

# WUNNAMURRA

## POLL DORSET

Wunnamurra Rams Breed Better Lambs

**Welcome to the 17th Wunnamurra Poll Dorset Ram Sale**

**Thursday 12th September, 170 Rams, 11am Auction**

Well, what a rollercoaster of a year, it has been an extremely varied 12 months in terms of both weather and markets. Clearly most of Eastern Australia is under drought, particularly in the north of NSW. In contrast, we are told that much of Victoria is looking quite good. It has made for another very challenging year. We had been feeding sheep from January through to mid-May when it finally rained here. Since then the season has been reasonable with average rainfall keeping things growing, however, rainfall has stalled since the start of August, and the likelihood of finishing crops is beginning to diminish. We have been fortunate to have some irrigation which our ewes and lambs have enjoyed immensely, but without rain we will be looking to graze crops and feed grain again soon.

The other part of the rollercoaster has been the markets with wool reaching multiple peaks and a sharp decline since February due to a range of factors. Sheep and lamb have also been somewhat volatile with many records made and broken throughout Winter and then also a fairly sharp drop off since that time due to greater supply. It is hard to see where the number of lambs are going to be sourced from with record demand and year to date slaughter, coupled with lower than normal lambing % and drought for much of Eastern Australia. It will make for an interesting Spring selling season and hopefully the record prices for lamb continue through for everyone. All in all, one thing is for sure, the demand for wool, sheep and lamb is ever growing and that can only be good for all sheep producers.

We now market rams over a very wide area, from Kyalite to Morundah, Junee, Holbrook, Moama, Longwood and even down as far as Leongatha, and also our local area, Jerilderie to Deniliquin. Hopefully this drought breaks soon!

This year will be our 17th Annual Sale and the Rams will present in very good condition despite the extremely tough season.

They exhibit our breeding aims of big long bold clean headed rams, displaying early growth suitable for joining to Border Leicester Merino cross ewes or large framed Riverina Merino ewes to produce quick maturing lambs for the Trade or Export markets.

All Stud lambs are weighed at birth and 100 days. At 200 days all lambs are weighed and scanned for fat depth and eye muscle depth. From these measurements ASBVs, or (Australian Sheep Breeding Value) are allocated to each Lamb.

**Sale Rams are C+ 190 to 220 and PWWT of 14.8+, negative for PFAT and positive for PEMD**

**The average of the Australian Poll Dorset flock 2017 drop is C+ 191 and PWWT of 13.9**

Catalogues with ASBV information will be emailed out, available on our website, and available on sale day. If you don't receive email, or have questions about Lambplan, please contact us.

All rams have been drenched with Zolvix Plus, and vaccinated with 6 in 1 in August. For your protection our sheep are guaranteed free of Footrot and Lice, and we are certified Ovine Brucellosis Free, and we have been vaccinating against Ovine Johnes Disease with Gudair for over 15 years. Wunnamurra is also in the **Riverina Sheep Biosecurity Area**.

On behalf of Andrew, Ian and Judy, we welcome you to inspect our Rams on sale day and thank you for your ongoing support. Outside agents welcome 3% rebate.

The sale is being held in conjunction with Elders Jerilderie and Landmark Mills, with lunch provided after the conclusion of the auction. Wunnamurra is located 10km south of Jerilderie.

**For more information, contact Andrew Gillett on 0429 660 584 or go to [www.wunnamurra.com.au](http://www.wunnamurra.com.au).**

# Knowing your ASBVs

Rams with lower ASBVs for birth weight (BWT) produce lambs with lower birth weight. If joining to merino ewes aim for 0.45 or less to minimise birthing issues. Larger frame crossbred ewes are able to handle higher birth weight ASBVs. Very high birth weights should be avoided.

Rams with more positive ASBVs for post weaning weight (PWT) produce lambs that grow quicker and reach target weights in a shorter time. This ram will produce lambs that are, on average, 3kg heavier at post weaning age (7.5 months) than a ram with an ASBV of 0.

The eating quality index is targeted at terminal producers interested in improving the meat eating quality of their prime lambs. The EQ index is based on the same production targets as Carcase + with the added emphasis on eating quality traits including Intramuscular fat (IMF) and Shear force (SF5).

Trait	BWT (kg)	WWT (kg)	PWT (kg)	PFAT (mm)	PEMD (mm)	EQ INDEX	CARCASE + INDEX
ASBV	0.3	4	6.0	-1.5	1.0	130	150
Acc	43	63	71	59	69		

Rams with a more positive ASBV for weaning weight (WWT) will, on average, produce lambs that grow quicker to weaning. This ram will produce lambs that are 2kg heavier than a ram with a 0 ASBV for WWT.

Rams with a more negative ASBV for post weaning fat (PFAT) will produce lambs that are leaner, at the same weight. This ram will produce lambs that are, on average, 0.75mm leaner at the GR site when compared to a ram with a FAT ASBV of 0.

Rams with more positive ASBVs for post weaning eye muscle depth (PEMD) produce lambs that have more muscle, independent of weight, and a higher lean meat yield. This ram will produce lambs that have, on average, a 0.5mm deeper eye muscle than a ram with a 0 EMD ASBV.

The Carcase Plus index assists in identifying animals with high growth and muscle, while maintaining carcase leanness. This index identifies high growth animals by the traits for Weaning Weight and Post Weaning Weight and also aims to recognise carcase traits by emphasis on increased Eye Muscle Depth. It also puts a small emphasis on Fat Depth to maintain a level of leanness.

