



April 2014

175 YEARS

Balmoral Victoria Sire Evaluation Group

Trial News

www.balmoralbreeders.com.au

ELDERS BALMORAL SIRE EVALUATION TRIAL FIELD DAY

- Friday 11th April from 12.00 Noon (lunch available)
Wando Estate (Casterton-Edenhope Road)
- Guest Speakers at 1.30 pm include Andrew Michael
'Supercharging the speed of genetic gain with juvenile in vitro embryo transfer (JIVET)'
- See the 2012 & 2013 drop progeny from 37 of Australia's leading sires (VIC, WA, NSW & SA)
- Comprehensive pedigree trial results presented – traditional methods V DNA V Pedigree MatchMaker – which works best?
- Display of Innovative individual animal daily walkover weighing trial
- See the latest EID technology

For more information please contact

Tom Silcock - 0419 882 239 or Andrew Howells - 0418 846 291

www.balmoralbreeders.com.au



Elders Balmoral Sire Evaluation Trial Committee Members Nick Falkenberg, Elise Kealy and Hugh Jarvis take the final mid side samples from the 2012 drop progeny ahead of delivering results at the Field Day on April 11th



VR1861707



175 YEARS

Balmoral Sire Evaluation Group

2012 Entrants

BINDAWARA, 080358
 CONNEWARREN, 088016
 GLENPAEN, 080356
 GRINGEGALGONA, 071609
 HAZELDEAN, 8.3561
 KOORINGAL, 102277
 LACHLAN, 08SP30
 LEACHIM 090918
 THE MOUNTAIN DAM, COA029
 MOOJEPIN, 100248
 NAREEB NAREEB, 100655
 NERSTANE, 080121
 ONE OAK, 100010
 POOGINOOK, CLARK 103462
 RIDGEWAY, 091137
 ROSEVILLE PARK, 090014
 TOLAND, 111021

2013 Entrants

Bundaleer 2.1 JackpOnly
 Connewarran 0040
 Gringegalgona 090960
 Hazeldean 9.4752
 Kurra-Wirra SV885(SR 98)
 Leahcim 09/0918 (LINK)
 Mount Yulong 111 Nigel
 Nerstane 100919
 Nerstane (Link) 050010
 One Oak Blue 11-104
 The Mountain Dam LE018
 Tuckwood 101012
 Yalgoo YO 80068
 Yiddinga 195
 Roseville Park RP10-0038
 Hannaton Poll 110001
 KiaOra 90130
 Kurra Wirra SR 296

2014 Entrants

Leahcim (Link) 09/0918 (LINK)
 Pooginook (Historical Sire) Jewel (990883)
 Nerstane (Historic Link) 920002 (Historic)
 Nerstane (Link) 958 (Link)
 The Mountain Dam RE17
 Mumbulbone 120431
 Merinotech WA 115
 Edale 800E+239
 Mokanger 92
 Winyar RP Win 710
 Kurra Wirra KW784
 Karowara Plains Poll Merino KP11-024
 Connerwarren 2097
 Donley Park White 44
 Centre Plus 807300
 Anderson Rams 120103
 Wanganella W00.019
 Nareeb Nareeb 120910
 Tuckwood 131023
 Pooginook Four Corners (112469)

Our Chairman - Tom Silcock



This year's Field Day will have more to see than ever before. All visitors will be challenged by some of the latest new industry concepts and trials on display. Also, the only chance to see one of the biggest presentations of progeny from some of Australia's leading sires. Every year we have to wait for our field day opportunity to finally see progeny groups on display. Only the Field Day will finally reveal a visual insight into the genetics we took on 2 years ago.

At this year's field day, we are fortunate to have **Ben Swain**, the Executive Officer of Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association (AMSEA) and also our sites data manager, able to attend. Ben will give a presentation on **"What Does AMSEA DO?"** as well as a summary and explanation of results for the 2012 drop.

