



RIDGWAY

Poll Merino Stud

Ric, Gail, Matthew & Rachel Ridgway
Welcome

Newsletter
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We hoped you enjoyed last year's re-enactment and original photo of our initial ram purchase that instigated the commencement of the Ridgway Poll Merino stud back in 1989. The 25th year was a special one for us and all credit to my parents John and Jenny for having the wisdom and determination to succeed in their farming ventures, including the stud, at Kulkami. This is especially poignant as in December last year we 'lost' John after a 6 year battle with declining health. The eulogy from his funeral is the source of a tribute to John in this newsletter.

This is our immediate family gathered at last year's celebratory sale.
It was a time of great pride and satisfaction for all of us.



While last year was special, our focus is now clearly on this year, while also planning for the years beyond with our breeding program. We are excited about this year's sale team.

The wool test average for the drop is **Mic 19.1 SD 3.0 CV 15.5 CF 99.7.**

Ridgway Poll Merino Stud

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Sale rams

We will again be offering a very strong team of 160 rams at our annual on-property sale, plus select rams at Hamilton, the Classings Classic and the Adelaide ram sale. The latter two sales will be part of the World Merino Insight which promises to be a special event bringing focus on the quality and strength of the South Australian Merino industry.

We have two rams that we would like to highlight in particular, but at this stage we have not yet decided on their sale destination. When we do, we will put that decision on our website.



Ridgway 451ET: Sired by Kiandra 644
Wool figures: **Mic 19.1 SD 2.7 CV 14.1 CF 99.7**
ASBVs: **Ycfw 22 Ywt 8.6 Yfat 0.6 Yemd 0.3**
Ysl 11 DP+ 150 MP+ 148

R451 is an ET bred son of Kiandra 644 and carries a double copy of the Poll gene. He is a dominant young ram with an exceptionally long plain body, has terrific neck extension and a magnificent head with a soft pure muzzle. He carries a heavy cutting fleece of pearly white and sharp crimping fibre.

While these two rams are our picks the depth of quality right through the draft is very good, not only for phenotype, but also supported by their objective figures through Merino Select.

The photo below shows one of our rams in the classing race being assessed during cataloguing. Anyone wishing to receive a catalogue can sign up to our mailing list on our website: www.ridgwaymerinos.com.au or alternatively follow us on Facebook.



Ridgway 609ET: Sired by Ridgway 204
Wool figures: **Mic 19.0 SD 2.6 CV 13.7 CF 99.9**
ASBVs: **Ycfw 20 Ywt 6.6 Yfat 0.6 Yemd 0.4**
Ysl 9.9 DP+ 140 MP+ 144

R609 is an ET son of Ridgway 204 and is a full brother of R599, a ram we sold at Adelaide last year. 609 is a well-balanced and square ram with a great top line and a blemish free soft muzzle. His fibre is super soft and white, with both good density and staple length. He also carries a double copy of the Poll gene.

New Zealand visitors

In October last year, Mark Ferguson from New Zealand Merino Company organised a trip of 14 mainly stud breeders to attend the Melbourne Wool Sale. They made the most of the opportunity and visited some SA studs on the way to the sale. We were pleased to be included, but because of the timing (after the sales) we didn't have many rams with much wool to show them. However, they were impressed by our wool quality on the sheep we had, plus our Merino Select ASBVs.



Classings Classic 2015

Last year's Classings Classic was especially successful for us. We offered and sold 8 rams to a top of \$17,000 and averaged \$5031. The star of our success was R721 that sold for the second top price overall to the Gunallo stud. Hopefully he will breed



as well for Gunallo as he already has for us.

721's latest Merino Select figures are:
Ycfw 25 Ywt 8.1
Ysl 13.4 DP+ 157
MP+ 160

He also carries the double Poll gene. We have semen available from him.

In our welcome we mentioned how pleased we are with the 2016 drop lambs, 721's first progeny have a fair bit to do with it.

Here are some of the 200 lambs we have on the ground, sired by him!



Our second ram at Classings Classic 2015 sold to Angus McLachlan of the Rosebank stud at Mt Pleasant for \$6500. Brenton Smith, Calcookara stud, Cowell purchased one, while Craig and Josh Graham, Maitland, and Kangaroo Island bought two. Our 2016 teams for Classings and the Adelaide sale will be on display as usual at our annual sale.

John Ridgway

A loving and lasting legacy

John Heath Ridgway was born at Pt Lincoln on 27th January 1933. We lost his immediate presence on December 23rd last year, but his legacy lives on with us and in us.

He was the only child of Eric and Olive. Eric's family owned a farming property near Coffin Bay but due to drought and the depression they moved into Lincoln and started a butchering business which Eric took over.

As for many youths of the period, life was relatively carefree, not many possessions but plenty of family love and friendships. Sport typically was a prominent focus. Football and athletics were areas where he excelled. He was inspired in his schooling by very good teachers and the well-known author Colin Thiele was one who influenced his love of reading and writing and gave him self-belief and confidence with public speaking.

At 16 he commenced work as an office clerk with Elders in Pt Lincoln. After 4 years there, for the next 2 years he was posted to Gladstone, Taillem Bend, Meningie and Mt Pleasant. Then at the ripe old age of 22 he was posted to Lameroo to open a branch for Elders, supplied with nothing more than a typewriter and some stationery in the clapped out old Holden car. There were 3 well entrenched opposition stock agents in the town so competition was intense. However his determination saw him develop relationships with the local farming community and gradually grow the business.

It was during this time that John started to develop a passion for sheep and wool. Other than his family, if anything is remembered, it should be his passion for breeding sheep and their health and wellbeing.

