

Balmoral Victoria Sire Evaluation Group

Trial News

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Our Chairman - Tom Silcock



It is with a sense of excitement I write this report. We have just joined 19 sires in this years trial representing potentially some of the best genetics Australia has to offer. Included in the trial are 2 ram lambs selected from the CRC latest trial work evaluating DNA for trait selection. Unfortunately a number of potential entrants weren't able to have semen collected, but I pass on my gratitude to the many breeders who responded with entries when asked.

The new host property "Wando Estate" run a very commercially focussed business with 35,000 sheep and 1200 cattle. We look forward to working with the team there in evaluating the most desirable sires in this trial for our district.

This year's Field Day at Yiddinga showcased some very interesting progeny of both the 2010 & 2011 trials, thank you to all who helped make the day a successful one. DNA will play a bigger role of evaluating sheep in the future, along with becoming a commonly used means of providing pedigree certainty. Later this year at Yiddinga, the ewe progeny from the 2010 trial will have their lambs identified back to them using DNA as part of an extension of the original trial.

We continue to provide a unique volunteer force that delivers an industry undervalued resource, which pursues real measurable commercial benefits to the whole industry. To our small group of volunteer workers and supporters that make what we do possible, along with the host properties, a massive big thank you.

As chairman of the Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association (AMSEA) and our local Elders Balmoral trial, I will push to have our efforts better appreciated by our industry bodies, so that our trial work and research is better financially supported by the wider industry, that is the benefactor.

Tom Silcock

Australian National Merino Sire Evaluation Association Executive Committee

Tom Silcock (Chairman) VIC Elders Vic
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Bill Sandilands WA Yardstick
Jock McLaren NSW New England
Rick Keogh QLD
Alex Ball Meat and Livestock Australia

Ben Swain Executive Officer
Knox Heggaton TAS
Phil Toland VIC North East Victoria
Sally Martin NSW South West Slopes
Geoff Lindon Australian Wool Innovation

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‘Yiddinga ’ Host property 2010-2011

Jim Farran

“ Yiddinga ”

The recent spring, summer and autumn have turned out to be very dry in contrast to last year. This has led to more hand feeding of the sheep. The 2011 drop sire evaluation lambs have been fed a ration of 30% beans 70% oats, the sire evaluation sheep from 2010 have been fed a ration of barley. As with everywhere else on the western Victoria we are just holding out for an Autumn break. The long range forecast is positive for the end of April, we just hope that happens.

The Field day on the 20th was a successful day, it was a great opportunity to inspect the two years of progeny at Yiddinga and make your own observations on the merits and faults of the different sires that have been used over the last two years.

At Yiddinga we shear in March, it all went well with the wool cuts up this year, the microns was up also about half a micron. This year we had a visit from shearing instructor during shearing as four of the shearers are younger they would have benefitted greatly from this we also had a visit from a wool handling instructor during shearing which was a benefit to the young shed hands. I must congratulate AWI on funding this scheme, which we hope will help attract young people to the wool industry.

The Sire evaluation sheep were shorn on the 23rd & 24th of April so the final data on the wool should be available soon. We will shortly be carrying out eye muscle scanning on the one and a half year olds.

I congratulate Wando Estate on putting up there hand to continue the Sire Evaluation this year and next, I hope they will get a lot out of it. I would also like to thank the members of the committee that have provided their expertise and labour along the way.

Jim Farran

Tom Sweeney

“ Wando Estate ”

Wando Estate — Host property 2012-2013

The start to the 2012 season has certainly been very challenging and demanding for our district with well below average rainfall. Pasture quality and quantity has been poor. So the majority of the Wando flock has been on a supplementary feeding program of barley and silage. The 2008 drop ewes which we have chosen for the Sire Evaluation trial presented well for the AI program with an average condition score of 2.8.

The ewes were AI by David Kennett of Genstock with two teams of technicians in the shed which all travelled very smoothly and professionally, 19 rams were used with an average of 57 ewes per ram. Hopefully we receive good autumn rains very soon.

Tom Sweeney

Wando Estate

AMSEA Report April 2012

Ben Swain - BCS Agribusiness

2012 sees Merino sire evaluation in Australia as strong as it's ever been with a total of 7 sites joining under the Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association (AMSEA) banner. Several of these sites, including Elders Victoria, will potentially be part of ground breaking research into the establishment of post weaning fleece breeding values. Currently the earliest a breeder can access fleece trait breeding values is at the yearling age (10 months). Waiting till this age does not necessarily fit with every breeder's management calendar and often results in rams being sold to clients or used internally without breeding values being available. Using the resources of the sire evaluation flocks, many of which currently carry a post weaning (7 to 10 months) shearing, research will be undertaken to establish post weaning breeding values for the commercially important fleece traits. These breeding values will be available to sire evaluation entrants and Sheep Genetic clients.