The other key presenter this year is **Andrew Michael** from Leahcim. What Andrew and his family are doing, will challenge every ones thinking on future sheep breeding. Andrew will display and present how they are **"Smashing The Generation Interval"** while multiplying out their best genetics.

We will also have a panel Q&A session that will cover the daily walk over weighing trial, the pedigree comparison trial and this year's focus on maximising conception rates and early lamb survival.

This is a very hectic time for all involved with our trials. Finalizing this year's new trial, classing, sampling, AI, Field day, followed by 2 lots of shearing and another newsletter as well. We are indeed fortunate to have quality skilled people dedicated to help make it all happen and behind every one of those activities is a lot of organizing. Again a big thank you to all helpers and the team at Wando Estate, along with our new hosts for this year's trial, Nick & Yvonne Falkenberg and their team. For those involved it provides an opportunity to be part of activities at the cutting edge of our industry in management and genetics.

We are fortunate to have AWI, MLA and DEPI supporting our current activities. It is great to have all industry bodies sharing in a common good, for the good of us all. We hope to continue to receive this same joint support, as we tackle fertility and in particular the challenge of improving early lamb survival in this year's trial.

On the 8th & 9th of April, just prior to our Field Day, I will be attending firstly the Merino Consultative Committee (MCC) then an AMSEA meeting. I'm sure high on the agenda, as it should be, will be the results of the recent AWI Industry Consultation Document and the implications. I hope for a very clear message that industry bodies should continue to strongly support the great work we are involved in and those same bodies ensure the accountability and credibility for all the industry to benefit.

I have just completed 5 years on the Sheep Genetics Advisory Committee as of now. It has been a challenging position for me, although as always I have enjoyed meeting and mixing with great industry people. Sheep Genetics has been and is challenged as being an R&D body, whilst also then being a deliverer of a product. In my view SG accountability to their customers has been and remains a challenge to them. I am strongly of the view that industry should play a bigger role in the delivery side and wish those on that committee well with these challenges.



merinoSUPERIOR SIRES

AMSEA Comment

AMSEA has invested heavily over the past month in preparing its submission to AWI's Genetic Benchmarking Consultation process.

As one of the key genetic benchmarking investments that AWI makes, sire evaluation and the operation of AMSEA, along with AWI's investment in Sheep Genetics, Merino Bloodline Performance (wether trials) and production class sponsorship, are all part of the review AWI is undertaking into the potential for increased breeder responsibility and full commercialisation.

The discussion paper that AWI released as part of its consultation paper, outlined 4 potential business models going forward. These models ranged from the current situation in which AWI, MLA and ram breeders share the operational, extension, research and development costs associated with the current genetic benchmarking programs, through to models with no AWI involvement, except for research and development. A model that proposed a fully commercialised entity, similar in structure to that of AWTA Ltd was also included.

AMSEA's submission supported that current model of ownership, funding and governance of all genetic benchmarking programs and encouraged AWI to continue its investment in this area. AMSEA also highlighted many areas for improvement in the programs and the put forward potential ways in which service to ram breeders, together with commercial wool growers, could be improved.

AWI is currently summarising the submissions received and the AWI Board will consider the responses at its meeting in late April. Keep an eye on the AWI website www.wool.com.au for more information as it becomes available.

Ben Swain
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175 YEARS

2012 Drop Adult Classer's Grade and Weight

Classer's Grade results from the recent adult assessment of the 2012 drop, together with average adult weight for each sire group. Full results will be available at the field day.

