

WELCOME to our newsletter for 2019. With another dry year upon us, what else is there to do but dream? I recently attended the AWI Shearing Shed Design Open Day at Dubbo and was impressed with the design that shearing contractor Hilton Barrett has developed with the support of AWI over the past several years.

The shed addresses the concerns of all members of the wool harvesting team including workflow efficiencies, workplace safety, quality wool clip preparation and animal welfare.

Now we just need the season to turn around a bit more so that we can get started on building our own dream shed! Meanwhile, we have been upgrading our sheep yard infrastructure across our properties, with a new set of Stockpro yards completed at "Yarrawa" and work underway on the upgrades to the sheep yards at "Rocklyn".



In other news, our Stud and flock ewes have now finished lambing, with plenty of twins in the 2019 drop. Work continues to fast-track our genetic gain through DNA sampling and genomic testing as part of the MerinoLink DNA stimulation project. Our sires are also performing well in the two MerinoLink Central Test Sire Evaluations that Rocklyn has been involved in this year.

Once again we will have a display at the SWS Merino Field Day leading up to our on-property ram sale in September. I encourage interested buyers to contact me to discuss how this year's Rocklyn sale rams can benefit their flocks.



On a special note, Rocklyn would like to thank and congratulate Grenfell Commodities who engaged the services of the talented artist Heesco to transform their silos at Grenfell into a brilliant work of art. The artwork represents the farming industry and landscape of the Weddin Shire.

The two Merino rams depicted in the artwork are based on photographs of Rocklyn's 2012 drop hogget rams, taken by local photographer Denise Yates of Five Hours West. It took Melbourne based artist Heesco Khosnaran five weeks to complete the large mural, using over 800 cans of spraypaint and about 180L of acrylic paints.

Now officially part of the national Silo Art Trail, the artwork (located on West Street, Grenfell) is a wonderful addition to our local town.



2019 ON-PROPERTY RAM SALE
THURSDAY 12TH SEPT

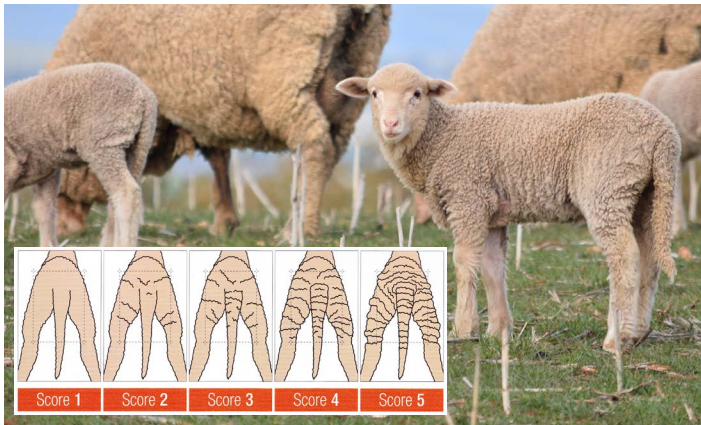
Visit our website at
www.rocklynmerinostud.com.au
to sign up to our newsletter or

Find us on 

NON-MULESING PROGRESS

Over the past few years, we have been working towards a non-mulesed commercial flock and reducing breech wrinkle within the Stud as well. Selected flock mobs are non-mulesed with one-third of the commercial flock not mulesed in 2018. This year, that figure should be around 50 per cent, with the vision to achieve non-mulesing status for the commercial flock in the next couple of years.

Through careful selections over time, we have been able to class out sheep with poor breech-wrinkle scores without compromising our heavy wool cutters in the process. Our genomic testing will be able to speed this process up, with markers for breech traits being introduced. Rams suitable for use in non-mulesed flocks will be available at the on-property ram sale on Thursday 12th September.



Rocklyn lambs are assessed and given breech-wrinkle scores, with only Score 1, sometimes 2, being accepted.

Freeze branding

In July this year, I attended a freeze-branding workshop, conducted by Dr John Steinfort and hosted by Maurice Webb at “Bloomfield”, which was very insightful.

Freeze branding (or ‘Steining’) involves the application of liquid nitrogen to a sheep’s breech skin and either side of the tail - to create a plainer breech with a reduced risk of flystrike. The freezing process is highly targeted and does not affect the underlying muscles.