Research Breeding Values (RBVs) are also being made available to breeders now as a result of the work undertaken in the genomics program which is being led by the SheepCRC. Over the past 4 years, sire evaluation entrants have contributed to this program through supplying semen for use in this research project. Breeders have also contributed directly through the Pilot Project II and the Information Nucleus programs. Results are now being provided directly back to breeders detailing these RBVs for a range of traits that have been calculated from analysing the genomic information from each ram's DNA, and measurement taken in other related animals in the MERINOSELECT database.

As a result of both of these programs that sire evaluation is part of, breeding values will continue to be improved and made even more accurate.

Ben Swain
Executive Officer

Annual Field Day—2012 Yiddinga

Guest Speaker—Lisa Warn BAgSc MAgrSc

Speaker biography.

Lisa Warn is a Senior Agricultural Consultant and Senior Research Fellow with the Mackinnon Project (a whole farm consultancy service for sheep and beef producers) based at the University of Melbourne, Werribee. Lisa has over 20 years experience in the grazing industries and specialises in farm management, pasture agronomy, grazing management and natural resource management.



She has a Bachelor of Agricultural Science (Melb. Uni) & a Masters of Agricultural Science (Latrobe Uni). As well as working with producer groups and delivering training programs (e.g Prograze, TRIPLE P, BeefCheque, Improved Grazing Management) throughout her career, she has also run numerous research projects on Victorian farms focussing on pasture improvement, fertiliser and grazing management. One project Lisa managed for 10 years was the Broadford Grazing experiment which has been the catalyst for many producers to change the way they graze their pastures.

Lisa and her husband run a self-replacing Merino flock (ultra-fine, 15.5 µm) and vineyard on their property in north-east Victoria.

GRASSGRO GIVES GRUNT TO LISA'S NUMBER CRUNCH

Guest Speaker at this year's field day, Lisa Warrn has used the GrassGro program to compare the profitability of merinos versus Dohnes, Samms, Crossbred and composite sheep. Grassgro is a sophisticated computer program developed by the CSIRO Plant Industry Division over thirty years with financial support from producers through wool and meat research levies. It allows producers, research scientists and advisers to ask a huge range of questions which in turn saves a lot of time, resources and risk before they commit themselves to a new strategy or research project.

It had its origins in the GrazFeed program which is an Australian type of nutritional model detailing animal maintenance and production needs and the energy and protein levels of typical pastures, growing or senescent, and supplements commonly used in this country. To this a huge meteorological database has been added which allows modelling of weather close to most temperate locations in Australia. It is not just the averages but the variation of this weather data that allows the user to ask questions such as how often will summer crops succeed or fail, how often do late or early breaks occur, and also to simulate 10 to 30 years weather to help predict the risk in a change to farm management. By collating a huge amount of research data the program developers have created sophisticated mathematical models to simulate pasture growth and livestock production. GrassGro is applicable to a large range of sheep and cattle enterprises, such as wether flocks for wool and meat, ewe flocks for wool and prime lambs, lamb finishing, beef breeding or steer finishing.

It is important to provide good input information to get a meaningful output from the program. Before a simulation is done a lot of questions will need to be answered such as the location, soil type (bulk density), soil fertility (test results), pasture species, livestock type, age and condition, supplements available, their price and anything else applicable to the question asked such as wool and meat prices. GrassGro evaluates the effect of pasture supply on animal production, year to year variability in pasture supply, the balance between seasonal pasture supply and animal needs. The production of different pastures in different environments can be evaluated, e.g. is lucerne worth the establishment cost in a winter dominant rainfall area? Patterns of fleece growth and fibre diameter profiles can allow shearing times to be optimised for staple strength. The feasibility of meeting target markets for beef and lamb can take some of the stress from forward selling produce. Because of the financial modelling features of the program it allows different stocking rates to be compared, supplementary feeding strategies optimised, different sheep types compared, test urea application for winter feed growth versus buying oats etc, etc. The production modelling can help predict the best time to lamb, whether this is maximising lambs born or getting weaners to target weights before pasture senescence. Simple paddock rotation and deferment schemes can be tested as ways of meeting production targets. In times of drought destocking, containment feeding, early weaning and other strategies can be tested for animal production or financial outcomes.



The types of questions it can answer are as varied as your imagination. You may never need to wonder "What if?" again.



