo, 111424	50	-7	-1	-8	-1	-1.4	-1.4	-1.0	-1.6	-1.1	-0.5	-12	26	3	-19
3	Bundaleer Poll, 13V741	54	-6	-2	-9	-3	-0.3	-0.2	-0.1	0.6	-0.1	0.4	-7	-14	-7	5
4	Bundilla, 111265	37	13	9	15	12	0.9	0.7	2.6	4.6	7.3	6.5	28	-17	-8	12
5	Centre Plus Poll, 207316	44	-4	-4	-6	-6	-1.3	-1.3	-1.4	-2.0	-1.9	-1.3	-19	-9	22	3
6	Darriwell, 130941	49	5	6	7	7	0.7	0.9	1.0	0.8	-0.2	0.2	5	-10	14	-2
7	Glenpaen, 120042	49	2	4	-1	1	-1.5	-1.5	-0.6	-1.2	-2.1	-2.4	-12	-15	7	29
8	Greenfields Poll, 130599	48	7	8	9	9	-0.2	-0.2	-0.8	-1.4	-2.2	-3.0	-10	8	22	-9
9	Hazeldean, 11.43	56	7	9	9	11	-0.1	0.0	1.5	2.7	4.9	4.9	28	13	-13	-5
10	Kurra-Wirra, SR5681	48	-2	3	-1	3	-0.5	-0.1	-3.1	-5.8	-7.7	-8.1	-8	6	28	4
11	Leahcim Poll, 090918	59	-12	-13	-12	-12	-0.2	-0.1	-0.4	-1.3	-1.4	-1.6	-9	-9	1	17
12	Leahcim Poll, 123153	40	-10	-10	-9	-8	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1	1.1	-4	-15	-5	3
13	Merinotech WA Poll, 100081	55	1	-1	2	1	1.0	0.8	-2.2	-2.6	-1.6	-2.0	-1	19	-9	-12
14	Mokanger, 120092	37	3	1	5	4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.6	-1.6	-2.1	-3.6	-28	-27	14	36
15	Moojepin, 100248	48	9	2	9	3	2.2	1.9	3.4	6.8	10.5	11.2	-17	-9	15	14
16	Mumblebone, 130389	29	-8	-7	-7	-8	1.1	1.1	-1.0	-1.7	-2.3	-1.9	-12	10	-5	3
17	Mumblebone, 130850	27	-4	-9	-5	-12	1.2	1.2	2.9	4.9	4.5	5.9	43	18	-28	-12
18	Nareeb Nareeb, 130380	45	1	0	1	-4	0.3	0.2	1.3	2.0	0.0	1.1	23	1	-11	-15
19	Nerstane, 130467	44	7	11	5	8	-0.6	-0.4	-1.1	-2.4	-2.1	-2.9	-8	24	3	-11
20	One Oak No. 2, R56	57	-1	4	-1	5	-1.1	-0.9	-1.2	-2.2	-2.7	-3.2	-5	-11	5	0
21	Roseville Park, 140019	34	-5	-1	-6	-2	0.6	0.6	-0.2	0.2	-0.2	1.1	-4	-10	-10	-8
22	The Mountain Dam, 11/ESA004	57	-4	-9	-3	-8	-0.4	-1.1	0.0	0.3	-0.1	-0.5	-2	-5	-15	0
23	Tuckwood Poll, 121021	48	9	4	10	4	0.4	0.3	2.9	4.6	5.9	5.6	4	17	-7	-6
24	Yalgoo, 120043	57	-6	-9	-6	-7	-1.9	-2.0	-1.2	-2.0	-3.0	-4.9	13	9	-11	-10
25	Yiddinga, 130374	49	-5	-3	-5	-4	0.7	0.7	-0.4	-0.2	0.7	1.5	-1	2	-5	-12

^ 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)

1 Classer's Visual Grade is expressed as the percentage deviation of average Tops% and Culls%.

Elders Balmoral Sire Evaluation MLP trial 2016 drop post weaning assessment report

