



From the President



Firstly, let me say that I am honoured to have been chosen by your Federal Council as President. Since the formation of the AWSA, the face of the lamb industry has undergone great changes. The information coming out of things like the Sheep CRC, indicates that we have even more exciting, and possibly challenging,

times ahead as White Suffolk breeders, and I look forward to being involved as your President.

I would particularly like to thank two people for their contribution towards the association. Firstly, thanks to Murray Long for his three years as President. Despite the continuing terrible seasons at home, Murray worked tirelessly for the breed and much has been achieved under his leadership. Secondly, to Penny Holmes who has retired from federal council. Penny's time on council was brief, but her contribution was tremendous, particularly with regards the promotion of White Suffolks. To both of them I extend heartfelt thanks from all AWSA members.

While on the subject of council, it would be remiss of me not to mention Pete Nalder. Pete was unable to attend the national conference because of major heart surgery, and I'm sure I speak for all White Suffolk breeders when I wish Pete a speedy recovery. We all look forward to seeing him back around the traps soon. Also, it is with great pleasure that I welcome Craig Mitchell to council, to replace Penny. I know that his contribution will be terrific and look forward to working with him. I am also particularly pleased to have Ian Pfeiffer as my Vice President. Ian's knowledge and experience is vast, and I'm sure I will be drawing on it during my term as President.

The camaraderie, sharing of knowledge, and affiliation that is exhibited at our national conference is one of the strengths of this association, and the recent conference at Lake Hume well and truly met all expectations. Congratulations to all involved, especially Julie Wiesner and Paul Routley, for their efforts in organising such a successful event. Planning for next year's conference is under way. It will be held in regional Victoria at a time similar to this year's.

Several points of interest to members have arisen out of meetings held during the conference. In the main they are covered in the 'From the Secretariat' section elsewhere in this newsletter, and I encourage members to read that section to keep abreast of association issues. One thing that I would like to mention is that the sub-committee structure has been revamped to include more members who are not directly involved in council. This is something I am particularly keen to promote to encourage as wider range of opinion and input as possible.

Over the last twelve months the association has established a liaison with the Sheep CRC through the efforts of Murray Long. That liaison was strengthened at the conference both during the CRC presentation at Rutherglen, and when Murray, Allan Piggott and I joined the CRC Board and Sheepmeats Council informally for dinner. I believe that this liaison will in the future be of great benefit to the White Suffolk breed.

As I mentioned before, the information coming out of the CRC Information Nucleus flock is very exciting. In particular, traits which we as breeders would never be able to measure in our own right are being assessed across a wide range of genotypes, many involving lines that are widely used in our breed. I urge you to keep abreast of this information where possible, to allow you to continue to provide the best information and genetics to your commercial clients.

Finally my message to all AWSA members is to 'not rest on your laurels'. As providers of genetics to the Australian lamb industry we should always be looking for ways we can improve our product. Maintain contact with your clients and obtain as much feedback as possible. Above all listen, and be prepared to change if required. As I said at the start of this report, the lamb industry continues to evolve and we must do likewise to continue to be successful.

In closing, let me wish you all a good season for 2009. Something resembling 'normal weather' would be an improvement in most areas, and welcomed by all.

Regards

Steve Milne



From the Secretariat

2009 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Congratulations to both Paul Routley and Julie Wiesner and their willing band of assistants on conducting a friendly, educational and highly successful Conference.

Thanks also to all members who attended.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The AWSA balance sheet and profit and loss statement for the period 1st July 2007 to 31st December 2008 have been included in this Newsletter. You will notice this is an eighteen month period. The new financial year will now run from January to December each year.

NEW FEE STRUCTURE

As a result of budget deliberations and member pressures to increase promotions the memberships, registration and transfer fees have been increased. It should be noted that the current registration and transfer fees have been in place for many years.

NEW FEES

TO BE APPLIED IMMEDIATELY, ARE AS FOLLOWS:

MEMBERSHIP FEES: GST INCL.

1-25 ewes	\$176
26-100 ewes	\$242
Over 100 ewes	\$297

REGISTRATION/TRANSFER FEES: GST INCL.

Ram Registration	\$8.25 per ram
Ram Transfer	\$16.50 per ram
Registration & Transfer	\$24.75 per ram
Ewe/Lamb Transfer	\$2.20 per weaned ewe
Semen Transfer	\$8.25 per package
Embryo Transfer	\$8.25

REGISTRATIONS AND TRANSFERS

It would be appreciated if all members could complete their registrations and transfers as soon as possible after sale. Please be reminded that the Association bylaws state all transfers must be completed within 60 days of sale.

It is imperative your transfers are completed immediately to ensure the Annual Return process is easier for everyone, and to eliminate the time spent chasing members for outstanding transfers.

SURPLUS FLOCK BOOK AND NEWSLETTERS

Members are advised that the Secretariat has surplus supplies of past years Flock Books and Newsletter editions.

Any member, especially new members, who may be seeking copies of these please contact the Secretariat. A postage fee will be charged.

2010 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The 2010 National Conference will be conducted in Victoria in mid February at a location to be advised. Any members who have any issues they particularly want covered should contact Steve Milne or Craig Mitchell, and they will be considered for the 2010 conference.

Keep your eye on future Newsletters for further information.

Thankyou

A special thankyou from all of us at Nalvin Park, for the get well wishes, the phone calls and special thoughts. It has been very rewarding and uplifting to receive these messages from people I have a lot of respect for and hold in high regard – even some I don't really know - from the breeders of WA, to those who attended the conference and also from Federal Committee on behalf of the association.

My recovery is well in advance but as some will know, time and patience are essential.

Pete Nalder



From the Committee

NEW PRESIDENT

Members are advised that Steve Milne, 'Waratah' stud, has succeeded Murray Long as the President of the AWSA.

On behalf of all members we thank Murray Long for his leadership, enthusiasm and tremendous service to the Association during his reign as President.

