
PRESIDENT'S REPORT

MARK GROSSMAN

Welcome to the March Newsletter. As your new President I look forward to working with all members in our breed throughout the coming year, with many events and plans being put in place, to ensure the White Suffolk breed is a pacesetter within the lamb and sheep industry.

Firstly, after having returned from a great, well organised national conference in Hamilton, I wish to thank Steve and Deb Milne and the organising committee from Victoria for the work in presenting the conference. Our conference offers our members and the industry a great opportunity to meet, learn and share new aspects of the prime lamb industry.



Following the 2014 AGM we have seen changes within our Federal Council.

Lachlan Day and Simon Kerin have been appointed as new Councillors.

Dale Moore and Ian Gilmore leave the Federal Council. Both Dale and Ian have given much time and assistance to our breed at Council level and on behalf of all members in the breed I thank them for their contributions and enthusiasm in promoting our breed. Peter Button is elected as the Vice President and also chairs the promotion sub-committee. Following the national conference, Jason Barker tendered his resignation from Federal Council. I also wish to thank Jason for his time and contributions to Federal Council and he will be greatly missed on council.

The year ahead offers many opportunities to promote the White Suffolk breed. The recent engagement of Kim Woods of Outcross Media will assist with marketing and promotion.

Our involvement in Lambex in July 2014, this year in Adelaide, will be in the form of sponsorship of the Young Guns Lamb Industry Competition. Lambex is a national seminar held bi-annually across Australia .

A sub-committee on Federal Council is currently also looking into developing a branded product for our breed. The coming year is also a time for the breed to prepare to celebrate its 30th Anniversary in 2015, with many feature shows planned across all states.

Finally, many shows and field days are coming up in coming months. These events give all members a chance to help promote the White Suffolk. The lamb and sheep industry is moving forward with many opportunities ahead for us to grasp, maintain and lead, so I encourage all members to work to gain and promote White Suffolks.

As your President I welcome any correspondence.

Mark Grossman



FROM THE SECRETARY

ROB MARTIN (ACTING SECRETARY)

National Conference Report

It's pleasing to report that the 2014 National Conference conducted at the Hamilton Exhibition and Conference Centre from the 16th -19th February maintained the tradition of successful White Suffolk Conferences with in excess of 75 members attending a relaxing and informative event.

The program kicked off with a Meet and Greet Barbecue and registration on the Sunday evening which provided a great opportunity for members and friends to get together socially. The following two days featured a raft of quality speakers and power-point presentations covering the following interesting topics, Lamb Eating Quality, Innovative Lamb Production, EID latest technology and research, Software Program Workshops, Sheep Genetics & Genomics, Pre Lambing Ewe Nutrition, OJD Sheep MAP and Climate Change.

Conference session reports and general photographs are included in this Newsletter.

On the Monday evening a pen of Three Ram Lambs Competition based on both visual assessment and the Lambplan Trade \$ index (for the Trade class) and the Export \$ index (for the Export class)was conducted, feedback indicates that this event was very successful with approximately 15 entries being paraded before Alistair Day the competition judge.

The Conference culminated with a very relaxing dinner at the Hamilton Golf Club where we were entertained by Steve Funke and offsidiers with a humorous trivia quiz based on information extracted from the White Suffolk History Book.

On behalf of all members who attended and on behalf of the Association I thank Steve & Debbie Milne, Denise & Ian Porter, Craig Mitchell, Lachy McCrae and Dean Cameron for organising the Conference, well done you guys on organising a great Conference.

FEDERAL COUNCIL MATTERS

ROB MARTIN (ACTING SECRETARY)

New Membership Fee Category

Members are advised that the following new membership fee category was accepted at the 2014 AGM.

The new fee of \$382 will apply to a stud with over 200 ewes.

The fee categories will now be:

1 – 25 ewes	\$194 GST Incl
26-100 ewes	\$266 GST Incl
101 – 200 ewes	\$322 GST Incl
201 ewes and above	\$382 GST Incl

Council Movements

Two new Councillors in Lachy Day and Simon Kerin were elected and welcomed to the Council at the 2014 AGM. Peter Button, Mark Grossman and Murray Long were also elected for an additional two year term of office. Both Dale Moore and Ian Gilmore will be leaving the Council, on behalf of the Association both Ian and Dale are to be thanked for their input and enthusiasm in developing and promoting the White Suffolk breed during their time as Councillors.

Mark Grossman has been elected as the AWSA President with Peter Button being elected as the Vice President for the 2014/2015 year.

FEDERAL COUNCIL MATTERS CONT...

ROB MARTIN (ACTING SECRETARY)

Retiring President Murray Long is to be thanked for his guidance and enthusiasm during his term as President.

A list of the Councillors and sub-committees are printed in the front of this Newsletter.

AWI Consultation Process

The AWSA Council submitted a response to the AWI Industry Consultation document requesting industry responses to the roles and responsibilities regarding genetic benchmarking into the future. The position of the Council was to support the position where all areas of the sheep industry and government continue to provide financial support for R&D and development of new technologies

Future Conference Dates

The conference dates for future conferences are as follows. These may be subject to alteration.

2015	South Australia
2016	Western Australia
2017	New South Wales
2018	Victoria

Promotion/Marketing

The Association has appointed Outcross Media representative Kim Woods to assist with the production and sourcing of press releases for breed promotion. Kim will also assist with other areas of promotion, e.g. website and facebook.

If any member has commercial contacts that can be contacted by Kim please advise the Secretariat.

Marketing & Promotion Strategy

Council conducted a meeting on Sunday 16th February with Ben Simpson and Kim Woods from Outcross Media to discuss the development of a future Marketing and Promotions plan for the AWSA. The meeting discussed the full range of concepts from the use of electronic mediums, websites to print media.