**Note: This is an excerpt of the 2016 Post Weaning Assessment report. To view the full report, download it online from www.blamoralbreeders.com.au or an electronic version can be emailed to you by contacting the Balmoral Breeders secretary. A full report will be printed in 2018 following the adult assessments of the animals.*

Table 2. **Major Measured Traits and Classer's Visual Grade**

Sire Code	Breeders flock, Sire name	Number of Progeny	Flock Breeding Values (deviations) GFW % P^	CFW % P	FD µm P	WT kg W	WT kg P	Classer's Visual Grade[1] Tops % P	Culls % P
1	Centre Plus Poll, 707115	39	0	-1	0.2	-0.7	-0.4	4	-6
2	GRASS, 142194 (R4)	27	3	6	1.4	1.1	1.5	-15	4
3	Glen Holme, 141077 (Dohne)	40	-9	-14	0.4	2.4	4.0	-20	-1
4	Greendale, 120012	32	0	-1	-1.2	-1.8	-2.9	-15	-2
5	Greenfields Poll, 140345	20	-1	0	0.3	1.9	3.0	6	9
6	Greenland, 2.366	35	-2	-2	1	-0.5	-0.6	-1	-4
7	Hannaton Poll, 120046	40	-3	-4	-0.7	-1.0	-1.1	26	-6
8	Hazeldean, 11.3542	38	10	13	-0.4	-0.6	-1.2	-2	4
9	Kiandra Poll, 140757	30	-7	-12	-0.6	1.3	2.4	-7	7
10	Kooringal, 130519	34	-8	-10	-0.6	-2.2	-3.3	-15	21
11	Kurra-Wirra, SB5585	25	6	7	0.4	-0.6	-1.2	12	8
12	Leahcim Poll, 090918	35	-7	-7	0	0.6	0.9	12	-3
13	Melrose, 12UGB060	32	8	9	-0.2	-1.3	-2.5	-2	-2
14	Mumblebone, 130389	14	-6	-7	0.6	-0.7	-0.6	24	1
15	Mumblebone, 140026	28	-1	1	0.4	1.0	2.4	-6	1
16	Nerstane, 100919	40	11	12	0.4	0.4	0.5	7	-12
17	One Oak No. 2, R56	44	0	0	-0.3	-1.0	-2.0	-14	8
18	Stockman Poll, 090853	39	1	1	-0.2	-1.8	-2.9	-3	-12
19	Terrick West Poll, 122220	26	-3	-2	0.1	1.9	2.1	-5	-6
20	The Mountain Dam, 11/ESA004	30	0	1	-0.4	-0.3	0.2	-8	7
21	Trefusis, 110482	37	1	0	-0.3	-1.8	-3.3	8	0
22	Tuckwood Poll, 131026	35	1	3	0	2.3	3.4	12	-3
23	Wallaloo Park Poll, 120912	32	-4	-6	-1	-1.6	-2.1	11	-6
24	Woodyarrup, 120175	27	8	12	0.3	1.7	2.2	8	-3
25	Yiddinga, 141989	19	2	2	0.4	1.3	1.6	-18	-5

Table 5. **Sire Means for Measured Traits**

Sire means are the average performance of all the progeny of a sire adjusted for all available information on sex, birth type, rear type, age of dam, age of measurement and management group, in order to improve the accuracy. No account is made for trait heritability and genetic correlations between traits that can improve the breeding value accuracy, as is the case in Table 1 of the report (not shown here).
The highest performing sires for each trait (trait leaders) are highlighted by shading. Curvature is the possible exception when for many breeders the optimum score is in the middle of the range therefore trait leaders have not been highlighted. The **Progeny group average** listed at the bottom of the table is the actual mean of the progeny group.

