

# NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 4, AUGUST 2021

There is a sense of déjà vu here at Rocklyn this year with COVID-19 looming over our heads again and another wet winter providing perfect conditions for crop and pasture growth, with plenty of moisture going in to Spring.

The wet conditions have made things difficult in preparation for our sale, with wet yards and wet sheep. We were lucky enough to get a few sunny days in between to conduct mid-side sampling and grab a few photos of the rams!

Both the stud sheep and commercial flock have proven their robustness and stood up to the wet weather very well, with no sign of staining in the wool and no issues with foot abscess.

We are very much looking forward to next year when our new shearing shed and covered yards have been completed. Again, wet weather has delayed this project; however, the pad is starting to come along now and much of the framework has been delivered, ready to put up.



The new infrastructure is sure to make things easier, allow for greater use of technology and provide better working conditions for shearers, staff and stock. It is hoped that the shearing shed and yards will be completed by early 2022.

Good groundcover conditions and fewer cold snaps have also fostered good lambing rates again. This year, Rocklyn has made use of the 50K genomic testing that it has been conducting as part of the DNA Stimulation Project. Our 2020 drop ewe lambs were joined in April to sires that had already performed their duties for the main joining in February-March.

With these lambs due in September, this earlier mating will allow Rocklyn to continue to fast-track its genetic gain.

## Ram Breeders Workshop

In early June, Ralph attended the annual two-day UNE/MerinoLink DNA Project Ram Breeder Workshop at Wagga to gain a progress update and hear from other participants about their journeys as part of the project and discuss questions that have been raised.

Presenters from Sheep Genetics explained the new Data Quality Score/Rating pilot and discussions were held around the production systems that the selection indexes are based on. Presenters also provided information on the submission portal, new website and selling season options.

The team from MerinoLink spoke about Ramping Up Genetic Gain (RUGG) Reports and recording requirements for reproduction.

Tom Granleese from NSW DPI discussed options for 2022 joinings and ways to use MateSel, fast-track traits and use embryo transfers.

**RAM SALE**  
THURSDAY 9<sup>TH</sup>  
SEPTEMBER 2021

## DNA STIMULATION PROJECT UPDATE

The four-year UNE/MerinoLink DNA Stimulation Project, has entered its last year and will conclude in June 2022. Final workshops and meetings with both ram breeders and commercial flock participants have been planned and a series of case studies will be produced to portray participant experiences and results from the project.

Commercial breeders taking part in the DNA Stimulation Project will soon collect their second lot of genomic blood tests as part of the flock profiling to analyse the progress and genetic gain that has been made in their flocks over the life of the project.

As part of the project, Rocklyn will continue to conduct 50K genomic tests on all stud ram and ewe lambs.



## Rocklyn Merino Stud Genetic Progress

- Information supplied by Sally Martin, SheepMetriX

Rocklyn Merino Stud has been making significant genetic progress with a five-year average genetic trend of 6.1 index points compared to the industry average of 3.4 index points.

Rocklyn Merino Stud embarked on a journey to capture full pedigree using DNA Parentage testing in 2018. The 2018, 2019 and 2020 drop have all been DNA Parentage tested. All the ram progeny in 2018 and 2019 were 50K Genomic tested and in 2020 both ewe and ram progeny were 50K Genomic tested.

Moving forward, Rocklyn Merino Stud will be 50K Genomic testing all progeny to maximise the accuracy of the Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) as a selection tool and capture the benefits of genomics to predict hard to measure traits, such as inter muscular fat (IMF) and later in life traits such as adult clean fleece weight (ACFW).

Rocklyn Merino Stud is now using MateSel, a breeding tool that aims to maximise genetic gain whilst managing ancestry and inbreeding. MateSel was used in 2021 to find the best mating options to increase clean fleece weight and reduce breech wrinkle as Rocklyn Merino Stud continue to maintain their non mulesed status. Figure 1 shows the progress that has been made to date and the predicted outcome for the 2021 drop clean fleece weight and early breech wrinkle.

These results are particularly encouraging for Rocklyn as many clients are concerned that with a decrease in breech and/or body wrinkle, there will be a decrease in yield and this is simply not the case. In fact, it is quite the opposite, with higher average fleece weights being achieved.

