

RICHMOND

M E R I N O S

Flock No. 5021

WELCOME TO OUR 2022 NEWSLETTER



2022 SALE CALENDAR

TUESDAY 30 AUGUST SOUTH WEST SLOPES STUD MERINO FIELD DAYS

(Harden showground)

Richmond will be in attendance displaying selected sires & sale rams.

WEDNESDAY 7 SEPTEMBER RAM INSPECTION & OPEN DAY

10am-3pm

All sale rams penned + morning information session answering all your questions on ASBVs with leading industry consultant Belinda Steers.

TUESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER ON-PROPERTY RAM AUCTION

Inspections from 9.30am

Sale commences 1pm.

Offering approximately 120 thirteen month old poll and horn rams. Fully measured and genomics tested with pedigrees, raw wool tests, and ASBVs.

WEDNESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER PRIVATE SALES

Grade ram available at set prices by appointment from Wednesday onwards.

With the strict Covid regulations of the previous two years at last seemingly behind us (hopefully) it's great to be able move back into a normal ram sale program. Despite the irritation of masks, social distancing, lockdowns and all the inconveniences that we had to endure perhaps one benefit has been that commercial buyers have had to develop a better understanding of how to navigate the complicated and continually evolving world of figures and in particular breeding values. Whether we like it or not ASBVs are definitely here to stay and the better our understanding of how to use them the better placed we will be to make selection decisions on sale day. With this in mind we have decided to incorporate a presentation during our open day by industry consultant **Belinda Steers** on the finer points of how ASBVs work and how to properly utilise them from a commercial point of view. We think that this will be a very helpful and informative discussion and sincerely hope that anyone who feels they need to develop a better understanding of the ASBV system will make the effort to attend.





The top priced ram purchased by Scott Thrift on behalf of the Coddington Uardry Merino Stud with Trevor Ryan and auctioneer Paul Dooley

2021 SALE REPORT

Despite the second year in a row of frustrating Covid restrictions the Richmond 2021 on property sale was remarkably successful offloading a total clearance of 120 rams at a record \$3038 average, up \$761 on the previous years result.

The top price ram knocked down to the Coddington Uardry Poll Merino stud for \$8000 was a beautifully balanced sire by Richmond 170007. He was +10.9 YWT, +2.0 muscle and carried a long, lustrous and silky fibre.

Kevin Hynam of Hynam Poll Merino stud, Victoria and Jock Allen "Kiah Lake" Berridale both paid \$7000 for two excellent high fleece weight CP7379 sons while volume buyers on the day were Old Springfield partnership Cooma 22 rams, Dalkieth Herefords Cassilis 13 rams and Geeron partnership Forbes with 11 rams.

We very much appreciate the support of both long term and new clients. We see

ourselves as above all things ram breeders and our first priority is to provide commercial breeders with the highest quality genetics that will continually improve their flocks. We are eternally grateful for those who have stuck by us and shared our vision in breeding the highest quality merino for not just today's markets but for tomorrow and well into the future .

GENOMICS

Genomics or genotyping is the study of a sheep's DNA sequence which helps predict breeding values for multiple traits including those for wool, carcass and reproduction. The process is quite simple and involves sending a tissue sample allocated to a specific animal to the laboratory. Once the genetic markers for the animal's traits are identified the information is then combined with any existing available data or parentage to create

a much more accurate breeding value. Richmond began genotyping the ram sale team 2 years ago and were immediately surprised by the changes generated in our ASBVs. Although initially we only really expected to see some insights into the hard to measure traits such as eating quality to our surprise many of the production traits for fleece and carcass changed considerably and often in a positive direction. What was particularly encouraging

was that after the inclusion of the genomics data many of the animals began to match much better visually with their ASBV figures than they had previously done with only the raw measurements for data. Below is an example of 2 rams from the 2021 sale catalogue with their ASBV figures before and after the inclusion of genomics data.

Genomics is yet another available tool for the modern sheep breeder that helps us and our clients make a more informed decision on sale day. This year we have collected DNA samples from 200 young 2021 drop rams which should hopefully include the entire sale team as well as 70-80 grade rams.

	YWT	YEMD	YFAT	YCFW
LOT 1 (Before genomics)	7.8	0.9	0.4	19.5
LOT 1 (After genomics)	9.9	0.4	0.2	23.8
LOT 4 (Before genomics)	8.9	1.7	0.8	17.8
LOT 4 (After genomics)	10.4	1.9	0.8	20.3

WILL IT EVER STOP RAINING?

