

Balmoral Victoria Sire Evaluation Group

Trial News

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Our Chairman - Tom Silcock

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

With a new trial underway, we are now pleased to report that DEPI have joined us with support funding, to enable us to lamb this year's lambing ewes in a mob of single and another of twins.

This will save having to build 40 new lambing paddocks. We will now be able to provide a lamb survival comparison on the 20 progeny groups because all progeny will now be able to be lambed in the same environment. We will be keen to then follow the ewe lambs through to compare their conception rates and (ideally lambing results, if we can fund matching them to their lambs) This will eventually provide a fertility analysis on all rams entered this year.

We are disappointed that AWI and MLA have not joined us on this project as we had hoped. They both claimed that the number of animals involved in our trial would not provide an accurate scientific difference for a comparison of rams entered, with the extreme fat and muscle sires entered. With new born lamb survival a critical issue for us all, we are still very keen to look into this area and share in any differences we do identify with you.

This year's lamb's pedigree will be achieved by utilizing "Pedigree Match Maker"(PMM) to match the majority of lambs to their mothers and thus their sire. Any lambs that fail to be mothered, will then have a DNA sample taken and be matched to their sire. Any serious pigmented lambs will also be DNA sampled, ensuring sire accuracy. Having just secured the DEPI financial commitment, we will now seek DNA samples from all sires entered this year. Training ewes for PMM has started and is progressing well with multiple pairs of wooden pallets placed around the paddocks either side of sheep tracks. An electronic tag reader will be located inside one of these pallets after lambs have an electronic tag applied shortly after lambing, enabling lambs following the same ewe regularly to be matched and identified.



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DNA testing matching the 2013 drop lambs to sires entered, averted a major embarrassing mistake with the 2013 drop analysis, but not before the 2 affected progeny groups were incorrectly displayed at this year's Field Day. Unfortunately a human error at AI, meant that the "One Oak" and "The Mountain Dam" progeny were incorrectly identified at this year's display. The pedigree trial comparison highlighted the accuracy of DNA, but also highlighted human error problems with both DNA and visual identification compared to PMM.

A big thanks to the Wando team and all other helpers for making this year's field day a big success with over 100 people in attendance.

As so often is the case, we are waiting to get the 2013 drop wormy enough to collect individual WEC.

Having mastered PMM with the 2013 drop progeny, Robert Wyld (Sapien) is leading the development of a daily walk over weighing (WOW) system. Robert has the system working, but still fine tuning its development. It is fascinating to be able to see in real time, the animals and their live weights. I'm sure we will all be challenged with the benefits these technologies offer in the future.

We welcome and thank Amy Tierney, Tom and Julia Waldron for picking up responsibility for data collection. They'll make a great team.

Once again a big thanks to all sponsors and helpers for making it all happen whilst enabling us to operate at the cutting edge of the industry.

Chairman Tom Silcock



Committee member Mark Bunge at the Field Day

'Wando' Host property 2012

With good autumn rain, a mild May and the start of June we have seen an ideal break at Wando Estate. These conditions enabled us to reduce supplementary feeding as enough grass was on offer.

Both drops were shorn in late April and came out of the wool in good condition. We are now waiting to get the 2013 drop wormy enough to collect individual WEC. Fat and muscle scanning will be undertaken in the spring time.

Wet and cold conditions recently have made it quite wet under foot, but are setting up for good spring growth and water supply. As history predicts it should only be a month away before we see the grass start to move and we all look forward to good spring growth.

Tom Sweeny
Wando Estate.



Mepungah Pastoral Company—Host property 2014

Good opening rains in April and mild weather in May and early June have seen the 2014 Elders Balmoral Sire Trial get off to a great start. 1209 merino 2.5yo ewes were AI to 20 different sires on the 7th & 8th of April. The ewes were joined in CS 2.3 and have at least maintained that body condition since joining.