NEW COUNCILLOR

It's pleasing to advise that Craig Mitchell, 'Gemini' S stud, has been elected to the Association Council. Craig has taken the position of retiring Councillor Penny Holmes. Penny has heavy commitments to the Wine Industry that require her dedicated time. The Association thanks Penny for enthusiasm and in particular her assistance with the advertising graphics.

SUB COMMITTEES

The following Sub Committees were established following the conference in Albury.

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Murray Long, Pete Nalder, Julie Wiesner & Andrew Heinrich.

FINANCE

Allan Piggott & Debbie Milne

PROMOTIONS

Andrew Frick, Paul Routley, Penny Holmes, Pete Dowdell, Craig Mitchell & Dale Moore.

Those first mentioned will nominally chair and coordinate any discussions.

LAPSED MEMBERSHIPS

As a result of Council discussion on issues that have arisen concerning the renewing of lapsed memberships the following criteria was developed and will be implemented immediately.

Studs seeking to reactivate and whose active membership has lapsed for a period greater than twelve months will be charged a fee for each lapsed year equivalent to the base membership fee. In addition all stud sires used during the lapsed period must be registered with the Association.

Members should also note that the AWSA only considers ewes being sold by active financial members of the association to be transferable. This policy will be conveyed to stock agents to negate any sales of "stud ewes" by breeders who are not active financial members of the AWSA. This is very much a situation of "buyer beware", as although the AWSA has this policy, it is not in the position to police all ewe sales.

OVINE BRUCELLOSIS

You are advised that a Council recommendation that encourages all members to become Ovine Brucellosis accredited by 2010 was accepted by the AGM.

There are significant marketing and quality assurance benefits for the White Suffolk breed if all members become accredited. If you are not accredited we urge you to contact your State Department of Agriculture and request information on the procedures involved.

New Members

Name	Location	Flock No	Prefix
Alex Zhao	Sheffield TAS	717	Gaomah
Brockwell Tippet	Newlyn VIC	718	Tippetts Glengyron
Courtney Cluff	Gilgandra NSW	719	Biddon Creek
Carole Forrest	Boyup Brook WA	720	Tammar Gully
Peter Finlayson	Berrigan NSW	721	Berrinock
Sam Kele	Hensley Park VIC	722	Hensley Park
Mark Hull	Port Kenny SA	723	Minta



The National Conference – An ongoing success

Once again the Annual Conference was a success attracting approximately 90 members and visitors to hear a wide range of speakers, view demonstrations, debate and discuss breed issues and enjoy a high degree of camaraderie.

Comments are often made that the introduction of the Conference concept (sometimes known as the annual pilgrimage) has been a major part of the development of the White Suffolk breed. In the early years members debated the issues of type, colour, percentages etc and developed friendships with other breeders that continue today. It is pleasing to note that the enthusiasm for the breed shown at Conferences in the late 1980's and onwards has not changed, with good attendances, interesting speakers, good debate and the usual high level of camaraderie still continuing.

The following report is a basic précis of the Conference as detailed reports and papers will be provided in this Newsletter.

The 2009 Conference was conducted at the picturesque Lake Hume Resort located 15kms from Albury, from Sunday 15th to Wednesday 18th February.

The Conference commenced on the Monday morning with an address on Stockscan by Geoff Oliver and Lambplan with Matt Dwyer. Members discussed and questioned aspects of these carcass measuring systems.

At the conclusion of morning tea members circulated between three workshops, these being a Structural Assessment session conducted by Graeme Wilson, Pedigree Wizard demonstration by Steve Milne and a WebManager session by Sue Piggott.

During the day members were treated to interesting and entertaining addresses by Andrew Heinrich and Andrew Bouffler who had both been awarded Nuffield Study Scholarships during the year. Both members highlighted the study content and other interesting aspects of their tours. Congratulations to both Andrews' on their success.

The Conference afternoon session featured an open forum on "Improving Artificial Insemination results". Due to the wide range of AI results obtained by members it was decided that it would be beneficial for members present to highlight aspects of their AI programs that they find successful or not so successful. This was a very interesting session with numerous snippets of information that could assist other members.

I advise that the AWSA will be producing a booklet on AI issues. Many of the ideas and concepts provided by

members in this session will be included.

This year's Conference included two corporate sponsors, Ollsons Blocks set up a static display with Ron Herron answering questions from members. The other corporate was Pfizer. They organized a static display staffed by Liz Lloyd and Matt Hardy, and were also provided with an opportunity to address members on vaccines. Thanks to both Companies for their support.

Following this address, members participated in the general open forum section of the program whereby members could ask questions and vent their feelings on any issue.

ISSUES DISCUSSED AND DEBATED WERE:

- Increased membership/registration fees
- Discounting of some White Suffolk sired lambs in the market place
- Breed promotions
- Inconsistency of commercial lamb products
- Trade marking of logo and name
- Education of agents on White Suffolk product
- Combined breeder stud sales
- Quality assurance through the use of the logo
- New rules concerning overdue memberships
- The provision of the Financial Statement prior to the AGM.





On the second day of the Conference, members travelled by bus to Rutherglen to participate in the morning session of Sheep CRC Information Nucleus Open Day.

During the morning the following speakers enlightened all present on Sheep CRC activities and other sheep related issues:

- Professor James Rowe – The Sheep CRC
- Dr Alex Ball – Rams and Results
- Dr David Pethick – Sheep CRC Sheep Program
- Nick Linden – Feed Conversion Efficiency
- Andrew Thompson – Sheep CRC Sheep Program
- Dr Ben Hayes – SNP and Genomics

Following this session it was all aboard the bus for the trip to the Rutherglen Research Station to view the trial work being conducted there.

On arrival back at the Lake Hume Resort, members enjoyed afternoon tea, then on to the AGM.

Members were informed that Craig Mitchell, 'Gemini' Stud had been elected to fill the Council vacancy caused by the retirement of Penny Holmes.