## 2018 Validates Results

As part of our livestock operation we join our Poll Dorset rams to commercial merino ewes to ensure our ram breeding program is heading in the right direction with our breeding objectives of fast growth and early maturity. In April/May 2018 we lambed down 617 Merino ewes based on Willandra and Woodpark genetics and we achieved a marking percentage of 134%.

At weaning 15th July they averaged 35kg after an overnight curfew as part of our yard weaning. Working on 1st May birth date and a 4 kg birthweight, we estimate an average growth rate of 410g/day. They were weighed and drafted for sale on Friday 31st of August, averaging 47 kg (heaviest being 68 kg) after an overnight curfew due to crutching. This estimates to an overall growth rate of 355 g/day.

This demonstrates the early growth and weight gain that we are looking for, which is key to turning off lambs earlier at higher weights to take advantage of the early season markets before the spring flush of lambs hit. And the timing was great, on the 6th of September we turned off 420 lambs over 44 kg live (23.46 kg carcase weight) into the peak of the market for the year, making \$9/kg through both saleyards and over the hooks. The balance of the lambs were processed 30th of October, averaging 27.46 kg carcase weight.

## Changes to Index

Sheep Genetics have recently replaced the Carcase Plus (C+) index with a new index, Terminal Carcase Production (TCP). This year is a transition period between the two with C+ being discontinued by March 2020. Carcase Plus was designed to select for Lean Meat Yield and has resulted in reduced eating quality. To counter this, they have developed TCP index which has the same breeding objective as C+ (WWT, PWWT, PEMD and Lean Meat Yield) but maintains eating quality by adding in Intra-Muscular Fat and Shearforce. This should ensure key production traits are still improving as normal, as well as enhancing consumer satisfaction and eating experience.

We have included a fact sheet explaining the index. At the end of the day this will not impact greatly on you, we will have both indexes in the catalogue so everyone gets time to learn the new index scale before next years sale.

If you have further questions or concerns please contact us.

# Crossing your Ts with Ram Care

Now is the time to bring your ram team into the yards and assess their soundness prior to joining this year, as well as getting an idea of how many replacement rams you require. Time and effort is well spent caring for rams to ensure their longevity and are in best condition at joining.

Ensure they receive a 5 or 6 in 1 vaccine and drench each year. Before joining apply fly treatment on heads to reduce incidences of poll strike. If being shorn before joining ensure it is at least 6 to 8 weeks before to minimise impact on semen quality. Check teeth, toes, testicles, especially of aged rams. Trim all the toe on the rams to avoid lameness issues.

Check the condition of the rams. For the most part of the year rams really need only be on maintenance feed to maintain weight and condition, often rams are fed too much for the bulk of the year and can get way too heavy. This can cause lameness and breakdowns. For approx. 8 weeks in the lead up to joining, increase the condition of rams to ensure they are fit and raring to go on day 1 of being with ewes. Also post joining they may need to be built up a bit as rams usually lose weight over the joining period.



## Eating Quality

There has been quite a lot of talk in the media in the last 12 months or so regarding DEXA and eating quality of lamb from the Sheep CRC and MLA along with other industry groups and processors and I thought it would be good timing to make mention of this now. DEXA or Dual Energy X-Ray Absorptiometry machines are being installed at a number of processing plants and with this comes the ability to measure Lean Meat Yield, Intra Muscular Fat and weight of individual carcasses in real time on the processing chain. Currently these machines are being used by robotic cutters to accurately breakdown carcasses into primals for further breakdown for retail. As the technology improves and becomes more widespread, these DEXA machines will be used to analyse a carcass and estimate the weight of individual cuts before the carcass is broken down. It will also be able to measure LMY and IMF of carcasses which is a key determinant of lamb eating quality as well as processing efficiency and value of carcasses. The idea is that in the future, pricing grids for over the hooks will have premiums or discounts for LMY and IMF, as eating quality will become a factor in the value of individual cuts and indeed whole carcasses.

Currently there isn't a pricing grid in place that places a premium or discount on Lean Meat Yield, or Intra Muscular Fat content. We don't believe that this will happen for 3-4 years until the technology and data quality improves. So we don't recommend purchasing or selecting rams on Eating Quality at this point in time. However, we did want to let our clients know that we are selecting for EQ ASBVs in the stud and are using DNA genomic testing to identify elite animals within the stud for EQ so that when the time comes that there is substantial premiums for LMY and IMF we will have the rams available that perform both for fast growth as well as premium eating quality. EQ ASBVs are currently available on all rams and will be provided to clients on request if this is something they are interested in or is part of their business model.

## Ram Sale History

Year	Rams Sold	Average Price	Top Price
2018	125 of 153	\$1041	\$1900
2017	155 of 155	\$1200	\$2000
2016	132 of 132	\$1401	\$3100
2015	121 of 121	\$1230	\$1800
2014	80 of 80	\$880	\$1300



# WUNNAMURRA

**POLL**  **DORSET**

*"Wunnamurra Rams Breed Better Lambs"*

## ANNUAL RAM SALE

JERILDERIE

FLOCK 3721

**THURSDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER  
11AM AUCTION/ 170 RAMS**

**Lambplan Tested Gold Standard**

**BRUCellosis ACCREDITED**

**FOOTROT FREE**

**OJD VACCINATED**



**RIVERINA BIOSECURITY AREA**

IAN & ANDREW GILLETT 0429 660 584

ELDERS JERILDERIE 0438 833 090

LANDMARK MILLS 0429 420 040

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

