

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2004



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KOONWARRA MERINO STUD

27TH ANNUAL ON-PROPERTY RAM SALE



2004 Koonwarra On-Property Sale Rams

Friday 15th October, 2004

Inspections from 10am - Sale to commence 1pm

Offering

70 August-September

2003 Drop Fine/Medium Wool Rams

With outstanding, soft, bright, stylish wools
& excellent constitution

- Approved Gudair Vaccinates
- Brucellosis Accredited Free • Footrot Free

PRE-SALE INSPECTIONS OF KOONWARRA RAMS ARE MOST WELCOME

A MESSAGE FROM STUD PRINCIPAL CHARLES CURRAN

The future of the Merino industry remains bright. As foreshadowed last year, the reduction in sheep numbers has led to much improved conditions for Merino breeders, which has been borne out with the very good prices achieved over the last six months for lambs. With the reduced national flock, Australia will find it hard to satisfy demand for wool. Woolgrowers who continue to improve their genetics will benefit by producing sheep that cut more wool. Koonwarra clients are producing larger framed sheep cutting more quality wool, which puts them in good stead for the future.

The Chinese economy is in the early stages of developing, with an emerging middle class of 400 million having discretionary spending power, reflected in the huge demand for energy in China to power air conditioners and televisions. Australia is a significant beneficiary with an initial \$23-billion contract to supply LNG from the north-west shelf. These Chinese consumers also have spending money for apparel, which is good news for the wool growing industry over the next five to seven years.

Much of Australia has continued to suffer from adverse climatic conditions, which is another reason for woolgrowers to ensure they have the best genetics in their flock. With a limited number of sheep that can be grazed, it stands to reason that one should ensure the best economic outcome from each animal grazed. Thus, Koonwarra clients have been able to maximise income with Koonwarra genetics during these difficult climatic circumstances.

With the purchase of additional country, in addition to running our stud ewes, we are now running a commercial flock. A number of our commercial ewes have been joined to Poll Dorset rams and we have been very pleased with the early maturity and good prices we have achieved with our lambs. This bears out Koonwarra's reputation for breeding large framed ewes, that are heavy wool cutters and which produce lambs sought after by meat processors. Running a prime lamb operation enables us to more fully understand the operations of our clients who join Koonwarra blood ewes to terminal sires.

Koonwarra follows best sheep husbandry practices, combined with the most advanced veterinary care available, to ensure the health status of our flock.

Our flock has been subject to rigorous testing and the rams that we are offering are approved vaccinates. Koonwarra is now able to sell sheep into Victoria. Buyers of rams from Koonwarra can do so with a high degree of confidence in the health status of our sheep.

KOONWARRA WEDDING

The gardens at "Wyvern," Carrathool acted as a picturesque backdrop for the recent wedding of Koonwarra Stud Manager, Ben Lane and Ali Wagstaff.

Ali is the only daughter of David and Jan Wagstaff of "Wyvern," while Ben is the son of Gerry and Jan Lane "Erin Vale," Milbrulong.

Ben and Ali were married in April, followed by a reception in the garden at "Wyvern," and they have now made their home at Koonwarra, Canowindra.

Ali is working in the office at Koonwarra, looking after the stud records, keeping statistics and co-ordinating client visits. Ali is a qualified sports administrator and completed her studies at the University of Canberra prior to moving to Sydney, where she was involved in sales and marketing.

Ben, who grew up on the family property at Milbrulong, jackarooed at Uardry Merino Stud, where he was later appointed Overseer. He then worked at Koonwarra before undertaking a course at Marcus Oldham prior to returning to Koonwarra as Manager.



Koonwarra Stud Manager, Ben Lane recently married Ali Wagstaff.

THE VIABILITY OF THE MERINO INDUSTRY

In light of comments being made regarding the viability of the Merino industry, our Sheep Classifier, Stuart Hodgson, has put together a scenario using wool figures sourced from Landmark Euroa, in north-east Victoria. The scenario is based on a 1000 head Merino self-replacing flock and the details shown demonstrate a profitable enterprise. The surplus sheep proceeds incorporate the joining of CFA ewes to terminal sires in lieu of their sale. With indications pointing to a massive shortage of replacement ewes, the price of Merinos will likely be pushed to an all time high. Stuart points out that all figures quoted are estimates only; also, they may vary with seasonal conditions.