Murray Long informed members that he would be stepping down as President. Steve Milne was elected as Murray's successor at the Council meeting conducted immediately after the AGM.

Members attending the Tuesday dinner were entertained with an interesting and humorous address by Neil Druce, on the development and formation of the Junee Chocolate and Licorice Factory.

The Conference concluded after breakfast on Wednesday with members heading home to five states.

In conclusion, Paul Routley and Julie Wiesner and the willing group of NSW based assistants should be congratulated on organizing and conducting a very successful Conference in very pleasant surrounds. Thanks to you all on behalf of the members who attended.

Rob Martin.



STOCKSCAN - Ultrasonic eye muscle measurements

CONFERENCE PRESENTATION AUSTRALIAN STOCKSCAN SERVICES

PRESENTED BY GEOFF OLIVER

INTRODUCTION

- Ultrasonic scanning business operating in Australia and New Zealand
- Eye muscle and pregnancy detection in sheep and deer
- Two trained operators in Australia and three in New Zealand
- Operating for 20 years in New Zealand and 12 years in Australia

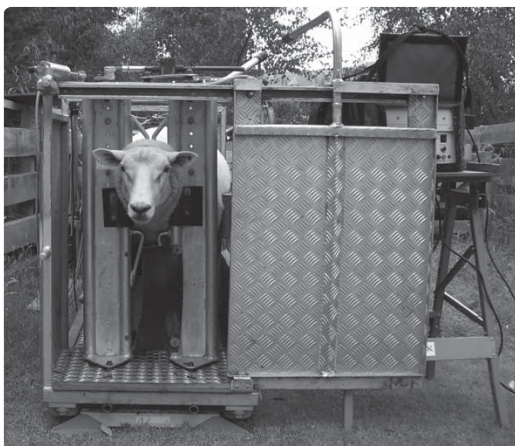
EYE MUSCLE SCANNING IN SHEEP

- Eye muscle measurements are correlated with total lean meat
- Can measure fat depth (C), eye muscle depth (B), eye muscle width (A)
- Highly repeatable measurements using trained operators (95%+)
- Good handling equipment is vital to getting good scanning results

BENEFITS OF SCANNING

Measurements	Relative response
LWT 100	
LWT+FD+EMD	191
LWT+FD+EMD+EMW	209

Source: Jopson et al. (1995) AAABG

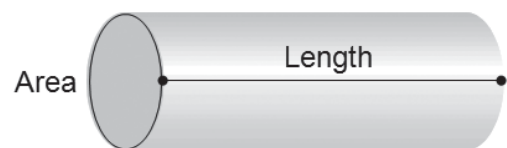


View of the Ultrasound screen

$$EMA = EMW \times EMD \times 0.77$$

WHAT'S IN THE PIPELINE?

- Benefits of eye muscle scanning are well documented, but can we do better?
- In addition to differences in eye muscle dimensions, sheep vary in back length which is another predictor
- Can we estimate the weight of the entire loin at ultrasound scanning?



VOLUME OF A CYLINDER/LOIN

- Volume = Area x Length
- Loins are approximately cylindrical
- Loin volume = EMA x back length
- Volume and density give weight in kg

FOR MORE DETAILS:

Secretary : Julie Davey (03) 54522438

Email: stockscan@live.com

Postal: PO Box 365, Kerang VIC



LAMBPLAN Data Flow

CONFERENCE REPORT

MATT DWYER
SHEEP GENETICS AUSTRALIA

OUTLINE

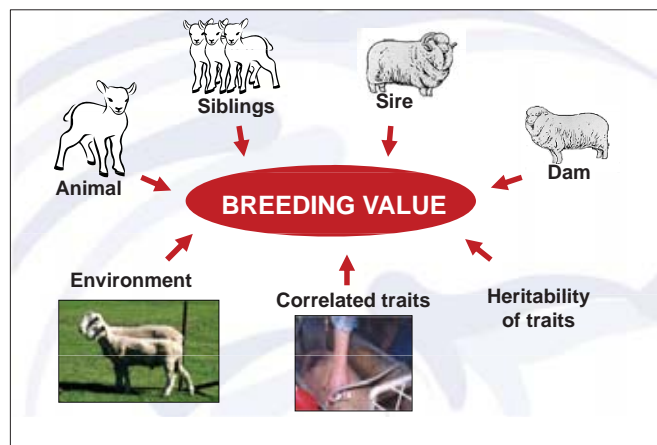
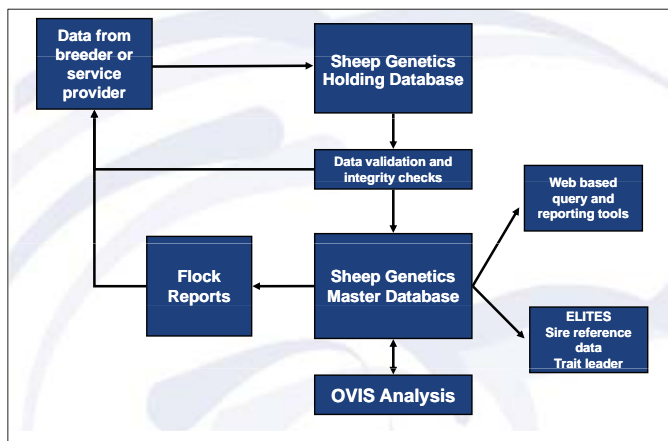
- Data handling in LAMBPLAN
- What happens after data is submitted?
- How is the information distributed?
- Applying the information

INTRODUCTION

- There are a series of steps that data follows before ASBVs are presented to ensure that the genetic ability of an animal is identified
- LAMBPLAN is based on sound genetic principles successfully used in other industries

DATA SUBMITTED TO LAMPLAN

- Submitted using compatible on-farm software package
- Several options available
- Should meet your needs
- Record and store information
- Compatible
- Allow the information to be submitted and interpreted
- Other information known by LAMBPLAN database to help calculate Breeding Values



DATA COLLECTED

- Raw measurements taken on individual animals
- Several traits
- Different age stages
- May be a status e.g. reproduction
- Collated into Management Groups
- Management groups identify animals that have equal opportunity to express their potential - important to get these correct
- Single sire management groups - not a good idea as progeny from a single sire that are run together do not allow the separation of genetic and environmental effects on performance

ANALYSIS

- Data received by Sheep Genetics database Electronically
- Validated and amended
- Sent to analysis (OVIS)
- Exclusions for extreme values

CALCULATION

Within the analysis calculations and adjustments are made based on:

- Environment
- Traits
- Heritabilities
- Correlations
- Management groups



LAMBPLAN Data Flow cont....