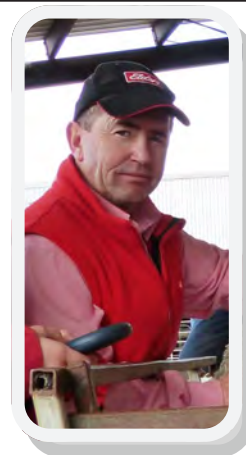
NB: No allowance made for singles or twins

| Sire | No of Progeny | Classer's Grade | | | Average Weight (kg) |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|------------|---------------------|
| | | Culls (%) | Flocks (%) | Tops (%) | |
| Bindawarra, 080358 | 39 | 10 | 72 | 18 | 39 |
| Connewarran, 8016 | 36 | 22 | 58 | 19 | 38.5 |
| Glenpaen, 080356 | 23 | 13 | 65 | 22 | 37.8 |
| Gringegalgona, 071609 | 54 | 9 | 72 | 19 | 41.2 |
| Hazeldean, 8.3561 | 21 | 5 | 67 | 29 | 40 |
| Koorringal, 102277 | 32 | 38 | 56 | 6 | 37 |
| Lachlan Merinos, 08SP30 | 36 | 3 | 61 | 36 | 45.4 |
| Leahcim Poll, 090918 | 44 | 11 | 73 | 16 | 38.4 |
| Moojepin, 100248 | 48 | 17 | 69 | 15 | 44.3 |
| Nareeb Nareeb, 100655 | 32 | 25 | 66 | 9 | 37.5 |
| Nerstane, 080121 | 33 | 6 | 76 | 18 | 36.3 |
| One Oak No. 2, BL0010 | 32 | 16 | 81 | 3 | 42.6 |
| Pooginook, Clark | 43 | 42 | 53 | 5 | 38.3 |
| Ridgway Poll, 091137 | 50 | 16 | 74 | 10 | 40.7 |
| Roseville Park, 090014 | 26 | 12 | 65 | 23 | 39.5 |
| The Mountain Dam, 11/ CWA029 | 37 | 5 | 68 | 27 | 38.4 |
| Toland Poll, 111021 | 25 | 16 | 68 | 16 | 42.3 |
| Yalgoo, 070441 | 40 | 40 | 55 | 5 | 36.8 |
| Yiddinga, 101057 | 33 | 36 | 61 | 3 | 38.1 |
| Total | 36 | 18% | 67% | 15% | 39.7 |

'Classing Report



Elliot Lindley
District Wool Manager Ballarat



Classing of the 2012 drop **Elders Victorian Sire Evaluation Group.**

It was great to be invited again to class & evaluate progeny from different sires from around the country.

I would like to thank the host property Wando Estate with Tom Sweeney & his team presenting the sheep in good order.

Favourable spring conditions certainly had the sheep in good buckle.

This years classing was probably the most comprehensive that I have undertaken with 16 different traits being looked at. Over the two days we looked at the different traits of the progeny.

The approach is to always look at the progeny of the 19 different sires on a commercial basis.

The majority of the drop fitted into the Flock criteria 67%, some Culls 18% and 15% of the progeny going into the Tops.

The overall make up of the 2012 drop were of good shape & structure.

Depth & constitution were also very positive.

Few sheep showed shoulder, wither or back problems.

The feet were mostly very good with a score of 3.

The wool types were in the range of mostly 64's through to 70's, Good to Best Topmakers, with some pushing up into Spinners types.

I would like to thank the Sire Evaluation committee for once again giving me the opportunity to go along & evaluate the progeny at Wando estate.

I am sure that Wando estate will reap the genetic benefits in the years to come.

Elliot Lindley.

I joined Andrew Howells to condition score AI ewes at the time of inserting Cidrs and completing fasting period trial comparison. Overall, I thought the ewes at Mepungah were in reasonable condition given the current environmental constraints at play in our district. From the sheep I have looked at in recent times from my lifetime ewe management participants, these sheep are certainly not the lightest, nor the heaviest I have conditioned scored. Rightly or wrongly, these sheep are largely (apart from genetics), a function of the feed they have eaten.

After condition scoring some 1230 ewes, they averaged 2.84. They were quite even in condition, although, as with every flock, you tend to see sheep at both ends of the spectrum. With that said, I thought there were more ewes above score 3 than there were ewes below 2.6.

