

# SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2003



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## KOONWARRA RAM SALE

An outstanding draft of large-framed, heavy-cutting Merino rams sold to a top of \$6400 and averaged \$1153 at Koonwarra stud's annual production sale in October. The sale, conducted on-property at "Noojee Lea," Canowindra, attracted spirited competition among the registered bidders and grossed a total of \$61,300 for the 53 rams sold.

The top priced ram of the sale, a 19.59 micron sire nicknamed Koonwarra Winchester and sired by BG, sold to a syndicate of four clients for \$6400. The upstanding 15-month-old ram had a comfort factor of 99.6 per cent and a co-efficient of variation of 15.82 per cent.

Syndicate members were John Williams "Thalabar," Laggan, John Bensley "Stillbrook," Crookwell, Stuart and Corrine Rintoul of Dongiemon Merino stud at Williams in Western Australia, and Gordon McMaster of Sheep Advisory Services Pty Ltd, Narrandera.

The sale's second top price of \$2000 was paid on two occasions by the Flannery family "Goonawarra," Galong. The rams, an 18.06 micron ram sired by Koonwarra SP/Fine and a 20.38 micron son of BG, were two of seven rams purchased by the Flannery family at an average of \$1614.

Other volume buyers included Ulah Station at Orange, who secured 10 rams to a top of \$1500 and average of \$960, and Cocum South Partnership at Cowra, who went home with 6 rams at a top of \$800 and an average of \$783.

Major buyers also represented at the sale included the Larkin family "Hillside," Ben Bullen, who purchased four rams to a top of \$1800 and average of \$1150, the Martin family "Bonnie View," Grenfell, who purchased seven rams to a top of \$1500 and an average of \$929, and the Carruthers family "Careva," Binda, who secured three rams at an average of \$800.

Management and staff of Koonwarra thank all buyers and underbidders at the sale who helped make the day a success.



*Pictured with the \$6400 top priced ram at Koonwarra Merino stud's annual on-property sale at Canowindra are buyers Gordon McMaster of Sheep Advisory Services Pty Ltd, Narrandera, John Williams "Thalabar," Laggan and John Bensley "Stillbrook," Crookwell, with Koonwarra stud manager Ben Lane and stud principal Charles Curran.*

Management and staff of Koonwarra wish Clients & Friends a  
Very Merry Christmas and Prosperous 2004

## STUD PRINCIPAL CHARLES CURRAN

2003 has been a year of growth for Koonwarra under the guidance of stud manager, Ben Lane and stud classer Stuart Hodgson, with a continuation of our AI program, the resumption of the on-property ram sale and an expansion of our operations at Koonwarra.

The purchase of two new properties, away from the Belubula River and including some paddocks running back into hills, has allowed us to provide breeding and grazing areas more closely corresponding with the properties on which our clients run their breeding operations.

The expansion has also enabled us to use some of our older flock ewes for joining to terminal sires to produce prime lambs. This gives us a better insight into the versatility of Koonwarra ewes.

Large framed ewes, for which Koonwarra is renowned, allows clients the flexibility of breeding options. They can either join to Merino rams to produce a large framed heavy cutting sheep, with the option of selling ewes as breeders increase their flocks or, if market conditions dictate, they can join to terminal sires to produce lambs for both domestic and export markets.

The drought has reduced Australian sheep numbers, resulting in reduced wool production.

Also, with the stockpile gone and with the improvement in world economies, there is a generally favourable outlook for wool, along with other commodities. This is largely fuelled by the improvement in economic conditions in the US, which is driving world economic growth, and most importantly the extensive growth being achieved in the economy of China, with an emerging middle class of 450 million.

As will always be the case, cost of production and efficiency of wool growing operations will be a major ongoing focus. Against this background, the issue of genetics remains of central importance.

Koonwarra is committed to improving genetics, based on traditional large framed sheep with proven heavy wool cutting ability, and an ideal micron level of 19.5 to 20.

In October, we were once again in a position to hold our on-property ram sale and it was gratifying to see so many familiar faces in attendance. Ben and I thank all purchasers and underbidders on the day, who helped make the sale a success and showed their confidence in Koonwarra's genetics.

There has never been any confirmation that Koonwarra was affected by Ovine Johnes Disease and with the new rules for OJD to be implemented in 2004, Koonwarra will again be able to resume free trade of its vaccinated sheep throughout Australia.

Due to the length of Koonwarra's vaccination programs, the stud is expected to be rated highly on the vendor declaration forms as a secure option for the purchase of stock.