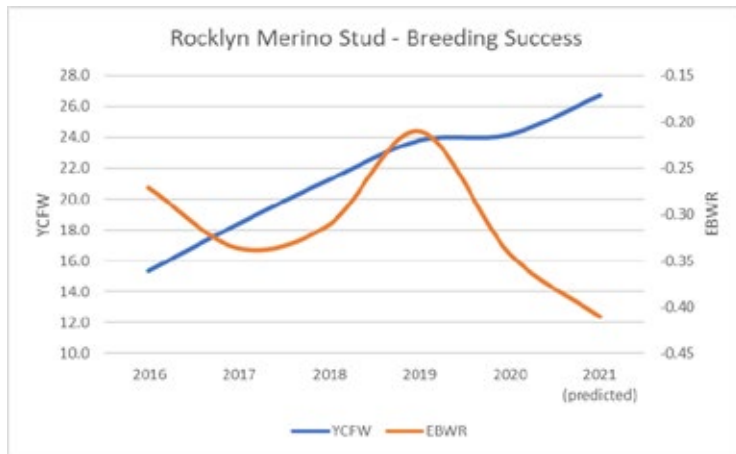


Figure 1 – Breeding trajectory for Yearling Clean Fleece Weight and Early Breech Wrinkle

Figures 2 and 3 show the trajectory of Rocklyn Merino Studs breeding program and Ralph's commitment to breeding well balanced, fit-for-purpose Merinos.

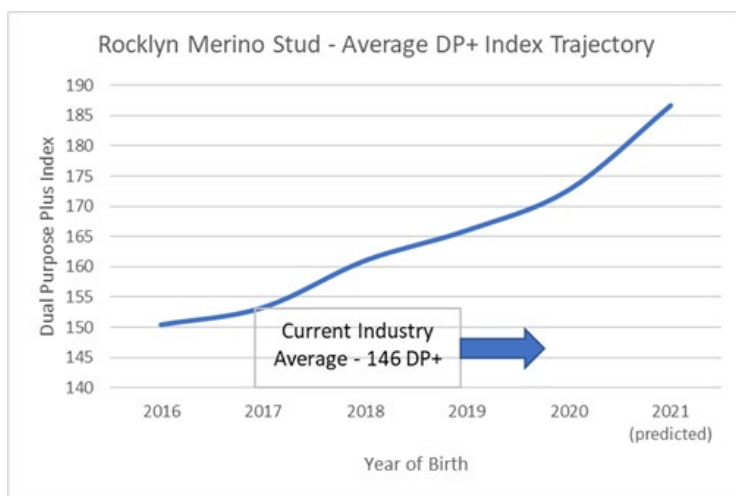


Figure 2 – Rocklyn Merino Stud Average DP+ Index Improvement

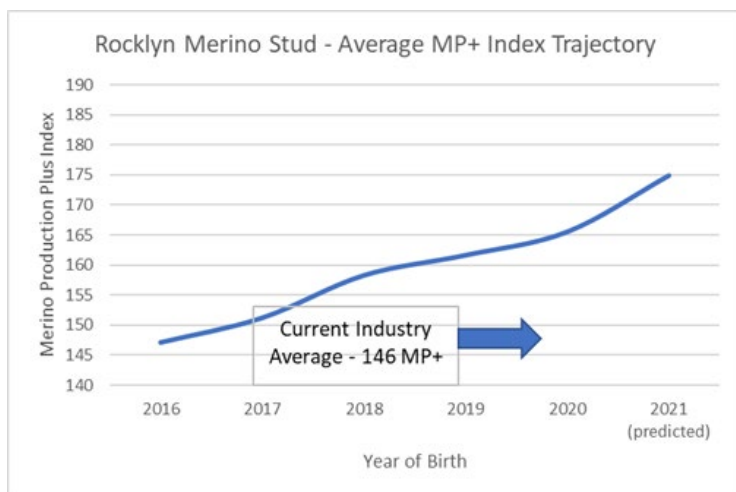



Figure 3 – Rocklyn Merino Stud Average MP+ Index Improvement

Table 1 on the next page presents the trait and index improvements for each year drop and the direction of the breeding program. The 2021 drop is predicted to have an average DP+ index in the top 5% of the industry.