Breeders flock, Sire name	Number of Progeny	Sire means for measured traits (deviations from the site mean) GFW kg P^	CFW kg P	FD µm P	FDCV % P	SL mm	SS N/ktex	WT kg W	WT kg P	FAT mm	EMD mm
Centre Plus Poll, 707115	39	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0			-0.7	0.0		
GRASS, 142194 (R4)	27	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.9			0.5	0.5		
Glen Holme, 141077 (Dohne)	40	-0.1	-0.1	0.4	-0.3			1.4	1.7		
Greendale, 120012	32	0.0	-0.1	-0.9	0.7			-0.9	-1.6		
Greenfields Poll, 140345	20	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0			1.1	1.7		
Greenland, 2.366	35	0.0	0.0	0.8	-0.9			-0.6	-0.3		
Hannaton Poll, 120046	40	0.0	0.0	-0.6	-0.3			-0.8	-0.4		
Hazeldean, 11.3542	38	0.2	0.1	-0.4	-0.4			-0.3	-0.8		
Kiandra Poll, 140757	30	-0.1	-0.1	-0.5	0.5			0.6	1.4		
Kooringal, 130519	34	-0.1	-0.1	-0.5	-0.7			-1.1	-1.8		
Kurra-Wirra, SB5585	25	0.2	0.1	0.3	-0.5			-0.3	-0.5		
Leahcim Poll, 090918	35	-0.1	-0.1	0.0	0.0			0.5	0.5		
Melrose, 12UGB060	32	0.1	0.1	-0.2	0.5			-0.5	-1.7		
Mumblebone, 130389	14	-0.1	-0.1	0.5	-1.7			-0.9	-0.4		
Mumblebone, 140026	28	0.0	0.0	0.3	-1.5			0.0	1.8		
Nerstane, 100919	40	0.2	0.1	0.2	-0.6			0.2	0.0		
One Oak No. 2, R56	44	0.0	0.0	-0.2	2.5			-0.5	-1.1		
Stockman Poll, 090853	39	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.9			-1.1	-1.4		
Terrick West Poll, 122220	26	-0.1	0.0	0.1	0.9			1.6	1.2		
The Mountain Dam, 11/ESA004	30	0.0	0.0	-0.3	0.6			-0.5	0.4		
Trefusis, 110482	37	0.1	0.0	-0.1	0.9			-0.8	-1.8		
Tuckwood Poll, 131026	35	0.0	0.0	-0.1	-1.2			1.5	2.0		
Wallaloo Park Poll, 120912	32	0.0	0.0	-0.7	0.3			-1.0	-1.0		
Woodyarrup, 120175	27	0.2	0.2	0.2	-0.2			1.3	0.9		
Yiddinga, 141989	19	0.0	0.0	0.3	-0.2			1.1	0.6		
Progeny group average	**31**	**1.9** kg	**1.3** kg	**15.4** µm	**19.0** %	mm	N/ktex	**24.2**	**25.8** kg	mm	mm

SS and SL not currently available

FAT and EMD not yet measured

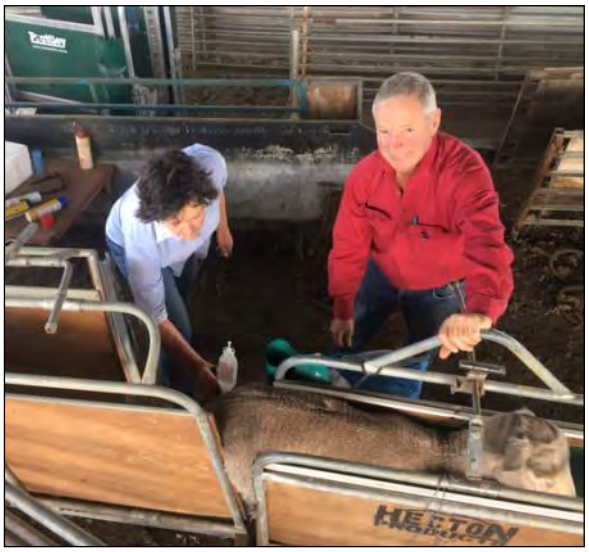
^ W = Weaning (42 to 120 days); P = Post Weaning (210 to 300 days); Y = Yearling (300 to 400 days); H = Hogget (400 to 540 days); A = Adult (540 days and older)