ASBVS

- Common language across flocks
- Key production traits
- Calculated using information supplied by breeders
- Must meet certain criteria

INDEXES

Indicate an animal's suitability to a particular market or breeding objective

Desired Gains Indexes

- Carcase Plus
- Dollar Indexes
- Trade \$
- Export \$
- LAMB2020

RESULTS TO BREEDERS

- Results are distributed to breeders through personalised reports
- Data files uploaded into on-farm software packages
- Breeders own and retain their data

RESULTS TO INDUSTRY

- Web-updates and search facility
- Percentile band reports
- Elites lists
- Trait leaders lists

ANALYSIS DATES

Run twice a month - 1st and 15th LAMBPLAN
Two opportunities to Submit or Change

LAMBPLAN – IMPACT ON INDUSTRY

Example:

NSW DPI trial - Mixed farm
Gulargambone NSW
Terminal sires over 1st cross ewes

How many more \$ for producers with high performance rams?

The high growth lambs were 5kg heavier @ 1ST slaughter

Using a market price of \$3.50/kg @ 46% DP lambs would be 2.5kg heavier

= \$8 extra per lamb

@ 80 lambs /ram / year with 4 joinings

= \$2802 more per ram or \$700 per ram per year

Average ASBVs for Sire Group

Sire Group	Birth Wt (BWT)	Growth (PWT)	Fat (PFAT)	Muscle (PEMD)
Red	0.12	8.9	-0.6	0.4
Blue	0.07	1.6	0.1	0.1

Top 20% and bottom 20% of rams in LAMBPLAN and NOT visually different for size/growth

High growth → quick to slaughter

	% OF MOB KILLED @ 20 WKS	% OF MOB KILLED @ 27 WKS
RED	57% @ 24kg	97% @ 24kg
BLUE	26% @ 22kg	77% @ 22kg

SUMMARY

- LAMBPLAN based on sound genetic principles
- Information is supplied by breeders
- Environmental effects taken out
- Describes and animal's genetic performance
- ASBVs are a common language for describing and comparing sheep
- ASBVs allow increases in production



“Breed for commercial yield, not the show-ring”

CONFERENCE REPORT
NUFFIELD SCHOLAR,

ANDREW HEINRICH

Andrew entertained and challenged us with a Power Point presentation of his overseas trip as a Nuffield Scholar.

The following is a copy of an article by Melissa Branagh, 16 January 2008

Kangaroo Island seedstock breeder and prime lamb producer Andrew Heinrich no longer subscribes to the Texan philosophy that ‘bigger is better’.

After scouring America to investigate how efficient use of genetics can improve carcase yield and growth rate, the Nuffield Scholar is urging Australian producers to dismiss the widely embraced correlation between size and quality, and to breed for more important traits. “The benchmark should be fast growing, early maturing rams – not necessarily the biggest,” he says.

Similarly, while the Parndana farmer’s recent Nuffield tour, sponsored by Meat & Livestock Australia, bolstered his confidence in MLA’s LAMBPLAN model, he is concerned that the prime lamb industry is placing too much emphasis on the Carcase Plus index at the expense of eating quality.

The Carcase Plus index, produced under the LAMBPLAN initiative, is based on the weight, fat and eye muscle depth Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) at post-weaning age, with a relative emphasis on 60 per cent growth, 20 per cent fat and 20 per cent eye muscle.

The tool is designed to be used in conjunction with LAMBPLAN ASBVs for individual traits that influence lamb performance and market suitability, such as birth weight, growth rate, carcase characteristics and disease resistance.

However Andrew says too many commercial producers are buying terminal sires based solely on the Carcase Plus index.

“The Carcase Plus index favours large lean rams that are acceptable to certain lamb export markets but are not suitable for trade lamb production or burgeoning overseas markets that demand high-flavour products. If we go too lean, we will lose taste and forfeit lucrative opportunities.

“We need to focus on a balance of traits and maybe we need to look at other indexes, such as the Trade Index, for scoring that reflects this balance – the Trade Index actually downgrades scores for rams which are too lean, whereas

Carcass Plus is weighted to give the leanest rams the highest scores. Seed stock producers in particular need to be careful not to chase leanness just to achieve high scores on this index.

It was Andrew’s reservations about the use of the market-focused index that prompted the South Australian’s interest in how meat industries overseas estimate genetic value and motivated his application for a 2006 Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarship. Andrew runs 5000 grown sheep on his 800-hectare property, two-thirds mated to Merino rams for wool production and one-third joined to White Suffolk rams to produce prime lambs.

He also manages a closed White Suffolk stud of 300 ewes which he inherited from his father – one of Australia’s founding White Suffolk breeders.

LAMBPLAN PROVIDES RESULTS

Since Andrew turned to LAMBPLAN in 1999 to select trait leaders for artificial insemination, carcase yield has increased to almost double that of the average terminal breeder. His faith in LAMBPLAN was reinforced four years ago when the Australian White Suffolk Association received a Producer Initiated Research and Development (PIRD) grant from MLA to trial the tool on his property.