Table 1 – Rocklyn Merino Stud Genetic Trend compared to the current industry percentile (benchmark) as at 7 July 2021.

	PWT	YWT	YEMD	YFAT	YCFW	YFD	YSL	EBWR	EBCOV	NLW	MP+	DP+
2021 Drop Sire team	8.0	11.7	1.5	0.8	32.2	-0.6	15.7	-0.6	-0.3	8.5	191	208
Predicted 2021 drop	6.3	9.6	0.9	0.5	26.7	-0.6	12.5	-0.4		5.1	175	187
2020 drop	5.0	8.2	0.5	0.2	24.2	-0.7	11.0	-0.3	-0.2	1.9	166	173
2019 drop	4.3	7.5	0.2	0.1	23.8	-0.6	9.8	-0.2	-0.3	0.7	162	166
2018 drop	3.8	6.9	0.1	0.0	21.3	-0.8	8.5	-0.3	-0.2	0.1	158	161
2017 drop	2.7	5.7	-0.1	0.0	18.4	-0.7	8.3	-0.3	-0.3	0.5	151	153
2016 drop	1.8	4.7	0.1	0.0	15.4	-0.7	8.1	-0.3	-0.2	0.9	147	150
Industry Top 1%	9.2	12.2	3.0	2.0	35.9	-3.2	21.6	-1.3	-0.8	16%	192	199
Industry Top 5%	7.5	10.1	2.3	1.4	30.3	-2.5	17.5	-1.1	-0.6	11%	178	182
Industry Top 10%	6.6	9	1.9	1.1	27.4	-2.2	15.3	-0.9	-0.5	8%	170	173
Industry Average (50th Percentile)	3.4	5.1	0.3	0.1	16.6	-1.0	7.5	-0.2	-0.1	1%	146	146

**2020 DROP RAMS**

**AVAILABLE AT OUR RAM SALE**

**THURSDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021**



# MERINOLINK SIRE EVALUATIONS



Rocklyn currently has sires entered in several new sire evaluations at Bathurst and Frogmore. MerinoLink Limited are yet to release results for the adult stage of the 2019 drop evaluation at 'Ravenswood', Yass; however, Rocklyn's entrant, 170184, performed particularly well in the Yearling stage, being a trait leader for greasy fleece weight, clean fleece weight, FDCV, staple length, staple strength, post-weaning body weight, fat and eye muscle depth. For more sire evaluation results visit [merinosuperiorsires.com.au](http://merinosuperiorsires.com.au)

### 2019 Drop 'Ravenswood' Yass Evaluation Yearling Results

Rocklyn's sire 170184 achieved good results in the Greasy Fleece Weight and Post Weaning Body weight evaluations (Table 2), as well as the FDCV, Staple Length, Staple Strength, Fat and Eye Muscle Depth evaluations. Progeny of 170184 will be available at Rocklyn's on-property ram sale on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

Table 2 – Major Measured Traits and Classer's Grades from the MerinoLink Ltd 2019 Drop Sire Evaluation at 'Ravenswood', Yass.

