



**C.T. MERRIMAN  
& SON**



## WINTER/SPRING 2020 NEWSLETTER





## WELCOME TO OUR WINTER/SPRING 2020 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our annual combined winter-spring newsletter, with information about our Merrignee and Koonwarra Merino and Poll Merino Studs and our Merrignee Poll Hereford Stud.

Jono, Anna, Digby, Toby and Zoe, along with Charlie and Pip

## NEWS FROM THE FARM

Like everyone else in Australia and the world we are having to manage our lives and business during and through the Coronavirus pandemic for our own health and safety as well as being mindful of all those we interact with, be they family, friends or strangers, as well the financial impacts.

During the last 12 months we have been very lucky to escape the horrendous bushfires and have seen the drought conditions commence breaking in Autumn. We are now enjoying a good season with our Winter grazing crops doing a great job to allow us to maintain full stocking rates and all our dams full. Now in August we are receiving big rainfalls events ensuring our soil profile is certainly very full, so we are feeling very lucky.



Two of the top three Koonwarra rams that topped the from the 2019 ram sale at \$4,750 (ex. GST) - Tim Davidson with Lot 19, Jono, Rick Power, Nutrien Ag Solution (auctioneer) and Di and John Janetzki with Lot 14.

Last September we had a good ram selling season, and at our annual on-property **Koonwarra Merino and Poll Merino Stud** ram sale we sold 93 rams from the 110 May/June 2018 offered, for an average of \$2,212 (ex. GST) with the top price being \$4,750 (ex. GST) for 3 Lots - 14, 19 and 34.

This year, 2020, we intend to again offer 110 young rams at Koonwarra's 43rd Annual On-Property Sale on Wednesday 23rd September. These rams are as usual all paddock reared and May/June 2019 drop.

Last October the **Merrignee Merino and Poll Merino Stud** had solid demand for the rams offered at its annual on-property ram sale, with 89 of the 90 rams offered sold for an average of \$2,241 and a top price of \$5,250 for Lot 87.

At this year's 30th Annual On-Property Sale, Merrignee will be offering 90 young rams, August/September 2019 drop and paddock reared. We will also be offering the five March shorn Merrignee rams which we intended to take to the 2020 Hamilton Sheepvention in early August, but were unable to attend due to COVID-19.

The Merrignee Poll Hereford Stud purchased a new poll hereford bull in July 2020 from Mountain Valley Stud. This bull has settled in well and has terrific temperament. We were able to attend the Mountain Valley auction on 18th July 2020 and this bull, Lot 6, Mountain Valley Pickett P171, was exactly what we were looking for.



*The top priced ram at Merrignee's 2019 ram sale, Lot 87 which sold for \$5,250, with Malcolm Jones, Euralie, Yass, Jono, Paul Simons, Euralie, Yass, and Steve Ridley, Elders Goulburn (auctioneer).*

## THOUGHTS FROM JONO

This year we are celebrating 30 years since C.T. Merriman & Son commenced Merrignee Merino (No. 4417) and Poll Merino (No. 1100) Studs as well as Merrignee Poll Hereford Stud (B2743).

Koonwarra Stud is a registered Merino stud (No. 1267) established in 1947 and a registered Poll Merino stud (No. 1585) established in 2018.

It has been an interesting management challenge over the last 12 months here at the Little Range. After the two on-property rams sales, Koonwarra in September and Merrignee in October, the farm's focus changed to how best to get through the next six months with a dry spring and a hot dry summer ahead. With that at the front of our minds we once again decided to stock a lot of our cropping area, only keeping our oats and one wheat paddock for the 2019 harvest.

We were able to get a lot of the Merrignee ewes with lambs at foot onto the canola paddocks which helped carry a lot of animals till the end of December without having to feed out a lot of grain before the start of 2020. This enabled us to spread the Koonwarra ewes out for the joining period and we had another good stud and flock joining.

The AI programs for both studs were below average with their conception rates, but due to the drought conditions we decided to single join with a backup sire to the AI programs. This plan

worked out well as there were very few empty ewes out of the AI with the backup program.

Due to the drought conditions setting in, we started to plan for a drought lot area to be built on the property – something that had been on our minds for the last few years as an infrastructure that needed to be put in place. We can now drought lot sheep in five pens to a total of 3,750 head with all sheep fed with lick feeders and hay racks. This really helped take the pressure off our paddocks and we thank Ben Lane, Windridge Farming, for his ideas and plans for the layout of our drought containment area.