“We looked at the effects of various sire traits over 400 ewes and an analysis of the lamb carcasses confirmed LAMBPLAN is a highly accurate way to calculate the





“Breed for commercial yield, not the showring” cont...

probability of achieving desired characteristics. There were significant visual improvements in some progeny,” he says.

“These developments excited me, but I didn’t want to compromise on eating quality by going too lean. The Nuffield Scholarship provided an opportunity to look at how LAMBPLAN could be used to improve yield and growth rate while maintaining flavour.”

Visits to the United States, Canada, Britain, Europe and South America revealed that overseas, LAMBPLAN is regarded as one of the pre-eminent sheepmeat industry models for estimating genetic merit.

However the beef and pork industries, which were forerunners in the use of genetic measurement, presented some valuable lessons.

“The lamb industry in particular can learn from mistakes made in the pork and beef industries. We have to stop trying to produce the biggest rams and aim to breed rams which have good early growth, and whose lambs will finish for market as quickly as possible.

“Energy and water markets are changing our production. Farmers are being asked to grow crops for energy, which will keep grain prices high. And with Australia’s water crisis, I don’t think we can afford the luxury of finishing lambs on irrigated pastures or grain. It’s just a waste of water.

Genetic improvement increases animal growth efficiency and is critical to secure long-term profitability, but it is also a valuable way to meet rising consumer expectations in terms of premium quality – predominantly eating quality – and value for money.”

The Nuffield Scholar cited the Gardner Angus Ranch in Ashland, Kansas, as a leader in this approach.

COMMERCIAL BALANCE

“Henry Gardner started using genetic measurement to select animals for artificial insemination and embryo transplant 20 years ago, and his ranch has evolved as one of the United States’ leading studs.

“But while Gardner’s operation is huge, the livestock are not. He does not breed for the show ring – he breeds for commercial carcase yield by balancing size, birth rate and flavour traits – a methodology that produces medium-sized cows.”

Andrew observed the downside of the opposite approach in Berlin, where pushing genetics too hard has cost the Belgian Blue breed its natural capacity to reproduce effectively.

“I visited a commercial herd where the bulls couldn’t serve the cows, the cows had to be artificially inseminated and could only give birth via caesarean section, and the calves had to be bucket fed,” he says. “This is the price for an impressive visual carcase on a breed produced solely for yield and leanness, and the eating experience was very disappointing.

“By comparison, the British Longhorn – a rare suckler breed – has a low carcase yield but a distinctive flavour and the emphasis on eating quality has attracted a premium. We need to strike the balance between size, birth rate and flavour traits.”

Kangaroo Island’s first Nuffield Scholar is also adamant that Australian producers should be breeding lamb for particular markets rather than concentrating exclusively on volume.

TARGET MARKETS

“The Pig Improvement Company – an international outfit with headquarters in Tennessee – breeds superior breeding stock to maximise genetic potential and meet diverse global pork demands,” he says. “This facilitates production of marbled meat for Asia, for example, and leaner product for the European market.”

With Japan emerging as Australia’s second largest lamb





“Breed for commercial yield, not the showring” cont...



export market behind the US, Andrew is keen to explore the use of LAMBPLAN to measure traits suitable for various meat products.

These range from large lean carcasses preferred by Americans, to boneless product with high intra-muscular fat – a quality associated with flavour and juiciness that is valued by Japanese consumers.

“An international market-specific approach driven by a greater focus on the balance of genetic values would give Australia an edge over its major competitor – New Zealand,”

After visiting New Zealand in December, Andrew is excited about the potential of using molecular markers to identify desired genetic traits to improve breeding efficiency.

“Australia and New Zealand are working together a bit on this and I think it’s going to be great for stud breeders. We’re not quite there yet, but it will give us another tool to use and will give us more confidence in selecting young rams for breeding.”

Andrew says New Zealand’s lamb breeding program has focused on increasing the number of lambs weaned at the expense of other traits including carcass weight, wool quality and volume and skin quality.

“They send a lot of lambs to the EU and they’re missing out with their smaller carcass. Where we aim for 22 to 24kgs, they’re getting 16kgs. They’re also getting terrible prices for their wool and virtually nothing for skins.

“The skins and wool might only be a small part of the lamb price, but they’re still important. It’s brought home to me the need to make sure these traits aren’t forgotten,” he says.

2009 sheep and lamb industry projections

AS PRESENTED BY KARA JONES –SHEEPMET ANALYST, INTERNATIONAL MARKETS AND ECONOMIC SERVICES AT THE HAMILTON BEEF EXPOS - 12TH FEBRUARY 2009

- Australian sheep meat industry developments in 2008...
- Australian sheep flock declined 7.6%, to 79.2 million head
- Australian breeding ewe flock increased 0.4%, or 186,400 head, to 46.6 million head
- Lamb production dropped 5.5%, to 415,000 tonnes swt (estimate)
- Lamb exports fell 6%, to 152,000 tonnes swt
- Saleyard lamb prices averaged 19% higher year-on-year, at 347¢/kg
- Sheep slaughter stable but unsustainably high, at 12 million head
- Live sheep exports up 12% to 4.2 million head (estimate)

IMPACTS OF AN ECONOMIC DOWNTURN ON MEAT

- Less eating out & more at home
- Fall in foodservice sales
- –particularly middle to upper restaurants
- Increase in cheaper fast food outlet custom
- –hamburgers in US, gyudon & bento boxes in Japan
- Increased retail sales
- Shift from dearer foods to cheaper foods
- –eg. from beef to poultry
- Shift from dearer cuts to cheaper cuts, sausages & mince



Where Nuffield Took Me

CONFERENCE PRESENTATION NUFFIELD SCHOLAR

ANDREW BOUFFLER

GLOBAL FOCUS

New Zealand, California, Canada, Mexico, Washington and Brazil

PERSONAL STUDIES

South Africa, Chile, Falkland Islands, Argentina, Holland and Belgium

MY UNDERLINING OBSERVATION FROM NUFFIELD

Nearly without exception, the really successful businesses I visited either

Valued added their product

OR

Were diversified in production

SOME CHALLENGING QUESTIONS :

- Do you routinely use the latest industry information and data available ?
- Are you embracing technology?
- Are you protecting your soil?
- Do you strive to make life easier?
- Do you ensure you get it right every time?
- Is productivity gain a business goal?
- Where are the opportunities on your farm?
- In most cases the limitation to our cropping programs is now determined by moisture.
- In mixed farming enterprises, is the area where whole farm profits can be most improved the livestock component?