1 Classer's Visual Grade is expressed as the percentage deviation of average Tops% and Culls%.

2017 Elders Balmoral Sire Evaluation AMSEA trial
Property update: Kooringal, Coleraine

After one of the best autumn breaks we have seen for a long time at “Kooringal” all the livestock are in great shape and putting on condition going into winter.
The 1200 foundation ewes were artificially inseminated of April 20 and 21 to 20 different sires. A big thank you to all those people that helped over the 2 weeks of the program. The ewes were in condition score 3 and on a rising plain of nutrition so we are hopeful for a good pregnancy result.
Pregnancy scanning will took take place on June 27. Results from 1201 ewes scanned were: 387 singles; 340 twins and 14 triplets. A total of 460 ewes unsuccessfully joined to AI sires and were scanned empty or joined to back up rams.
The ewes are also being trained to walk through pallets stood up on their ends for the purpose of getting scanned with their lamb for pedigree match maker to get sire pedigree.

Mark Bunge, owner Kooringal

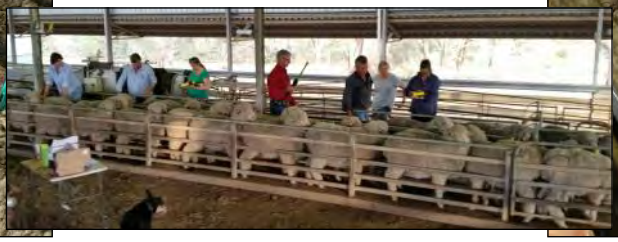


ABOVE LEFT: *Foundation ewes at Kooringal await to have CDRs inserted, April 2017.* ***ABOVE RIGHT:*** *Rosey Leeming and Tom Silcock removing CDRs from foundation ewes in preparation for AI.*

MLP classing trial

As part of the Merino Lifetime Productivity Trial, the Balmoral site has agreed to undertake a classing trial which aims to see if professional classers can identify top sheep from a young age. Trial progeny were classed as lambs and weaners, and will be classed again as five-year-old sheep in individual sire groups. This year’s classing took place the week after the field day on March 27 and 28 by professional sheep classers, Bill Walker and Chris Bowman.

LEFT: *Classer Bill Walker assesses sheep with the help of his wife, Rose.*
RIGHT: *Committee member Rosey Leeming assists classer Chris Bowman (centre) and onlooker Graham Wells.*
BELOW: *Classing in action at Tuloona.*



2017 Elders Balmoral Sire Evaluation AMSEA trial
Final accepted sires & pregnancy scanning results

Scanning: July 27, 2017

Summary: Conception Rate = 61% (ewes pregnant versus ewes joined)

Fertility Rate = 91.5% (foetuses present versus ewes joined)

