

The Mountain Dam Merino Stud

It is with mixed emotions we inform you that our next Ram Sale on Monday 5 November will be the last held at The Mountain Dam. We are proud to present our sale team for you with genetics we have finessed over 30 years of stud operation.

True succession means handing the reins to the next generation to chase their dreams and ambitions. The Stud operation does not fit with John and Merty's plans and Alison and I are looking forward to semi-retirement. As such, The Mountain Dam stud is also for sale by negotiation and we will present a sample of stud ewes, sires and lambs at the sale.

We hope you will join us at this years' sale, with a lineup of exceptional poll rams for your breeding program, the stud display and a post-sale celebration - The end of this chapter and an opportunity to thank you for your support over the years.

"Sheep breeding has been my hobby, passion and profession. With challenges, exciting industry developments and successes - I have loved every minute of it. I have never known a more positive time to be in the merino industry with exciting times ahead." Tom



FINAL RAM SALE – MONDAY 5 NOV 2018

Inspection 10.00 am Helmsman Sale 1.00 pm

THE MOUNTAIN DAM STUD FOR SALE

Sample of stud sires, ewes and lambs on display

Light lunch and post-sale celebrations provided



PHOTO: 2017 drop rams from which the sale rams will be chosen shortly

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GENETIC DEVELOPMENT

Every year I am excited to see the next round of genetic development and this year is no exception (*stud ewes and lambs pictured below*). We will have our best ever rams for selection with a strong poll influence and strong carcase traits - combined with our renowned quality wool and doing ability.

We have just been notified that our sire RG76 has provided another leading Sire Evaluation trial result for The Mountain Dam, in North East Victoria (Dookie). We are pleased with this validation of our breeding program - which has been targeting a good balance across all traits.

RG76 will again have progeny for sale this year - See a summary of his results (*Table 1 below and Table 2 on the next page*), with shaded results showing trait leaders. Two years ago, RG76's father had stand out results in the Balmoral 2014 trial drop, and a son has promising lambs on the ground for us this year, along with an array of other exciting progeny results. All these rams along with all sires used at The Mountain Dam are poll rams.



Table 1. Adjusted Sire Means for Measured Traits

Adjusted Sire Means are the average performance of all the progeny of a sire adjusted for all available information on sex, birth type, rear type, age of dam, age of measurement and management group, in order to improve the accuracy. No account is made for trait heritability and genetic correlations between traits that can improve the breeding value accuracy, as is the case in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

The highest performing sires for each trait (trait leaders) are highlighted by shading. Curvature is the possible exception when for many breeders the optimum score is in the middle of the range therefore trait leaders have not been highlighted. The Progeny group average listed at the bottom of the table is the actual mean of the progeny group.