WHY I APPLIED FOR A NUFFIELD SCHOLARSHIP

- Concerned about a major CRISIS confronting the Australian wool and lamb industries.
- Continuity of Supply
- Nuffields basic Philosophy

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL SHEEP FLOCK

- A 52% decrease since 1990
- In 2008 Merino ewe to Merino ram joining was predicted to be less than 30 million.

EXPORT DEMAND FOR WOOL & LAMB

- Both industries are very valuable to the Australian Economy
- Lets put the above into perspective: 06/07 wool exports = 3.1 billion; sheepmeats – 1.6 billion

FUTURE DEMAND LAMB

- Average US consumption is 94Kg of meat per year of which only 0.3Kg is lamb
- They consume on average more garlic than lamb
- FAO estimates that World meat consumption will increase by 20% by 2016 (108m tons)
- At current %'s this represents a 5 million ton increase for lamb
- Asian potential is unlimited (D Hollands AJC)
- Sheepmeat in India comprises 15% of meat
- No other country has any real capacity to supply product.





Where Nuffield Took Me cont....

FUTURE DEMAND WOOL

- Clean green renewable fibre which isn't heavily reliant on fossil fuel
- Global warming and consumers new found concern about their consumption footprint
- Current prices are the highest in 17 years even with the historically high Australian dollar
- Post Olympic demand boom from China
- No likelihood of a quick turnaround on the supply side
- If both valuable industries are to remain viable we **MUST** make the low ewe numbers more productive as the flock re-builds

SOUTH AFRICA

PRODUCTION VS FITNESS

- Fitness – the ability to survive, grow and reproduce in a particular environment (Oxford English Dictionary)
- Extremes of production always impacts negatively with fitness (hardiness, fertility, growth rates, longevity)
- For dual purpose sheep the villain seems to be wool cut
- Wool cut per head has negative correlation with Number lambs weaned (A good indicator of Fitness) Published research varies from -0.1 to 0.35

IMPLICATIONS

- Selecting for increased wool cut/ head indirectly results in decreased fertility
- This goes a long way in explaining the Merino's generally low fertility levels
- Performance testing allows the identification of individuals which are genetic outliers (go against this trend)
- The reverse is true for Growth rates
- Selecting for faster growing animals indirectly results in increased fertility
- This is a great outcome for breeding a dual purpose sheep.
- The concept of diminishing returns

INDUSTRY OUTCOMES

Meat to Wool Income Ratio

- Every farmer I met knew exactly where their income was derived
- Meat always greater than wool – implications
- The Australian experience! Its all in the language
- My commercial flock ratio 05/06 - 60:40
04/05 – 63:37

Genetic progress is maximised by breeding from superior individuals NOT breeds

The different roles Maternal and Terminal genetics play in breeding programs must be understood

The Maternal's Best Friend - fat

- Hatcher and Atkins 2006 found with high CFW ewes lower lambing % was due to lamb survival
- High CFW sheep tend to have a lower metabolic energy status and body fatness
- Dove et al (1994) found that milk production was influenced by body reserves (fat) in the ewe at lambing
- Wool production and lamb survival are competitors for nutrition
- Staple strength is vital for selecting

Performance Testing using Merino Select and Lambplan is essential.

- Breeding Objective: Significantly increased 200 day lamb weights
- Since 2001 Clients Lambs on average are 6.5 kgs heavier at 200 days
- $1000 \text{ ewes} * 110\% = 1100 \text{ lambs} * 6.5 = 7150 \text{ kgs} / 2(\text{dressed weight}) * \$4.50 = \$16087 \text{ extra}$

Single trait selection is very dangerous

- The Holland Genetics Dairy Experience
- Push for production lead to major fitness problems (Correlation -0.35)
- In 1999 they placed more emphasis on Fertility
- Great outcome as improved fertility without losing production gains



Where Nuffield Took Me cont...



Sheep Classing in Chile

EBV's and Index pressure can take us to any direction breeders want to go

Feed Conversion or Efficiency is the next frontier (DNA)

ENVIRONMENT IS KING

- Falkland Island Landscape - What can we learn from the Falkland's
- To select for increased production would be disastrous
- Must improve environment by management OR select for improved feed conversion rates
- These basic rules are paramount as we target ever increasing production !!!!!

WHERE TO FROM HERE

OPTION 1.

– Follow the Holland Genetics experience and maintain current wool weights but select for fertility

OPTION 2.

Do I dare to say it. Select for lower wool cut per head!!

IMPLICATIONS FOR BREEDING PROGRAMS

- Sire Selection
- More emphasise on meat
- We need a better understanding of the constraints of our environment

NEW PERSPECTIVE ON FARMING

- We have got the greatest job in the world
- We have choices
- Opportunities are everywhere
- Lamb, Wool and Beef
- Grain (Food, feed and now fuel)
- Carbon Trading schemes
- Environmental Custodians
- Traceable and Clean/ Green products
- Internationally competitive

TAKE HOME THOUGHT.....



“When you are in deep shit, say nothing, and try to look like you know what you’re doing.”



Next generation meat quality



CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

**PROFESSOR DAVE PETHICK,
MURDOCH UNIVERSITY, WA**

This work will increase the meat yield of sheep and raise consumer demand by building on the key virtues of eating quality and human nutritional value of lamb.

