

ASHMORE
WHITE SUFFOLKS
Genetics that Perform

NEWSLETTER

June 2019

WELCOME

Welcome to our June Newsletter, produced to keep our greatly valued clients informed of our latest developments and progress.

Survival of the fittest

It's fair to say that 2018 was an incredibly challenging year for most regions. We had 190mm of growing season rainfall with the largest fall for the 12 month period being 15mm. Even with a decile 1 rain year, we were still able to harvest crops and cut some hay which we recognise was well above what many regions achieved.

We decided to graze all our barley crops and then cut all our compass barley for hay for our own use. Whilst we missed out on the high grain prices on that portion of the farm, the cereal hay we made is excellent quality (CP 12%, ME 12%, 78% digestible with close to zero wastage). We wouldn't hesitate to do it again as it meant we didn't have to downsize our ewe flock.

Despite the challenging seasons, what an amazing time to be in sheep with wool maintaining terrific prices and the price of lamb and mutton at unbelievable levels, one must think of their ewes as "white gold"!

As this newsletter goes to print our first lambs are dropping which marks the beginning of a new breeding cycle and evaluation of the next crop of lambs.

Expansion and upgrade

We have had a few exciting developments in the last 6 months. The first being that we were successful in a public tender process for a 400ha lease block just 4km from Ashmore. We are in a very tightly held district so we were over the moon when we were told the news – amazingly the deciding factor was that we wanted to run sheep on it!

This will allow us to expand sheep numbers as required, take the pressure off our pastures at Ashmore and provide more summer stubbles. It also gave us 400ha of lentil

stubbles during April and May just when we would have had to ramp up feeding our pregnant ewes. Six weeks of feed for 600 ewes which was a huge bonus when you consider how scarce and expensive hay is presently.

The other development is we have invested in a precision seeder – a DBS from Ausplow. The new seeder has hydraulic tynes (we haven't dug up too many stones!) and a parallelogram attached to the seeding boot for precise seed placement. The ability to direct sow into our concrete hard pasture ground whilst dry and still do a great job was invaluable with the dry start this year. We have had 50mm for May and 40mm recorded on 12 June—perfect timing for pasture and crops!

We also trialed paired row sowing boots when sowing our pasture and hay paddocks to take the row spacing from 10" to 7" and provide more weed competition in the absence of pre-emergent sprays. The results look very promising.



Oats planted using a paired row sowing boot

Like most who used Clearfield chemistry last year, we had a plant back issue with our Clearfield ground due to lack of rain post spraying. This year we decided to plant Spartacus CL and Hurricane CL lentils back into those paddocks as a pasture option. Whilst this is a non-conventional mix it allows us to graze any grass weeds that germinate early and then spray them out later as well as multiple options of spraying out barley to harvest lentils, spraying out lentils to harvest barley, lentil + barley grazing or hay or spray topping the whole lot – it's a very flexible system with lots of options. Also the early vigor on the lentils is leaving our medic for dead. We look forward to seeing how this performs over the season.

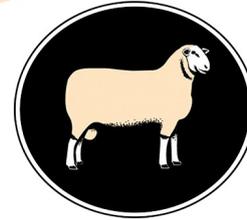
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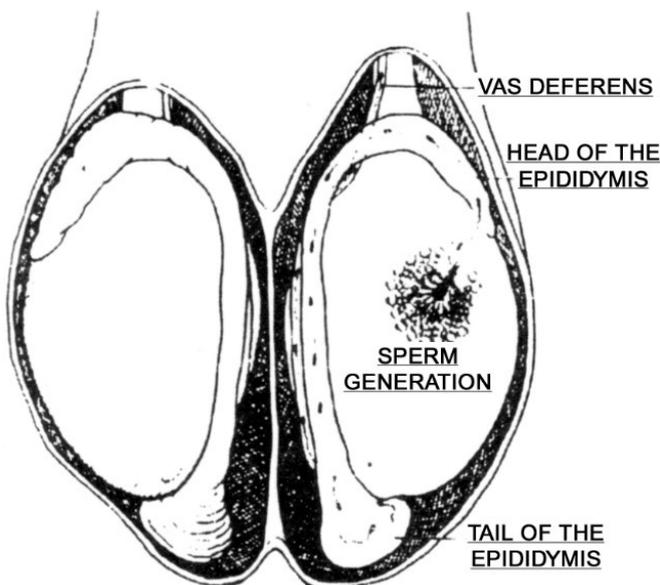
NEWSLETTER