We have fenced off an old swamp area and used that as another containment area. We were able to use this area for the Merrignee flock ewes feeding and joining about 600 head in one group, which worked well and with great conception results.

I looked at a number of different layouts for these drought containment areas and I would recommend that anyone thinking of enacting this management tool get out and see as many different layouts as possible. Then work out what suits your management, position within your farm, suitable topography and needs before building these areas.

We were lucky to get some storm fronts drop some rain at the end of February which allowed us to start planting grazing canola and grazing wheat in the first week of March.



## IMPORTANT MESSAGE – COVID-19

**Due to the Coronavirus pandemic we intend to have appropriate COVID safe procedures in place for our on-property preview days and sale days, guided by the COVID safe sale protocols recommended by our agents running these sales and in line with current recommendations by our Governments.**

We ask everyone to sign in on arrival, listing your name, phone number and email address. Sanitised individual pens will be provided to each person – please do not share. We ask everyone to maintain the 1.5 metre social distancing and no hand shaking requirements. Hand sanitising stations will be placed around the sale area.

If you feel comfortable, please wear masks. We intend to have spare masks and gloves if people require them. We ask that each business attending the preview and/or sale days to do so with the minimum number of people required i.e. two family members plus an agent or classer.

We will be providing some all ready packaged sandwiches along with bottled water and cans for lunch. Only those behind the serving tables will take orders and hand out directly to each patron. There will be no double handling and definitely no self serve. Sadly after the sale there will be no BBQ or socialising up in the shearing shed.



*Merrignee's Aug/Sept 2019 drop paddock reared young rams*

These grazing crops have been great for the livestock as our pasture paddocks were very slow to recover after the hot dry summer, even with the use of the containment areas and yearly application of fertilizers.

As usual the young livestock are the first sheep onto the grazing crops and will be on these crops till early August, giving them a great start to their lives setting them up well for productive years ahead at Little Range, both for good joinings and wool cuts.

Koonwarra's orange tag maiden ewes, born in May/June 2018, came off the crops averaging 75kgs with a top of 96kgs.

The Koonwarra flock ewes results for this May/June 2020 lambing are:

- Maiden ewes – 13 dries/205 wet for 250 lambs marked for 121% on wet ewe lambing and a total of 115% lamb marked on ewes joined.

- All grown flock ewes – 82 dries/516 wet for 664 lambs marked for 129% on wet ewes lambing and a total of 111% lambs marked on ewes joined.

Merrignee orange tag maiden ewes, born Aug/Sept 2018, came off the crop averaging 53kgs (3 months younger than the Koonwarra maidens) with a top of 72kgs.

The Merrignee flock ewes scanning results for 2020 years lambing are:

- Maiden ewes – 12 dries/187 wet for 6.4% dries.
- All grown ewes – 10 dries/621 wet for 1.6% dries.

We have been keeping a count of percentage of twins at scanning and over the years we know that there is a 20 to 25% twin ratio at time of scanning.



## KOONWARRA'S UPCOMING RAM SALE

At the upcoming Koonwarra On-Property Ram Sale on Wednesday 23rd September 2020 we will be offering a group of sale rams that have come through their first 12 months very well, even through there has been very trying conditions. Luckily they had another good start to life with time spent on grazing crops as lambs. After weaning and as Spring dried off we decide to graze out our canola crops. This group of rams were given a paddock to eat out with lick feeders introduced mid-December as the canola had all but been reduce to a stubble. We introduce oaten hay at the end of December and they stayed on this feed pattern until they were moved into a smaller 20ha paddock as the dry continued. Early May we were able to get these rams onto an improved pasture paddock without any extra grain feeding. In mid-July, the lick feeders were slowly re-introduced and by the start of August the lick restriction was opened up some more.

We will be doing the meat scanning with Rick Power again this year for the 110 Koonwarra catalogued rams and our retained sires from this 2019 drop of rams.

Through talking to some clients and Rick Power, I thought I would go through what these scanning information results mean in relation to each part of the scanned area of the ram:

- **Eye Muscle Width A:** This is the one trait that is more to do with type of animal i.e. the shape of that animal's meat area. It is the one piece of the scanning information that does have

to do with the genetic make-up of the animal and therefore can be passed down through the rams genetics as a sire in your flock and will show up in their progeny.

