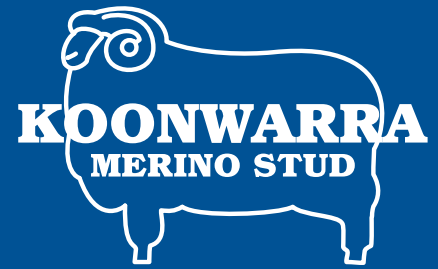


# NEWSLETTER WINTER 2008



**STUD PRINCIPALS** CHARLES CURRAN AC, LL.B. FCPA., CHARLIE & JONO MERRIMAN

**STUD MANAGERS** CHARLIE & JONO MERRIMAN **STUD CLASSER** STUART HODGSON OAM.

Koonwarra Merino Stud is owned in a partnership between Charles Curran and his family's Capital Investments Rural Pty Ltd and Charlie and Jono Merriman and their family's Merrignee Pty Ltd. Koonwarra Merino Stud has now been at its new home, Little Range at Boorowa, for two and a half years. All management and breeding decisions for future development are done in conjunction with the well respected Stud Classer, Mr Stuart Hodgson. We thank all buyers and under bidders for their support since Koonwarra's move to Boorowa.

At the 2007 Annual On-property Ram Sale 53 of the 60 rams sold with an average of \$948 (GST exclusive), with the top price being \$2400.

Other sale results in 07-08 (GST exclusive) were:

- Bendigo 07 – 1 ram sold for \$2,000
- GSSM Canberra 08 – 3 rams, averaging \$2,083
- Stud Ewe Sale, 28 Feb 08 – 102 stud ewes averaged \$70

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## MESSAGE FROM CHARLIE & JONO

Koonwarra's 2008 started well due to good summer rains from November 2007 of around 350mms which enabled us to cease hand feeding the sheep at long last. While the rain was very welcome it also created possible flystrike problems. The Koonwarra stud sheep stood up to these conditions extremely well, with only a very few having any water damage or fly strike along the backline, with not one of the stud sires showing any damage.

### RAMS FOR SALE IN 2008

The 2007 June/July drop are certainly a good looking group of young rams with some new sires used. Rams are for sale at the 31st Annual On-Property Ram Sale on Thursday 10th October and paddock sales commence from mid-October. With Stuart, we have had a mid year review of these rams recently and are very pleased with the quality throughout the 2007 drop. Sires BG177 and Yarrawong J12 (purchased in 2006) have thrown very good types in their progeny; these sires will be definitely used during the next few years. We also used in the AI program the following sires: Nerstane 43 (Nerstane was originally a daughter stud of Koonwarra), Roseville Park 45 and Koonwarra 3.21, an older sire from the Uniform family. While there was not a lot of progeny from

In 2008, Koonwarra is concentrating its sales focus on the 31st Annual On-Property Ram Sale, and therefore will not be offering rams for sale this year at Bendigo, Hamilton or Dubbo. The only off property sale at which Koonwarra rams will be offered in the next 12 months will be at the Great Southern Supreme Merino (GSSM) show and sale at Canberra Showground in January 2009.

Photo of Ram for sale at GSSM 2009



this AI program in 2007 due to the drought, the quality of these sires' progeny has been very high.

We welcome long term and new clients to Koonwarra Stud at Little Range, Boorowa to come, visit and inspect these well known Koonwarra sheep and the 2007 drop rams. They are quite an impressive group.

### BREEDING

Koonwarra had already made a breeding choice to develop a plainer skin type merino to provide a freer fleece type while maintaining the quality wool already there. Through these discussions with Stuart we have been very mindful not to lose the staple structure and tip type of the Koonwarra sheep as a major profit driver.

The merino profit line is still very competitive with a wether lamb receiving up to \$4 a kilo at the saleyards recently, as quoted in The Land. Coupled with the market improvement in wool prices this 10 month old merino lamb could have a fleece value of \$30 plus on top of the meat value. With the ewe drop retained as breeders at no purchase cost the merino enterprise looks good value.

The summer rains helped the stud lambing in 2008 with the AI program achieving around 105% and the single joinings at 94% at lamb marking time. This is a true reflection of the fertility ability of the Koonwarra ewes as they did not receive any supplementary feeding and due to the drought were not running on well developed pasture. Having these larger numbers of progeny gives more opportunity to push harder on our selection criteria for the stud, especially in the ewe drop.

The 2006 drop ewes had a very tough year to mature in with all sheep on grain and no grass for the first six months of their life. These lambs grew up in this environment into well grown ewes with a high number in lamb. These young ewes were fleece tested in September 2007 with an average micron of 17.2, a comfort factor of 98.9% and a fleece weight of 4.6kgs on 10 months of wool growth. We are pleased with the way the Koonwarra young ewes not only survived the difficult weather patterns, but matured well enough to get in lamb and raise their progeny.