The ewes were scanned in lamb at 80% on the 6th June & 16.5% of the total joined were scanned as carrying twins. Ewes carrying singles and twins have been separated and at this stage are both on pastures that are 1200kg/dm/ha. The ewes carrying twins are only stocked at 8.4dse/ha, so I expect the grass to start moving ahead of them prior to lambing.

Weather mid June to date has seen typical Western District Winter conditions at the trial site; miserably wet, cold and windy. At this point of the trial we are training the ewes to walk between two upright timber pallets in preparation for the Pedigree Matchmaker tag readers to be put in the field to determine parentage of the progeny which are due to be born in early September.

Nick Falkenberg
Mepungah Pastoral Company



Summary 2012 Drop Results & 2013 Results to date

Breeders flock, Sire name	Number of progeny	Dual Purpose Plus	AMSEA Index Values			Classer's Grade	
			Merino Production Plus	Fibre Production Plus	Fine 20% + SS	Tops % (dev)	Culls % (dev)
Bindawarra, 080358	39	94	97	96	98	3	-8
Connewarran, 8016	34	88	95	96	109	3	4
Glenpaen, 080356	23	100	103	107	104	7	-5
Gringegalgon, 071609	52	121	126	116	111	4	-8
Hazeldean, 8.3561	21	105	107	111	112	12	-14
Koorringal, 102277	30	74	79	92	88	-10	19
Lachlan Merinos, 08SP30	35	137	118	99	97	20	-15
Leahcim Poll, 090918	43	82	77	83	88	0	-6
Moojepin, 100248	48	126	103	89	73	-1	-2
Nareeb Nareeb, 100655	32	113	120	105	106	-7	6
Nerstane, 080121	31	86	95	104	104	2	-12
One Oak No. 2, BL0010	32	125	123	114	114	-13	-2
Pooginook, Clark	42	91	89	91	81	-12	24
Ridgway Poll, 091137	50	112	111	110	105	-6	-2
Roseville Park, 090014	27	94	98	97	100	8	-6
The Mountain Dam, 11/CWA029	35	92	88	93	97	11	-13
Toland Poll, 111021	25	110	98	94	86	1	-2
Yalgoo, 070441	40	63	69	90	113	-11	22
Yiddinga, 101057	30	94	106	102	103	-12	19
Average performance	36	100	100	100	100	16	18

2013 Drop – Results to Date

Breeders flock, Sire name	Number of progeny	Flock Breeding Values (deviations)				
		GFW % P [^]	FD μm P	FDCV % P	WT kg	
					W	P
Bundaleer, BDR021	39	1	0.0	-0.8	-0.1	-0.1
Connewarran, 0040	45	5	0.0	-0.6	1.5	2.5
Gringegalgon, 090960	41	4	0.1	-0.7	2.5	2.9
Hannaton Poll, 110001	47	7	0.8	-0.3	1.2	2.3
Hazeldean, 9.4752	34	-9	-0.8	0.3	-2.3	-3.0
Kia Ora, 090130	42	-6	0.4	0.2	-3.0	-4.0
<i>HISTORICAL SIRE</i> Kurra-Wirra, SR296	31	-11	0.3	-0.4	-0.9	-1.9
<i>HISTORICAL SIRE</i> Kurra-Wirra, SV885	43	-5	1.4	2.9	-1.9	-2.5
Leahcim Poll, 090918	42	-13	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.3
Mount Yulong Poll, 110111	45	3	0.5	0.0	0.9	1.6
Nerstane, 050010	40	-1	-1.4	1.2	-0.2	-1.2
Nerstane, 100919	54	15	0.5	-0.5	1.0	1.3
One Oak No. 2, BL11-104	40	-1	0.2	0.8	0.4	-0.2
Roseville Park, 100038	34	2	-0.6	1.8	-0.9	-0.9
The Mountain Dam, 12/LE018	41	6	-0.3	-1.4	0.1	0.4
Tuckwood Poll, 101012	41	-2	-0.6	-0.6	3.6	5.9
Yalgoo, 080068	50	-6	-0.6	-1.3	-0.4	-0.7
Yiddinga, 195	36	11	-0.2	-1.1	-0.8	-1.4
Average performance	41	1.8	15.5	20.1	23.9	27.1
		kg	μm	%	kg	kg

