



December 2019



Balmoral Sire Evaluation Group

Trial News

www.balmoralbreeders.com.au

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From the Chairman

Welcome to our Summer newsletter edition. We are pleased to report that our area has just come through a very good Spring with excellent lambing conditions and plenty of feed going into Summer. These conditions have contributed to a very good lambing at "Jigsaw" for the 2019 drop.

The committee has been busy over the last couple of months with data recording at lamb marking and weaning at both "Tuloona" (MLP site) and at Jigsaw. It has been pleasing to see all the ewes and lambs in great condition wherever I go.

While we are feeling very lucky in our part of the country, our thoughts are always with our fellow sheep producers to the north of us who are still battling this very severe drought. We recently held our committee AGM where there was no change to executive positions. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support and commitment to Balmoral Breeders over the last 12 months. We do have a large and vibrant committee that makes running our site a pleasure. We are now in the planning stages of next **field day to be held on the new of date March 13, 2020**. The committee has decided to shift from our previously advertised date to avoid a clash with another Merino event in Victoria.

We look forward to seeing you all there. A major draw card again will be the progeny from the 50 year old semen. I am sure there will once again be plenty of interest to see how they have measured up and grown-out when compared to their modern genetic counterparts.

We are also now taking entries for the 2020 joining at "Jigsaw". Feel free to enquire through Anthony Close, our new entry coordinator. An entry form will be at the back of this newsletter.

I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2020.



Mark Bunge



2020 FIELD DAY FRIDAY, March 13, 2020



**NOTE NEW
DATE**

2017, 2018 & 2019 drops on display
Guest speakers: industry displays and more.

On property at:

Jigsaw Farms (2019 drop display AM only)
& Koorinal (main field day from lunchtime)



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MLP Functionality Classing

The MLP F1 ewes undergo an annual teeth and udder assessment after weaning to track their functionality and impact over time.

Teeth soundness plays a critical role in animal health and wellbeing as it directly relates to feed consumption and effective mastication. At around 4 years of age ewes usually have all 8 permanent incisors and as the aging process starts teeth start to spread, wear down and are lost or broken.

Standard industry scores to assess teeth and udders weren't available when the MLP project commenced in 2015. However, several teeth scoring systems used in other research projects were used to guide the

development of a quick and simple system of assessing teeth function. The scores include a count of permanent incisors, a score for length of the teeth, and another score for spacing/alignment.

The udder scores provide a count of functional teats and identify ewes as being a standard teat shape, starting to balloon or ballooned teats. Mastitis or udder damage is also recorded.

The annual udder assessments explore the diversity of udder shape and sizes along with the functionality of teats, to estimate the impact on a ewe's rearing ability and her own production. Welfare culling decisions are also made at this time for ewes that have suffered severe mastitis, inverted or non-functional teats.

The oldest ewes in the project are the Balmoral 2015 drop ewes who weaned their third drop of progeny in November. These ewes underwent functionality classing following weaning and the results suggest that the ewes' mouths and udders are tracking well, with only a small number of ewes observed with broken mouths or udder issues.

Further information

Download MLP Reports from the [Merino Superior Sires website](https://www.wool.com/mlp)

Subscribe to the MLP newsletter at [wool.com/mlp-subscription](https://www.wool.com/mlp-subscription)

Contact MLP Project Manager Anne Ramsay on 0400 368 448

Contact Balmoral MLP Site Manager Tom Silcock on 0419 882 239

Additionally, 23 of the 500+ ewes had more than 2 functional teats and it wasn't uncommon for ewes to have 2 functional teats but only 1 side in use.

The MLP project will undertake a total of 45 functional assessments before 2023. The results will provide the industry with an understanding of the impact that teeth and udder soundness has on lifetime productivity.

*This is an excerpt from the latest MLP newsletter.
Subscribe via [wool.com/mlp-subscription](https://www.wool.com/mlp-subscription)*



A Balmoral 2015 drop ewe during functionality scoring, December 2017 (2.5 years of age), four functional teats and extremely bare crutch cover.



The same Balmoral ewe again being scored for functionality, November 2019 (4.5 years of age).