2017 trial entrant sire	Ewes Joined	Pregnancy Status - Ewe Numbers				Number of Foetuses			
		Empty	Single	Twins	Triplets	Singles	Twins	Triplets	Total
Anderson Poll, 120096	60	19	17	21	3	17	42	9	68
Connewarran, 150024	60	24	19	17		19	34	0	53
Centre Plus Poll, 407445	60	28	22	10		22	20		42
Hazeldean, 4030	60	19	22	19		22	38		60
Kerin Poll, 151911	60	25	17	18		17	36		53
Kurra Wirra, 150583	60	29	17	14		17	28		45
Lachlan, 150280	60	22	15	21	2	15	42	6	63
Moorundie Poll, NE073	60	25	24	11		24	22		46
Merinotech WA Poll, 122041	60	24	21	14	1	21	28	3	52
Mumblebone, 130850	60	17	22	21		22	42		64
Mumblebone, 151723	60	24	16	19	1	16	38	3	57
Nerstane, 140053	60	26	16	17	1	16	34	3	53
Ridgway Poll, 140721	60	18	21	21		21	42		63
The Mountain Dam Poll, WYA037	60	22	19	16	3	19	32	9	60
Tuckwood Poll, 131026	60	19	19	22		19	44		63
Tuckwood Poll, 141025	60	34	16	10		16	20		36
Turkey Lane, 150077	60	15	27	17	1	27	34	3	64
Wallaloo Park Poll, 140261	60	17	21	20	2	21	40	6	67
Woodyarrup, 140149	60	28	11	21		11	42		53
Yiddinga, 154995	60	33	18	9		18	18		36
Grand Total	**1200**	**468**	**380**	**338**	**14**	**380**	**676**	**42**	**1098**
Percentage		*39%*	*32%*	*28%*	*1%*				

Come visit us!

The Elders Balmoral Sire Evaluation Group will be having a static display at the following industry events, so track us down and see what we've been up to. Displays will include pictorial display, audio-visual display, hard copies of recent results and other trial information.

Bendigo Sheep and Wool Show — July 14, 15 & 16, 2017
Hamilton Sheepvention — August 8 & 9, 2017

Don't forget to put our next field day in your diary now! The 2015, 2016 and 2017 trial progeny on display PLUS F1 and F2 sheep, and F2 lambs. On property at Tuloona and Kooringal.

Friday, February 16, 2018

2017 Field Day handout — Sheep selection

Allan Casey, Advanced Breeding Services, 0408 279 719

SheepSelect®

"Select to your Breeding Objective – Select accurately and efficiently"

Making more money as a result of your ram and ewe selections must be the primary objective for a commercial sheep producer. This is a summary of how I recommend a commercial flock producer achieves this outcome.

It's your flock, it's your income. You must take control.

Two basic elements

A. Select to your breeding objective.
B. Select traits accurately and combine them efficiently.

1. **Breeding Objective**: Establish traits that increase income or save costs. Balance the emphasis (not importance) on each so they maximise return. Write down the emphasis on each. Out of 100% for ASBV traits. And out of 100 for the additional traits. Selection must be a balance across all these traits. Separate breeding objectives from management objectives.

2. **Ram selection** (at auction) for a group of flock rams. Use RamSelect if possible, it's a huge help.

- Know how and when ram purchase takes place – talk to your breeder not just look at the "web".
- *Benchmark to rams in other relevant flock's catalogues and use a current percentile band table.*
- Step 1. Benchmark. When you get your catalogue compare their standard to the rams you have on hand.
- Relative to the standard of rams you have on hand set yourself reference performance standards for the index that matches your breeding objective and each relevant trait.
- Step 2. Grade the rams on performance in the ram sale catalogue as soon as it is available.
- Use an index if there is one that matches your objective. Only use an index if you are sure.
- Grade the whole catalogue 1 to 4 or at least 1 to 3 – 1 being best. **X** rams that are unsuitable.
- The index may be a primary way of dividing the rams into groups.
- But also look closely at each rams performance for the traits in your objective to ensure they have the right standard and balance. Remember each ram will have strength and weaknesses.
- If the standard or balance is only slightly weak for the grade they can be dropped one or more grades or if less suitable **X** the ram.
- Outcome – 4 or 3 grades – hopefully 50 to 70% of the catalogue is graded – about equal number per grade but normally more in lower grades as marginal sheep get pushed to lower grades.
- Step 3. Your visual trait evaluation – usually sale day. First have a look at the overall standard.
- Set a reference standard. Take account of the season – nourishment, dust, fleece rot, etc
- Work through the catalogue - combine your measured grade with visual trait performance.
- Adjust your measured grade down if visual trait standard is not suitable. **X** if unsuitable.
- Set a price limit for each grade and stick to it. Bid up quickly to the grade limit.