2012 Sire Entries—Wando Estate , Casterton



Bindawarra 358

Connewarren 08/8016

Glenpaen BO.37.356

Gringegalgona 07/1609

Hazeldean HAZ 08/3561

Koorringal 10/2277

Lachlan Merinos 80SP30 (LINK)

Leahcim 09/0918

Moojepin 10/0248

Nareeb Nareeb 100655

Nerstane 08/0121

One Oak 10-10

Pooginook Clark 103462

Ridgeway 1137

**Roseville Park RP09-0014
(Link)**

The Mountain Dam 11/COA029

Toland Merinos 11/1021

Yalgoo 07/0441

Yiddinga 10/001057

Thank you to all our entries for 2012
we look forward to an exciting trial
ahead



**Rozie Kennett (Genstock) and youngest
AI technician Dougal Sweeney**

2010 Drop Adult Raw Results* - March/April 2012

SIREs of 2010 drop PROGENY	Measured Wool Traits Mar-12				Visual Classing of Wool Traits Mar-12					Classing of Tops/ Flocks/Culls Mar-12			Visual Classing of Sheep Traits March 2012				
	Micron	Yield	Staple Strength	Staple Length	Colour	Charac- ter	Dust	Staple Weath.	Wool Structure	Top	Flock	Cull	Jaw	Face	Legs/ Feet	Shoul- der/Back	Body Wrinkle
Billandri 070380	17.9	68.7	27.6	93.2	2.1	2.7	2.1	2.3	2.8	5 (10.2%)	40	4	1	2.9	2.7	2.1	2
Connewarran 8002	17.9	70.4	31.2	89.9	1.5	2.7	2	2.3	2.7	11 (3.8%)	29	2	1	3.1	2.8	2.2	2.1
Glenlea Park 070706	18.1	69.4	27.2	95.5	2.1	3.1	2.3	2.5	2.8	1 (3%)	28	3	1	3	2.3	2.2	2
Hannaton Blue 80002	18.1	71.8	23	91	1.9	2.6	2.1	2.3	2.8	7 (2.5%)	29	3	1.1	2.9	2.6	2.1	2
Kerrsville 60436	17.5	69.1	25.5	87	1.8	2.8	2.2	2.2	2.8	2 (6.2%)	30	0	1.06	3.1	2.4	2.2	2
Kia Ora 60151	17.6	69.8	23.4	86	1.9	2.7	2.1	2.2	2.9	3 (8.6%)	28	4	1.06	3.1	2.8	2.2	2.1
Kurra Wirra Bz5000(XR5)	18.4	68.9	23.4	87.4	2.1	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.8	2 (8%)	20	3	1	3.2	3.1	2.2	2.1
Lachlan Merinos 80SP30	17.6	69.7	25	87.7	2.1	2.5	2.2	2.5	2.8	5 (14.2%)	29	1	1	3.1	2.4	2.2	2
Mokanger 23	17.2	69.1	22	81.3	1.7	2.8	2.1	2.2	2.7	2 (4.6%)	30	11	1	3.3	2.6	2.3	2.1
Mount Yulong 060624	17.7	70.4	23	90.2	2.1	2.5	2.1	2.3	2.8	4 (11.4%)	28	3	1	3	2.8	2.2	2
Nareeb Nareeb 80411	17.9	66.2	25.2	87.1	1.8	2.7	2.1	2.3	2.7	5 (15.6%)	26	1	1	3.3	2.8	2.1	2
Pooginook 082025	17.6	70.8	30.7	93.3	1.8	2.3	2.2	2.5	2.8	4 (16.6%)	20	0	1	3.1	2.6	2.3	2
Roseville Park (Dohne) 070947	18.5	67.1	18.3	81.6	2.3	3	2.2	2.5	2.8	2 (7%)	23	4	1	2.8	2.8	2.2	2
The Mountain Dam 080109	17.4	72.8	24.6	84.2	1.3	2.3	2.1	2.1	2.7	6 (25%)	16	2	1	3	2.7	2.2	2
Uardry (Dohne) 050068	17.9	67.6	23.1	88.8	2	2.8	2.2	2.4	2.8	4 (8.9%)	38	3	1	3.1	2.7	2.2	2
Yiddinga 05 BLK 84	17.7	72.7	24.1	80.7	1.7	2.5	2.1	2.1	2.9	5 (12.1%)	33	3	1	3	2.7	2.1	2
Percentage/Average	17.8	69.7	25	88.3	1.9	2.7	2.1	2.3	2.8	5 (13.8%)	28	3	1	3	2.7	2.2	2

Note: These raw figures have not been corrected for birth type etc & are subject to verification and analysis

REMEMBER 1=least, 5=most, with exception of wool character

Would you like to be involved in the Trial?
Contact Tom Silcock
Ph 03 5388 2238



2012 Annual Progeny Display Day
Yiddinga Edenhope