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



The 2nd and 3rd lambing of the MLP Ewes at Tuloona, produced a good result. Despite a later than normal autumn break, the winter growth and following lambing conditions were near perfect. The singles lambed on over 1700kg/DM and the twins lambed down on over 2500kg/DM.

As part of the trial protocols, no sheep (except twins and singles) are separated from the mob to ensure consistency of management conditions. This does mean that dry ewes are run with the singles, whereas in a normal system they would be removed and the repeat offenders would be removed from the system. This results in the MLP lamb marking rates potentially being lower than one would expect. Interestingly, when benchmarked to Tuloona's flock ewe performance these results correlate well and prove the value in removing dry ewes.



Michael Craig, owner,
"Tuloona"

The summary of the progress of the MLP Ewes over the last six months is shown below. The weaning weights, for predominately 10-week old lambs, reflect the good season and the healthy condition of the ewes.

	Pre Lambing 25/7/19		Lamb Marking 30/9/19				Weaning 18/11/19		Progeny Weaning Weight (F2) 13- 8 weeks age
	Weight	Condition Score	Weight	Condition Score	Lamb Marking % on ewe joined	Ewe Mortality	Weight	Condition Score	
Single (962)	56.7kg	3.2	57.7kg	3.1	79.3% *	2.8% #	62.2 kg	3.5	25.2kg
Twin (365)	64.5 kg	3.2	64.1kg	3.1	146%	2.4% #	62.2 kg	3.37	21.1kg
Notes: * All dry ewes are run with the singles for the purpose of consistency of the trial. # ewes were not assisted during lambing, although an intensive fox off program was conducted.									

The ewes will continue to be run in a commercial setting, with an expected gradual reduction of condition score to slightly below 3 into mid-January whereby feeding rates increase.

It would be preferred if individual egg counts could be taken from them, however as of early December the WECs remain stubbornly low, even with our best attempts to run them on "dirty country".



Trial property update 2018 AMSEA trial: Koorinal, Coleraine



After a late autumn break this year we have had favourable seasonal conditions through winter and spring. Lambing conditions on our own flock has been very kind to us this year.

The 2018 drop have been travelling along well and are well grown-out for their age. With green feed still in front of them, supplementary feeding will still be a little way off yet. Fat and muscle scanning were conducted in September and these results are published in this newsletter.

Crutching will be the next job to be done, just before Christmas and then classing and mid-side sampling in late January, so we can have the results collated by the field day on March 13th.



*Mark Bunge, owner
Koorinal*



**Want to keep up to date with what's going on at the
Balmoral Sire Evaluation Group? Here's how:**



Follow us on social media!
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Regularly check our website:
www.balmoralbreeders.com.au

Balmoral Sire Evaluation Trial 2018 Drop Yearling Update



The table below contains early results up to the yearling stage for the Balmoral 2018 drop. Post weaning wool results for the 2018 drop averaged 1.9kg for GFW, 1.3kg for CFW, 15.1µm for FD and 19.1% CV. The drop averaged 26.7kg at post weaning and then 36.9kg as yearlings when they were also scanned with an average 2.8mm for FAT and 21.4mm for EMD.