- **Eye Muscle Depth B:** This is associated with environmental and feeding conditions that the animal has been running on. Therefore it will change as seasonal and environmental conditions change through the ram's lifetime.
- **Eye Muscle Fat C:** This is also associated with environmental and feeding conditions that this animal has been running on. Therefore it will also change as seasonal and environmental conditions change through the ram's lifetime.

The scanning information means that no matter the environmental conditions that the sheep are run under the Eye Muscle Width A will stay with that ram and his progeny.

The other two pieces of information from the scanning – Depth B and Fat C – can and will change due to the environmental conditions that the ram and his progeny are run under.

For the 2019 Koonwarra drop lambs we used three outside sires for the AI program. These outside sires were:

- **Pemcaw Poll 012:** *Progeny have mustard eartags.* This sire is a 'double P' polled sire with very good wool growth and style of fleece. This sire has had sons in the 2017 and 2019 sale groups of rams.

## 2020 ANNUAL ON-PROPERTY RAM SALE

WEDNESDAY 23rd SEPTEMBER 2020 · 1pm auction, 10am inspections

Preview Open Day · Friday 18th September 2020, 10am–4pm

This years' 110 May/June 2019 drop rams to be offered are a very impressive large framed group from both A.I. sires and Koonwarra bred sires. Both horn & poll rams will be in the sale group, and as usual these rams have all been paddock reared so they are ready to adapt to clients paddock conditions.

All rams were shorn on 14th April and were side sampled for their fleece tests on 11th August 2020 so they have current measurements, they will be body scanned by Rick Power and weighed the week before the sale.



*Koonwarra's May/June 2019 drop paddock reared young rams*

- **Nerstane Poll – 43:** *Progeny have black eartags.* This new poll sire was spotted at Dubbo Sheep Show in 2018. A very well-built ram with great staple length and style. He has left us with some very impressive rams and just as good young ewes. We have been so impressed with this ram we used him in the late 2019 AI program for the 2020 drop as well.
- **Yarrowonga – 193:** *Progeny have orange eartags.* This new horn sire was also spotted at Dubbo Sheep Show in 2018 in the display pens that Yarrowonga Merino Stud had set up. We liked the wool style and the thickness of the wool and ordered semen doses from that ram straight away. This ram was later sold for \$60,000 to three other merino studs.

The 2019 Koonwarra paddock joining sires were:

- KWA Glenpaen Magic 030: *Dark green tags*
- KWA Glenpaen Magic 205: *Dark green tags*
- KWA Boonoke 043: *Lime green tags*
- KWA Charinga Doc 004: *Dark blue tags*
- Claypans 323: *Sky blue tags*
- KWA Claypans 017: *Sky blue tags*
- KWA Claypans 020: *Sky blue tags*
- KWA Winyar 029: *White tags*
- KWA Winyar 027: *White tags*
- KWA Uniform 077: *Purple Tags*
- KWA Roseville Park 065: *Yellow tags*
- KWA BG 177: *Red tags*

**The March 2020 shearing of the Koonwarra orange tag ewes (2018 drop) average fleece test and body weight results: micron 18.3, SD 3.2; CV 17.5, CF 99.3, GFW 9.8kgs and an average body weight of 80.7kgs. The whole Koonwarra flock fleece micron average for the 2020 shearing was 18.94.**

The 43rd Annual On-Property Koonwarra Merino and Poll Merino Stud ram sale will be held on Wednesday 23rd September 2020 from 1pm, with a Preview Day on Friday 18th September from 10am to 4pm.

There will 110 May/June 2019 drop rams, all unhoused, all side sampled on 11th August 2020. They will all be on display and individually penned for the preview day as well as the sale day, as usual. The rams were shorn on 14th April 2020 by the local contracting business, Diamond Shearing.

All rams will have current fleece tests, while body weights will be done the week before the sale. Rick Power will be testing the Koonwarra rams for body fat score etc. before the sale date. All information above each ram ensuring information is current and accurate to each ram on the sale date.

All clients are welcome to ring and organise an inspection of these young sale rams with Jono, Charlie or with your agent or classer before the sale date.