A session on strategies involving Conference participants was conducted as a part of the Open Forum on the Monday afternoon of the Conference. This session provided members with the opportunity to provide members with input into how the breed can progress into the future.

Marketing and Promotion strategies will be an ongoing matter for Council consideration.

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NEW MEMBERS SINCE NOVEMBER 2013

Welcome to the following new members of the AWSA:

Flock	Name	Address	Town	State	Stud Prefix
827	Gilmore, I & D	265 Foley's Creek Rd	Oberon	NSW 2787	Baringa
833	Askew, Mr & Mrs T	430 Terang Woolsthorpe Rd	Ballangeich	VIC 3279	Ballamook
834	McDonald, E	5862 Western Hwy	Dadswells Bridge	VIC 3385	Hopea
835	Wilson, MS	3574 Rye Park Rd	Yass	NSW 2582	Foxlee Vale
836	Vagg, SA	146 Tuckermans Rd	Menah	NSW 2850	Drewood
837	Young, DT	PO Box 1171	Balhannah	SA 5242	Oakwood
838	Dennis, M	PMB 36	Port Lincoln	SA 5607	Kurrabi Park
839	Bradtke, S	806 Bradtke Rd	Mannanarie	SA 5422	Bradfield
840	Addis, RJ & MJ	PO Box 84	Katanning	WA 6317	Melroy Elites

FEDERAL COUNCIL MATTERS CONT...

ROB MARTIN (ACTING SECRETARY)

E-News

Members are advised that the last two E-News issues were produced by Richmond Hill Agribusiness Pty Ltd. It has been agreed that Richmond Hill will produce the E-News for the Association during 2014.

Corporate Sponsor

Council is actively seeking a major corporate sponsor, a proposal has been developed with approaches soon to be made. This is an ongoing Council action.

Branded Product

During the last twelve months Council has undertaken to develop a Branded Product that will be a major step forward in promoting the White Suffolk brand to the industry and the consumer. Council has a sub-committee that is currently working through the development of the concept.

Trials have been conducted in conjunction with Prime Valley Pastoral, a local South Australian processor, with encouraging results. For any Branded Product project to be successful the continuous supply of quality lambs at a realistic price is required. Member assistance is required to source lambs. Lambs will be sought from lamb producers who purchase flock rams for AWSA members.

This project is ongoing so all members will be advised of its progress as it develops.

Appendix Review

As a result of the Appendix Referendum amongst members Council has appointed a sub-committee to review all aspects of the Appendix criteria.

Ballot Process

Members are advised that Council has appointed a sub-committee to fine tune the Councillor ballot process.

Ballot protocols will be drafted to ensure that the ballot process for the election of Councillors is clear, precise and can be used as a template by the Secretariat.

2015 Celebrations

It is pleasing to advise that the majority of the major Show Societies across Australia have accepted the AWSA request to conduct Feature Show celebrations throughout 2015.

Council will keep all members posted on this subject as plans develop.

Upcoming Show Dates

Dubbo Show: *23rd - 25th May, 2015*

Australian Sheep & Wool Show: *18th – 20th July, 2014*

Hamilton Sheep Vention: *4th – 5th August, 2014*

Royal Melbourne Show: *20th Sept – 1st October, 2014*

Bendigo Elite White Suffolk Show & Sale:
13– 15th September, 2014

Royal Adelaide Show: *5th – 14th September, 2014*

Perth Royal Show: *27th September – 4th October, 2014*

Lambex 2014 'Young Guns' Sponsorship

Lambex 2014 has launched a new 'Young Guns' lamb industry competition sponsored by the AWSA.

This competition will involve young people sharing their views on the lamb industry. Entrants in the 'building the lamb value chain of the future' must submit a one slide Power Point and a one page document on a lamb industry tip. A selection panel will adjudicate.

If any member requires additional information on this please contact www.lambex.com.au.

Deadline for entries is 14th April, 2014.

Councillor Resignation

Members are advised that since the National Conference and AGM Jason Barker has tendered his resignation from Council. Council has accepted his resignation and in doing so wishes to thank Jason for his enthusiasm and actions in furthering the cause of the White Suffolk breed.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

MURRAY LONG

Since the Annual Conference at Hamilton, \$15.5 Million of federal money has been approved for the extension of the Sheep CRC program. This extension will focus on 3 main areas; Enhanced Sheep Wellbeing and Productivity, Quality Based Sheep Meat Value Chains and Faster Affordable Genetic Gain. The final windup Conference for the current Sheep CRC will be held in Adelaide the day before LambEx and the extension of the CRC will then run for a further 5 years.

The Australian White Suffolk Association has signed on as an official partner for the next 5 years; what does this mean for the members of AWSA? No different to what we have been doing for the past 6 years but we will get assistance in some areas. We have been lucky enough to be afforded the privileges of a partner for the past few years and have played a part in planning and development of the program and extension bid; we now have an official role for the next phase of the program.

Members of this Association have been generous in not only the supply of genetics for research and the INF but also participation in the Pilot programs and many members have personally played a significant role on committees and through participation in group discussions and planning. Our representation as a breed at all levels is significant and it is hoped this will continue as we further build on the findings of the past 6 years.

Much discussion around the topic of Meat Eating Quality (MEQ) has been taking place amongst the committee and members and the results of the genomics program do tend to indicate that as a breed we have an advantage in the area of MEQ. While this is great for our breed, it does come at the expense of Lean Meat Yield (LMY) which, on average, does not sit so favourably within our breed and while we do not at this stage get paid for either of these traits, we should assume that both MEQ and LMY will be the subject of further development as part of the next CRC program.

