



RIDGWAY

Poll Merino Stud

NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 21
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This year has seen exceptional lamb marking percentages on our property. For more than 20 years we have been recording 'dry' and 'lost lamb' ewes and removing the poor performers from our flock. Improved fat coverage through the use of ASBV's, six monthly shearing and our plainer bodied sheep also help us record very good lambing percentages most years.

Due to our ewes lambing onto green pasture this year, with little supplementary feed required, lamb survival rates have been high. This could be attributed to our season. An Easter thunderstorm in early April gave our

pastures an unexpected kick start, with over 20mm recorded on most of our properties.

Unfortunately the remainder of April and May was mostly dry with above average temperatures, which put pastures under a lot of stress. 10mm in late May followed by an above average June and mild temperatures with no frosts has boosted feed growth. We will now head into spring with plenty of feed and good sub soil moisture.

We hope lambing has gone well for you and look forward to catching up at the upcoming field days and sales.



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BREEDING SHEEP FOR NON-MULESING

The sheep we produce possess thin, pliable skins on uncomplicated bodies, producing fast growing, crimped, white wool. As such, it has always been our view that our genetics could handle non-mulesing well.

This is backed up by independent testing over many sire evaluation trials where our rams have always performed very well for both breech wrinkle and breech cover scores.

During 2022 we made the decision to cease mulesing and no lambs have been mulesed on our farm this year.

Ceasing mulesing has allowed us to stop using a contractor to do our lamb marking. This change has enabled us to take our time a little more and record breech wrinkle and breech cover scores. This adds to the ever-increasing bank of measurements that we offer our clients to aid them in selecting their rams.



IMPROVING OUR PARENTAGE ACCURACY

We are always trying to improve or increase the data we collect in order to breed the most profitable and easy-care animals we can.

In August last year we took DNA samples from 665 of our breeding ewes. The remainder of our ewe flock will be tested this year including our 2023 drop ewe lambs.

This is a major investment which will allow us to get full and accurate parentage on every lamb born in 2024 and beyond.

Having full parentage data for all of our stock will improve breeding value accuracies giving the ram buyer confidence that the genetics they are buying will breed as they should.

We have also tested 150 of this year's sale rams. The testing focused on some of the early leaders in the mob and those rams who were bred from a syndicate mating.

This will give us full paternal pedigree data on all rams to be offered this year as well as a poll/horn test result for many.



SALE RAMS

220 rams are available for sale this year at various multi-vendor sales and our on-property auction. Rams are also available through private selection by appointment. We are proud of our offering this year and believe they display all of the attributes we strive to breed.

The wools are deeply crimped, white, long stapled and free growing and the rams are displaying good early growth and genetic fat and muscle attributes.

The sale team's average wool tests are:
FD 18.2, SD 2.9, CV 16.1, CF 99.7

This year we will be offering 3 rams at Hamilton Sheepvention and select teams will be offered at both Classings Classic and the Adelaide Ram Sale in September.

We also welcome your enquiry for the purchase of our excess 4 and 5yo ewes and ewe hoggets.

LAST YEARS SALE REPORT

The following is an abbreviation of our printed sale report

Bids fly for dual-purpose Ridgway rams

Alisha Fogden - Stock Journal - 9 August 2022

The Ridgway Poll Merino on property auction started strong at Kulkami on Monday, with top end rams quickly reaching \$7800 - surpassing last year's sale top price.

The big dollars were paid for lot 3 by Brent Farr, operating under DK&DM Farr, Pyap West, via Loxton, who liked the "stand out" ram for its "nice plain body, with good eye muscle and fat".

"The wool is also pretty good," he said.

"We also bought lot 84 (at \$4000) - a half brother (both sired by Ridgway 005), so they will run together.

"We plan to use them over 150 of our top mixed age ewes to breed rams from."

The top price ram, weighing 105 kilograms, had top 20 per cent ASBV figures of 174.1 on the Merino Production Plus Index and 178.2 on the Dual Purpose Plus Index figure, plus a 46-millimetre eye muscle depth and 6.5mm fat depth.

The May 2021-drop ram also had a 18.2-micron fleece, with 2.9 standard deviation, 15.9 coefficient of variation and 99.8pc comfort factor, while its MerinoSelect figures included a yearling clean fleece weight of 23.9 and and 8.6 yearling weight (both top 20pc).

Ridgway stud principal Ric Ridgway said if the ram hadn't made "good money", it would have been kept for the stud, as it was from the Ridgway 170005 family (a sire that died this year).

"170005 was very good in its growth and meat traits, with still a reasonable wool cut - which is what we're trying to push for these days," he said.



The \$7800 top price ram with Nutrien agents Gordon Wood; Simon Aldridge; and Richard Miller; Ridgway Stud's Ric Ridgway; buyer Brent Farr and Ridgway stud's Matt Ridgway.

"170005 was our best eye muscle ram - it topped the 2020 SA sire evaluation trial we had here in Lameroo."

Top price ram underbidders, the Hampel family, Meribah, via Loxton, bought the sale's second-highest price ram at \$6200.

Jeff Hampel said the lot 6 ram appealed for its MP+ figure of 179.9 (top 10pc) and yearling staple length of 11.3, as they shored every six months.

The long-time clients bought five rams, averaging \$3480.

Mr Ridgway said the \$6200 ram was from the Ridgway 131 family, which are heavy cutting and produced their best staple lengths.

The May 2021-drop ram had a 19.3M fleece with 2.9SD, 15CV, 99.6CF and YCFW of 34.8 (top 5pc).

Mr Ridgway was pleased to see a few new names among the 38 registered buyers, of which only seven went home empty-handed.

Other bigger spenders at the sale included Hamilton Harvest, Hamilton, with two rams averaging \$4500; repeat buyers Glencorrie, Maitland, with six averaging \$3833; Borung stud, Waikerie, with one at \$5600; GL&SL Auricht, Pinnaroo, with three averaging \$3333; WD Wilson, Pinnaroo, with one at \$4400; and McPiggery, Lameroo, with one at \$5400.

While the bigger volume buyers included return clients CJ&YM Butcher, Meningie, with 10 rams to \$2400, averaging \$1280, while ND&CM Smith, Alawoona, bought nine averaging \$1067.



Loyal clients, the Hampel family, Meribah, via Loxton, with the sale's second-highest price ram.



Mr Ridgway noted that the sale overall didn't quite emulate the outstanding clearance of last year's sale, but he expected to sell a few privately to clients that couldn't make it on the day.

"It was good to see people getting the rams at the value they were willing to pay, and there was still some good competition right down to the last row," he said.

"The sheep presented really well. They were a little dusty in the tip, due to the dry start to the year, but they have been out in the paddock the past month after good rains in late May."

Seven rams also sold in a mini auction after the sale, ranging from \$800-\$1000.

Nutrien Ag Solutions conducted the sale, which was interfaced with AuctionsPlus, with Gordon Wood and Richard Miller the auctioneers.

Mr Wood said the Ridgways presented a "very even" line-up of "modern Merinos with good ASBVs and a productive, pliable skin".

"And to come out with a \$2200 average is a pretty good result," he said.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2023

Australian Sheep & Wool Show, Bendigo VIC - Friday 14th - Sunday 16th July

South East Merino Field Day, Keith SA - Wednesday 19th July

Hamilton Sheepvention, Hamilton VIC (offering 3 rams) - Sunday 6th & Monday 7th August

RIDGWAY ON-PROPERTY SALE - KULKAMI - MONDAY 14TH AUGUST

Classings Classic, Murray Bridge SA - Monday 4th September

Adelaide Royal Show Merino Ram Sale - Friday 8th September