You might argue that to achieve maximum conception rates, ewes need to be at condition score 3 or better at the point of joining. This is true and I have no intention of disputing these facts. However realistically in a commercial situation on a farm, often carrying debt with large flock numbers and the cost of supplementary feed, this target is not always achievable.

At an average weight of 42kg, I thought that these ewes were slightly underdone given their medium to larger frame size and genetics. As with all maidens and/or ewe lambs, they need to reach ~80-85% of their mature weight at joining to achieve maximum conception rates. At their current weight, I would argue that if last year's conception rates were low, body weight may be one of the main culprits. This year, however, (as mature sheep), condition score will play an important role in determining joining success.

With these ewes only two weeks off shears, and with a good supplementation, including lupins, I am confident they have turned the corner.

Looking around Mepungah, Nick has been able to achieve excellent utilisation of his dry standing feed, which is always difficult to achieve and this will allow excellent clover germination in the autumn, allowing stock to put on further condition prior to lambing.

It is a credit to Nick and his team to carry these ewes through the summer and to manage a significant sized ewe flock under environmental and economic stresses.

When thinking about supplementary feeding, critically, we often start too late. When pasture digestibility drops below 55-50% it is impossible to maintain condition and live-weight in sheep, regardless of the amount of feed on offer. This year, pasture quality had declined to around 52% digestibility by mid-January. Therefore, as a rule of thumb, supplementary feeding should commence at the start of January at the latest. If ewes are carrying a lot of condition, i.e. >3.5 and come through a good spring, you can allow them to utilise the fat on their back for some time – but remember, it is always easier and more cost effective to maintain condition than to lose too much and scramble to put it back on sometime in February.

Spring lambing flocks will be more susceptible to changes in condition score at joining compared to Autumn lambing flocks, where day length and poorer ovulation rates for November/December joined ewes is responsible for lower reproductive rates. On average, for spring lambing flocks, an increase in 1 condition score at joining can result in 20 extra lambs per 100 ewes joined. Trial work conducted by the lifetime wool research has shown responses as high as 52% for ewes joined in March that were in condition score 3 - 3.5 compared to ewes in condition score 2 - 2.5.

to achieve maximum conception rate potential in spring lambing flocks, you need to consider sheep condition score and body weight at least two months prior to joining start date and then consider how much supplement to offer.

Testing both pasture and your supplement ensures that you allocate the right quantity to the right stock in a timely and economical fashion. To develop a nutrition plan for your livestock, phone Steve at Livestock Logic on 5572 1419.

Wando Host Property 2012-2013

From January to end of March we have below average rainfall and certainly some very high temperatures in between. Pasture quality and quantity is low. But all is in place for hopefully a good autumn break.

Both 2012 drop and 2013 drop are progressing well at present and are on a supplementary ration of 1.8kg/hd/wk of wheat and 1.5kgDM/hd/wk of silage.

Recent tasks carried out have been classing of the 2012 drop and weighing plus the 2013 drop will be weighed prior to the field day.

Also mid-February the data recording and telemetry system was set up for the walk over weighing system of the 2013 drop.

As our two year period as host property for the Sire Evaluation comes to an end.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Tom Silcock and the rest of the committee for their support and ongoing help and enthusiasm over the last two year period.

It has been a fantastic opportunity to be involved with a committee with a vast knowledge base that I have been able to utilize.

I wish Nick and Yvonne Falkenburg all the best with the next phase of being the host property.



Tom Sweeney “Wando Estate”



The beautiful rolling hills of Wando Estate

Mepungah Pastoral Company Host Property 2014

A better than average Spring was very welcome here and was followed by a Summer that included three extreme heat waves and negligible rainfall in January and February. Its now the 26rd of March and we have received 17mm and 12.5mm of rain a week apart over the last three weeks. There has been a strike of clover and fodder crops and perennial pastures have freshened up. Follow up rain will be required soon if this is to be called an early "break".