Common problems in rams—getting the most out of them

In August last year we hosted a successful field day with Dr Greg Johnsson as one of the speakers. Greg provided some terrific answers to some of the most common questions we get asked by clients about rams. Those present found this extremely valuable so we thought it useful to provide a summary of this information for those that could not attend.

Q: What are the possible causes of swollen testes in rams? If I see this, what should I do?

A: Trauma/fighting, Hernia, Brucellosis, *Actinobacillus seminis* (a bacterial infection) and *Histophilus ovis* (also a bacterial infection). If you observe swollen testes, isolate the ram(s) immediately and call a vet as the last three issues are highly contagious.



Your rams' testes produce the only thing that is passed on to their progeny—semen which contains DNA! An annual check is important to make sure they are in good working order.

Q: How many years should I expect out of my rams?

A: 4 years. By 5 years old 50% of rams suffer significant

arthritic degeneration of the spine and hips that prevents high rates of service as well as decline in semen quantity and quality.

Q: What are the most common causes of death in rams? Sometimes they just lay down and die!

A: Clostridial disease (rams need 6 monthly vaccination), overfat, fighting injury, grain poisoning, disease (e.g. pneumonia), urinary calculi

Q: What are the most common causes of breakdown in rams and how can I prevent these?

A: Lameness, Arthritis, Age, Poor hind leg conformation, Testicular problems, Poor health (worms, infection, low condition score), Trace elements, Vitamin A

Q: What pre joining checks can I do before putting the rams in with ewes?

A: 12 weeks before joining do the 5 "T"s: Teeth, Torso, Testicles, Tossle, Toes.

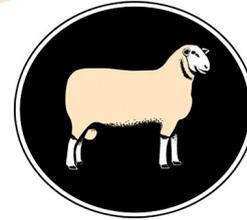
Sound mouth, sound feet, CS 3.5-4, penis sound, testicles symmetrical, no lumps, springy like a tennis ball, free in scrotum

8-10 weeks before joining (no closer) – shearing, drenching, vaccination, fly treatment

8 weeks before joining lupin supplement of up to 1 kg/day



Your ram team is a valuable asset that require an annual service ensuring they perform as expected.



NEWSLETTER

Changes to LAMBPLAN indexes

Carcase Plus (C+) has been an important index to the sheep meat industry, however we now know that it is negatively impacting eating quality. To overcome this, Carcase Plus and the Lamb2020 indexes will be retired in March 2020 and replaced with a new index called TCP (Terminal Carcase Production).

TCP and LEQ (Lamb Eating Quality) will be presented in our 2019 sale catalogue but we are sure some of you would feel more comfortable seeing C+ also, so we will have this available in excel format on our website. There is limited space for all the individual traits and indexes on our catalogue but we are only too happy to run a custom report with any index and individual breeding value you like. Just contact Troy on 0456 230099 or troyfischer@bigpond.com any time.

What is the new TCP index?

Indexes aid in the selection of animals for use within a breeding program when there are a range of traits of economic or functional importance. Using indexes in your ram purchasing decisions allows you to make balanced progress towards more profitable sheep for your production system.

The TCP index (Terminal Carcase Production) has been created to assist producers to achieve both gains in their major production traits, post-weaning weight (PWT) and carcass eye muscle depth (EMD), as well maintaining key eating quality traits of shear force (tenderness) and intramuscular fat (marbling).

How to use the TCP index:

If you were familiar with the former terminal indexes, it is worth noting that the scale of index values is different for the TCP index. To assist in comparing rams, Sheep Genetics recommended to use a percentile band table as reference. We will have this in our sale catalogue.

As you can see from the table below, Ashmore rams stack up extremely favourably on the new TCP index. As we have been selecting for production and eating quality traits for a number of years now, we are well ahead of the breed average for all key traits and indexes.