Developed by Dr John Steinfort, with assistance from Australian Wool Innovation and the Australian Wool Network, freeze branding has been used commercially on sheep for the first time this year. The process takes around 15 seconds to complete, at a cost of \$5/head. Four freeze brand units are currently in operation across southern Australia. Sheep that have been freeze-branded are currently able to be declared as ‘non-mulesed’ to AWEX.

Results from initial trials run by the developer indicated that freeze branded and non-mulesed lambs had the same growth rate in a five month period, while mulesed lambs’ growth was set back 50 per cent in the first 35 days and they never caught up. Mulesed lambs also grew 9 per cent less wool than the other two groups. It will be interesting to see what more extensive studies find and I would be keen to see the physical results on the lambs freeze branded at “Bloomfield” in a couple of months’ time.

With the potential to replace surgical mulesing and improve animal welfare, this innovative method is certainly a step-forward. Dr Steinfort describes his “steining” as an “interim step between mulesing and improved genetics, to improve breech health”. This mentality is echoed here at Rocklyn - breech wrinkle will continue to be reduced progressively through classing and genetic testing; however, freeze branding may be used as an interim option, particularly within the Stud, provided further investigations into this method produce favourable results.

Merino LINK SIRE EVALUATION

The latest results from the two MerinoLink Central Test Sire Evaluations that Rocklyn is involved in will be released soon.

2018 Drop ‘Cavan Station’ at Yass

Poll ram 170184 has been entered for this sire evaluation. The progeny of this ram will not be mulesed as part of the trial. A plain bodied ram, 170184 has good all-round ASBVs. YCFW 23.5, YWT 9.8, YSL 15.5, YEMD 0.7, MP+ 171, DP+ 183.

2017 Drop ‘Ravenswood’ at Yass

Sire 120182 continues to perform well in both the visual and measured assessments. Progeny from this ram will be offered at our 2019 ram sale. YCFW 31, YWT 7.1, MP + 164, DP+ 153.

120182 topped the classer’s grade (yearling), indicating an even line of high quality progeny.

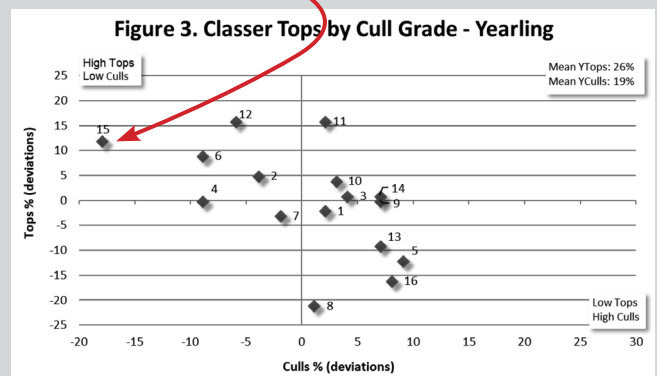


Figure 3. Yearling Classer’s Tops by Cull Grade – describes performance for Classer’s Tops Grade on the side axis and Cull Grade on the bottom axis. Sires that have above average Tops and below average Culls are in the top left-hand quadrant. Classer’s Tops (23%), Flock (47%) and Cull (30%) is based on a visual assessment where the progeny performed well for growth, structurally sound with good wool quality traits including long soft handling wool and fleece weight.

Rocklyn Merino Stud...Over eighty years of adaptive breeding

SIRE SELECTION

Each year, I search the countryside - peering into wool and scrutinising figures - to pick new sires for the Stud breeding program. In July, I attended the Australian Sheep and Wool Show at Bendigo where I was able to see first-hand some of the sires that have been shortlisted for next year's AI program. These visual assessments are invaluable and I combine these with ASBV and measured traits along with sire evaluation results to hand-pick the very best genetics for Rocklyn clients.

Over the past few months, we have been selecting our 2019 sale rams. This year, a large portion of the sale rams are Poll Merinos, which has been demand driven. Some of the stand-out rams are by trait-leading sire, Poll Boonoke 160612.



YWT	8.6
YCFW	38
YEMD	1.3
YSL	19.0
NLW	9%
EBWR	-0.45
DP+	199

Progeny from this outstanding sire, Poll Boonoke 160612, will be offered at the 2019 Rocklyn on-property ram sale. He is a well balanced, double poll sire with good visual conformation and wool. Photo: Australian Food and Agriculture.

