

RIDGWAY - THE RIGHT WAY

Ridgway Merinos & Poll Merinos – Ric, Gail & Matthew Ridgway

Newsletter
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Welcome

Welcome to our 2012 newsletter and thank you for showing interest in the Ridgway breeding program.

We had a 'breakout' sales year in 2010, but 2011 exceeded our wildest expectations. We give a sincere thankyou to everyone who inspected and bid on our sheep last year. The trust you have put in the Ridgway genetics to enhance your future breeding progress is not under-appreciated and is also a wonderful stimulation for us when

planning our future breeding programs.

Seasonally we are behind last year's fantastic opening, but that was an exceptional one-off year and unlikely to be repeated too often. With that in mind, this year has been quite satisfactory and when the days warm up, a little pasture and crop growth should 'bound away'. We trust you are also having a satisfactory season and your stock are doing well.

Last Things First - Well Bred - Well Fed

On July 2nd we hosted a 'Bred Well – Fed Well' workshop, sponsored and funded by AWI and MLA under the Sheep CRC programs. It was presented by Jason Trompf and Colin Trengove with 30 attendees, predominately local producers, but some from as far afield as Paskeville on Yorke Peninsula.

There were two main topics: (1) Introducing producers to Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) and outlining the benefits of using them; (2) Highlighting the benefits of improving ewe nutrition, primarily higher conception rates and lamb survival.



Jason Trompf (right) explaining the benefits of ASBVs to the Bred Well-Fed Well workshop

The day was very successful for those participating, with excellent information to take home and act on! Relating the information to our own program, it reinforced what we have been striving to achieve with reproductive efficiency and lamb sur-

vival. Having scanned our ewes for many years, it is evident that a large percentage carry multiple lambs and with efficient management and good nutrition it is possible to achieve lamb marking percentages of 130% and beyond with Merinos.

With the wool and meat prices we have all been receiving in recent years, it is easy to become a little complacent as income is still good with lower percentages. However, we think it is important to remember the value of unnecessary losses is also high and any improvement you can make that leads to higher lambing and survival percentages can greatly improve bottom line profitability. This was strongly reinforced by the presenters at this workshop.



Attendees participating in a 'hands-on' segment with some of our rams penned for the workshop



RIDGWAY



2012 Ram Sale Offerings

With an uncompromising focus on only presenting rams for sale of a high quality and type that we believe can help take our industry forward, the increase in sale numbers has been steady.

Over the last decade our sale auction numbers have trebled from around 70 to 200 in 2011. Our annual on-property sale on Monday 13th August will have 170 rams available. We are pleased the steady increase in numbers has been almost parallel with the increasing demand, ensuring affordability for buyers on all budgets.

We have reserved and will offer 15 to 18 rams at the Classings Classic at Murray Bridge on September 28th. Ten will be offered at this year's Hamilton Sheepvention on August 6th and 7th (sale on 7th) and the new venue for us this year is the Adelaide Royal Show Merino Ram Sale where we will offer up to three rams.



2011 drop rams from which sale selections will come.

These sale teams will be selected from our final classing group of 246 rams. The average wool test figures for this entire group were: **Microns 18.7, SD 2.9, CV 15.7, CF 99.6**

We are very pleased with these results, being very much in line with our breeding objectives and current industry needs based on sale feedback results.

Of note and to assist all buyers with their selections, all rams will have their trait ASBVs available this year as assessed under the Merino Select performance assessment scheme.

Ewes Available Also

In last year's newsletter we gave details of our surplus ewes available by private selection. Just like the previous year, these were purchased very quickly, so we make you aware of the need to get in quickly if interested this year. We have 320 ewe hoggets, 180 x 4.5 year old ewes and 150 x 5.5 year old ewes available this year. We welcome your enquiry on these.



Productive Ridgway ewes have lambing percentages up to 130%

Purchasers of our 5yo ewes last year was Len Matthews, Rand, NSW; our 4yo ewes went to Russell Gordon, Goldalea Poll Merino stud, Karabeal, Victoria, while our ewe hoggets went to Claralda Pty Ltd, Hopetoun, Victoria.

Shed Development

We have recently modified our shearing shed which has greatly improved our working efficiency and comfort at shearing time.



Pictured is Matt with our two long time 'gun shearers' Donald Spratt & David Trowbridge and the first bale of wool to come out of the new modified shed.





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On Property Sale Exceptional

The following is an abbreviated report on our 2011 on-property sale. Ric and Gail Ridgway and family had many reasons to celebrate after their annual on-property Poll Merino ram sale. 119 main auction rams sold to \$3500 and averaged \$1754 while 26 of 42 mini auction rams sold to \$1000 and averaged \$588.

The wonderful line-up of rams was a credit to the vendors. They had good body size with strong carcass merit, plain easy care bodies and free growing well defined fleeces. They drew a record crowd that included 57 registered bidders from 3 states, with 48 of these being successful in securing rams.

In the process Ridgway's previous on-property sale record price of \$3000 was twice exceeded by \$500, and the main auction average was up by \$608. While these prices were very good, they were still very good value for such industry relevant sheep.

Mark Bucket, Heathdale Pastoral Co, Naracoorte successfully bid \$2400 for lot 1 and by the sale's end he had purchased 4 of the best at a \$2550 average.