We finished our general shearing on the 19th March and have began preparing for the AI program for this year's sire evaluation trial. All

ewes to be AI'ed have been weighed, condition scored, EID'ed and

have had their CIDRS put in. Laparoscopic AI of these ewes will take place on the 7th & 8th of April. The ewes are 2.5 years old.

I must say I have been overwhelmed by the passion ,enthusiasm and professionalism associated within this group. Its objective to achieve definitive and positive outcomes for the wool industry is exceptional. As a farm manager I have always been driven by production based models that have tended to under emphasise the importance of genetics, but being involved with this group has ignited an interest in the merits and potential of a highly focused sheep breeding program.

It's a great honour to be hosting what is believed to be the largest merino sheep sire evaluation trial in the world and I very much look forward to participating in it. regards Nick



Nick & Yvonne Falkenberg

B a r k

break apart raised kennel

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ph. nick 0407 559 680



WOW and Dam Pedigree Comparison PDS Trial Project Update March 2014

Dam Pedigree Comparison Trial

The comparison of the three methods of Dam Identification is nearly complete. The three methods in this trial are visual identification and tagging at birth, Pedigree Matchmaker analysis of data collected via electronic tags in the ewe and lamb and DNA analysis of parentage from blood samples, (see pictures below).

Data has recently been received from the DNA analysis method allowing a comparison of the three methods to begin. Sire identification data from the tagging at birth and DNA analysis methods will be compared to the AI sire records for each ewe (Pedigree Matchmaker does not identify sires). Dam identification comparison between the three methods will include success rate and correlation between the three methods. Results comparing costs and success rates for each method will be available at the field day at Wando Estate on the 11th April.



Tagging lambs at birth



Downloading data from Pedigree Matchmaker



Collecting blood samples for DNA analysis

Walk over Weighing Trial

2013 drop lambs were weaned and weighed on the 24th December 2013. They were then boxed together and run in a new paddock with two water troughs. Each water trough was fenced and has a weigh crate as used in the Pedigree Matchmaker trial above through which the lambs pass to access the water. Initially the fence around each trough was opened opposite the crate and each crate was opened to its widest setting to ensure all lambs were able to access water.

This was particularly important straight after weaning and during hot weather in January and February.

Gradually the fences were closed and the crates narrowed until access to water was only through the crates on their narrowest settings. All lambs are happily accessing water through the crates on the narrowest settings.

On the 20th February the walk over weighing equipment and telemetry system was installed at the homestead and at the first water trough (see pictures below). There were some initial hardware and software problems that have now been resolved. Lamb electronic tag numbers and weights are now being remotely accessed from the paddock via the homestead to the Sapien office in Melbourne. Sapien is now in the process of developing software that will make sense of this data and provide real time reports on the body weight status of the lambs in the paddock.

A demonstration of this equipment and data reports will be on show at the field day at

Wando Estate on the 11th April.

WOW and Dam Pedigree Comparison PDS Trial Project Update March 2014



Tom Sweeney attaching the telemetry



Tom Silcock, Rob Wyld (Sapien Technology) and Tom Sweeney connecting the WOW computer system at the homestead



Steve Milne, the two Toms and Rob attaching the load zone reduction plate to the weigh crate to reduce the weigh area.



Rob setting up the trailer with the aerial and WOW equipment.



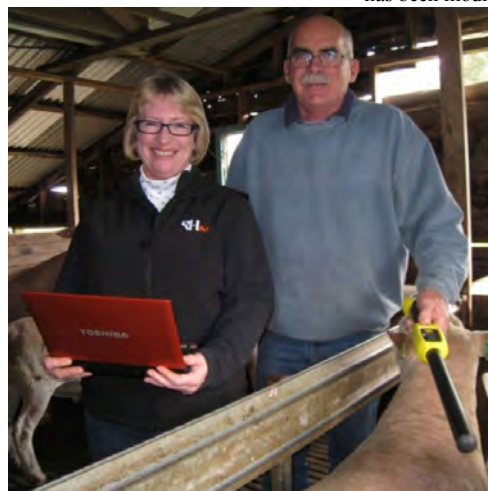
Steve checking the scale head reader



The PMM electronic tag reader on the crate has been modified to connect to the WOW



Walk over weigh crate and telemetry system installed on the first water trough.