This season we have put a lot of thought into our breeding program. We have moved the Koonwarra stud joining time forward a month so this year we lambed in May/June. We have used the Koonwarra show ram from last season, KWA 5.244 "Ruby" from the Gem family, as one of our sires and his lambs on the ground at looking very good.

We used "Ruby" in the AI program and with paddock joinings and we feel he is destined to have a good impact on the Koonwarra stud, especially after seeing his first crop of lambs this year. He is a large framed ram with a clearly defined crimp, bright white wool testing 20.8 on full shed feed, very square behind in his stance with big spring of rib. He has a tremendous outlook with a strong head and horn set that so epitomises the Koonwarra blood sires. Another new sire we have used in the 2008 drop is Nerstane 43 in the AI program.



KWA 5.244 "Ruby"

## HEALTH & WELFARE

Koonwarra has used the Trisolfen product in the lamb marking operation during 2007 and 2008. This product is a definite help to the lambs as they are back feeding on the mothers almost immediately. While we will be breeding plainer skin type merino sheep we are also very mindful of new and developing products which may be used to take the place of traditional mulesing. The clip technique is a useful tool in this area and while the result is not as good as the traditional mules with various fly prevention products it would be possible to use this product. We are very interested in the Cobbett Technologies Company's intradermal injection called *Skintraction*. AWI publicised this in their latest *Beyond the Bale* magazine and we believe this is the type of operation which may give woolgrowers mules free sheep.

## FLOCK RAM SALES

COMMENCE MID-OCTOBER 2008

Commencing mid-October 2008 by appointment at a time that suits clients. This is done individually so each client has plenty of time to inspect and discuss their individual requirements. These rams are from the same drop as those to be offered at 31st Annual On-Property Ram Sale. There will be two grades \$700 and \$500 (excluding GST).

## STUD EWE SALE

THURSDAY 26TH FEBRUARY 2009

The annual ewe sale is held in conjunction with Merrignee Merino Stud on-property at Little Range, Boorowa, commencing at 1pm.

## HEALTH STATUS

**Koonwarra Merino Stud is Accredited Brucellosis Free, OJD Approved Vaccinates and Vendor's Declaration Ovine Footrot Free.**

Koonwarra Merino Stud has been vaccinating with Gudair since 2002 resulting in all Koonwarra Stud ewes to and including the age of six years have all been vaccinated as lambs, as have their progeny. Therefore these sheep have reached the OJD Program Point of Category C – "the Flock is a second generation approved vaccinate Flock" which retains 4 credit points and allows Koonwarra stud progeny to go to medium and low prevalence areas.

## MESSAGE FROM CHARLES CURRAN

The outlook for the Merino Industry is generally optimistic. Lamb prices, which are dependent on merino based mothers, are back to near record prices. High input and production costs for cotton and man made fibres, should offer merino growers good returns for their wool. The well published higher costs for energy and food should continue to offer livestock based enterprises rewarding returns.

Positive international influences are present, such as the continuing strong development of the Chinese and Indian economies which increases the demand for food, including meat. In this situation, the productive capability of Koonwarra style sheep, which are good wool producers and large framed sheep for meat production, will continue to show good economic returns. This is already evident through the strong prices being achieved for lambs both domestically and for export.

Widespread winter rains provide the prospect of a good spring. This should result in improved outcomes from sheep breeding operations with better seasonal conditions having already become evident in the lambing percentages at Koonwarra.

We are fully supportive of the efforts being undertaken by Charlie and Jono Merriman, with the able assistance of Stuart Hodgson, to continue to improve the genetic capability of the Koonwarra sheep. In this way we continue to strive to meet the needs of the valued clients of Koonwarra.

## 31ST ANNUAL KOONWARRA RAM SALE

FRIDAY, 10TH OCTOBER 2008, 1PM

INSPECTIONS FROM 10AM

**60 JUNE/JULY 2007 DROP**

PREVIEW DAY – MONDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER 2008, 12 NOON TO 5PM

This will be Koonwarra Merino Stud's third sale at the new location, Little Range, 16 kms from Boorowa (NSW) on the Cunningham Road towards Harden.

These rams were shorn on 13th April 2008 and their fleece tests will be taken about six weeks before the sale. Each ram will have individual fleece figures for micron, S.D., C.V., Spinning Fineness, Bodyweight, and Greasy Fleece Weight percentage. These rams were Gudair vaccinated as lambs out of approved vaccinated ewes and will be selected by Stuart Hodgson, the Stud Classer, and Charlie and Jono Merriman, the Stud Managers. Koonwarra clients can come to the new

home of Koonwarra and know that there will be a continuity of the Koonwarra type and direction that Stuart Hodgson has been developing over the years.

