

NEWSLETTER

August 2025



ASHMORERAMS

Genetics that Perform

WELCOME

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

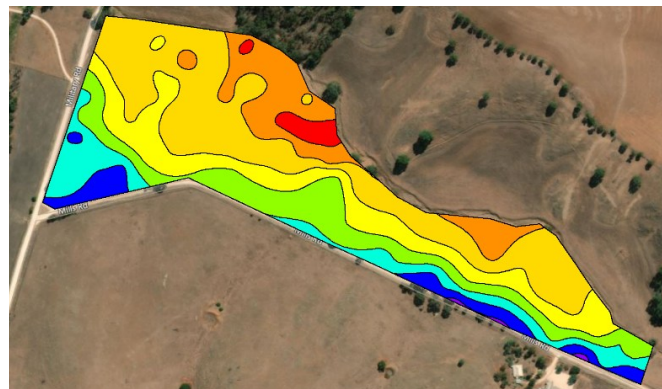
Latest News

2024 and the start of 2025 have been among the toughest seasons in our farming careers. We received 165mm of growing-season rainfall in 2024 making it the driest on record. After purchasing our farm in the hills, "Millbrae", last year and managing a fair share of lease country it has taken some careful financial management to make it all work.

That said, we're grateful to have harvested something from nearly all our paddocks and feel for those who couldn't. We're also incredibly thankful to our ram clients—selling out of rams earlier than expected was a real highlight.

Our wheat averaged 1.5t/ha, with Sunblade performing best in the dry. Lentil yields averaged 0.85t/ha ranging from not harvested (<0.3t/ha) to nearly average (1.4t/ha). Our best crop came from back-to-back lentils partly attributable to leftover subsoil moisture from 2023.

We have been busy at Millbrae pH mapping, spreading 360 tonnes of lime, and replacing a number of internal fences. While buying a farm in such a tough year was daunting, having extra area for our sheep meant we avoided lambing onto bare ground. As a result, our ewes came home in excellent condition in January and joined up well. Our preg scan was 148% lambs/ewes joined, with an AI result of 81% pregnant which is our best in a long time.



The pH maps highlight the huge variation within paddock ranging from 4-7pH within a few 100m.

In April, we moved our DBS seeder from Ashmore to Millbrae which was no small feat! It was a real baptism of fire for us Adelaide Plains farmers as sowing downhill was the only option in parts. The arable paddocks had set pretty hard after many years, so a hydraulic tyne was the ideal machine to get good establishment into hard, bone dry soil. The Kingbale oats sown there are up and looking promising. We also achieved an excellent germination of large rocks!



The 6 hour journey through the hills to Millbrae with the seeder created a few more grey hairs!

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Latest News Continued



No shortage of school holiday pocket money for the kids picking rocks after the seeder had been through.

Lambing at Millbrae is going well, with over 850 lambs tagged in the first group. Troy or Nette were driving 100km each way daily to the Harrogate property. After five weeks of that, we invested in a caravan, although finding one tall enough for Troy was a challenge!



Ewe with triplets at tagging

With 111mm of rain in June/July, 2025 is shaping up as a late but promising season if spring delivers. Lamb prices are surging on tight supply, so those who stuck it out and fed their stock are finally seeing the reward.

Lessons from the Drought

As most of our clients have experienced the last 12 – 24 months, there have been challenges with such low rainfall. By no means are we experts but here are a few things we have done in case it helps someone.

1. Being upfront with bank & exhaustive budgeting

We have kept a close eye on cashflow and carefully forecasting the debt / overdraft ahead of time has been helpful. We feel really supported by our bank NAB who have been on our side. 2024/25 is definitely the year of the excel spreadsheet!

2. Mental health

It has been a marathon, with such a long period of time with uncertainty and worry about finances. We have thrown ourselves into watching our kids sport. Holidays and pub dinners with mates have been a priority also.

