



*The Kerin Family
"GullenGamble"
Yeoval NSW 2868*

July 2012

GullenGamble -the Quiet Achievers



2011 drop lambs and ewes

Welcome to our 2012 newsletter and we hope that all clients, friends and fellow producers are in good health and spirits.

The last twelve months have been very exciting and also rewarding for all of us at GullenGamble. The last two years has seen a significant increase in ram sales and to help us keep up with the ever increasing demand for top-quality rams with 'The Right Balance Between Wool and Meat', we decided to join our ewe lambs at 10 months of age—with excellent results.

Last year our Orange Tag ewe lambs (2010 drop) had a conception rate of 89% at such a young age, and these ewes were then rejoined with lambs at foot to be brought in line with our main lambing of mid April/May 2012 - and subsequently had a scanned conception rate of 91% the second time around.

We have just scanned our 2011 drop Green Tag ewe lambs, who have shown a conception rate of 92% in the Stud and 85% in the commercial flock.

The decision to use ewe lambs was a much better option than retaining cast-for-age ewes for an extra year, as the ewe lambs are genetically leaps and bounds ahead of the older sheep in all aspects of 'the Right Balance of Wool & Meat' traits..... fertility, yearling weight, eye muscle depth and positive fat and muscle genetics.

As we have seen all commodity prices fall from the heights of 2011, we have taken full advantage of the forward contracts on offer with all our merino wether lambs locked in for sale at 430c/kg and a large portion of crossbred wether lambs at 470c/kg—well above the physical market at the time of delivery.

We have also forward sold a quarter of our 2012 wool clip in a 21 micron contract of 1250c/kg clean for mid September delivery. We view forward contracts as a guaranteed minimum price for what we produce, and if the physical market is above that at time of delivery—we view this as a bonus. We encourage clients to forward sell part of what they pro-

duce as a good business decision and Don Macdonald will be speaking about forward selling wool at our upcoming Open Day on 11th September.

In February, we hosted a three day eID tagging workshop run by Sheep CRC and TAFE. SRS Stud Breeders from three states attended and it was a very worthwhile couple of days, with us now implementing this additional technology (see article by Liz Cotton from The Stock & Land on the last page). Thank you to Ben Watts (Western Institute TAFE) and Bill Murray (Exact Livestock) as course providers.

The team at GullenGamble believe MerinoSelect sheep breeding values (ASBV's), will be as big an advance to the merino sheep producer as EBV's were to the Angus cattle breed. ASBV's are being used along with visual selection methods to help improve the flocks' genetic gain of productivity and overall

2012 Events Calendar:

***4 August**— Nyngan Ag Expo

***11 August** - Bathurst Ram Expo

***19 August** - Midstate Merino Field Day @ Narromine Race-course

***28,29 August** - National Merino Sheep Show @ Dubbo

***6 September** - South West Slopes Stud Merino Breeders @ Iandra Castle Greenethorpe

***11 September—
GULLENGAMBLE
INFORMATION and
OPEN DAY**

***15 September** - SRS Classic Field Day & 'Bred Well Fed Well Workshop' @ Wellington Show-ground

***5 October -14th
ANNUAL ON-
PROPERTY RAM
DISPLAY & SALE from
10am**

***13 October** - SRS Classic Ram Sale - Wellington Show-ground



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profit over a comprehensive range of traits.

Brett's belief is that if you can't measure it; you can't monitor it! All ewes entering the Stud will have their genetic merits expressed as ASBV's—allowing us accuracy and flexibility in decision making and to achieve our goal for us and our clients of 'the Right Balance between Wool and Meat', now and into the future. Jim Watts will be speaking about the importance of ASBV's to sheep breeders as well as Redesigning the Merino at our Information and Open Day on 11th September, as will Tom Hook from the MLA.

To benchmark our sires against others in the industry, we have entered Green 110461 x L445 in Macquarie Sire Evaluation Trial at Trangie Research Station. *"As well as meeting all the requirements of an accredited CTSE site, the Trangie site has been designed to allow research to define the genetics of fleece traits at the post weaning age (7 to 9 months of age). The almost total lack of knowledge of the genetics of fleece traits - in particular fleece weight - at the post weaning age has been identified as a major industry constraint to designing optimal ram breeding programs for the modern Merino industry."* Alan Casey—DPI. We look forward to the results of this trial.

If Brett, Nathan or I can be of any assistance to you in your sheep enterprise; please do not hesitate to contact us.

GullenGamble merinos are looking forward to this season and offering existing and potential clients a steady and robust line-up of quality rams for purchase. As mentioned, we have organised an Information and Open day on 11th September with exceptional speakers who are at the forefront of the merino industry addressing those present. See next page for more information on this exciting day and Kym, Brett, Nathan, Laura and I look forward to seeing you all at sometime over this season.

Mark Kerin

Two sires to watch closely are:

****GG100176**



We believe GG100176 can take us to new heights in all areas especially improved fat and muscle. An outstanding carcass sheep with soft, deeply crimped white wool and is a very well structured ram.

ASBV's

GG100176	YWT	YEMD	YFAT	YFD	YCFW	7%DP
	10.2	+0.9	+0.6	-0.6	+11	155

Test 05.08.11

MIC	SD	CV	CF
17.6	2.8	15.8	99.5%

****LEAHCIM 080445—carries double poll gene**

Leahcim 445 was purchased privately in 2010 and he is a proven sire and has been used in AI and naturally at GullenGamble. Progeny of L445 will be for sale at the On-Property and SRS Classic sales this spring



ASBV's

L080445	YWT	YEMD	YCFW	YFD	7%DP
	8.8	-0.5	17.1	-1.1	160

Food For Thought...