Last year we recorded a fraction under 1000mm for the calendar year and this year at the time of writing this newsletter we have already received almost our average annual rainfall in the first 6 months of the year. Over the last 2 ½ years merino flocks across eastern Australia have been put under incredible pressure from these conditions especially from fleece rot and flystrike. Don't let anyone tell you that these issues are to be expected as normal occurrence in wet years. Heavy colour, fleece rot and flystrike are genetic faults that need to be classed out of your flock, they are avoidable and if your current ram supplier tells you otherwise then you may need to consider changing bloodlines. Years of selection for high quality fibre on the right skin types combined with correct structure have enabled us and many of our clients to navigate these extreme seasonal conditions with minimal issues.

BREEDING FOR BALANCE AND QUALITY

Balance and quality are an integral part of livestock breeding and form the cornerstone of our breeding direction at Richmond. They are two words that are regularly used in the stud industry but what exactly are they and what do they mean?

BALANCE

Unfortunately the perfect merino doesn't seem to exist and the main reason for this is that unlike many other breeds of livestock, including sheep the modern merino is very much a multi purpose animal with the ability to generate multiple income streams. The three main areas of production are wool, meat and surplus sheep (fertility). The problem is that an animal has only so much energy available to direct towards these areas so generally one of them is compromised and the sheep ends up being genetically wired to produce either meat or fibre but not extreme amounts of both. Also if there is concerted effort by the breeder to heavily increase production in one area then we often begin to see faults develop. An example would be sheep that are bred for extreme fleece weights are often prone to fleece rot and flystrike whereas sheep bred for extreme meat traits might develop structural problems.

The answer is balance. We need to be mindful that there is only so much a sheep can produce from what nutrition is available. This doesn't mean that we can't improve our production across multiple traits it just means that it

might not happen overnight. With a well thought out breeding program and the use of modern tools such as ASBVs and genomics we can gradually breed better animals across multiple traits keeping balance in our flock while at the same time retained the ability to adjust to changing markets.

QUALITY

A common misconception is that production equals quality. Although obviously a highly productive animal is desirable some of the most productive sheep bred each year end up as culls. A well bred flock of superior quality has the following characteristics.

1. They are well classed and even without a large percentage of obvious culls
2. They have high structural soundness.
3. They have soft, quality fleeces that process well with minimal colour and resistance to fleece rot and flystrike providing a excellent product for the end consumer.
4. They have tender, tasty meat that gives the consumer a good eating experience.

Each year some of our highest indexing rams end up as culls because they don't fit the above criteria. In today's industry figures and in particular ASBVs and indexes are playing a increasingly important role in our selection decisions but if we are serious about retaining our market share of quality fibre and protein while maintaining premium prices for surplus sheep then it is imperative that we continue to concentrate on supplying the consumer with a quality product. Production per head has always taken centre stage in the sheep industry but it is worth remembering that for every kilo of fibre or meat that a sheep produces it must consume more dry matter to provide the energy for this production which then raises the animal's DSE which consequently limits the number of sheep you are able to run. To put it simply the combination of kilos per hectare and quality of product is the determining factor in a successful livestock enterprise rather than kilos per head.



SEMEN SIRES



RICHMOND SIRE 200099

Young sire with white, sharp crimping wool showing all the markers for follicle density and a very good bare breech area.

WOOL TESTS (AT 13 MONTHS) ASBV'S

	FD	SD	CF%	YWT	YEMD	YFAT	YCFW	YFD	YDCV
200099	17.4	2.6	99.9	6.2	1.05	-0.29	29.9	-0.32	-2.03



RICHMOND SIRE 200112

Balanced sire with a good carcass package to go with a long stapled, lustrous and soft handling fibre.

WOOL TESTS (AT 13 MONTHS) ASBV'S

	FD	SD	CF%	YWT	YEMD	YFAT	YCFW	YFD	YDCV
200112	16.8	2.7	99.8	9.4	1.42	0.54	24.1	-0.53	-1.50

SOUTH WEST SLOPES MERINO FIELD DAY

This year for the first time we will have a display the **South West Slopes Merino Field Day** at The Harden Showground. We will be presenting our Spring drop rams straight out of the paddock without any access to feeders and we hope that this will be taken into account when comparing them on the day. We will also have our sale team penned for inspection on our on property open day the following week and as usual we are always happy to accommodate on farm private inspections of the rams.