Breeder's Flock, Sire Name	Number of Progeny*	Flock Breeding Values										Visual Traits	
		Carcass & WEC					Wool					Breech Scores	
		Weight P (kg)	Weight Y (kg)	FAT Y (mm)	EMD Y (mm)	WEC P (%)	GFW P (%)	CFW P (%)	FD P (µm)	CV P (%)		DAG P (1.5 th)	
Anderson Poll, 150266	29	0.5	2.1	0.3	1.0	-31	8	5	0.1	-0.1		1.8	
Challara Poll, 150245	29	1.8	0.7	0.0	1.3	33	9	13	-0.4	0.6		1.6	
Elandring Poll, 155906	33	8.6	7.8	-0.6	0.3	21	-7	-12	-0.3	-0.8		1.4	
Glen Donald Poll, 150091	29	2.6	4.9	-0.6	-1.1	-20	-7	-4	0.3	-0.2		2.3	
Glen Holme, 151450 (Dohne)	28	6.3	6.2	-0.6	0.6	16	-2	-6	0.1	1.5		2.0	
Hannaton Poll, 130015	23	-1.3	-1.3	-0.8	-0.7	-4	-1	-2	0.1	0.8		2.2	
Karabein Poll, 150357	29	-1.7	-3.2	0.0	0.3	6	-7	-9	0.2	-0.9		1.9	
Kein Poll, 160137	22	3.1	1.5	-0.9	-1.5	-2	20	21	0.0	-0.3		1.9	
Koorngal, 150026	32	-2.8	-4.0	0.2	0.3	-15	7	10	0.1	-0.6		2.2	
Kurra-Vittra, 160029	25	-2.1	-1.5	1.1	0.9	-32	0	-1	1.0	-0.7		2.2	
MerinoTech W/A Poll, 155477	18	3.2	4.3	0.5	0.3	6	9	11	0.9	-1.5		1.6	
Nerstane, 150226	26	-0.8	-0.2	-0.3	-1.6	10	-2	-3	0.2	0.1		2.0	
The Mountain Dam, 14/RG076	30	-4.8	-5.6	0.4	0.0	7	-11	-10	-0.2	-1.8		2.3	
Tuckwood Poll, 131026	26	0.6	1.2	0.2	0.7	36	-4	0	-0.5	-1.3		1.3	
Turkey Lane, 150071	27	2.8	3.0	-0.4	-1.4	-17	6	5	-1.3	-0.1		2.2	
Turkey Lane, 150077	41	0.8	1.9	1.2	1.2	1	8	4	-1.0	-0.5		1.6	
Wallabo Park Poll, 161514	38	1.5	1.3	0.2	0.4	2	-5	-5	0.1	-0.3		1.9	
Woodside Mountajup, 110149	37	-9.4	-10.4	0.2	-0.8	-14	-17	-20	-1.4	1.8		1.8	
Woolaroo, Sydney Uni 50yo	27	-7.2	-8.3	-0.3	0.0	10	-2	-5	2.0	2.4		2.1	
Yiddinga, 160132	28	-1.8	-0.4	-0.1	-0.2	9	0	7	0.0	1.8		1.9	

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)

*Number of Progeny is the total progeny number for each sire at weaning.

^A/Visual scores are reported as a score between 1 and 5.

Trial property update 2019 AMSEA trial : Jigsaw Farms, Hensley Park & Melville Forest



All seems to be going well with the 2019 Balmoral Sire Evaluation Trial lambs at Jigsaw Farms. Good weather and solid rain have given us a good spring. Although we are down 80mm on our annual rainfall, we have received our rain at just the right time for good pasture growth. It is still green here in early December.

Lamb marking went well on the 19th of September with lots of committee members attending for a most productive but long day. There were 1113 lambs marked out of 846 ewes, making it 132% lambing out of the ewes that were pregnant to the AI program. The majority of the lambs came from the twinning mobs. There were 531 twinning ewes that raised 846 lambs. The tripling ewes were removed from the trial and lambled down with the Jigsaw commercial flock. Kind weather, good pasture growth and excellent shelter helped us achieve the good lambing results.



*Mark Wootton,
Jigsaw Farms*

All lambs were freeze branded by John Steinfort using the cryogenic procedure on the 22nd of October. The results on the lambs are excellent with the procedure being much more refined and even this year. The lambs didn't have any noticeable check in their growth post the process. With the wide range of 21 different sires in the trial the use of the freeze branding gives us confidence that fly risk is minimised.

Weaning of the lambs took place on Thursday the 28th of November. All lambs were drenched with Tri-guard and given a 6-in-one injection. We weaned 1086 lambs of the original 1113 marked lambs. The average weight for the lambs were 22.5 kg for the twins and 25 kg for the singles. The lambs were boxed up into one management mob and are now moved onto quality short feed from the silage paddocks. Imprint feeding has taken place over the last month and grain feeding is starting be it at minimal levels. This will be adjusted as feed quality drops.

Happy Christmas to all.