The immediate advantages of superior MEQ to the consumer are obvious, perhaps not so LMY, and even to the processor when we are talking about 1-2% variation, so we are at least in the right corner. Going

forward we must concentrate our breeding efforts across both MEQ and LMY; there is plenty of variation within our breed and we do have sires that are unfavourable for MEQ traits, we also have animals with good LMY so we should be concentrating efforts across both traits to maintain or even build on the advantage we have. Rest assured other breeds are working hard to match our perceived advantage.

Be aware of the MEQ and LMY values of the sires you are using, the industry is very aware of these traits, especially processors and retailers.

As a rule of thumb;

Positive Intra Muscular Fat (IMF)

Negative Shear Factor (SF5)

Positive Lean Meat Yield (LMY)



WOOLORAMA RESULTS 2014

7 - 8TH MARCH, WAGIN

JUDGE: LAURIE FAIRCLOUGH

The weather for Woolorama this year was extremely hot and humid, especially for judging with temperatures in the high thirties.

However the team did a great job not only enduring the conditions themselves but the sheep presented on the day were top class.

The sheep here in the West just keep getting better, not only in the way they are prepared but it is obvious that breeders are becoming more aware of genetics, muscling etc. and it shows.

Our judge for the day was Laurie Fairclough, who I think we would all agree had his skills put to the test with the line up of sheep put before him. Simon Kerin was the under judge, and Simon tells me he learnt a lot including "that it is a lot harder in the judging ring that you think",

Tamesha Gardner attended to the scanning with her usual untiring efforts many thanks to Tamesha.

The Annual General meeting was conducted on the 8th March, with one of the best attendances we have seen in many years, and with the new subcommittee elected I am sure we are in for an exciting year.

Heather Dowdell

AWSA President

WA Branch

RAM under 1 year showing milk teeth, born before May 31st

1. Brimfield (M Whyte)
2. Kiara (Lockeridge Snr High School)
3. Valencia Downs (G J & J Smith)

RAM under 1 year showing milk teeth, born after June 1st

1. Yanda (J T Argent)
2. Kohat (G, S, R & C Hyde)
3. Brimfield (M Whyte)

RAM over 1 year

1. Brimfield (M Whyte)
2. Annaghdowns (K M & V J O'Neill)

PAIR of RAMS under 1 year showing milk teeth

1. Brimfield (M Whyte)
2. Sasimwa (G & K Cole)
3. Annaghdowns (K M & V J O'Neill)

RAM under 1 year judged Objectively & Subjectively

1. Kohat (G, S, R & C Hyde)
2. Brimfield (M Whyte)
3. Annaghdowns (K M & V J O'Neill)

EWE under 1 year showing milk teeth, born before May 31st

1. Brimefield (M Whyte)
2. Kiara (Lockeridge Snr High School)
3. Brimfield (M Whyte)

EWE under 1 year showing milk teeth, born after June 1st

1. Brimefield (M Whyte)
2. Kohat (G, S, R & C Hyde)
3. Sasimwa (G & K Cole)
4. Kiara (Lockeridge Snr High School)

EWE over 1 year

1. Kiara (Lockeridge Snr High School)
2. Ridge Top (D M Carter)
3. Kiara (Lockeridge Snr High School)

PAIR of EWES under 1 year showing milk teeth

1. Kiara (Lockeridge Snr High School)
2. Sasimwa (G & K Cole)
3. Brimefield (M Whyte)

GROUP - 1 Ram & 2 Ewes under 1 year

1. Brimefield (M Whyte)
2. Kiara (Lockeridge Snr High School)
3. Sasimwa (G & K Cole)

PROGENY GROUP of three, any age or sex by same sire

1. Brimefield (M Whyte)
2. Sasimwa (G & K Cole)
3. Yanda (J T Argent)



CHAMPION WHITE SUFFOLK EWE & GRAND CHAMPION WHITE SUFFOLK EXHIBIT - BRIMFIELD

CHAMPION WHITE SUFFOLK RAM - BRIMFIELD

CHAMPION WHITE SUFFOLK EWE - BRIMFIELD

SUPREME CHAMPION WHITE SUFFOLK - BRIMFIELD

ALL BREEDS CHAMPION RAM - BRIMFIELD

ALL BREEDS CHALLENGE, RAM & EWE TOGETHER - BRIMFIELD



CHAMPION WHITE SUFFOLK RAM - BRIMFIELD

BROXMORE FARM'S SUCCESSFUL RETURN TO SHOWING AFTER A 6 YEAR ABSENCE

SALLY O'CALLAGHAN

Congratulations to Robert Quayle of Broxmored Farm, Bellarine, Victoria, who in the past 4 weeks has successfully shown sheep in two of the premium Victorian "Prime Lamb" carcass competitions.

He won the prestigious Honeywell perpetual trophy at the Geelong Show, finishing 1st in the domestic class; 2nd in the export class and 3rd in the trade, all for 'pens of 3'.

More recently at the Ballarat Show, Broxmored won the Archibald perpetual trophy for the most successful exhibitor, finishing 1st in the 20-25 kg export class; 1st in the 19-22Kg domestic division acquiring the John Harper Trophy for the 'Best Individual Carcass' and 3rd in the 16 – 19 kg trade division.

Robert dedicated his success to his recently deceased wife Anne who passed away in September following a prolonged illness. Robert commented that Anne would have loved to have known about the ongoing success of the commercial arm of their White Suffolk and Suffolk Sheep Business.