Brendan Duncan, Glen Esk Pastoral, Wentworth bid strongly for R1145 before winning the bidding at \$3500, the equal top price in the sale. With wonderful structure and wool figures of 18.7 micron, 2.9 SD, 15.4 CV and 99.5 CF he had attracted a lot of pre-sale interest. He added 2 other selections at \$3000 and \$2500 a little later in the sale in great value buying.

Also purchasing 3, including R1185, the other \$3500 equal top priced ram were David Farr and his son Brent from Loxton for their 1200 head breeding flock. This ram had wool figures of 19.8 micron, 2.8 SD, 14.1 CV and 100 CF.

Glen Hampel, GMR & J Nominees, Loxton is a Ridgway sale regular and again operated strongly, purchasing 6 rams from \$1700 to \$2700. Buying for Gregor Livestock, Parndana, Brian Jeffries bought 6 from \$1800 to \$2100, being one of 4 successful KI bidders. Nigel and Simon Murton, Parndana bid from \$1500 to \$2300 for 4, Mitch Willson, Penneshaw bought 2 to \$1900 and Jeff & Andrea Buick, Penneshaw bought 2 to \$2400.

Peter, Simon & Yvette Brady, Stawell who bought at Ridgway for the first time in 2010, purchased 7 rams from \$1000 to \$2200. Colin & Jacquie Smith, 'Carranballac', Vic were also strong Victorian buyers, purchasing five rams to \$2400.

Neville Smith was the again the biggest volume buyer over-

all with 9 at great value, paying from \$500 to \$800. Bill Walker, Classings Ltd purchased 10 rams for 4 clients, while Neil Wormald, Pasadena paid to \$2600 for 5 rams.

Other prominent buyers with 4 rams each were Noel & Lynette Dunn, Coolabah, NSW (\$650 to \$1800), Tim Freak, Coomandook (\$800 to \$1400), Jack Pryse, Torita, Vic (\$600 to \$2000), John Hunt, Bordertown (\$900 to \$2000), Blue Chip Livestock, Young, NSW (\$600 to \$1400) and Scott Biggins, Naracoorte (\$450 to \$1800).

A personal highlight was the sale of 14 rams into other studs. All up, we sold 167 rams at auction at a \$2124 average in 2011. Obviously this average was greatly enhanced by our stud sales, for there was still great buying value available - 36% of the rams at our annual sale sold for \$1000 or less.



These 2 rams both made the \$3500 top price. Pictured with them are Landmark Auctioneer, Gordon Wood; purchaser David Farr, Loxton, Ridgway principals Ric, Gail & Matthew Ridgway, purchaser Brendan Duncan, Glen Esk Pastoral, Wentworth, NSW; & Landmark auctioneer Malcolm Scroop.



Inspecting the rams at the Ridgway sale with Ridgway principal, Ric Ridgway (right) are Victorian visitors Peter Brady, Stawell (7 rams to \$2200); Australian Wool Network agent Kelvin Shelley, Highton; Barry Rogers, Streatham; and Colin & Jacquie Smith, Carranballac (5 rams to \$2400).



Feedback on Ridgway 1137

Those who have followed our progress over the past few years will probably remember Ridgway 1137. He topped our 2010 Classings Classic offering at \$25,000 which was a Ridgway record at the time. The purchasers were John and Jenny Carter, Wallaloo Park stud, Marnoo, Vic and Steve Phillips, Yarrowonga stud, Harden, NSW.



Ridgway 1137 when sold at Classings Classic in 2010 for \$25,000, with Bill Walker, Classings Ltd, John & Jenny Carter and Gail & Ric.

He has been used in many studs and we have had some very encouraging and positive feedback on how well he has bred, so expect to see some elite progeny from him at field days and

sales this year in SA, Victoria and NSW.

To support that, 1137 was our best performing sire in 2011; his progeny displaying all his best attributes – deep and square bodied with strong bone and covered with long stapled crimped wool on uncomplicated free skins.

2011 Classings Sale was a Classic

If the 2010 Classings Classic was a breakthrough for us, then 2011 was a wonderful reinforcement. We hope it is an endorsement and indicator of recognition of the industry relevance of the top end rams we are producing.

17 specially selected rams sold to a new Ridgway record of \$32,000 and averaged \$6662. Naturally we were ecstatic with this result.

Our top ram was purchased by the Daniell family, White River stud, Minnipa and Poochera for their expanding Poll Merino breeding program.



Our \$32,000 ram at last year's Classings Classic with Landmark's Gordon Wood, John Daniell, Bill Walker, Wes Daniell & Ric, Gail & Matt.

2012 Calendar of Events

► **Friday 20th - Sunday 22nd July** ◀

Bendigo - Australian Sheep and Wool Show (display only)

► **Tuesday 24th July** ◀

Keith - South East Merino Field Day (display)

► **Friday 27th July** ◀

Karoonda - Karoonda & Districts Merino Field Day (display)

► **Monday 6th & Tuesday 7th August** ◀

Hamilton, Victoria - Hamilton Sheepvention (display & offering 10 rams)

► **Monday 13th August - Inspection from 10.30am - Auction at 1pm** ◀

Kulkami - Ridgway On-property Ram Sale (offering 170 rams)

► **Friday 14th September** ◀

Adelaide Royal Show Merino Ram Sale (offering 3 rams)

► **Friday 28th September** ◀

Murray Bridge - Classings Classic (offering 18 rams)

Ridgway Merino & Poll Merino Studs

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