3. **Ewe selection** for a classed Merino/Dohne flock – for a flock with 10 to 40% classed down.

- Fine tune Breeding Objective. Establish % being aimed for in grades, e.g., Merino, X bred, cull.
- Establish general standard of the group being classed – in the yard and down the race. Take account of the season and management – nourishment, dust, fleece rot, etc.
- Establish the standard you will grade to. This is difficult because you are balancing several traits. There is no one standard for each trait. A ewe with a very high standard for a high emphasis trait may be tolerated with a little lower standard for another trait. Each race won't have the correct %.
- Select as directly as possible for a trait, e.g. for fleece weight, use fleece wool not bonnet.
- Accuracy improved by measurement. High emphasis, if possible, if cost effective. Body weight.
- Accuracy improved by good and fair inspection – see all traits, consistent fleece, stand correctly.

2017 Field Day handout: Ram Care

Allan Casey — Advanced Breeding Services 0408 279 719

RamCare® "An unsound ram is worse than no ram at all …"

An unsound ram is worse than this ram being completely left out of a syndicate mating. The following RamCare will ensure the rams that are mated are sound for a 6-week mating and will work to at least 6 years of age.

At purchase

1.1. Rams that have been bred and selected for soundness will require less management. Make sure your ram breeder is focused on breeding as well as selection for soundness.

1.2. Ensure rams being purchased have been recently checked by a veterinarian for sound reproduction, sound conformation and are showing no sign of disease. Prior to taking delivery check again for soundness, in particular testicles as they can be injured fighting after the veterinary check.

1.3. Obtain the ram's and its flocks health status and management history from your ram breeder; vaccination, drench, fly and lice treatment, OJD status, foot rot status, brucellosis status supplementary feeding (now and over their lifetime) and feet trimming.

1.4. Transport rams so they can stand easily and will not get injured. Rams should have been off feed and water for between 4 and 12 hours when they start their journey. Good flooring is very important so they can grip and not be injured by a rough or loose surface.

1.5. On arriving home keep your new rams away from older rams to avoid any risk of injury from fighting. This is particularly important if you are within the 12 weeks prior to mating. It is also likely the new young rams will need a higher level of nutrition as they are still growing.

1.6. Quarantine drench your new rams with the most suitable drench or combination of drenches to 'clean out' resistant worms. Do this when they arrive home and leave them in a safe, secure yard or holding paddock to ensure resistant worms don't contaminate pasture before the drench has time to work. Two days is a suitable quarantine in the yard. The WormBoss website provides more information on quarantine drenching www.wormboss.com.au. Feed as much good quality hay as rams will eat. If lupins are to be fed in the future this is a good time to introduce rams that have had no experience with this grain. The yard should have good day long shade for all rams, a lot of "personal" space to eat, water and simply distance themselves from the other rams they are in the yard with. Good interaction between you and the rams during this time will make handling easier in the future.

Year Round Management:

2.1 Maintain rams in a fat/condition score of 3 all year round except when leading up to mating. Over fat rams are more prone to breakdown due to excessive weight on limbs and are less mobile around the paddock. Keep rams fit.

2.2 Shearing rams 10 to 12 weeks prior to mating is recommended. Shearing within 8 weeks of mating can reduce semen quality during mating, particularly in hot weather, as the fleece protects the ram against high temperatures. Shear rams with as little stress as possible, including when traveling to and from their paddock and in the yards before and after shearing.

2.3 Shear rams twice a year.

2.4 At mating, if rams have not been shorn in the last 12 weeks, ring rams around the pizzle or remove the belly wool completely, especially if the belly wool is burry. Also, wig and crutch if necessary.

2.5 Ensure rams are drenched (with an effective drench) at strategic times.

2.6 Maintain immunity via an annual booster of 6 in 1 vaccination.

2.7 Keep ram's feet trimmed if necessary to reduce the risk of lameness or foot abscess. A ram with poor feet shape (and the lameness and arthritis that results) is less likely to seek out, mount ewes and ejaculate.