WOOL PROCEEDS

- March shearing
(Based on the National average of 174kg bale weight)
1000 ewes - cut 6.0kg @ 20 micron
35nkt - 68% yld - 2.0% vm
560 cent average - 34 bales @ \$970 per bale
TOTAL - \$32,980
- Autumn Lambing
1000 ewes @ 80% lambing (400 ewe lambs, 400 ram lambs)
Shear lambs March @ 10 months - cut 3.5kg @ 18.5 micron
550 cent average - 16 bales @ \$950 per bale
TOTAL - \$15,200
- Classed ewe Hoggets
320 1 1/2 year old ewe hoggets - cut 5kg @ 18.5 micron

40nkt - 66% yld - 2.0% vm
620 cent average - 9 bales @ \$1070 per bale
TOTAL - \$9,630
TOTAL WOOL PROCEEDS \$57,810

SURPLUS SHEEP PROCEEDS

Join CFA ewes to terminal sires @ 120% lambing
360 lambs @ \$100 per head - \$36,000
400 wethers @ \$60 per head - \$24,000
80 ewe hoggets (cull) @ \$90 per head - \$7,200
TOTAL SURPLUS SHEEP PROCEEDS \$67,200

TOTAL GROSS REVENUE - \$125,010

STUD MANAGER BEN LANE



CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

The Koonwarra type of bright, white, soft handling wools and excellent constitution allows merino breeders to successfully diversify into many regions within NSW, Victoria and New Zealand.

From previous flock ewe competitions it has become apparent that studs in general may not be listening to the needs of commercial producers.

We at Koonwarra encourage client feedback. It is important for Koonwarra's breeding objectives to meet those of our clients, both in wool types and frame size, with many clients diversifying their operations.

Koonwarra is only as successful as our clients.

SHEEP HUSBANDRY

Having experienced consistently successful lambing percentages, I would like to reiterate the importance of having rams in top working order at joining time.

Key points to remember are:-

- Shear rams twice per year.
- Join rams with approximately 2 months wool, possibly 3 months of wool if joining during the summer months to prevent heat stress.
- Toe cut rams annually.
- It is imperative to jet rams with Vetrazin prior to joining as flystrike does have a great effect on fertility.
- Join for 42 days capturing two breeding cycles.
- Mid-side sample rams each year to ensure continued breeding quality.

A good guide for estimating the quantity of rams to join per mob is 1% + 1, but higher with maiden ewes with their shorter oestrus.

WHAT IS IN STORE FOR KOOHWARRA?

We are currently investigating profitability of Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs), worm resistance, and the effectiveness of DNA testing. We will keep our clients posted on new developments.

KOOHWARRA CLIENT VISITS

I would like to thank those clients who have taken the time to see me over the last couple of months. Our most recent visits were to the Charlton/St Arnaud district in Victoria, when Koonwarra Stud Classer, Stuart Hodgson and I caught up with the Watts' families at Glengower and Springdale.

Lloyd and Dennis Watts run an extensive cropping enterprise at Glengower and a sheep breeding operation at Arrarat. Prior to sale, they return their wethers to Glengower where they are feed lot finished, utilising their own feed grain. With excellent sheep prices the Watt's are hoping to receive up to \$100/head, plus an additional income for their wool cut.

Hilton and Doris Watts and sons, Leigh, Peter and David Watts' of "Springdale" were in the midst of shearing their wethers at the time of our arrival. We were fortunate to witness beautiful fleeces coming off the board – white, bright, soft wools with great staple length and weight. The sheep displayed qualities of a well managed merino flock. They are an excellent credit to the Koonwarra type and to the Watts' family.

It was "bon voyage" to Arnold and Colleen Bond at "Yawong Springs". Having being Koonwarra clients for the past 15 years, they have sold their property and are moving into St Arnaud to retire. We wish them all the very best for the future.

Following the trip to St Arnaud, I made a trip to Henty where I had the pleasure in seeing John and



Koonwarra clients, Leigh and Peter Watts are pictured with Koonwarra Stud Classer, Stuart Hodgson.