Steve and Debbie Milne, Project Managers

Bar Code Printer Trial

The printer trial has commenced with research via a questionnaire to printer users and purchase and use of two printers in data collection. Demonstrations and preliminary results will be on display at the field day.

Steve and Debbie Milne, Project Managers
Richmond Hill Agribusiness P/L



Trent Fordham

Firstly, I would like to congratulate all the participants in the Elders Victoria Sire Evaluation Group. It is excellent to see growers keen to push the sheep industry forward, with trials and research like this Balmoral evaluation.

Secondly, I would like to thank the coordinators of the group for allow Riverina Wool Tester to be a sponsor of this trial, but also a service provider, undertaking all the wool testing.

Here at Riverina Wool Testers, there have been some exciting events, also, with the appointment of myself, Trent Fordham as General Manager, assisting Managing Director Paul Cocking. With this Paul has recently been appointed to the AWI board of directors and we wish him well in his role. We have updated our website, so please check that out, at www.wooltesters.com.au . You are able to order sample bags through the web site or download a test request form. We have a full range of services, including micron/FDD, yield, length and strength testing and indexing with Sheep Genetics Australia. If you can't find it or there is something you need that isn't there, or you would like a quote for your wool testing, EID equipment or ear tags, please give me a call 02 69251 407. At Riverina Wool Testers, we pride ourselves on our service, quality and turn around times and we are an internationally accredited member of the International Association of Wool Textile Laboratories.

Trent Fordham
Riverina Wool Testers

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**Would you like to be involved in the Trial?
Contact Tom Silcock**

Final Classing Day at 'Wando Estate'



Elders classing team in operation:
Amy Tierney, Elliot Lindley, Andrew Howells



Big thanks to Peter Mecham Zoetis

Also Steve Cotton Livestock Logic



Rachel (UK) Elise Kealy , Charlie with Peter Hicks in the background

“Cidr” Insertion and Condition Scoring at “Mepungah”



Amy Tierney ,Tom Silcock ,Ken (Mepungah) & David Bunge inserting Cidrs at Mepungah



Andrew Howells, Dr Steve Cotton and Peter Mecham condition scoring at Mepungah



What is erysipelas arthritis?

zoetis

Erysipelas arthritis, caused by the bacterium *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae*, is observed in newborn lambs, after marking/mulesing, or less commonly, post-dipping. The disease can cause significant loss of production from poor weight gain, reduced wool production and failure to thrive in lame lambs.