3. Rationalised capex spending

Outside of the capex that had been ordered back in 2023, very little was purchased. There are a few things on the list (another front end loader is a hot topic!) but we are just making do with what we have and making that as efficient as possible.

4. Feed budget and confinement pens for our sheep

We did a feed budget early on and could see if it was to stay dry, we would run out of hay. We had carry-over hay from 2023 but secured 125t from a neighbour before the severe shortage and prices took off.

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Ashmore Ram Sale 2025

This year's ram sale team are progressing well and are packed with as much performance as ever. As always, the best rams of the drop are offered in our auction, so we encourage you to participate in the auction to ensure you get the best selection possible. A limited number of private sale rams will be available, however around 100 less than normal due to exceptionally high mortality caused by foxes during the 2024 lambing.



Ashmore 240404 (above) is a great example of what we are trying to breed and demonstrates our objective of a moderate birthweight, rapid growth and muscle ram with good structure. The table below outlines the merit of our 2024 drop relative to an average terminal in the 2024 drop.

	BWT	WWT	PWT	PFAT	PEMD	PWEC	EQ	TCP
Ashmore 240404	0.17	14.1	21.7	0.5	5.1	-17	171	173
Ashmore WS 2024 Drop Average	0.27	11.3	18.3	0.0	3.5	-22	155	159
Terminal 2024 Drop Average	0.24	9.4	14.5	-0.1	2.2	-23	137	142
ASBVs 15/7/25		Top 1%	Top 5%	Top 10%	Top 20%			

UltraWhite Update

We have been happy with the structure, muscling and growth of our UltraWhites, however within our flock we are finding the fertility is not as good as we would like. The goal of our flock is that the ewe base needs to be a shedding maternal with the ability to breed plenty of replacement ewes, so adequate fertility is as important as providing an option for terminal lambs.

We have focussed on a breeding value called Number of Lambs Weaned (NLW). NLW is a reproduction trait measuring a ewe's ability to: 1. Get in lamb, 2. Carry a pregnancy successfully, 3. Give birth, 4. Raise lambs to weaning age.

To speed up the progress in this trait we have decided to use an F1 UWxWS who is score 2 for bareness as well as an extremely bare WS ram. Both of these rams have a significant advantage in NLW ASBVs and will allow us to fast track progress in this trait. As a result of these joinings all of the progeny in 2025 will be crosses of varying percentage.

Going forward we plan to breed from those animals which possess the highest combination of growth, muscle, fertility and bareness whilst maintaining good foot/leg structure and temperament. If the progeny out of these crosses meet our expectations for these traits, a limited number of rams will be for sale.

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A visit from the top brass

In early June, we received a call from Primary Producers SA asking if we would host a delegation of senior politicians visiting drought-affected regions and making announcements about drought funding. The group included the Prime Minister, SA Premier, Federal and State Agriculture Ministers, along with four national TV crews, several newspapers and more.

PPSA and the NFF were the driving force behind the day and wanted a farm which could demonstrate that even a professional, well-run farm business needs support in such an exceptionally dry year. We hope we did them justice. In no way are we aligned with the labour party, in fact we are not terribly political people in general.

What surprised us most was how long we were able to speak privately with Anthony Albanese, Peter Malinauskis, and Penny Wong without media or officials recording. We covered a lot of ground: the need to develop new markets for sheep meat as the live export market is being taken away, concerns about housing encroachment on prime agricultural land, and the importance of maintaining strong trade relationships—especially with the US (meat) and India (lentils). We also made sure to point out that many other areas were suffering even more from the drought.

A silver lining to the day? Elke scored a handwritten note from the Prime Minister to excuse her from school. Isabelle grilled the Premier on footy—he earned a reprieve from her when he revealed he is a Port Adelaide man!



Ashmore Ram Sale, Monday 22nd September, 1460 Wasleys Rd, Wasleys

180 Rams with average Terminal Carcase Production Index in top 20% of Terminals

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