Breeders flock, Sire name	Number of Progeny	Adjusted Sire Means for measured traits (deviations from the site mean)														
		GFW kg		CFW kg		FD µm		FDCV %		SL mm	SS N/tex	WT kg			FAT mm	EMD mm
		P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	A	A	W	Y	A	H	H
Birdawarra, 130001	17	2.4	7.0	1.8	4.4	13.9	18.0	22.2	18.2	107.8	38.8	27.4	42.5	45.9	2.4	27.3
Cahirbong, 140308	18	2.3	6.2	1.7	3.9	16.7	19.1	23.0	17.6	107.1	39.5	26.7	43.1	45.1	3.2	27.5
Connewarran, 1002	23	2.3	6.7	1.8	4.3	16.5	18.1	21.9	17.0	117.4	39.2	26.5	40.0	44.1	2.4	26.1
Greenfields Poll, 140345	23	2.3	6.7	1.7	4.2	16.4	18.3	23.1	19.1	110.9	32.9	27.2	42.1	48.2	2.5	24.8
Hinesville, 130047	17	2.4	6.8	1.8	4.3	16.4	18.6	22.6	17.9	108.2	36.4	26.5	42.9	48.1	2.6	25.2
Kilfeera Park, 100024	30	2.3	6.8	1.9	4.4	16.2	17.8	22.6	18.5	105.2	36.3	27.6	40.6	45.1	2.3	26.1
Kilfeera Park, 150409	23	2.4	6.6	1.8	4.2	16.1	17.5	23.9	19.9	109.3	36.9	28.1	42.9	47.7	2.2	26.0
Pastora Poll, 113416	17	2.4	6.9	1.8	4.3	15.9	17.0	22.7	20.2	110.7	32.7	25.6	39.8	44.4	2.2	24.7
The Mountain Dam, 14/RG076	30	2.4	7.0	1.8	4.3	15.7	17.3	21.5	17.3	115.2	36.5	26.7	40.7	44.8	2.5	26.3
Toland Poll, 151042	37	2.5	6.7	1.8	4.0	16.2	18.1	22.6	18.5	109.3	38.7	28.5	43.8	48.7	2.6	26.4
Toland Poll, 151058	32	2.4	6.3	1.8	3.9	16.2	18.1	22.3	18.3	112.1	34.7	27.3	41.5	49.3	2.6	25.6
Progeny group average	24	2.4	6.7	1.8	4.2	16.2	18.0	22.6	18.4	110.3	36.6	27.1	41.8	46.5	2.5	26.0

W = Weaning (42 to 120 days); P = Post Weaning (210 to 300 days); Y = Yearling (300 to 400 days); H = Hingget (400 to 540 days); A = Adult (540 days and older)

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Table 2. AMSEA Index Values and Classer's Visual Grade

The index values reported are based on measured traits FBV performance with varying emphasis on fleece weight, fibre diameter, body weight, staple strength and worm egg count. See 'Index Options' (page 9) for more information on the indexes presented in the table below.

The highest performing sires for each trait (trait leaders) are highlighted by shading. Each sire is listed for Classer's Visual Grade and the same four indexes at all site evaluations.

Sire Code	Breeder's flock, Sire name	Number of progeny	AMSEA Index Values				Classer's Visual Grade	
			Dual Purpose Plus	Merino Production Plus	Fibre Production Plus	Wool Production Plus	Tops % P ^a	Culls % P
1	Birdswarra, 130001	17	123	119	114	116	-4	5
2	Cahirtönig, 140308	18	104	79	77	82	4	-8
3	Connewarran, 1002	23	98	105	105	103	0	-1
4	Greenfields Poll, 140345	23	80	94	88	101	-13	9
5	Hinesville, 130047	17	92	98	93	100	-15	-1
6	Kilferra Park, 100024	30	102	94	102	94	1	1
7	Kilferra Park, 150409	23	112	107	107	104	16	-5
8	Pastora Poll, 113416	17	82	102	107	102	-9	22
9	The Mountain Dam, 14RG076	30	119	112	118	105	14	-12
10	Toland Poll, 151042	37	111	106	101	104	19	-9
11	Toland Poll, 151058	32	82	85	86	88	-13	-2
	Average performance	24	100	100	100	100	20	14

^a W – Weaning (42 to 120 days); P – Post Weaning (210 to 300 days); Y – Yearling (300 to 400 days); H – Hogget (400 to 540 days); A – Adult (540 days and older)

^b Classer's Visual Grade is expressed as the percentage deviation of average Tops% and Culls%.

MERINOS IN HIGH DEMAND NOW AND FOR THE FORSEEABLE FUTURE

While many of our friends across Australia are in our thoughts as they battle drought - I consider us fortunate in the Western Victoria, with strong farming prospects. The drought has exacerbated the reduction in ewes joined to merinos nationally and further reduced wool production. For those still in the game, all merino ewes and any merino sheep are going to be in high demand for the foreseeable future. The high prices enjoyed now and will continue when NSW seasonal conditions improve.