Robert Quayle with the Archibald perpetual trophy & John Harper trophy recently awarded at the Ballarat Show.



CARCASS PROBE TO UNDERPIN EATING QUALITY IN LAMB BRANDS

AUSTRALIAN WHITE SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION MEDIA RELEASE
BY KIM WOODS



MLA's Richard Apps says the new carcass probe has the potential to underpin the eating quality of Australian Lamb.

A new carcass probe with the potential to measure intra-muscular fat on-line in processing plants has the potential to underpin eating quality for Australian lamb brands.

Developed by Danish company Carometec, the probe uses electrical impedance, or current, to measure intramuscular fat in the eye muscle of a lamb carcass.

Meat & Livestock Australia, in conjunction with Murdoch University, will begin the first phase of testing the prototype device at Western Australia processing plant, WAMMCO, at Katanning, next week.

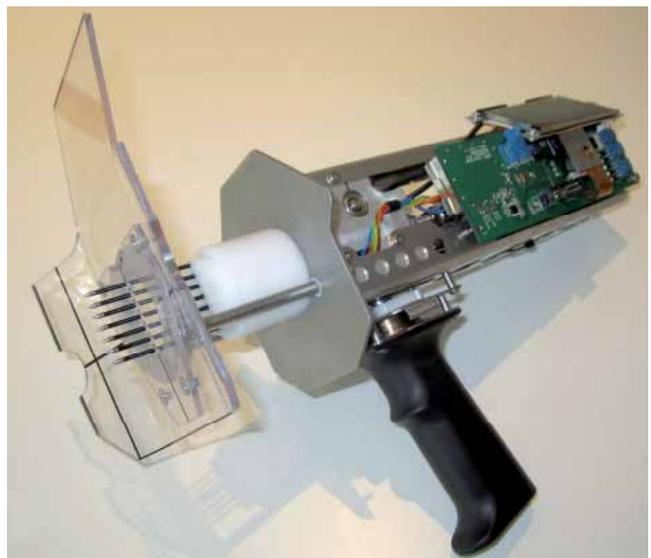
The Katanning trial is expected to be followed by full-scale calibration on resource flock animals in Western Australia.

Meat & Livestock Australia sheep research project manager Richard Apps said measurement technologies in processing plants was still one of the industry's great stumbling blocks.

"When we think of something so simple as a fat score measurement on a lamb, how many plants are not doing that with any degree of accuracy," Mr Apps said.

"We hope the probe will do it with reasonable accuracy and commercial line-speed application.

"It has the potential to measure intra-muscular fat on-line in the plant which will be a major step forward for us in underpinning high eating quality in brands for the lamb industry."



Mr Apps was a keynote speaker at the Australian White Suffolk Association conference in Hamilton this week.

He said significant data sets needed to be built on the probe before commercial release.

He anticipates the trial phase could take six months and is confident the probe will accurately measure tissue depth at the GR site (12th rib), and meat pH.

“The ability of the impedance capability to measure intramuscular fat is still a research question,” Mr Apps said.

“Unlike cattle, ultrasound scanning of live animals for IMF has not proven reliable for sheep; we think it is because the fat globules within the muscle tissue are much smaller.

“If successful, this probe will be a significant step in providing data for a really strong eating quality story, and will allow processors to grade lamb in many ways.

Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industry lamb production research manager Dr Matthew Knight said intra-muscular fat (IMF) content related to the juiciness, flavour and tenderness of lamb.

Dr Knight said research had shown the ideal IMF range in lamb was 4-6 per cent, with crossbred lambs averaging 4.2 per cent for the Sheep CRC Information Nucleus lambs.

He said genetic research by the Sheep Co-operative Research Centre had shown IMF was moderately to highly heritable in sheep.

“If we breed sheep pushing for lean meat yield it has a negative affect on intra-muscular fat,” Dr Knight said.

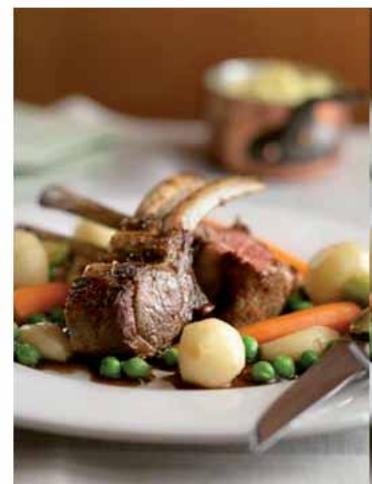
He said tenderness may also be affected by on-farm handling, processing practices and cooking methods.

Sheep Genetics manager Hamish Chandler said the former LAMBPLAN Carcass Plus index had a significant negative impact on IMF, affecting shearforce.

Mr Chandler said the new Carcass Plus index was a “happy medium for fat, muscle and growth rates”.

Key drivers for future lamb industry

- LMY + EQ = Meets Consumer needs?
- Strategic improvement in lamb (meat) production using ASBV's
- Optimising carcass compliance using MSA guidelines



SHEEP PRODUCERS URGED TO FOCUS ON CARCASS TENDERNESS

AUSTRALIAN WHITE SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION MEDIA RELEASE
BY KIM WOODS

Prime lamb producers need to be innovative when it comes to breeding objectives and not focus on lean meat yield, according to a leading sheep meat researcher.

Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries lamb production research manager Matthew Knight said the drive to produce more meat and less carcass fat had resulted in an average 1.5kg of increased lean meat yield over the past decade.

Dr Knight said the challenge for the lamb industry was to now focus on tenderness.

"If we breed sheep pushing for lean meat yield, it has a negative affect on intra-muscular fat percentage, shearforce or tenderness...and we run the risk of decreasing overall meat quality," he said.