Balmoral Sire Evaluation Trial

Invitation to enter sires

The Balmoral Breeders Committee, which runs the Balmoral Sire Evaluation trial, is calling for entrants in the 2020 sire evaluation trial to be run at 'Jigsaw Farms' Hensley Park & Melville Forest.

Jigsaw Farms, is a family farming operation of 3,378 hectares, is located at Hensley Park and Melville Forest, near Cavendish in Western Victoria. The farms receive an average annual rainfall of 675 mm, and are dominated by duplex soils. The mixed grazing operation consists of 25,000 fine wool Merino ewes which are joined to either Merino (60%) or terminal sires (40%) and they also run a 300- cow EU cross-breeding operation. The farms currently run over 50,000 Dry Sheep Equivalents (DSEs) in a high input production system (average Olsen P of 20) at a winter stocking rate of 21 DSE/ha.

The sheep stud and flock has been managed since 2010 to produce a sheep flock that has maintained its 18.2 micron average and its 5.2kg average fleece weight, while dramatically improving the flock's fertility levels. This is a result of a genetic focus on both muscle and fat, and the strict adherence to the Life Time Ewe Management learning's.

Jigsaw ceased mulesing in 2016 as a result of genetic selection. If needed, Jigsaw now use a breech cryogenic liquid treatment on about 15% of their lambs with very positive results, both from a lamb growth and wool premium perspective. The 2020 sire evaluation progeny will be treated consistently, if at all, across the drop.

Jigsaw are looking forward to seeing how these sheep perform with a range of different sires and welcome the scrutiny and development opportunities that the trial will bring.

Balmoral Site Breeding Objective:

The goal is to select sheep that are productive and well grown, with sound conformation and carrying heavy fine wool fleeces of good character, colour and nourishment suitable for the western Victorian environment.

2020 trial information:

The site has the capacity to trial 21 Merino sires which will be joined by AI in March 2020 making it the biggest trial in the country. The trial will run for two years to cover two shearings. Data for all sires will be submitted to MERINOSELECT as it is collected, and sires will be eligible for publication in Merino Superior Sires after the Adult assessment.

The cost to enter a sire will be **\$3,200** plus GST which covers the cost to AI, all measurements, trial management, data analysis and reporting. We will also be DNA sampling ALL progeny and SIREs used for the 2020 drop (hence the rise in the site fee).

Entrants will need to supply 52 doses of semen (at their expense).

If you would like to enter a sire, please complete the attached entry form by **1st February 2020** and send to Anthony Close by email anthony@kurrawirra.com.au.

NOTE: A position will only be kept available by a nomination, even if the entrant can't select which sire yet

All enquires to be directed to either Anthony Close on 0437 085 217 anthony@kurrawirra.com.au or Tom Silcock on 0419 882 239 tom@themoutaindam.com.au.

Yours sincerely,
Anthony Close
Vice Chair Balmoral Breeders
& Entry Coordinator

Sire Entry Form



1. Site details for the sire being entered

Site & year being entered Site: Year:

Other sites & years the sire has been entered:

Has the sire been genotyped: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

2. Sire details

Sire's stud/flock name:

Sire's identification:

Sire's stud/flock code: Sire's year of drop:

Breed of stud/flock (Merino or Poll Merino. If other breed give details):

Sire's 16 digit code [see sample code below right:] _ _ _ - _ _ _ - _ _ _ - _ _ _ -

Is the sire currently alive: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is semen available for sale: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Example 16 digit code	50	4697	2014	140012
	Breed	Flock	Year of drop	On-farm ID

Sire of sire (16 digit code): [see sample code above right:] _ _ _ - _ _ _ - _ _ _ - _ _ _ -

Grandsire of sire (16 digit code): [see sample code above right:] _ _ _ - _ _ _ - _ _ _ - _ _ _ -

3. Owner details - Owner and contact for enquiries about the sire, plus owner(s) permission

Owner:

Contact: First name: Surname:

Address:

Town: Postcode:

Phone: Mobile:

Fax: Email:

Does the owner of the sire give permission to enter the sire into this sire evaluation site: ☐ Yes ☐ No Initial:

Does the owner of the sire give permission to publish the sire's results in *Merino Superior Sires*: ☐ Yes ☐ No Initial:

Does the owner of the sire give permission to publish the sire's results in Sheep Genetics reports:* ☐ Yes ☐ No Initial:

* If you are an existing Sheep Genetics member, your default Sheep Genetics publication settings for your flock code will be used.