Ram Code	Breeders flock, Ram number	No. of Progeny	Flock Breeding Values (deviations)						Classer's Grade <sup>1</sup>	
			GFW %	CFW %	FD um	WT kg			Tops % (dev)	Culls % (dev)
			P <sup>A</sup>	P	P	W	P	Y	P	P
1	Bogo, 170003	48	-7	-6	-0.6	-1.0	-1.7	-3.3	-5	9
2	Bogo, 170018	54	-11	-7	1.4	-0.2	0.1	0.4	0	1
3	Bundilla Poll, 171495	43	4	4	0.1	1.8	1.8	2.8	-5	14
4	Centre Plus Poll, 507333	42	-6	-9	0.1	-1.1	0.2	-1.4	6	2
5	Hazeldean, 000113	46	9	9	-1.4	-0.8	0.0	0.1	3	-9
6	Hilltop, 160156 (HT156)	58	-5	-3	-0.4	0.2	0.6	0.3	3	4
7*	Langdene, 140700	48	-2	-6	-0.4	-0.8	-0.3	-0.2	-9	-1
8*	Miramooona, 140012	38	2	4	1.2	0.4	-0.3	0.9	0	-15
9*	Moorundie Poll, NE73	49	10	10	-0.2	1.1	-0.5	2.1	3	2
10	One Oak Poll, W17002	46	-5	-1	1.1	0.8	1.8	1.5	-10	-2
11	Pooginook Poll, 170364	38	-9	-7	0.8	0.4	1.2	2.6	1	-10
12	Rocklyn, 170184	48	12	5	0.8	0.4	2.0	1.3	3	-9
13	Tallawong Merinos, 170511	39	-2	-2	-1.0	-1.4	-4.0	-4.6	-8	20
14	Wattle Dale, 170625	47	10	3	-0.4	-0.5	-1.8	-4.0	14	-11
15	Woodpark Poll, 160058	50	1	4	-1.0	0.5	0.7	1.6	5	5

Source: MerinoLink Limited 2019 Drop Sire Evaluation – Post Weaning & Yearling Assessment Report



# RAM SALE

## THURSDAY 9<sup>TH</sup>

### SEPTEMBER 2021



Rocklyn's annual on-property ram sale will be held on Thurs 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 'Elon' 343 Barker's Rd Greenethorpe.

- Seventy Merino and Poll Merino rams by leading sires will be offered at the sale.
- Inspections are welcome from 10:00am on the day, with the sale to commence at 1:00pm.
- Buyers will need to register with Elders before the sale.
- The sale is held under shelter, with morning tea and lunch provided.
- The sale catalogue is available for download from our website [rocklynmerinostud.com.au](http://rocklynmerinostud.com.au)
- Strict COVID-safe guidelines will be in place at the sale, with attendees required to sign in, physically distance and wear a mask. Please do not attend if you are unwell or have travelled to an area of concern recently.

The majority of sale rams are polls and have been paddock run (unhoused), with only lots 1 to 19 shedded from 14 July.

Surplus, graded rams will also be available through private on-farm sales following the on-property sale.

Contact Ralph if you would like help to customise your ram selections to meet your breeding objectives or to discuss ways to improve your flock.

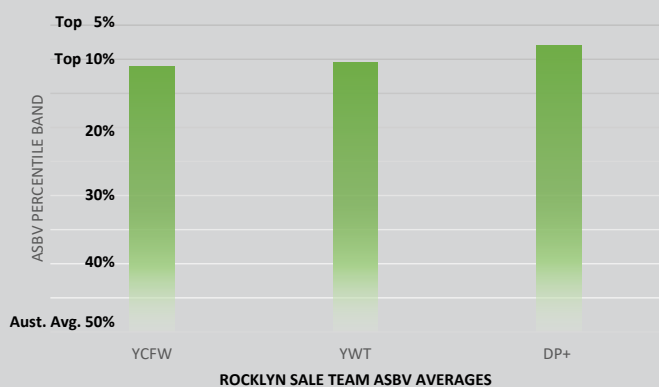


Figure 4: Rocklyn will offer ASBV trait-leading rams by leading sires at the 2021 on-property ram sale on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September.



## 2021 SALE RAM PREVIEW

### Lot 1: Poll Merino Ram 200202



Sire	PB160612
FD	19.3
BWT	93.5
YCFW	31.0
YSL	12.0
YWT	9.4
YEMD	1.1
EBWR	-0.32
DP+	196

### Lot 7: Poll Merino Ram 200250



Sire	PB160612
FD	19.2
BWT	91.0
YCFW	25.0
YSL	8.9
YWT	7.8
YEMD	1.2
EBWR	-0.32
DP+	181

### Lot 14: Poll Merino Ram 200026



Sire	PB160612
FD	17.5
BWT	88.5
YCFW	24.0
YSL	8.6
YWT	9.4
YEMD	1.3
EBWR	-0.32
DP+	181

We look forward to seeing you at the sale!

## CONTACTS

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