I have recently returned from WA where I assisted Lynley Anderson to class her sheep, including sale rams. Last year Lynley sold rams and genetics to 20 leading studs around Australia, having developed a reputation for FAT, EMD, CFW and WEC. I enjoy working with other enterprises to humbly share my knowledge of wool quality and genetic selection with their own and look forward to continuing this rewarding classing work with a number of flocks.

Reviewing genetics at the Bendigo sheep show, Ballarat sheep show (where I was honored to judge) and at Sheepvention – alongside the Australian Merino Sire Evaluation trials which I believe are cutting edge – I am confident that we continue to get our genetic direction balanced and correct.

The Mountain Dam has focused on producing animals that perform across all traits - doing ability, wool production, wool quality, fertility and carcase measurements. Our sheep are bred to perform commercially in Western Victoria which we feel is unique and something we are very proud of.

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STUD FOR SALE BY NEGOTIATION

On display at the annual Ram Sale will be a sample of The Mountain Dam Poll Merino Stud.

- **STUD SIRES**
- **STUD EWES**
- **MAIDEN EWES**
- **EWE LAMBS**
- **RAM LAMBS**

Robert Herrmann was instrumental in the establishment of the stud 30 years ago and we have engaged his services to manage its next chapter.

Anyone interested in acquiring the stud can contact:

Robert Herrmann

OR

Tom Silcock

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Please mark Monday 5 November (Melbourne Cup eve) in your diary.

We hope to see you there if not before,

Tom, Alison, John & Mertzy



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MANAGEMENT NOTES FROM TOM

Do whatever you can to maximise your excess sheep numbers now to deliver more cash for you. For some, that may mean improve your management inputs, to ensure better sheep survival results, good growth rates and maximise your wool production. You will be paid in cash for any or all of these improvements.

Other suggestions:

- Drafting off tail cull sheep and building them up will be very rewarding
- Drafting off light ewes at weaning to help maximise their next conception rates
- Drafting of light lambs at weaning to maximise survival rate and improve sale sheep returns
- Ensure your main mobs are reaching their target weights to deliver their genetic potential

So often our returns are restricted by our management, not the genetic potential. Have you been able to keep last year's lambs on an increasing body weight path and do you plan to keep that happening through to joining? Do you have a plan to maximise your lamb's growth rates after weaning this year?

Grass seeds! Every year we see a massive impact from grass seeds effecting growth rates, wool production, wool quality and wool value, as well as general sheep wellbeing. It is difficult to appreciate the effect of a small grass seed pickup, unless you have witnessed Bio Clip shorn sheep. Our management often imposes grass seed contamination, with the seeds working their way in to irritate against the skin. Like it would affect us with grass seed filled clothing, sheep's wellbeing is dramatically affected, often without our knowledge - Plan now to avoid it.

Every year I see sheep's genetic potential limited from lameness, worms and or flies. Once again these issues can be minimised by planned management now.

Generally speaking, I believe rams are the only animals that can be justifiably foot trimmed, because of the individual importance each ram has in their ability to deliver successful conception. Any infection at all, including fly strike or foot infections, may deem a ram infertile for at least six weeks, until the infection has past, regardless of how much you have paid for him. It makes good commercial sense to trim up your ram's feet now, while they are soft and check their testicles for lumps in the cords, their purses for mite, their teeth and give them an annual booster vaccination while you are at it. It won't be long before they will also need fly protection at least on their heads. Remember, plan to keep them seed free.

Although we may have just experienced our typical tough winter with its annual challenges, generally speaking times are as good as they could be expected to get for us, although as we know, we can never get too much rain from here on into the Spring. When things are fantastic, we can prepare for our next tough season - what are the underlying messages we should be grasping? What are our opportunities?

I have always made myself available to support our ram clients with classing and consulting. I am happy to continue providing these services for you in 2019 – should you wish for me to work with you in selecting future sires or providing any support where I can.

Wishing you a successful year ahead, Tom.