4. Breeder details - only fill in section 4 if the breeder's details are different to the owner's details in section 3.

Breeder:

Contact: First name: Surname:

Address:

Town: Postcode:

Phone: Mobile:

Fax: Email:

Does the breeder of the sire give permission to enter the sire into this sire evaluation site: ☐ Yes ☐ No Initial:

Does the breeder of the sire give permission to publish the sire's results in *Merino Superior Sires*: ☐ Yes ☐ No Initial:

Does the breeder of the sire give permission to publish the sire's results in Sheep Genetics reports:* ☐ Yes ☐ No Initial:

* If you are an existing Sheep Genetics member, your default Sheep Genetics publication settings for your flock code will be used.

Note: Sires entered will be included in the AMSEA database and managed by AMSEA.

5. Signature of entrant

I believe all the above details to be true: Date:

6. Stud/flock details - if you are a first time entrant of sire evaluation please provide a short summary of your stud/flock's history and breeding objective.

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TECHNICAL INFORMATION UPDATE



Gudair®: Best Practice Vaccination Technique

Gudair is a critical tool in the management of Ovine Johne's disease (OJD).

In accordance with the registered product label, the vaccine should only be administered under the skin (subcutaneously). However, a recent study conducted by Zoetis¹ has revealed that even experienced sheep producers may be unintentionally administering Gudair into muscle, or hitting other structures such as bone, on a regular basis. This increases the risk of carcase trimming (Image 1), abscesses – and the subsequent risk of fly strike – and, in rare cases, neurological dysfunction ("OJD staggers").

What can producers do to achieve correct, subcutaneous vaccination – maximising vaccine efficacy and minimising the risk of adverse reactions?

The Zoetis study indicated that the following measures will assist in achieving correct vaccine placement:

- Vaccinating **under the skin**, on the **side of the neck** (Image 2 & 5).
- Only using **¼ inch (6mm) needles**.
- Using an angle of vaccination suitable for the class of stock (Table 1). In adults with significant wool growth, use the vaccinator to help part the wool.
- Taking care to **avoid critical structures near the base of the ear** (Image 5).



Image 1. Vaccination site abscess at slaughter, which will lead to significant trimming.

Class of Stock	Needle Gauge	Needle Length	Needle Angle to Skin
Lambs	18G	¼ inch	45°
Adults off-shears/short wool/low body condition score	18G	¼ inch	45°
Adults with wool growth	18G	¼ inch	90°

Table 1. Correct vaccination technique by class of stock.

The Zoetis study involved an assessment of 64 injection sites in mixed ages and breeds of sheep. Due to Animal Ethics requirements, the study was performed in sheep that had been humanely euthanised.

Following euthanasia, animals were vaccinated with Gudair using a Sekurus safety vaccinator. ¼ inch and ½ inch needles were compared, at 45° and 90° angles to the skin. The placement of vaccine (under the skin, into muscle, or into the wool) was then assessed.



Image 2. Vaccine (dyed green) correctly administered under the skin on the side of the neck.

¹ Zoetis gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Dr Tristan Jubb of Bendigo Sheep Vets in the conduct of this study.

In addition, it is recommended to:

- Use clean **18 gauge** needles, and change them regularly (every 50-100 sheep, or if dropped or blunted).
- Ensure animals are adequately restrained – lambs in cradles, sheep packed tightly in a race.

What should producers avoid when vaccinating?

The Zoetis study indicated that **½ inch (12 mm)** needles are likely to deliver the vaccine too deep, into muscle, and **should be avoided** (Image 3).