## 43rd ANNUAL ON-PROPERTY RAM SALE

Wednesday 23rd September 2020, 1pm

110 Fine/Medium and Medium May/June  
2019 drop unhoused horn and poll rams

**OPEN DAY · FRIDAY 18th SEPTEMBER, 10am–4pm**

**FLOCK RAM SALES COMMENCE MID OCTOBER, BY APPOINTMENT**

[www.koonwarrastud.com.au](http://www.koonwarrastud.com.au)



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## THOUGHTS FROM CHARLIE

As Jono mentioned, 2020 commenced with a severe drought still affecting large areas of NSW and a large number of our sheep were in the newly organised drought lots with the outlook for the future weather patterns not looking good.

By mid January the rain arrived and by the end of February Little Range had received 192 mms, so in went the grazing crops and the pasture started to grow, even though it took awhile for things to pick up and May was a dryer month. However since June the season has been very good and we got through shearing in May and June under the COVID-19 protocols. These wools certainly showed signs of the drought, plus the pandemic has certainly dramatically affected the price of wool. It must be very difficult for the wool mills and processors when their sales are so severely reduced and it could be some time before retail sales get back to near normal.

We have recently sold wool in the first week of sales with the fleece section realising from 700 cents per kilo, while a six bale line of 16.3 microns, with 57.9% yield and 29 n/kt strength making 937 cents a kilo. We were pleased with the sale as I think it showed reasonable demand because the fleece style and micron measurement.

Whatever price range the wool market is at, it is the constant assessment of the merino sheep for the correct attributes that helps in the over all future and profitability of our merino sheep. Classing for conformation/structure along with fleece quality and quantity, plus keeping pressure on higher lambing percentages by scanning and the wet and dry method does make a big difference to our bottom line. With Merrignee (and Koonwarra) sheep we also seriously select for bone thickness and width between front and back legs, which also includes selection of sound feet in shape and type, so the sheep can better handle these wetter winters. This trait helps our flocks to have less lame ewes when lambing increasing lamb survival.



*Merrignee's 11 month old wethers sold at Wagga Wagga*

## 2020 ANNUAL ON-PROPERTY RAM SALE

FRIDAY 9th OCTOBER 2020, 1pm · 1pm auction, 10am inspections

Preview Open Day · Friday 2nd October, 10am-4pm

This years' 90 twelve month old rams (born Aug-Sept 2019) to be offered are a very good group and many of them by some very good A.I. sires, both horn and poll. As usual these rams have all been paddock reared so they are ready to adapt to clients paddock conditions.

All rams were shorn on 15th April except for the 5 March shorn rams that were going to be taken to Hamilton Sheepvention this August, before the event was cancelled.

All rams were side sampled on for fleece testing on 12th August 2020 so they have current measurements and will be weighed the week before the sale.





*Merrignee's Aug/Sept 2019 drop paddock reared young rams*

Jono and myself have been offering our sheep classing services for clients over a number of years, which has shown us improvement in clients flocks for fleece weights, body weights and frame size incorporated with management practices to improve lamb survival. There is always one more selection procedure I recommend to Merrignee clients and that is to maintain a high quality of fleece style with correct crimp patterns for 18.5 and lower micron fleeces. This stylish fleece is what attracts wool buyers to select clips and pay premiums.

A property where I have been classing for a number of years is that of Steve, Jude, Matt and Emma Merriman's Ravensworth property, which is the original Merriman property in the Yass district. It was at Ravensworth where our family's grandfather, Walter Merriman, grew up and eventually started the Merryville Merino Stud, next door to the Ravensworth property. The present aim at Ravensworth is for their merino sheep to have a high fleece weight in relation to micron and maintaining wool quality and crimp style. They also need to have good confirmation and frame size as the older ewes are used in a prime lamb operation on their Humewood property. Steve constantly monitors the merino flock for fleece weights, micron and lambing percentages and has kindly allowed us to use their results in this newsletter.