## KOONWARRA ENGAGEMENT

Clients will be interested to hear of the recent engagement of Koonwarra stud manager, Ben Lane, to Ali Wagstaff.

Ben, the fourth son of Gerry and Jan Lane "Erin Vale," Milbrulong, and Ali, the only daughter of David and Jan Wagstaff "Wyvern," Carrathool, announced their engagement in Sydney in late October.

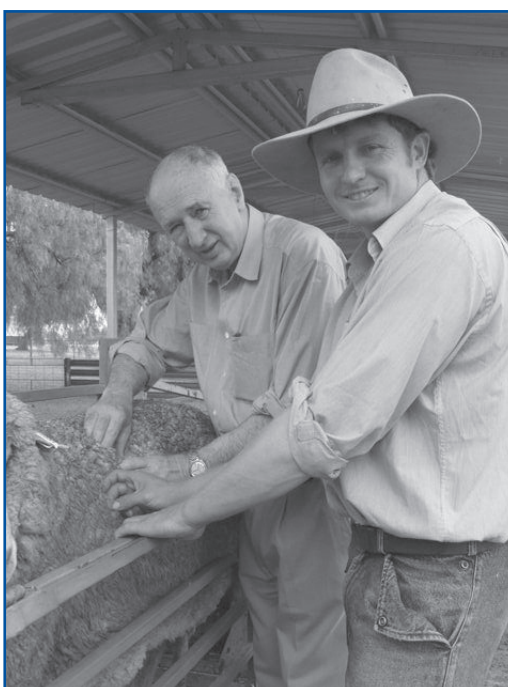
A familiar face to many Koonwarra clients, Ali moved to Canowindra in April 2003 and has had a strong interest in the stud's operations.

Ali is a qualified sports administration and completed her studies at the University of Canberra prior to moving to Sydney, where she was involved in sales and marketing.

Following their forthcoming marriage at Wagga in April, Ben and Ali will continue to make their home at Canowindra.



*Koonwarra stud manager, Ben Lane has announced his engagement to Ali Wagstaff.*



*Stud principal of Koonwarra Merino Stud, Charles Curran inspects the stud's breeding ewes with Stud manager, Ben Lane.*

## STUD MANAGER BEN LANE



I have made many client visits throughout New South Wales and Victoria with stud classer, Stuart Hodgson and we have been pleased with the outcomes.

Both Stuart and I have been impressed with the quality of sheep inspected that are sired by Koonwarra genetics.

This year Koonwarra held their annual on-property ram sale and the feedback on the sale rams was most favourable.

I have also received positive feedback on Koonwarra rams that have been used in AI programs in both Tasmania and New Zealand, with inquiries for more semen sales being made.

Koonwarra set up a display at this year's Dubbo National Show and Sale and received many favourable comments from clients and visitors to the event. Next year we are looking forward to being able to exhibit at the show.

Clients will have the opportunity to view the Koonwarra Show team at the Great Southern Supreme Merino Show at Goulburn, Canberra and Sydney Royal Shows and Young South West Slopes Merino Field Day.

One of the largest jobs at Koonwarra this year has been feeding the sheep, with pastures that were not irrigated unable to sustain grazing due to the drought.

A number of new feeders were purchased from Cowra Lick Feeders, and by using the feeders we did not have to go in through mobs of sheep and lambing ewes.

There was also less wastage of feed by using the feeders.

Another pleasing aspect was our lambing percentage, with AI ewes recording a lambing percentage of 114 per cent, which was very satisfying considering the season.

The lambs showed exceptional potential, which is a reflection on the outstanding Koonwarra sires used and the feeding program carried out during the drought.

I take the opportunity to wish our many clients and friends a very Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

## KOONWARRA OBJECTIVES

- Return to the show-ring at major events, commencing with Goulburn's Great Southern Supreme Merino show.
- Continue extensive AI programs using leading industry sires
- Maintain vaccination programs as a management tool
- Assist and advise clients on ram and ewe selection
- Provide management and advice on best breeding practices
- Offer clients a first rate sheep classing service
- Continue pasture improvement programs for breeding and sale stock
- Continue to maintain and improve on frame size and wool cutting ability
- Focus on producing rams with a micron average of between 19.5 and 20
- Continue our contribution to the ongoing development of the Merino industry

## KOONWARRA BREEDING PROGRAM

The entire Koonwarra ewe flock was classed in December by stud classer, Stuart Hodgson.