Some of the other leading sires used for the 2018 drop include:

ANDERSON POLL 140474	Very good carcass traits (YEMD 4.0, YFAT 2.1), without losing out on wool cut (YCFW 22). Excellent worm resistance (YWEC -75), plain bodied (EBWR -0.76) double poll with great 'doing ability'. DP+187.
ROEMAHKITA POLL 150092	"RJ" sold for \$28,000 at the Royal Adelaide Show in 2017. He is a well-balanced, finer sire with nourished wool. YCFW 27, DP+181, MP+ 182.
GLENLEA PARK POLL 011739	Good growth (YWT 9.0), wool cut (YCFW 21), high staple strength (YSS 5.0) and good fertility (NLW 14%). Plain bodied (EBWR -0.64), double poll, DP+ 189.
WOODYARRUP HORNED 120175	Good growth (YWT 10.1) and wool cut (YCFW 39) Performed well in sire evaluations in both measured and visual assessments. DP+ 176, MP+ 186.

Source: Sheep Genetics MerinoSelect 07/08/2019



DNA Stimulation Project

The University of New England/MerinoLink DNA Stimulation Project is now in its second year and continues to gather momentum. In July I attended the two-day Ram Breeders workshop in Wagga Wagga to get and update on the project and latest developments from the Sheep CRC, provide input to the project and participate in some informative sessions on how to maximise the benefits of the genomic and DNA testing and other data we collect as well as how to better relay the results to clients through ASBVs and RamSelect.

Several Rocklyn clients also had the opportunity to participate in some commercial flock profiling to get a snapshot of how their flock stacks up. A series of Commercial Breeders workshops are now being held to help those involved in the project refine their breeding objectives and better understand the flock profile results and tools such as RamSelect.

Full pedigrees have now been determined for the 2018 Rocklyn Stud drop. Information such as birth type (single/twin/triplet) and bloodlines (sire and dam) will now be included in our sale catalogue along with more accurate ASBVs, which will give buyers more information to help guide their selections.

Rocklyn will continue to fast-track its genetic gain by conducting 15K genomic tests on all ram lambs again this year, with tissue samples to be collected later in September.

For more information on the DNA Stimulation Project visit www.merinolink.com.au

For more information on genomics and DNA testing visit www.sheepcrc.org.au



Like mother, like son. Rocklyn DNA and genomic tests all ram lambs which provide accurate pedigrees and other trait data for the Stud.

Rocklyn Merino Stud...Over eighty years of adaptive breeding

RAM SALE

THURS 12TH

SEPTEMBER 2019



Rocklyn's annual on-property ram sale will be held on Thursday 12th September 2019 at 'Elon' 343 Barker's Rd Greenethorpe.

- Sixty Merino and Poll Merino hogget 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 will be available for download from our website www.rocklynmerinostud.com.au early September

With in-depth knowledge of the sires and sale rams, I am more than happy to help you customise your ram selections to meet your breeding objectives and discuss ways to improve your flock.



Just a few of the Rocklyn hogget rams that will be offered at the 2019 on-property ram sale on Thursday 12th September.

2019 SALE RAMS SNEAK PEEK!

Lot 2: Poll Merino 180240



Sire	R150092
FD	18.2
BWT	90.0
YCFW	30
YSL	10.5
YWT	8.1
YEMD	-0.8
DP+	168

Lot 4: Poll Merino 180228



Sire	PB160612
FD	19.7
BWT	85.5
YCFW	27
YSL	15.7
YWT	8.8
YEMD	0.9
DP+	178

Lot 11: Merino 180271



Sire	W120175
FD	20.4
BWT	88.0
YCFW	30
YSL	11.5
YWT	8.9
YEMD	0.1
DP+	173

We look forward to seeing you at the sale!



Visit us at the
SWS Merino Field Day!
TUESDAY 3RD SEPT
10AM HARDEN
SHOWGROUND

CONTACTS

PRINCIPAL/CLASSER

Ralph Diprose 0488 436 332
ralph@rocklynmerinostud.com.au
 'Elon' GRENFELL 2810

SELLING AGENT

Scott Thrift
 Aaron Seaman
 Nick McNamara



0417 660 260
 0488 915 315
 0419 643 941



www.rocklynmerinostud.com.au