"We must keep an eye on what the consumer wants as they are prepared to pay good dollars for a consistent product and a good eating experience."

Speaking at the Australian White Suffolk Association annual conference, Dr Knight said studies showed consumers were willing to pay 50 per cent more for red meat products with guaranteed eating quality.

He said optimizing carcass compliance using Meat Standards Australia guidelines contributed to eating quality.

Higher levels of intra-muscular fat (IMF) relate directly to juiciness, flavour and tenderness in red meat.

The ideal range of IMF in lamb is 4-6 per cent, with crossbred lambs averaging 4.2 per cent.

Genetic research by the Sheep Co-operative Research Centre has shown IMF is moderately to highly heritable in prime lamb breeds.

Dr Knight said there had been significant advances in growth rate, leanness and muscling but little development in tenderness, pH and IMF in lamb.

A DEPI producer demonstration trial in south-west Victoria aims to validate research breeding values for lean meat yield and eating quality across multiple environments and supply chains.

In 2012-2013, there were two sites in Victoria at Hamilton and Greenwald using terminal sires joined to composite ewes.

This year, the trial has been expanded to 20 sites nationally, using terminal and Merino genetics.

In Victoria, 80 eating quality samples were received out of 200 animals slaughtered from four farms.

Dr Knight said preliminary analysis this week showed a large range in tenderness, with IMF content yet to be investigated.



Dr Matthew Knight is calling for prime lamb producers to focus on tenderness in their breeding objectives.

Definition of Lean Meat Yield



Score 4

Carcase Wt 23.0 kg
 GR 20.0 mm
 Saleable Meat Yield 47.2%

900g more fat



Score 2

Carcase Wt 23.0 kg
 GR 10.0 mm
 Saleable Meat Yield 51.1%

900g more meat



Carcase Measurements LMY (RBV)

- HCWT
- GR thickness
- EMA
- C-site fat



If you are interested in seeing a full copy of the Powerpoint presentations from the National Conference, check out the conference page on our website <http://www.whitesuffolk.com/pages/member-services/conference.php>

PLENTY OF ELECTRONIC OPTIONS TO CAPTURE WITHIN FLOCK DATA

AUSTRALIAN WHITE SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION MEDIA RELEASE
BY KIM WOODS

Electronic identification may not be the silver bullet but is one of the most exciting developments in the sheep industry.

Livestock production consultant Nathan Scott said under traditional mob based systems, poor performing animals were culled and the best performers retained.

“But, we kick animals out because they’ve had a birthday and they still may be the best performing genetics,” Mr Scott said. “When seasons are tough, producers often pick out an age group and sell them.

“If we know the individual performance of each animal, we can drop the poor performers to make the most of the flock’s genetic potential!”

Speaking at the Australian White Suffolk Association annual conference, Mr Scott said electronic ear tags allowed on-farm data collection to be easy, accurate, faster and more likely to happen.

Electronic ID enables the recording of such measurements as body and fleece weight, pregnancy and animal health status.

Mr Scott said four new electronic ear tag options were available with more on the way this year.

Panel readers mounted on the side of a weigh crate or auto-drafter are designed to read individual ear tags when an animal is stationary only.

Mr Scott, of Mike Stephens and Associates, said panel readers must be mounted on timber or plastic to avoid signal interference, or ideally 800mm from metal or aluminium railings.

“If two animals enter the crate at the same time, neither tag will be read,” he said.

New stick readers from Shearwell, Tru-Test and Gallagher have the ability to upload data including comments of 15 characters on each animal, such as pregnancy status.

“A new phone app called Sheep Counter can record a comment against each animal, and email that data file to your personal computer,” Mr Scott said.

“Most people buy equipment capable of far too much so if you don’t need to display large amounts of data on screen, there is little point in spending a large amount of money on gear,” he said.

“People also expect to intuitively know how to use it but everything to do with electronic ID is a complex task. It is important to completely read the manual!”



Nathan Scott advises starting with the basics of a hand held stick reader for data collection.

He recommended producers attend TAFE training courses on data collection, equipment, management and use.

Mr Scott said refurbished robust laptops used by the police or defence forces could be bought on-line and were cost effective for capturing data in sheep yards.

Walk-over-weighing has been used for capturing flock and individual data in research trials and has future potential in commercial flocks.

Mr Scott said the system required data analysis and animal training, with water or lick feeders used as an attractant to encourage the sheep to the weigh crate.

MLA sheep research project manager Richard Apps said producers needed to capture and manage data to make better management decisions on-farm.

Mr Apps said efficient walk-over-weighing systems were on the horizon.

"If we move ewes from paddock to paddock we can capture weights so we can rapidly monitor the change of the distribution and average weight in our flock to understand what's happening with nutrition well before we see it," he said.

Branxholme White Suffolk breeder Steve Milne is using walk-over-weighing to record Pedigree Matchmaker data as part of the Balmoral Sire Evaluation trial.

Mr Milne said the system used an aerial at the paddock and homestead to continuously capture and transfer data.

"It allows us to keep an eye on the sheep from the kitchen table," he said.

WHAT ISN'T ELECTRONIC ID?

- It's not a silver bullet
- It's not auto-drafters
- It's not all about equipment
- It doesn't have to cost the earth

WHAT IS ELECTRONIC ID?

- A fantastic tool
- Part of a complete management system
- The most exciting development in the sheep industry?

WHY USE EID?

- More Accurate
- Easier
- Faster
- More likely to happen!

WHAT DATA?