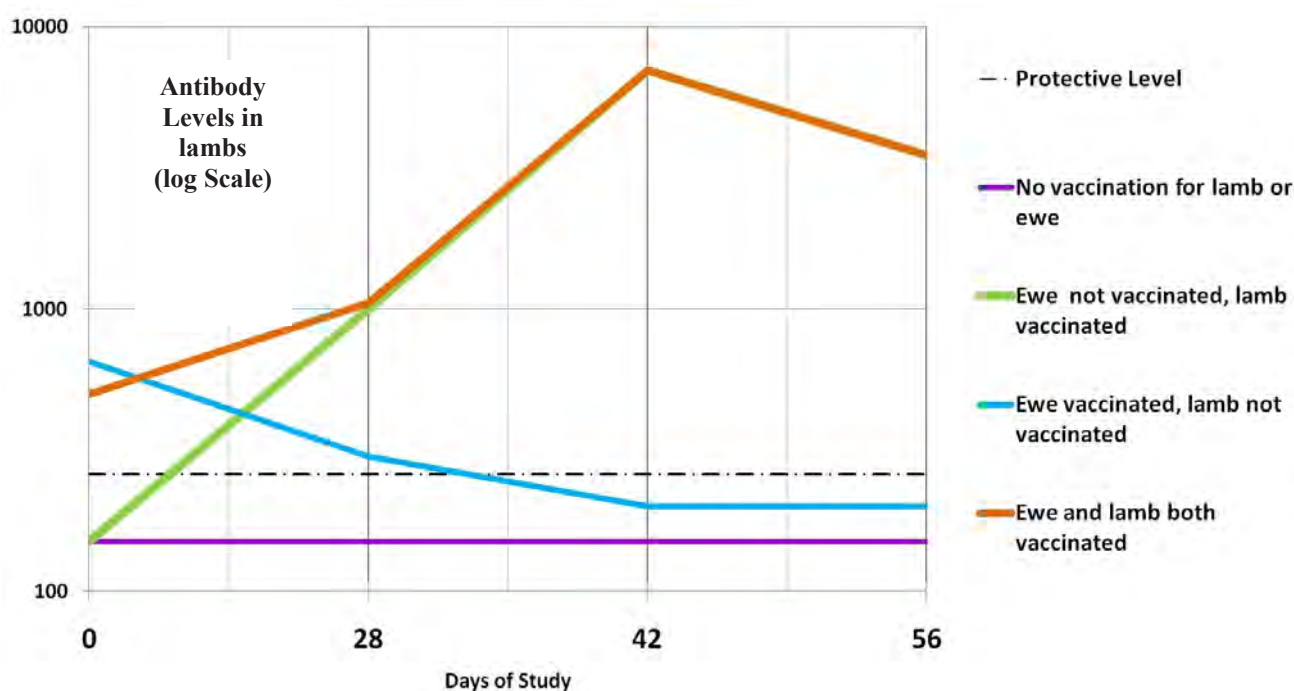
Eryvac is now approved for use in lambs

Until now, Eryvac has only been registered for use in ewes pre-lambing. In previously unvaccinated ewes, two doses are required – the first dose at the time of mating and the second dose about 4 weeks before the expected date of lambing. An annual booster 4 weeks prior to expected date of lambing is then required. Ewes vaccinated in this way will transfer passive immunity to their lambs through their colostrum. Such lambs should be protected for the first 6-8 weeks of life, covering critical risk periods such as when the naval is closing. However, once passive immunity from the ewe wears off, the lambs will become susceptible to erysipelas infection and arthritis at other critical risk periods such as the post-marking period, when tail-docking and castration wounds are healing, and weaning. We now have an additional label claim for Eryvac – use of Eryvac in lambs to generate active immunity against erysipelas, to protect lambs as the passive immunity gained from the ewe declines.

The NEW Eryvac vaccination program

| Description | Vaccination | Age |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|--|
| Lambs | First | 4-6 weeks (e.g. marking) |
| | Second | 4 weeks later (e.g. weaning) |
| Ewes – not previously vaccinated | First | At the time of joining up until 8 weeks prior to lambing |
| | Second | 4 weeks prior to lambing |
| Pregnant ewes – previously vaccinated | Booster | 4 weeks prior to lambing |

Dose is 1mL, under the skin, for all age groups. **For lambs, the shortest needle possible (6mm in length) should be used.** For ewes, a needle up to 15mm in length is suitable.



Vaccination 1
3-7 weeks old

Vaccination 2
4 weeks later,
7-11 weeks old

Australian National Merino Sire Evaluation Association Executive Committee (AMSEA)

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| Tom Silcock | (Chairman) VIC | Ben Swain | Executive Officer |
| Graham Peart | NSW (Deputy Chairman) Macquarie | Flea McShane | TAS |
| Bill Sandilands | WA Yardstick | Phil Toland | VIC North East Victoria |
| Jock McLaren | NSW New England | Sally Martin | NSW Bluechip Livestock |
| Rick Keogh | QLD | Geoff Lindon | Australian Wool Innovation |
| Sam Gill | Meat and Livestock Australia | | |

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