#### Information from Ravensworth - 08.12.2019

2 year old (25-27 months old) shearing of classed ewes:

- Average cut/hd - 7.05kgs
- Average flock micron - 18.17
- Average flock yield - 70%
- Average SL - 106
- Average com% - 99.4
- Total - 19 fleece bales (18 bales in top line, 1 bale broader style line at 18.3 microns)

3 year old (37-39 months old) shearing of classed ewes:

- Average cut/hd - 7.40kgs
- Average flock micron - 18.20
- Average flock yield - 71.5%
- Average SL - 103
- Average com% - 99.6
- Total - 17 fleece bales (14 bales in top line, 3 bales broader style line but same 18.2 microns)

A broader style line of four bales from the 2 and 3 year old ewes 18.20 microns (not much difference, although the yield was slightly lower at 69%).

Lambing percentages of merino flock 2019 (including all merino ewes):

- Ewes joined to lambs marked = 91.0% (note: % taken from ewes joined, not ewe numbers at marking)

Hoggets shorn (classed and culled together, with only 10 months wool):

- Average cut/hd - 5.45 kgs
- Average micron - 17.3
- Yield - 69.6%

Ewes and wethers unshorn as lambs.

These figures above are from the 2019 shearing through a very dry season and show that their management and feeding programs were well rewarded, with bulky fleece weights and very good lambing percentages at lamb marking. Ravensworth has been using Merrignee sires since 1990 and Charlie has been classing for the same period of time.

Other figures we can record are the Merrignee 2019 wether lambs born August/September 2019 that went to market at Wagga Wagga saleyard recently, and the top 130 head weighed between 65 and 55 kgs/hd and 116 head between 55 and 50 kgs/hd.

We have been scanning our stud and flock ewes for a number of years and our March joined maiden flock ewes aged 1.5 years old scanned at 12 dry out of 187 wet for a 6.4% dry with a 20-25% twin result. We have been maintaining around this level for some years. These ewes are about to start lambing now.

This allows us to sell the small number of non-lambing ewes to the meat trade, allowing us to build up the fertility levels of our merino ewes, both in the stud and commercial flock.

Another client, Gunning Pastoral Co have reported very good scanning percentages on their Fairview property at Tumorrana NSW. They have been using Merrignee sires since 1995. Fairview is in a very high rainfall area, so requires bright, white and genetically stable fleece types, which Merrignee is able to provide. Their 1.5 year old ewes scanned at 123% pregnant.

## MERRIGNEE GENETICS / BREEDING

Using bloodlines outside from Merrignee genetics has been a practice we employ to improve our basic merino traits which we know will increase the profit margin in our stud and that of commercial merino breeders. In the 2020 program we have used semen from a Demondrille sire who became Grand Champion Superfine ram at the Royal Sydney Show and went on to become Supreme Merino of the Show in 2019.

We also have used a sire from Glenpaen Merino Stud in Victoria, who became Supreme Exhibit at the 2019 Bendigo Sheep Show. His sire is Glenpaen "Magic" whom we have used very successfully here at Merrignee.

Other sires we have used are a Langdene sire who we purchased a share in as well as Poll semen we purchased from the Mt Yulong Stud in Victoria. Our son Jono found this Mt Yulong sire in their display section at Bendigo Sheep show and suggested we should go and have a look. I am very pleased that Jono did bring this sire to my attention as his lambs might be the best of a quality group of AI lambs just born - it will be good to see these lambs develop over the next 12 months.

The 2020 on-property rams are a high quality group and received good comment from woolgrowers and clients at our recent field day organised by Elders Ltd.

Some of the rams which stood out were sired by Langdene 007, with big fleece weights and rich stylish fleeces on very good frame sizes. There are progeny from Claypans Poll 323 and the Glenpaen "Magic" family who have four young rams we used in the 2019 joining, some of which were sold to clients at the 2020 GSSM sale at Canberra in January.

A Poll sire who we are very pleased with his progeny is the Coromandel sire loaned to Merrignee by Geoff Hall. There are definitely young rams to keep for the future from this drop and plenty to be offered at the on-property sale on 9th October. Their attributes are the high quality fleeces of ultrafine and superfine style.