2.8 Trim horns if required. Short horns will reduce fighting and handling difficulties. Check scurs and trimmed horns as they can grow toward the head.

2.9 If mating during the fly season provide fly treatment on the head that will last the length of mating. Routine fly strike management is a must to reduce infertility and deaths.

2.10 Avoid handling of rams in such a way they are getting toward "tonguing" particularly in the 10 weeks before mating as this can reduced fertility during mating. Careful handling at shearing, crutching, foot trimming and when mustering are important. Don't move rams any distance in the heat of the day if it can be avoided.

2.11 Rams need to be fit for mating. While you need to avoid stress, particularly in the 10 weeks before mating, ensure the rams are getting good regular exercise.

2.12 Keep rams well away from ewes before being mated in the autumn and summer. Close contact at this time can result in a "ram effect" that reduces ewe cycling during mating.

Pre and Post Mating Management

3.1 Carry out a pre-mating physical examination 12 to 14 weeks prior to mating (and also prior to ram selection) to ensure there are no problems with feet, teeth, prepuce and penis, testicles and scrotum. If testical size and tone is not good (28 cm or greater and firm and springy – not hard or flabby) feeding will need to start immediately.

3.2 Sound supplementary feeding of rams 10 weeks prior to mating can provide a marked improvement in semen quality and volume. Feed 0.4 kg (a cup) of lupins daily. For rams over 80 kg feed 0.5 kg per day. In addition, provide pasture or supplementary feed at a level suitable for a dry sheep at the ram's weight.

3.3 Each ram should be in condition score 3.5 to 4 during the 8 weeks prior to mating. If mating rams after a long period with no green feed at all, it may be necessary to supplement with vitamin A at 8 weeks prior to mating and just before mating.

3.4 Sound and well prepared rams can be safely mated at 1.5% unless the geography, pasture availability, paddock size and high ambient temperatures require an increase in the ram percentage. The optimum mating period is for 2 cycles (five weeks). Teasers can be an advantage if mating between August and January. During this teaser period, keep rams well away from Merino ewes to be mated to ensure ewe fertility is not compromised.

3.5 If possible, do not mate old rams and young rams together because of possible domination of older rams. If possible mate older rams with maiden ewes and maiden rams with older ewes.

3.6 After mating, put rams in a good paddock to recover. If rams are below 3 score supplementary feeding may be necessary. Maintain rams in score 3 condition (improve prior to mating – see point 3.3). Once rams reach 3 score condition (along with other care discussed) they are ready to be mated in 10 weeks. Mating rams within the 10 weeks from the end of another mating is questionable (even if in the correct body condition) due to stress that may have occurred during the first mating.

Percentile band table to assist with animal selection:

How do I use a percentile chart? Percentile charts show the range of each ASBV value for the drop that is approximately 1 year old. The table allows you to benchmark ASBV and index performance to the current range in industry standards. The left column in the table shows the percentile band. The 50% band is average performance for the drop. The 10% band shows "trait leaders" and is the performance of the 10% most extreme performers in the drop for that trait or index