A Preview Day of these rams will be held on Monday 15th September 2008 in conjunction with Merrignee and Tara Park Merino Studs. Koonwarra and Merrignee, at Little Range, will be open from 12 noon to 5 pm and Tara Park open from 10am to 3pm, at Tara Park.

*Individual details on each of the 60 rams will be available, on the website, [www.koonwarrastud.com.au](http://www.koonwarrastud.com.au) before the sale; however, not until after the fleece tests are taken (about 6 weeks before the sale) and the rams catalogued.*



# MESSAGE FROM STUART HODGSON

## KOONWARRA STUD CLASSER

Once again our industry finds itself in a crisis after just getting over the OJD debate and its ongoing divisiveness. The mulesing issue has created much the same antagonism in an industry that should stand together on issues affecting our future.

Some sections of our industry have jumped on the bandwagon indicating they have a solution and an instant 'fix'. They are almost like used car salesman with the slogan 'have I got a deal for you'. I believe it smacks of opportunism and I would urge an approach of caution with regard to some of these ambit claims.

I know that a vast number of Merino studs have been heading in a direction of plaining their sheep down while still bearing in mind that cutting an optimum amount of wool is vital to their survival. Not mulesing merino sheep will be a welcome by-product of this direction but it shouldn't and won't happen overnight.

I would suggest that clients be mindful of the results of too radical an approach to this issue.

Charlie, Jono and I have been attempting to breed a more modern merino catering to new demands and are pleased with our results so far. We would encourage you to discuss your concerns with us and perhaps we can assist you with a direction we feel the merino should be taking.

## KOONWARRA SEMEN SIREs

ALL SEMEN \$40 PER DOSE (+GST)

### KWA 8.180 BLOCKER

He has a soft, crimped wool with good outlook, presence and excellent bone structure. Blocker is a son of KWA 7.49 and won the Reserve Champion Medium wool August shorn ram at Canberra Royal in 2000.

Micron 19.32, S.D. 3.80, C.V. 18.5

### KWA 8.186 ANDRE

Purchased at the 2000 Koonwarra ram sale by Paul Weeding, Okehampton Stud, Tasmania for \$16,000. The progeny of the Andre rams show exceptional growth and bone structure and stand structurally correct and even. The wool on his progeny is very bright and white, with a well-defined crimp.

Micron 18.5, S.D. 3.60, C.V. 19.5

### KWA 7.49-52 MONTROSE

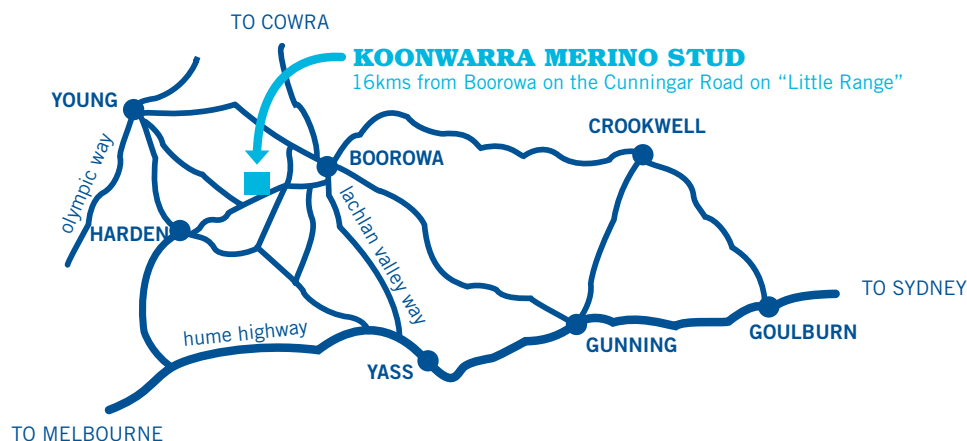
Junior Champion Ram at 2002 Canberra Royal Show. A beautiful tall sire, from the 3.21 family, and carrying a lustrous fleece.

Micron 18.8, S.D. 3.1, C.V. 16.50, Comfort Factor 99.6%

### KWA 8.27 ARNOLD

Overall Junior Champion Ram and Reserve Grand Champion Medium Wool Ram at Bendigo Australian Sheep and Wool Show 2000. Previously this ram was judged Reserve Champion Medium Wool August Shorn Ram at RAS Sydney Royal Show.

Micron 20.0, S.D. 3.30, C.V. 16.7



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