For full results lookup
<http://www.balmoralbreeders.com.au/>



2014 Scanning Results

Scanning Results by Sire (Shown as percentage of Ewes Scanned)

Sire	Empties	Singles	Twins	Total Ewes
Anderson, 120103	32%	47%	21%	57
Connewarran, 062097	18%	65%	18%	57
Centre Plus Poll, 807300	29%	51%	20%	59
Donley Park, 090044	55%	33%	12%	60
Edale, 08E239	27%	48%	25%	60
Karowara Plains Poll, 110024	32%	42%	27%	60
Kurra-Wirra, 110784	42%	46%	12%	59
Leahcim Poll, 090918	43%	34%	23%	61
Mokanger, 000092	52%	40%	8%	60
Merinotech WA Poll, 100115	32%	50%	18%	60
Mumblebone, 120431	37%	44%	19%	63
Nerstane, 100958	41%	44%	15%	61
Nerstane, 697	34%	47%	19%	59
Nareeb Nareeb Poll, 120910	61%	34%	5%	59
Pooginook, 112469	35%	50%	15%	60
Pooginook, Jewel	36%	49%	15%	61
The Mountain Dam, 11/RE017	41%	44%	15%	61
Tuckwood Poll, 131023	35%	53%	12%	57
Wanganella, 100019	33%	53%	13%	60
Winyar, 110710	25%	57%	18%	60
Total Ewes	37%	47%	16%	1194

WOW and Dam Pedigree Comparison PDS Trial Project Update Nov 2013

Commercial Pedigree Options Trial Results



The aim of this trial was to compare the accuracy and costs of three dam pedigree identification methods, Visual Dam ID/Tag at birth, DNA parentage test and PMM (Pedigree Matchmaker) in a large 'commercial' merino breeding situation. The trial was supported by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) through its Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) program, Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), and the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) Victoria and was conducted at Wando Estate using the 2013 drop lambs in the AMSEA trial.

A total of 1167 merino ewes were Artificially Inseminated to 19 sires in April 2013. The ewes were pregnancy scanned on June the 3rd 2013 with 564 being identified as carrying a single lamb and 234 ewes were scanned in lamb with twins. There were 4 ewes having triplets and 365 dry ewes. Dry ewes and ewes bearing triplets were removed from the trial. One sire had only 2 ewes in lamb and was removed from the trial leaving 18 sires in the trial. At lambing 936 lambs were recorded with a further 32 dead lambs not recorded (total lambs 968).

Set up costs for each method are not included here as they would vary considerably for each commercial operation. The ongoing annual costs in the trial for each method show that the most accurate method (DNA) is also significantly more expensive at the current test cost of \$17 per test. The Visual Id method requires significantly more time and labour. The PMM method has a lower level of accuracy than DNA but comes with the least annual cost and much lower time and labour costs compared to Visual ID.

Full results will be available in the final report when the trial is completed in June 2015.

Steve and Debbie Milne (Richmond Hill Agribusiness P/L)

Project Managers

	Dam Accuracy	PRO's	CON's	ANNUAL COSTS
Visual ID/Tag at birth	85.0% *	Opportunity to collect birth traits Least technology required Only method to collect date of birth	Ewes disturbed during lambing Highest time and labour costs Unidentified pedigree errors and does not pick up mismothering Highest opportunity for human error	Cash costs (tags) \$1223 Labour (268 hours) \$8460 Total annual costs \$9683 Cost per lambs weaned (778 lambs) \$12.50
DNA Parentage Test	97.8% *	High accuracy Low time and labour	High annual costs	Cash costs (DNA tests & tags) \$14546 Labour (27 hours) \$1020 Total annual costs \$15566 Cost per lambs weaned (778) \$20.00
Pedigree Match-maker	85.1% *	Low cost Low time and labour Least opportunity for human error Accuracy improves over time	Ewe training a necessity Need suitable attractant Does not pick up mismothering Highest rate of unidentified dams	Cash costs (tags, attractant, data analysis) \$2200 Equipment hire \$660 Labour (18 hours) \$750 Total annual costs \$3610 Cost per lambs weaned (778) \$4.65
Notes *	<i>An inaccurate result includes incorrect and missing dam identification. The DNA test results were compared to the ewe AI records. As the DNA test was the most accurate, Visual ID and PMM were compared to the DNA test where an accurate DNA test record was available.</i>			

