

# My Take

---

**Steve Milne, principal Waratah White Suffolks, President Australian White Suffolk Association.**

## Overview

Prime Lamb producers are facing a continual problem sourcing breeding ewes. The continued depletion of the merino ewe base, the buoyancy of the prime lamb market, and high mutton prices has led to extreme prices for replacement ewes. So are there alternatives to the traditional BLMo X ewe? I think there are, and the White Suffolk offers a very credible “maternal alternative”.

## The Good

- White Suffolks have excellent libido, fertility, milking ability and maternal instincts
- Breeding your own replacements decreases the risk of ‘buying’ unwanted animal health problems.
- Terminal sired wether lambs will return more than traditional 1<sup>st</sup> X wether lambs.
- WS X Mo fleece wool is generally finer than traditional 1<sup>st</sup> X.
- WS X ewes have clean points and are very easy care.

## The Bad

- Retaining WS X lambs gives the producer less lambs to sell.
- There is a time lag until home bred ewes are fully productive.

## The way forward

- When lamb prices are high, it is a great opportunity to retain a draft of ewe lambs as breeders and still maintain high income from lamb sales.

## My top 5 tips

1. Use White Suffolk rams to produce prime lambs and replacement ewes.
2. When selecting WS rams consider maternal as well as terminal Lambplan information.
3. Retain the twin ewe lambs to increase flock fertility.
4. Manage the retained ewe lambs well and join as lambs – they will handle it well.
5. Purchase rams from registered WS flocks with objective performance information and dependable health status.

**Steve Milne**

**[sjdmilne@bigpond.com](mailto:sjdmilne@bigpond.com)**