The following points should also be considered:

- Where possible, avoid vaccinating animals in **wet** or **dusty** conditions.
- Don't vaccinate at sites other than the neck. For example, if you vaccinate into the cheek (Image 4) or under a leg, and the animal develops an injection site reaction, this could cause the animal to go off feed/become lame and lose condition.
- Be careful to avoid vaccinating into important structures in the head/neck region (Image 5). These include salivary glands, lymph nodes and blood vessels located directly below the base of the ear.
- In particular, take care to avoid deep, intra-muscular injection near the junction of the head and neck, or the joints of the spine (Image 5). In rare cases, this has been linked with the development of a neurological condition known as 'OJD staggers'. OJD staggers has not been known to occur when the vaccine is correctly administered under the skin.

Other tips

- Store and handle vaccines correctly – keep refrigerated (do not freeze) when not in use. During use, keep cool and protect from sunlight.
- Use the correct vaccinator. **Only use the Sekurus safety vaccinator when vaccinating with Gudair** – its unique safety features minimise the risk of human exposure.

Image 5. The orange circle indicates the correct site to vaccinate, under the skin, on the side of the neck, avoiding critical structures near the base of the ear, and the joints of the spine (C1 & C2).

For more information call the Zoetis Technical Helpline on 1800 814 883 or contact your local Zoetis Professional Sales Representative.

Reference: T. Robertson, N. Study of OJD vaccination techniques: Revelations after dissecting sheep administered dyed Gudair® vaccine. Proceedings of the Australian Sheep Veterinarian's Conference, Dubbo, 2016.

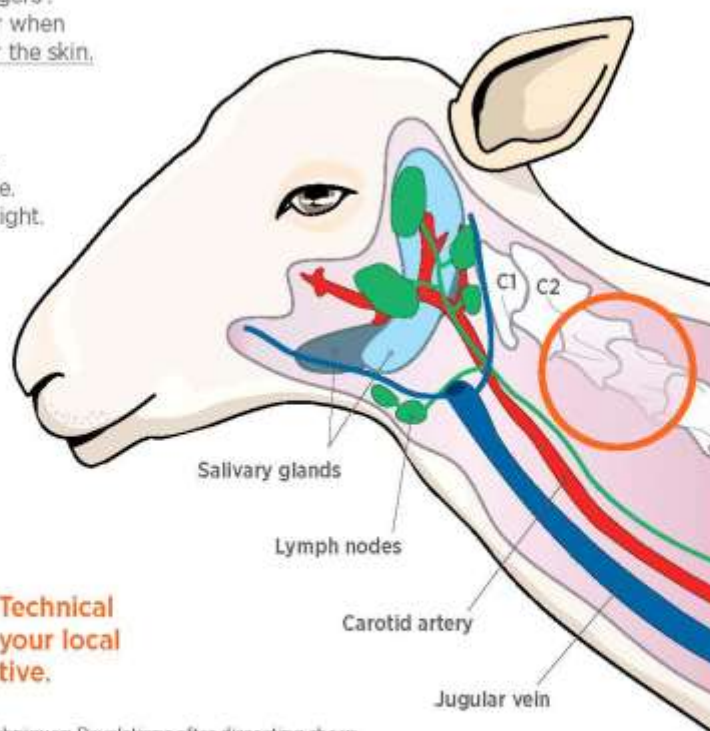
Zoetis Australia Pty Ltd, ABN 94 156 476 425, Level 6, 5 Rider Boulevard, Rhodes NSW 2138. 60112572 NOVEMBER 2016 ZLO599



Image 3. A half-inch needle has delivered the vaccine (dyed blue) deep into the muscle of neck on this animal.



Image 4. Abscess at the site of vaccination into the cheek.



Australian National Merino Sire Evaluation Association Executive Committee (AMSEA)

Jock McLaren (Chairman) – New England (NSW)
 Rich Keniry (Deputy Chairman) – MerinoLink (NSW)
 Matthew Coddington – Macquarie (NSW)
 Mark Bunge – Balmoral (VIC)
 Phil Toland – North East Victoria
 Bill Sandilands – Yardstick (WA)

Brett Jones – Muresk/Pingelly (WA)
 Stephen Lee – South Australia
 Georgina Wallace – AASMB
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 Hamish Chandler – MLA
 Ben Swain – Executive Officer

Thank you to our Sponsors

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of our sponsors and appreciate their participation in our trials.



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