Prototype Lifetime Ewe Management Application launched

Mobile technology and sheep extension have combined to create an early version of the Lifetime Ewe Management Application for Apple iPhone.

Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) and Rural Industries Skill Training (RIST) have developed the prototype application for the popular Lifetime Ewe Management (LTEM) course. LTEM has now involved more than 2000 sheep producers managing over 20 per cent of the nation's ewe flock or 8 million ewes.

The two-year nationally accredited course involves small groups of farmers learning from each other through on-farm facilitated activities such as condition scoring, pasture assessment and feed budgeting. The aim is to best match the energy requirements of animals with pasture production and supplementary feeding to maximise production.

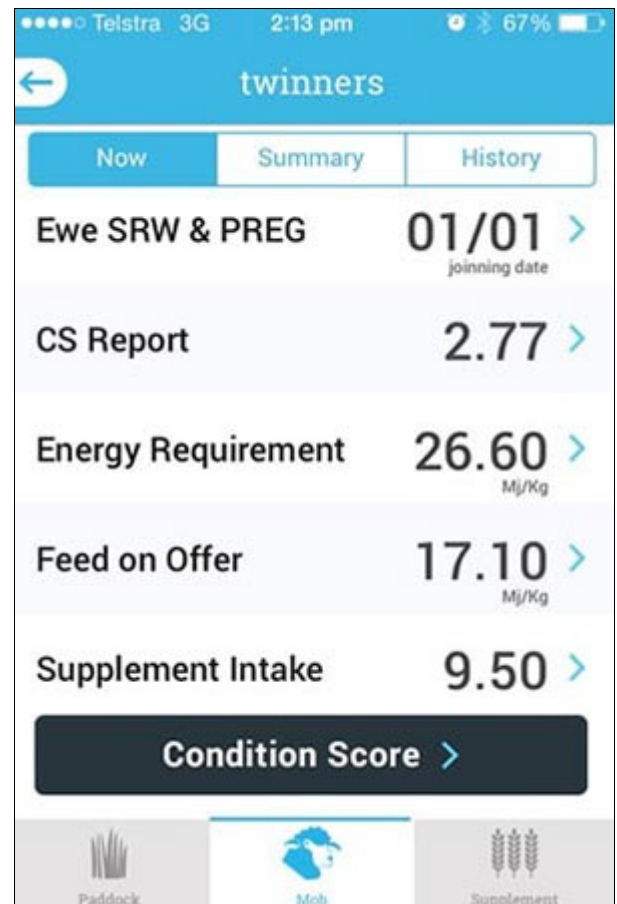
About 300 woolgrowers at the Bestwool/Bestlamb Conference in Bendigo, Victoria were shown a live demonstration of the application. AWI will also be demonstrating the application at LambEx in Adelaide, South Australia on 10 & 11 July.

The LTEM Application is a natural evolution of the program after years of research and extension. AWI has been its principal funder, contributing about \$10 million to the program and the initial research behind it.

The development of this technology has involved various farm visits and trials using existing Lifetime Ewe participants. Whilst still in development, AWI has now engaged a group of current LTEM facilitators and participants to trial and verify the application before it is formally released.

Once finalised, the LTEM Application will be available for both Apple and Android mobile devices.

To set up a LTEM group in your local area or to join a group in your area, call RIST on (03) 5573 0943 or visit www.rist.com.au.



Lifetime Ewe Management iPhone Application

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