- Individual body weights
- Fleece weights, Fleece testing
- Fat & eye muscle scanning
- Visual sheep classing & assessment
- Pregnancy scanning
- Animal health records
- WEC
- Treatments
- Stock auditing
- Pedigree MatchMaker

**THE COLLECTION OF DATA IS A
COMPLETE WASTE OF TIME AND MONEY....
UNLESS YOU USE IT!**

... taken from Nathan's Scott's Presentation at National Conference. See the full presentation by following the link on our website <http://www.whitesuffolk.com/pages/member-services/conference.php>

WINNING RAMS TICK THE BOXES FOR TRADE AND EXPORT MARKETS

AUSTRALIAN WHITE SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION MEDIA RELEASE
BY KIM WOODS



Sarah and Ian James, Henty, Victoria, won the inaugural trade class with their Iona stud ram lambs at the Australian White Suffolk Conference.

A focus on commercial traits paid off for young stud sheep breeders Ian and Sarah James when they took out the inaugural ram lamb trade class at the Australian White Suffolk Association conference.

The couple entered a pen of three ram lambs by homebred sires from their Iona stud, Henty, Victoria, in the competition to reaffirm their breeding objectives of moderate birthweight, growth rate and structural correctness.

The pen of three ram lambs competition, judged by Alastair Day, Allendale Studs, Bordertown, South Australia, was a highlight of the Australian White Suffolk Association conference in Hamilton this week.

Conference co-ordinator Steve Milne said the commercially focused competition comprised two classes – rams suitable for producing either trade (20-24kg carcass weight) or heavyweight lambs (24kg carcass weight plus).

Mr Milne said judging was based on the trade and export Lambplan indices, visual assessment on conformation, skin quality, breed type, evenness and market suitability.

He said the competition was modelled on a similar event held at the Hamilton Beef Expo, and was an extra drawcard on the conference program.

The competition drew 10 trade and five export entries from Victorian, NSW and South Australian studs.

In the trade class, Iona stud took out first place, followed by Gemini, Werneth, Vic, in second place, Somerset stud, Bulart, Vic, third and Days Whiteface Suffolks, Bordertown, SA, in fourth.

Lachy and Lou Day, Days Whiteface Suffolks, took first placing in the export class, followed by Waratah stud, Branxholme, Vic, in second place, Gemini stud, third and Somerset, fourth.

Ian and Sarah James established their Iona stud in 2007 initially to breed White Suffolk rams for their commercial flock of 2000 ewes.

“We selected our entries on a visual basis from 96 rams and then narrowed them down on figures,” Mr James said.

“We have been using artificial insemination to keep the fat cover and birthweights right for people using them over Merinos.

"It was a huge surprise to win – we don't show but sell rams privately into mainly Merino or composite ewe flocks."

Export class winner Lachy Day described the competition as "industry relevant" and entered as an educational and feedback exercise.

His June-drop rams were by three different sires and selected using a combination of visual appraisal and estimated breeding values.

"The rams scored well for structure – I'm a big fan of measured performance but foremost the rams must be structurally correct," Mr Day said.

He said the challenge for the breed was to continue at the forefront of the prime lamb industry by adopting new technologies.



Lachy Day, Bordertown, SA, took out the export class with his Days Whiteface Suffolk ram lambs at the Australian White Suffolk Conference.



2014 AWSA CONFERENCE PEN OF 3 RAMS

JUDGE: ALASTAIR DAY

At the 2014 National Conference a commercially focussed "Pen of 3" Ram Lamb competition was held.

Two classes were held, one for rams to breed export (heavy) lambs, and the other for rams to breed domestic or trade weight lambs. In each class the pens of 3 were assessed objectively using the appropriate LAMBPLAN index (Trade \$ or Export \$), and visually as a group in the ring. Each section is allocated 50 points, giving a total score out of 100.

The visual assessment points were allocated for structure, market suitability, evenness, skin quality and breed type by the judge Alastair Day from the Allendale Stud at Bordertown.

The winners of the Trade class were a pen from the Iona stud of Ian and Sarah James at Casterton. The Days stud of Lachie and Lou Day at Bordertown won the export class on a count back from Steve and Debbie Milne's, Waratah stud, Branxholme.

Congratulations to all those that entered pens and supported the competition, and thank you again to Alastair Day for making himself available to judge.