BENEFITS TO INDUSTRY

This program is expected to increase industry profitability by \$523 million over the next 25 years by improving lean meat yield and quality through:

- Increasing processing efficiency
- Enhancing eating quality by improved measurement of meat quality
- Securing and improving the nutritional claims of lamb as an excellent source of iron, zinc and omega-3 fatty acids
- Improving yield while maintaining quality
- Increasing the market value and productivity of lamb through integrated production and genetics
- Increasing the value of lamb to producers, processors and consumers

KEY AREAS OF WORK

Through a combination of traditional selection techniques and cutting-edge genomic selection technologies, this program will deliver:

- New meat quality traits for yield, human health and eating quality which will be used to develop new sheep breeding values
- The production pathways through the supply chain to deliver new traits right through to the consumer
- A commercial test to differentiate odour levels associated with aged sheepmeat
- A system to electronically track carcasses and cuts through the abattoir
- New methods to measure lean meat yield and techniques for improving quality within the abattoir

The Information Nucleus flock will breed 18,000 Merino, first-cross and second-cross lambs over five years from eight research sites. These animals will provide a large data set with over 12,500 pieces of meat quality data to be collected during processing.

Sheep meat industry overview

“THE AUSTRALIAN SHEEP MEAT INDUSTRY TOOK A POSITIVE TURN IN 2008, WITH A SMALL INCREASE IN THE BREEDING EWE FLOCK SIGNALLING A MOVE TO FURTHER BUILD PRIME LAMB FLOCKS. COMBINED WITH IMPROVED FEED SUPPLIES,

Australian lamb production is set to increase in 2009, with the lower A\$ and tighter New Zealand (NZ) supplies expected to boost export and lamb prices. The positive outlook however, is marred by the unprecedented global financial crisis and the highly uncertain impact it will have on global sheepmeat demand over the short to medium term”.

THROUGH TO 2013:

- Shifts within the flock to prime lamb production to stabilise and prevent further major flock falls
- Focus on prime lamb production to boost average carcass weights and lift production
- Lamb exports to reach 193,000 tonnes in 2013 – up 28% on 2008
- Strong Middle East demand to keep pressure on Australian mutton supplies



Transforming sheep and their management



CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

DR ANDREW THOMPSON

This work will assist sheep businesses to become more profitable by addressing the key issues of labour efficiency, reproductive efficiency, parasite control and the environmental impact of greenhouse gas emissions.

BENEFITS TO INDUSTRY

This program is expected to increase industry profitability by more than \$250 million over the next 25 years through:

- Smarter methods for capturing and monitoring production data on and off farm
- Decision tools to improve labour efficiency and selection of breeding stock while allowing individual animals to be more precisely managed
- Management systems that consistently improve the number of healthy lambs and weaners, increasing profitability across a range of production systems
- New diagnostic tests and on-farm control practices that reduce costs and chemical residues, delay the onset of drench resistance and protect markets
- New or improved Australian Sheep Breeding Values related to easy care and management of sheep, reproductive efficiency, parasite resistance and greenhouse gas emissions

KEY AREAS OF WORK

PRECISION SHEEP PRODUCTION

- Developing streamlined systems to collect and use information from individual sheep to assist sheep breeding, management and marketing
- Analysing the costs and benefits of precision production for sheep flocks and providing technical support for precision production service providers

INCREASED REPRODUCTIVE EFFICIENCY

- Increasing adoption of improved management systems
- Identifying traits to target for selection to improve reproductive efficiency
- Improved parasite control
- Reducing drench resistance and treatment costs by developing decision rules for drenching specific flocks or individual animals and commercialising diagnostic tests
- Further develop WormBoss, LiceBoss and FlyBoss information tools

GREENHOUSE GAS ABATEMENT AND FEED EFFICIENCY

- Developing new methods for measuring methane production enabling large scale screening of individual animals
- Determining the genetic and phenotypic correlations between methane production and animal production traits and their heritability
- Quantifying variations in methane emissions across a range of production systems and contributing to the development of the National Carbon Accounting System

The Information Nucleus flock is an integral part of this research, providing information from more than 18,000 Merino, first-cross and second-cross lambs across a range of environments.



SHEEP CRC

for more details website
www.sheepcrc.org.au



Information Nucleus Flock



**CONFERENCE PRESENTATION
PROF. JULIUS VAN DER WERF,
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND**

BENEFITS TO INDUSTRY

Producers will be able to use the developments in new genetic technology and molecular information to advance their breeding objectives and achieve more rapid and targeted genetic gain.

WHAT IS THE INFORMATION NUCLEUS?

The Information Nucleus is a world first innovation for sheep, providing new information about traits and their genetic makeup to the sheep industry, and supporting the three core research programs of the Sheep CRC.

The Information Nucleus consists of a series of flocks totalling 5,000 ewes, located at eight research sites in widely differing environments around Australia. Each year, these ewes will produce progeny by 100 young and proven Merino, maternal and terminal sires.

The progeny will be extensively measured and assessed for current and new traits in meat and wool quality, parasite resistance and reproduction.

THIS INFORMATION WILL BE USED TO:

- Enhance the accuracy of Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) for current traits
- Contribute to the development of ASBVs for new traits
- Validate molecular markers for current and new traits
- Develop breeding values that combine phenotypic and DNA based information

The Information Nucleus will also be the focus of sheep management, wool and meat research being undertaken in the other Sheep CRC research programs.

THE INFORMATION NUCLEUS WILL PRODUCE:

- Phenotype information from progeny that will contribute to sire ASBVs and to the overall linkage of the Sheep Genetics analyses
- Increasingly accurate ASBVs due to greater cross-flock linkage
- New commercially applicable traits added directly to Sheep Genetics
- Land mark research resulting in the validation of gene markers and SNPs that will contribute to the development of molecular breeding values
- Molecular breeding values that will be incorporated into enhanced ASBVs to more accurately select sheep for a range of traits at a young age

The Information Nucleus sites are hosting regular field days to enable producers, industry professionals and students to view the progeny and to keep up-to-date with the outcomes of the Sheep CRC programs.