After the difficult seasonal conditions which the sheep had experienced, Stuart was very pleased with the wool quality and its ability to resist dust penetration.

"The sheep presented for classing were in great order, which is testament to their capacity to handle adverse conditions."

The stud was broken into family groups and the AI ewes are in outstanding condition, ready for their program to start mid January.

The Koonwarra rams to be used in the program are well sought after bloodlines.

Among them are KWA 8.7 (brown tag family), KWA 3.21 and 7.49 (Uniform family, purple tag, Sam family) and 2.49 from the Equalizer family.



*Koonwarra breeding ewes - December 2003.*

Also to be used will be the BG ram, whose son sold for the top price at the 2003 Koonwarra auction for \$6,400 to a syndicate of buyers.

One pleasing aspect of the recent classing was the quality of ewes by former Victorian Ram of the Year, Glendonald 6.215. These daughters, which have been selected into a group, all exhibit well-grown, white medium wools and will be mated to a suitable sire to further develop the outstanding bloodlines.



*Joe Curran, Springdale Stud, Stud classer, Stuart Hodgson and Stud principal Charles Curran are shown here with Koonwarra stud ewes.*

## 2003 DUBBO NATIONAL



*Koonwarra Merino stud generated much interest with their display at the 2003 Dubbo National Show and Sale.*

## KOONWARRA EXPANSION

Demonstrating our confidence in the future, we have purchased two adjoining properties, which will be utilized primarily for Koonwarra's stud operations.

The properties are located away from the Belubula River and include some paddocks running back into hills, allowing us to provide breeding and grazing areas more closely corresponding with the properties on which our clients run their breeding operations.

We are undertaking a program for pasture improvement on the new properties to ensure our top breeding stock receive good nutrition supplemented through irrigated pastures on the Noojee Lea property.

Koonwarra will be running a number one stud flock along with a number two stud flock, which will provide ewes for upgrading to the number one flock and also be used to produce ewes for a commercial flock.

The commercial flock will be partly used for the breeding of prime lambs and partly as a commercial Merino breeding operation, underlying the versatility of the Koonwarra sheep.

### HEALTH REPORT

There continues to be no clear evidence Koonwarra has any incidences of Ovine Johnes Disease and at no stage have any losses been attributed to the disease.

The stud has maintained all precautions to ensure it minimises disease risk, including vaccination, use of semen in artificial insemination programs and testing for brucellosis and footrot.

The changes to the OJD program in 2004 will allow Koonwarra to resume free trade of its vaccinated sheep throughout Australia. Due to the length of Koonwarra's vaccination program, the stud is expected to be highly rated on the vendor declaration forms as a secure option for the purchase of stock.

Koonwarra has vaccinated its entire flock and will continue to use the vaccine as a management tool in line with many other leading Merino operations.

## KOONWARRA CLIENT SERVICES

- \* Sheep Classing services
- \* An extensive semen directory
- \* Advice and assistance on ram selection
- \* Management and advice on breeding
- \* Hay - various grades at attractive prices

We also receive constant enquiry for our bloodline, so if you have pure bred CFA stock for sale please contact the stud

### DIARY OF 2004 KEY DATES

JANUARY 16-19	Great Southern Supreme Merino Ram Show and Sale, Goulburn
FEBRUARY 27-29	Canberra Royal Show
APRIL 8-11	Sydney Royal Easter Show
AUGUST 24-26	National Merino Show and Sale, Dubbo
SEPTEMBER 2	South West Slopes Merino Field Day, Young
OCTOBER 15	Koonwarra On-property Ram Sale, Canowindra

### THE VALUE OF DIVERSIFICATION

Climatic conditions of the past several years have again demonstrated the importance of diversification.

Some farmers who have heavily concentrated their operations on cropping have suffered from frost and drought.

More recently, some farmers in the south of the state have suffered heavy losses due to shot and sprung grain as a result of the recent heavy rain.

Other farmers who have kept a diversified approach have been able to benefit from high livestock prices.

Self-replacing Merino flocks have enjoyed record prices for cull ewes recently whilst the overall average for Merino rams marginally increased in 2003.

This illustrates the value of maintaining diversified operations, including breeding and livestock fattening activities.

**VISITORS AND CLIENTS ARE WELCOME TO INSPECT THE STUD SHEEP & NARRUC INVESTMENT PROPERTIES.**

**Contact Ben on (02) 6344 2788 or Mobile: 0427 206 239**