TRADE

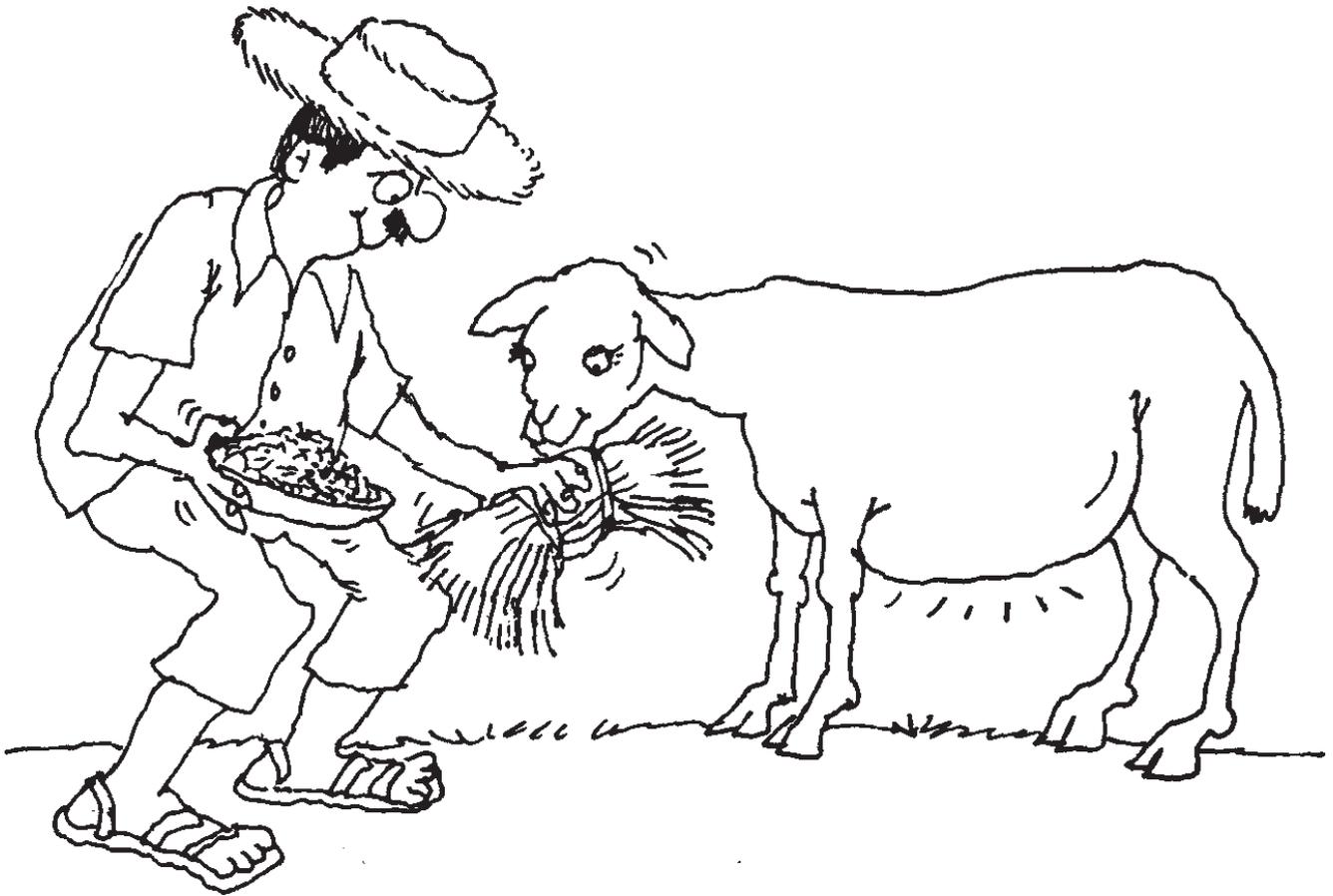
Pen No.	Stud	Tag No.	Trade Index	Tag No.	Trade Index	Tag No.	Trade Index	Lambplan Points / 50
		Ram 1		Ram 2		Ram 3		
T1	Waratah	642	112.7	645	112.3	696	112.5	47.8
T2	Days	412	111	440	110.9	458	111.2	45.1
T3	Gemini	59	111.8	89	112.2	242	111.7	46.7
T4	Ella Matta	82	113.3	112	113.5	440	111.8	48.5
T5	Waratah	507	112.8	639	111.9	695	112.4	47.6
T6	Cowobbee	3	109.1	15	110.3	99	110.3	43.1
T7	Somerset	116	112.7	119	113.5	133	113.7	49.3
T8	Noremac	19	110.1	79	110.2	93	109.9	43.4
T9	Iona	3035	112	3093	111.2	3119	111	45.8
T10	Noremac	42	108.5	60	108.7	62	109.8	41.4

EXPORT

Pen No.	Stud	Tag No.	Export Index	Tag No.	Export Index	Tag No.	Export Index	Lambplan points / 50
		Ram 1		Ram 2		Ram 3		
E1	Gemini	10	108.9	39	110.0	285	111.2	43.2
E2	Waratah	546	111.5	567	111.9	593	113.0	47.0
E3	Days	44	111.1	216	110.2	240	110.2	44.0
E4	Somerset	5	109.5	101	112.2	153	113.1	46.0
E5	Iona	3084	111.6	3090	110.2	3162	111.5	45.1

PROTEIN, PREGNANCY & PROGESTERONE... & FEED INTAKE?

LITERATURE REVIEW
BY MURRAY LONG



As a breed society that relies heavily on AI as a means of distributing elite genetics, we have long been frustrated by the seemingly unexplained variability of conception results. As a breed we held a forum at our 2009 Annual Conference in Albury to try and gain a consensus of what generally works to achieve high conceptions. The best we could evaluate from this forum is that what works for one breeder, does not necessarily ensure success for another. It is well known that around 20-30% of embryos fail within the first weeks of pregnancy so we need to focus on retaining what remains viable. So we are none the wiser as to how to ensure an acceptable conception rate through the use of AI.

One common thought in relation to conception is the effect of high levels of protein post AI and the negative effect this has on embryo survival. It has

been well documented in many research programs that diets excessive in protein increase plasma urea nitrogen (PUN) concentrations in the blood which in turn have a toxic effect on both the oocyte and embryo leading to lower levels of fertility and conception. High protein intake is also linked to unfavourable changes in the environment within the uterus and decreased progesterone secretion, both of which have a negative impact on conception. However there is a level of contradiction within these trials ranging from little effect to a massive reduction in conception and as Progesterone is the "hormone of pregnancy"; much of the research has been focussed around circumstances that affect levels of progesterone during and after conception.

In the trials where high protein diets that were associated with negative energy balance and heat

stress the conception rates were even lower, whereas when protein and energy were more in balance the effect was not as dramatic or not significant. So what role does energy balance or feed intake have on the rates of conception post AI?