### The Merrignee 20 month old stud ewes fleece test averages, shorn in May each year

#### 2020

- Superfines - 16.9 microns; 2.9 SD; 17.1 CV; 99.5 CF; 8.0 kgs flc/wt; 67.1 kgs b/wt
- Fines - 17.1 microns; 3.1 SD; 17.6 CV; 99.4 CF; 8.6 kgs flc/wt; 73.2 kgs b/wt
- Fine-Mediums - 17.5 microns; 3.1 SD; 17.9 CV; 99.4 CF; 8.9 kgs flc/wt; 66.7 kgs b/wt
- Polls - 17.7 microns; 3.1 SD; 17.4 CV; 99.4 CF; 8.2 kgs flc/wt; 69.1 kgs b/wt

A significant rise in fleece weights for the 2020 shearing says something about our breeding philosophies of concentrating on our profit objectives, but I also think it reflects big time on the terrible six months of drought. So with a good amount of our quality soil through the fleece lines, I would rely more on the 2019 very good fleece weights to get a more reliable view of the Merrignee genetic traits.

It will be interesting to see the 2021 fleece figures as I expect them to be very good due to the excellent season for growing out merino sheep.

#### 2019

- Superfines - 17.0 microns; 2.8 SD; 16.6 CV; 99.5 CF; 7.6 kgs flc/wt; 58.6 kgs b/wt
- Fine - 17.4 microns; 3.0 SD; 17.1 CV; 99.3 CF; 8.0 kgs Flc/Wt; 61.3 kgs b/wt
- Fine-Mediums - 18.3 microns; 3.1 SD; 17.0 CV; 99.2 CF; 8.3 kgs Flc/Wt; 61.9 kgs b/wt
- Polls - 18.1 microns; 2.9 SD; 16.1 CV; 99.1 CF; 7.6 kgs Flc/Wt; 67.5 kgs b/wt



## 30th ANNUAL ON-PROPERTY RAM SALE

Friday 9th October 2020, 1pm

90 Superfine, Fine and Fine/Medium Aug/Sept  
2019 drop unhoused horn and poll rams

**OPEN DAY • FRIDAY 2nd OCTOBER, 10am–4pm**

FLOCK RAM SALES COMMENCE MID OCTOBER, BY APPOINTMENT

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**JONO** 0427 272 238 | **CHARLIE** 0467 853 396 | **OFFICE** 02 6385 3396 / 0427 289 018



## POLL HEREFORD REPORT

Calving has started in our stud cows and heifers. These calves are by our stud Poll Hereford bull, Rayleigh "Magnum" M9. This is the second calving by this bull and we are very pleased with his 2019 born calves. They have very good body type, great skin and eye pigment and plenty of muscle in the right places. For the second year the heifers are having no problems calving to Rayleigh Magnum M9 due to his low E.B.V. 2.8 for birth weight. This is a pleasing result, especially this year as there has been plenty of high quality feed recently.

The two year old bulls for sale are by our previous stud bull Whim Park "Freight Train" who has left plenty of quality Poll Herefords here at Merrignee. He has provided very good types of commercial bulls with good length and depth of body which leads to solid body weights, combined with well set eye sockets and good eye pigment.

We recommend these bulls to clients who are seeking a Poll Hereford bull for their straight commercial herd or for a crossbreeding program.



Merrignee bulls

### OPEN DAYS PREVIEW FOR 2020 ON-PROPERTY RAM SALES

**KOONWARRA** Friday 18th September, 10am-4pm | **MERRIGNEE** Friday 2nd October, 10am-4pm

### 2020 ANNUAL ON-PROPERTY RAM SALES

**KOONWARRA** Wednesday 23rd September, 1pm | **MERRIGNEE** Friday 2nd October, 1pm

**FLOCK RAMS SALE** by appointment  
Two price groups \$900 and \$700 (ex. GST)

**SEMEN SIRES**  
\$50 (ex. GST) per dose

**HEALTH STATUS** BRUCELLOSIS FREE under C.T. Merriman & Son's accreditation CW90/33  
All lambs have been GUDAIR VACCINATED each year since 2002 | Vendor Declared FOOTROT FREE



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**MERRIGNEE MERINO & POLL MERINO STUD**  
**FLOCK NO** 4417 | **POLL FLOCK NO** 1100 | est. 1990 | **merrignee.com.au** | merriman@merrignee.com.au



**KOONWARRA MERINO & POLL MERINO STUD**  
**FLOCK NO** 1267 est. 1947 | **POLL FLOCK NO** 1585 est. 2018 | **koonwarrastud.com.au** | merino@koonwarrastud.com.au



**MERRIGNEE POLL HEREFORD STUD**  
**STUD NO** B2743 | merriman@merrignee.com.au