ASBV and Index Percentile Band Table

Analysis **MERINO** Run date **07-Mar-17**

Animals born in **2015**

Band	Yfd u	Ycfw %	Yfdcv %	Ysl mm	Yss Nktex	NLW %	Ysc cm	Ywec %	Ywt kg	Yfat mm	Yemd mm	DP+	MP+	FP+
0	-5.8	41.6	-4.0	32.4	11.9	23	6.5	-94	16.6	4.0	5.2	227.0	210.4	192.3
1	-4.2	28.3	-2.6	22.9	7.0	15	4.3	-81	11.4	1.8	3.0	181.8	176.1	163.1
2	-3.5	26.5	-2.4	20.5	6.1	13	4.0	-72	10.6	1.6	2.7	175.3	170.6	158.9
3	-3.2	25.3	-2.3	18.9	5.6	12	3.7	-66	10.0	1.4	2.5	171.1	167.1	156.4
4	-3.1	24.4	-2.2	17.6	5.2	11	3.6	-62	9.6	1.4	2.4	168.1	164.7	154.6
5	-2.9	23.7	-2.1	16.6	4.9	11	3.4	-59	9.2	1.3	2.3	165.8	162.8	153.1
10	-2.5	21.1	-1.9	13.8	3.9	9	3.0	-50	8.0	1.0	1.9	157.9	156.1	148.0
15	-2.3	19.2	-1.7	12.4	3.3	7	2.7	-44	7.2	0.9	1.6	153.3	151.8	144.6
20	-2.1	17.8	-1.5	11.3	2.8	6	2.5	-40	6.6	0.7	1.3	149.7	148.3	141.9
25	-1.9	16.5	-1.4	10.3	2.4	5	2.3	-36	6.1	0.6	1.1	146.5	145.4	139.6
30	-1.8	15.3	-1.3	9.5	2.0	4	2.1	-32	5.6	0.5	1.0	143.7	142.8	137.6
35	-1.6	14.3	-1.2	8.7	1.7	3	2.0	-29	5.1	0.4	0.8	141.2	140.5	135.7
40	-1.5	13.2	-1.1	7.9	1.3	3	1.8	-26	4.7	0.3	0.7	138.9	138.3	133.9
45	-1.4	12.2	-1.0	7.2	1.0	2	1.7	-23	4.3	0.3	0.6	136.6	136.2	132.2
50	-1.2	11.3	-0.9	6.5	0.7	1	1.6	-19	3.9	0.2	0.4	134.4	134.2	130.5
55	-1.1	10.3	-0.8	5.7	0.3	0	1.4	-16	3.5	0.1	0.3	132.4	132.1	128.7
60	-1.0	9.2	-0.7	4.9	0.0	0	1.3	-12	3.1	0.0	0.2	130.3	130.0	126.8
65	-0.8	8.0	-0.5	4.1	-0.3	-1	1.2	-8	2.6	-0.1	0.0	128.2	127.7	124.8
70	-0.7	6.8	-0.4	3.2	-0.7	-2	1.0	-5	2.2	-0.2	-0.1	126.1	125.3	122.5
75	-0.5	5.5	-0.3	2.2	-1.1	-3	0.8	0	1.7	-0.2	-0.2	123.7	122.9	120.2
80	-0.3	3.9	-0.1	1.0	-1.6	-4	0.7	5	1.2	-0.4	-0.4	120.9	120.2	117.6
85	-0.1	2.0	0.0	-0.4	-2.1	-5	0.4	11	0.5	-0.5	-0.6	117.5	117.1	114.5
90	0.1	-0.6	0.3	-2.1	-2.9	-7	0.1	19	-0.2	-0.6	-0.8	113.0	113.3	110.5
95	0.6	-4.7	0.6	-4.8	-4.1	-11	-0.3	31	-1.2	-0.9	-1.1	106.1	107.4	104.9
96	0.7	-6.0	0.7	-5.6	-4.5	-13	-0.5	35	-1.6	-0.9	-1.2	103.5	105.2	103.2
97	0.8	-7.7	0.9	-6.6	-5.0	-16	-0.6	39	-1.9	-1.0	-1.3	100.1	102.0	100.9
98	1.1	-10.2	1.1	-7.9	-5.7	-20	-0.8	46	-2.4	-1.1	-1.5	94.5	96.8	96.9
99	1.5	-14.0	1.4	-9.7	-6.9	-25	-1.2	55	-3.1	-1.3	-1.7	80.6	78.8	78.2
100	5.5	-36.5	3.8	-19.5	-13.4	-40	-4.0	157	-9.3	-2.3	-3.9	0.0	38.6	21.4

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Thank you to our Sponsors

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