Research conducted by Parr (1992) compared the rates of conception across a range of feed intake levels with some interesting results. He found that ewes fed twice their maintenance ration of energy during early pregnancy had a significant reduction in conception rates; 48% compared to ewes fed their maintenance ration with a conception rate of 68%. Ewes fed only half the maintenance energy requirement had no reduction in conception. If the ewes receiving the higher maintenance ration were administered progesterone during the first weeks post joining, their conception rates increased to 76%, indicating that the higher feed intake or twice the maintenance ration was having a significant effect on progesterone levels causing embryo death.

Blood tests indicated that the levels of Progesterone were inversely proportional to the level of feed intake and the most sensitive period for the embryo was 11-12 days after mating. Another finding was that the blood flow from the Portal Vein (Stomach to Liver) was directly related to feed intake and as the Liver is efficient in removing 96% of Progesterone, the higher the feed intake, the lower the blood level of Progesterone and given that the Corpus Luteum could not maintain the higher levels of Progesterone required to maintain a balance, the embryo is at risk.

So is it the level of protein that creates a problem with conception or is it the level of energy intake? Research would indicate both. There is little doubt from many research projects that high protein diets create an unfavourable environment for the new embryo and indeed the unfertilised egg. We also know that diets containing high levels of energy (twice the maintenance level) will result in lower levels of Progesterone resulting in embryo loss. If we assume that the good managers of sheep enterprises may over compensate feed intake to allow for lower protein levels, this could well explain some of the variability we see with AI programs. Putting the AI ewes on the best feed after insemination may well

be the problem and it seems that day 11-12 after insemination is the crucial time. If Progesterone levels are low at this time the chances of embryo survival is significantly decreased. It is worth noting that even a diet at half the daily maintenance energy levels, no adverse loss of embryos was recorded when compared to the full maintenance level diet over the first 2 weeks post conception.

Although this work was carried out a few years ago, there is further research currently being carried out to further evaluate the effects of feed intake and the association with Protein on embryo survival after an AI program.

Just another variable to add to the challenges of getting good results from AI.

References:

Parr, R A Nutrition – Progesterone Interactions during early Pregnancy in Sheep, *Reprod. Fertil. Dev.* (1992), 297-300

Rhoads, M L et al Effects of Nutrient Metabolism and Excess Protein Catabolism on Dairy Cow Fertility

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LAMBEX 2014 REVEALS CRACKER PROGRAM

ALLAN PIGGOTT

LAMBEX 2014 has released a cutting edge program featuring a star line-up of new speakers, some familiar faces and – in its trademark style – an array of local and global issues that don't shy away from any of the big ticket items influencing the sheep and lamb industry's future.

The event will kick off at the Royal Adelaide Showground with a Welcome Function, sponsored by PIRSA, on Wednesday, July 9, followed by two jam-packed days of thought-provoking sessions, trade displays, entertainment, fine food and networking.

Big names to be back in 2014 include US rancher and radio broadcaster Trent Loos, who at Bendigo challenged producers to be 'advocates' in their own families and communities, while the LambEx crowd will help Australia's famous lambassador Sam Kekovich celebrate his 10th anniversary promoting all that is tasty and nutritious about lamb.

Keynote speakers getting the conference under way include UK food marketing professor David Hughes and Meat & Livestock Australia's global marketing general manager Michael Edmonds, both of whom will examine changing consumer preferences and the on-farm production practices needed to meet evolving market requirements.

Local experts to take to the LambEx stage include Thomas Food International's Darren Thomas on how producers can capitalise on market opportunities; MLA's Alex Ball on new generation eating quality for lamb and yearling sheepmeat; JBS innovation manager Graham Treffone on robotics in processing; and consultant Jason Trompf on improving profit margins.

The practical side of LambEx is well and truly covered with a host of leading lamb producers from across Australia presenting their insights and experiences. These topics cover managing the Merino as the backbone of the sheep industry; lifting stocking capacity, growth rates and lean meat yield; optimising profit margins; becoming masters of pastures; predator management; and drought-proofing family farms. Of special interest is the Australian White Suffolk sponsored Young Guns lamb industry competition which involves young people sharing

their experiences, project, research, study, thoughts or ideas on the whole lamb value chain.

The organising committee has worked hard during the past 12 months to design a conference that is relevant to all sheep producers all over the nation, even internationally. Aside from the thought-provoking program, the networking and social opportunities on offer are another key reason that people keep coming back to LambEx, regardless of its location. There's a packed trade exhibition with a broad range of agribusinesses, producer organisations and government agencies, and, as always, LambEx prides itself on showcasing lamb's diversity of cuts and dishes.

"The Australian Wool Innovation-sponsored GrandsLamb Dinner is back on the Thursday night of the conference and is an event known for its mouth-watering fine food, outstanding entertainment and networking – you will have a fantastic time.

The conference will finish with the announcement of the lucky winner of the MerinoSA ewe and Kelvale Kelpies prize giveaway and a special session on 'People Magic'. Horse whisperer Steve Jefferys – famous for getting horses and dogs to perform in places most would consider nearly impossible – will outline his insights on staff management, with the help of a few friends, and Peak Performance's Allan Parker will cover successful succession planning and how to handle the conflict resolution that may be involved. There are a few more surprises to roll out at the conference so LambEx will be the "must attend" sheep event for 2014.

Generous sponsorship from many companies – including conference underwriter the SA Sheep Advisory Group – has enabled the committee to make the event affordable for all producers – particularly if they take advantage of the early bird registration and group booking offers.

More conference details and registration forms are available at lambex.com.au

*** Note: the conference is during the school holidays so bring the family, stay for the weekend and visit the Barossa Valley, Fleurieu Peninsula or Kangaroo Island to finish a wonderful trip to South Australia.*