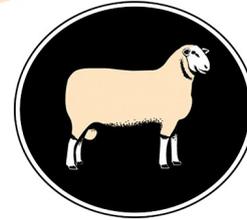
Celebrating 30 years of breeding

To celebrate 30 years of breeding White Suffolks at Ashmore this year, we have decided to do a special run of Ashmore shearers singlets for clients. Shearers singlets are super comfortable to wear as a singlet underneath your jumper in winter, or if you are keen to get your guns out when the suns out they are great to wear on those long hot days on the header or when you knock off work and have a cold beer!

If you would like a singlet – and that includes you too ladies, please get in touch with Nette by end of July via 0439933111 or nette@ashmorewhitesuffolks.com. They will be ready by sale day.



2018 Drop ASBVs	BWT	WWT	PWT	PFAT	PEMD	IMF	SF5	TCP	LEQ	C+
Ashmore Average	0.32	10.2	16.2	-0.3	2.3	-0.4	1.7	146	142	209
WS Average	0.33	9.5	14.8	-0.4	1.7	-0.5	3.1	139	134	191



NEWSLETTER

Decision to vaccinate for OJD

In response to client feedback as well as providing an additional service to all our clients, we have decided to start vaccinating for OJD. We will continue to test for the presence of the disease and participate in the MAP program, however, vaccination just adds another level of protection if our rams are exposed to the disease at their purchasers' property. We have been testing for OJD for over 20 years now and have been MN3 status (the highest status possible) since 2002. We will commence Gudair vaccination with the 2019 drop. The vaccine can create a lump on the neck at the vaccine site.

South Australia has now opened the borders to interstate sheep entering, in line with other states. Combined with this, a flock known to have OJD can now trade outside of direct to the abattoir, as long as it is declared on the National Sheep Health Statement. PIRSA no longer notifies neighbors if an infected sheep is found and Thomas Foods no longer test every consignment of ewes for OJD, unless requested two weeks in advance of delivery.

So if you are in the position to purchase ewes either within SA or interstate, we strongly encourage you and your agent to see the Health Statement BEFORE the ewes land on your property. When they arrive, keep them quarantined and any skinny, poor looking ewes, you may consider testing. You will not 'get in trouble' if you are found with OJD, you will still be able to trade sheep, but it is well worth knowing if you ever get the disease as it can slowly build to have devastating impacts.

On top of vaccinating for OJD, we vaccinate all rams for Scabby Mouth and routinely test for brucellosis and have never had lice or footrot. Although the risk of bringing a sheep health problem onto your property is technically always there, it's extremely unlikely to come from an Ashmore Ram.

Preview of Ashmore Ram Sale

Our ram sale is fast approaching, creating a very busy, but rewarding period in our yearly work program. We have some extremely exciting high performance rams on offer this spring. The very top rams sit around 230 on the Lambplan Carcase Plus index or 162 on the new TCP index and 160 on the Lamb Eating Quality Index, which puts them in the top 1% of all terminal rams. The average C+ index for our sale team is 200 placing at least half of our sale rams in the top 10% of all terminal sires.

Details of the sale are:

- At Ashmore, 1460 Wasleys Road, Wasleys
- 23rd September 1pm, inspection from 11 am
- 200 rams
- Average Carcase Plus index >200
- Includes specially selected stud ram offering
- Auctions Plus will be used on the stud ram offering so that clients who cannot attend the sale can still bid themselves.
- Catalogues available on our website from late August; hard copy posted in early September.

If you have never been to our sale, here are some of the reasons our clients keep returning:

- Over 25 years of measured performance
- Commitment to quality data
- Leading LAMBPLAN stud
- Excellent structure
- Elite eating quality genetics
- Rams are guaranteed
- Free of OJD, Brucellosis, Footrot, Lice
- Free interstate delivery on flock rams
- Ashmore roast lamb and gravy rolls!

Ashmore Ram Sale, 1460 Wasleys Rd, Wasleys - Monday 23rd September

200 Rams with Carcase+ average over 200 for sale