It was during the 2 years that he was moving around the branches before arriving at Lameroo that he met his wife and life partner Jenny while on a blind date organised by a family friend. It was instant love. They were engaged later in that same year, were married in 1957 and ultimately had 4 children; Ric, Jane, David and Jill.

Before they were married though, and with little money they purchased a scrub block at Kulkami that he had been unable to sell to anyone else. A very dry 1957 forced John back to work with Elders in their stock department in Adelaide and then as branch manager at Gawler for 3 years. He regularly worked at Gepps Cross Sheep and Lamb markets during this time where he enhanced his passion for sheep while gaining invaluable experience in trading and auctioneering.

During this period, Dudley Kemp in particular taught him more on judging, evaluation and presentation of stock for sale. Also their Kulkami block was under the management of a share farmer who continued the hard and laborious task of clearing; something John had started through the aid of loaned machinery from friends while Jenny worked in Adelaide.

In 1961 the family moved back to Lameroo and John ran sheep on shares on 3 properties owned by Larry Cornish, a very good friend who made the offer. It was not until 1966 that they moved to Kulkami; initially living in a neighbour's shearing quarters while their house was being built.

At first the land would carry very few sheep so John successfully traded and agisted sheep all over the district. From 1966 to the 1980s John and Jenny battled to keep their "heads above water". They were a team and it was not much other than work, but succeed they did. John often reflected in later life that he must have been crazy to think they were going to clear land with no plant or money!



He was very community focussed and served on the Lameroo District Council for 10 years (8 years as Chairman) overseeing many important developments. He also served with distinction on several regional and state government commissions. Passionate and sometimes stubborn, he was someone who never gave up on things that were important to him. He always backed the underdog and was always respectful.



Through his passion for sheep, he learnt they had to be fed and managed well if you were going to be successful.

“You don’t make any money out of dead sheep,” so he thoroughly researched all ailments and diseases, almost becoming an amateur vet.

He was instrumental in establishing the Ridgway Poll Merino stud in 1990 and was confident in our ability and expertise to produce rams of a quality to match other studs. That confidence was not misplaced, with both Ric and David and families now running successful studs. We are proudly continuing his legacy.

Why did he leave Pt Lincoln and choose to settle in the dry, dusty Mallee? Because the Mallee got in his blood. He saw its beauty and it became who he was.

2015 Sale Summary

Abbreviated from press reports

Ric and Gail Ridgway & family were soundly rewarded for the quality of their offering of Poll Merino rams at their annual ram sale last year.

They presented 128 rams for buyer competition in the main auction, with another 33 available in the mini auction that followed, all with outstanding Merino Select ASBVs. By sale end they had cleared 127 rams (up five on 2014), achieved a new on-property high price of \$5000 (up \$1400 on 2014) and averaged \$1464 (up \$294).

The result in the main auction alone saw a lift in average by \$356. However, like many sales with bigger numbers on offer, there was still value buying to be had with 37% of the rams selling for \$1000 or less.

The lift in average was just reward for rams that overall, weighed up to 130kg and averaged 10 to 15kg more than their previous draft.

Ric Ridgway said they also cut significantly more wool than previously, something they are constantly working to achieve.

“We love good wools; we are also constantly working on carcase improvement, but not sacrificing wool quality,” Ric Ridgway said.

The sale was very buoyant to start with, opening with a successful \$4200 bid for the powerful Ridgway 763 at lot 1, by Craig and Josh Graham, Glencorrie Pty Ltd, Maitland, buying through Wardle & Co. This was ultimately the equal second top price of the sale, but the Grahams didn’t stop there. They purchased seven outstanding rams in total at a \$2857 average to put real competition in the top end of this sale.



Pictured with the lot 2 \$5000 top priced ram at the Ridgway Poll Merino ram sale are Landmark auctioneer Gordon Wood, Matt Ridgway, purchaser Len Matthews, Bulgandri Poll, Rand, NSW, Ric Ridgway & Landmark auctioneer Richard Miller.

Weighing 112kg, this AI son of Kamora Park 1028 had an absolutely magnificent 17.4micron fleece with fantastic crimp definition and fibre alignment, and was also +23 for Yearling clean fleece weight. His MP+ index was 160 and his DP+ index was 150, both right at the top of industry standards.



Ridgway principal Ric Ridgway discusses deliveries after the sale with Lynton Barrett, Lameroo.

Lynton was the biggest volume buyer with 13 rams at a \$1315 average.



Pictured after the Ridgway ram sale are some of the key buyers who contributed to its success; Steven Paech, Callington (6 rams to \$1600); Tim Freak, Coomandook (5 rams to \$1100);

Andrew Johnson, Tintinara (4 rams to \$1900); Gary Hansen, Coomandook (4 rams to \$2300); & Duane Simon, McPiggery, Lameroo (2 rams to \$4000).

2016 Calendar of Events

- Australian Sheep and Wool Show - Bendigo* ▶ **Friday 15th - Sunday 17th July**
South East Merino Field Day - Keith ▶ **Wednesday 27th July**
Karoonda & Districts Merino Field Day - Murray Bridge ▶ **Friday 29th July**
Hamilton Sheepvention (offering 5 rams) ▶ **Monday 1st & Tuesday 2nd August**
Ridgway On-property Ram Sale - Kulkami (offering 160 rams) ▶ Monday 8th August
Classings Classic - Murray Bridge (offering 8 rams) ▶ **Monday 5th September**
Adelaide Royal Show Merino Ram Sale (offering 2 rams) ▶ **Friday 9th September**

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