Stud Classer, Stuart Hodgson is pictured with Koonwarra clients, Dennis and Lloyd Watts and Stud Manager, Ben Lane during a recent visit.

Diana Janetzki of "Rainbow". They had recently completed shearing their Koonwarra rams, and we were pleased to see some of the fleeces prior to baling. The wool displayed excellent brightness and crimp quality.

The next visit was to Graham and Debbie Mott of Green Hills. Despite having such a tough season with little rain, they enjoyed a good shearing with their 1 ½ year old ewes cutting 7kg of wool, with an overall average micron of 19.8 and a comfort factor of 98.8. These figures obviously reflected 29 years of strong Koonwarra genetics, together with excellent management skills.

Our last visit was with Steve and Helen McRorie at "Kilbirnie", Yerong Creek where we enjoyed valuable feedback and discussed the future direction of Merino breeding with the use of industry technological advancements.

KOOHWARRA CLIENT, ARNOLD BOND DISPERSES FLOCK

Long time client of Koonwarra, Arnold Bond has sold his property, "Yawong Springs", ending a 32 year stay. The dispersal of the 3300 Koonwarra blood flock created interest from South Australia, New South Wales and most parts of Victoria. The selling agents had remarked on the excellent quality lines of well-bred sheep, saying it would be hard to find anything better than these sheep in the country.

Four hundred and eight 4yr old ewes with 336 first cross lambs at foot sold for \$146 per head to new owners of "Yawong Springs", Ray and Bronwyn Pickering along with 299 5 yr old ewes. The Lockhart family purchased 608 ewe weaners for \$144 a head. Other sheep went to long time Koonwarra blood breeders at Benalla, Bendigo and Hamilton. Koonwarra Stud Classer, Stuart Hodgson bid on several lots for NSW clients.

Ray and Bronwyn Pickering and family intend to maintain the Koonwarra bloodline and we look forward to developing a close and fruitful association with them. Management and staff at Koonwarra wish the Bond family the very best for their retirement.

KOONWARRA WOOL TESTS

Koonwarra has received excellent results from its recent wool tests.

2003 Drop rams shorn April at 8 months 178 Ram lambs and their averages:

- Micron: 17.6
- Comfort Factor: 99.04
- SD: 3.58
- CV: 20.29

Young SWS Merino Breeders Field Day and Sale.



*Koonwarra 3.3 x BG (Show Tag M-0715).
Current Body Weight: 78kg
Wool Test Results at 27/7/04 – Micron: 18.2,
Comfort Factor: 99.9, SD: 2.7, CV: 14.8
Comments: Soft, sirey, pure muzzle with a long body
carrying a bright, soft, stylish free growing wool. For
sale at Young SWS sale.*



*Koonwarra 3.28 x BG (Show Tag M-0709).
Current Body Weight: 81kg. Wool Test Results at 27/7/04
Micron: 19.2, Comfort Factor: 98.9, SD: 3.7, CV: 19.3.
Comments: A well-balanced ram displaying a big barrel
with good bone, wool coverage and quality. For sale at
Young SWS sale.*

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 enquiries for our bloodline, so if you have pure bred stock for sale please contact the stud

DIARY OF 2004 KEY DATES

AUGUST 24	Dubbo National Ram Show Stud Display
SEPTEMBER 2	South West Slopes Stud Merino Breeders Field Day and Ram Sale - Young 2 x 1YO Rams for Auction Plus a stud display
OCTOBER 15	Koonwarra On-Property Ram Sale - Noojee Lea, Canowindra NSW 70 x August/September '03 Drop Rams for Auction

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.

VALUE ADDING

Value adding to Merino enterprises is being achieved by breeders, who instead of selling their Merino wethers as weaners are creating a lot feeding system and giving them a balanced pellet/cereal ration.

One client took his wether weaners from a value of \$30 pre-feed through to a top of \$116, to average \$100 for 1,000 wethers. These sheep were marketed prior to cutting their two-teeth.

Coupled with the demand for well-dressed surplus hogget ewes, this value adds to a lucrative scenario for the Merino breeder.

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

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