"Our business in life is not to get ahead of others, but to get ahead of ourselves -- to break our own records, to outstrip our yesterday by our today."

Stewart B. Johnson

GullenGamble Merinos Information & Open Day - 11 September '12

Guest Speakers:

***Dr Jim Watts** - Founder of the SRS® Company: Redesigning the Merino and the importance of ASBV's to SRS sheep breeders.

***Mr Don Macdonald** –Don Macdonald and Co-Woolbrokers: The pros and cons of forward selling wool and what lies ahead for the industry.

***Mr Tom Hook** - MLA: Using and Understanding ASBV's and the latest outcomes from the Sheep CRC including the genomics research.

PLUS a comprehensive display of GullenGamble Merinos including sale rams being offered this year.

Starts at 10am

If you can't
measure it;
you can't
monitor it'

Brett Kerin

Food and refreshments provided

RSVP for catering: 4th September

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**Making More
From Sheep...**

A joint initiative
of:



15/09/2012

SRS® Classic Group are pleased to be sponsoring this FREE workshop at Wellington Showground in conjunction with the 2012 Field Day. The workshop is for the benefit of all commercial breeders in the region. Two of Aus-

tralia's leading experts on genetics and nutrition are speaking on the day - Dr Mark Ferguson from Murdoch University in WA and Dr Jason Trompf who is the current Chairman of Best Wool Best Lamb. The goals of "Bred Well Fed Well" are closely aligned with those of the Classic Group in focusing on improved fertility, low

maintenance and feed efficiency, all of which equate to more dollars in the pockets of growers. Participating Studs will have sheep displays on the day and invite any interested parties to RSVP to Ian Smith on 0417 020 429 or ian@srsmerino.com.
Flyer for this workshop is on our website

eID Helps Lift Productivity

By Liz Cotton



Brett Kerin downloading flock data and the system in operation on GullenGamble Merino and Poll Merino Stud.

GullenGamble Merino and Poll Merino Stud has recently moved away from manual data record keeping to electronic identification and recording technology. The system means more data can be captured across a variety of locations on-farm and downloaded efficiently and accurately.

For most sheep breeders, the annual ritual of working out 'who belongs to who' is a vital yet laborious and costly exercise, but eID technology can automatically match lambs to their ewe mothers and provide full pedigree information at a click, meaning costs are reduced, accuracy is high and the information collected can be used in a variety of ways.



STUD and commercial SRS® Merino producers from three states gathered to learn about Electronic Identification and recording technology aimed at streamlining farming systems and delivering more precise and practical sheep management.

Mark, Nathan and Brett Kerin, GullenGamble Merino and Poll Merino Stud, held the 'Using eID for Sheep Management and Breeding' three day course at their Yeoval property in central western NSW earlier this month to learn about the benefits and efficiencies of the technology and improve their skills in using eID and automated sheep management systems. "With the rising cost and declining availability of farm labour, the bottom line benefits of precision sheep management and electronic identification technologies are becoming increasingly appealing to those in the sheep industry," said course provider Ben Watts from TAFE NSW – Western Institute. Watts said the intensive course was aimed at making data collection and its use on-farm much easier, thereby improving productivity in sheep enterprises.

"As well as collecting better data, the eID equipment helps breeders and producers to identify performing and non-performing animals, which is particularly beneficial for commercial producers," he explained.

"For commercial operators, eID opens up new possibilities to improve returns from top-performing sheep, and reduce the cost incurred from the poorest performers. For ram breeders it is simply a case of

being able to collect data more accurately and with less cost as well as enhance the use of ASBVs by collecting vast amounts of data accurately and more efficiently," Watts added.

Stud breeder and GullenGamble principal Mark Kerin said electronic weigh scales interfacing with RFID tags and recording equipment would be replacing "the tedious paper-based processes that was inconsistent, labour intensive and yielded numerous errors during manual tag-reading and recording" on his farm. He said the eID and automated sheep management systems would also help define management strategies to best utilise the information captured by the technology.

"Our 'old' classing system involved being at the race with a lot of paperwork, paint tins and plenty of people. We had all the paperwork on fleece weights and micron for the entire ewe flock so it was great to be able to combine the data with the eID technology where the data can be used at the race and in our classing decisions."

"EID also means easy record keeping and enhanced use of ASBVs. Meeting market specifications is essential to profitability and precision sheep management ensures this is achievable. EID tag information is combined with ram's ASBVs to ensure selection for growth and muscle is carried through to progeny and the information from the carcass measurements by using eID tags is showing me how well the rams are working," he says.

Cost-effective, electronic, reusable eartags priced at

around \$1.60 per tag and the upfront cost of the tags is well worth the investment, according to Mark, as they are fully retrievable, reprogrammable and reusable for two generations of sheep.

"The data is 99 percent accurate and it's the cheaper cost of the getting the data that makes a real impact. Farmers have been using precision equipment in their cropping programs for years. The eID is a way of bring precision farming to livestock management," says Mark.

Software costs vary, but for the Kerin's, the total outlay has come out at around \$2.00 a head. The data collecting equipment can also be used in the shearing shed to weigh fleeces, to record particular information, such as classing scores, for individual sheep, in-paddock or feedlot walk over weighing and pedigree analysis.

"We expect to recoup the cost of the initial outlay very quickly but we also expect a rise in productivity of at least 25% straight away once the system is in place and this, in turn, will see a rise in profitability."

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