Only great minds can read this

fi yuo cna raed tihs, yuo hvae a sgtrane mnid too Cna yuo raed tihs? Olny 55 plepoe out of 100 can.

i cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdnrig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it dseno't mtaetr in waht oerdr the ltteres in a wrod are, the olny iproamtnt tihng is taht the frsit and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it whotuit a pboerlm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Azanmig huh? yaeh and I awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt!

LAMB2020



a NEW DIRECTION for the AUSTRALIAN SHEEP INDUSTRY

For two years, Sheep Genetics has been working to develop a new standard index that better reflects the future demands of the Australian lamb industry. This new index, called LAMB 2020, will be available to terminal sire breeders from 1 December 2008.

LAMB2020 has been developed with several features that require some explanation. The following information is a guide to how the index was developed, what changes are likely to occur as a result of the index and how breeders should consider using it.

FEATURES

The first feature of LAMB2020 is that it has been constructed as a dollar index rather than a desired gains index like Carcase Plus. This structure brings LAMB2020 into line with the Trade \$ and Export \$ indexes, the maternal \$ indexes and MERINOSELECT indexes which are all dollar indexes.

The initial focus of LAMB2020 was on the standard traits currently used in the Carcase Plus index. Dollar values for growth (carcase weight), fat and muscle have been calculated on an assumed carcase weight of 22kg. With more producers targeting earlier turn-off ages, the relative value for growth was split 40:60 between weaning weight (WWT) and post weaning weight (PWT).

In developing the LAMB2020 index extensive consultation with breeders and industry stakeholders was conducted, resulting in the inclusion of birth weight (BW) and worm egg count (PWEC).

LAMB2020

- Developed to meet the future challenges of the Australian sheep industry
- Designed to suit terminal sire breeders
- Concentrates on carcase and growth traits, while considering birth weight and internal parasites
- Presented as a dollar index

In an attempt to limit further increases in birth weight a negative \$ emphasis has been placed on increasing birth weights - a result from directly selecting for growth (noting that there is a positive correlation between growth (WWT and PWT) and birth weight (BW)).

The addition of PWEC to LAMB2020 was driven by the fact that internal parasites are one of the most significant costs to the Australian sheep industry (\$320M per annum; MLA 2006). In addition, resistance to anthelmintics by internal parasites is resulting in less effective chemical treatment options for worms. One of the strategies that producers can put in place to assist with worm management is to select animals that are more resistant to worms (lower PWEC ASBVs). Over the last two years, there have been a number of breeders who have measured PWEC.

A product of SHEEP GENETICS



This information, combined with ~~comes~~ from the Sheep CRC information ~~news~~ project, will provide breeders with access to sires with accurate ASBVs for PWEC.

The dollar value of PWEC has been calculated based on information that a range of PWEC of 100 units ~~is~~ worth approximately 10% of the value of ~~pro~~ improvement in growth.

WHAT DOES LAMB2020 DO?

In ~~the~~ following table ~~he~~ relative selection emphasis and ~~predic~~ted change over ten years have been calculated for LAMB2020.

Trait	Relative Emphasis	Change over 10 ys
BWT (kg)	8%	0.10
WWT (kg)	24%	27
PWT (kg)	25%	35
PFAT (mm)	9%	02
PEMD (mm)	22%	13
PWEC (%)	12%	-0

From this table, ~~ther~~ are several important points that need to be considered:

- Despite a negative emphasis on birth weight, birth weight still increases by 0.10kg over 10 years. This is due to the positive correlations that exist between growth and birth weight.
- Despite a ~~eg~~ative emphasis on fat, it ~~lwi~~ increase slightly by 0.2 mm over 10 ~~year~~. This is a direct result of ~~thi~~gher emphasis on muscle and selecting for internal ~~pa~~asite resistance.

The LAMB2020 index ~~is~~ designed to be a different index to Carcase Plus. ~~How~~ever, it still has a high ~~or~~relation or relationship with Carcase Plus (90%). This is due to ~~he~~ relatively high emphasis on growth, fat and muscle that are ~~cons~~istent between both indexes.

The index has been developed to suit terminal sire breeders with ~~cl~~ients targeting a 22 kg ~~larb~~ carcase, from either ~~M~~erino or first-cross ewe base where ~~wom~~ may be a significant challenge to lamb production

If you require further ~~informa~~tion on the LAMB2020 index or selection indexes in general ~~pl~~ease contact the Sheep Genetics office.

DOLLAR INDEXES

As with the Trade and Export \$ indexes, a value in LAMB 2020 reflects the improvement in lamb dollar value.

For example, lambs from a sire with a LAMB 2020 index of \$13 will be worth \$3 more than lambs from a sire ~~wh~~ with a LAMB 2020 index of \$10.

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Terminal Sire Indexes

LAMBPLAN provides ram breeders and commercial producers with three indexes for terminal sire selection: the Carcase Plus Index, the Trade \$ Index and the Export \$ Index.

The Carcase Plus Index is a desired gains index, based on post-weaning weight, fat depth and eye muscle depth in a 60:20:20 ratio. Carcase plus rewards for high growth and muscle depth, while also rewarding for increased leanness without optimising this trait at a particular point.

The Trade \$ Index is designed to target production of 20kg carcass weight lambs and uses post-weaning age (7.5 months) ASBVs for growth, fat and eye muscle depth to produce the \$ Index value. The Trade \$ Index rewards animals with a post-weaning weight (PWT) ASBV of +6 or greater, optimises the post-weaning fat (PFAT) ASBV at -0.5 and rewards animals with more positive eye muscle depth (PEMD) ASBVs.

The production of trade weight lambs requires appropriate leanness; however, excessive leanness is undesirable due to potential difficulties in finishing lambs at this weight. For this reason the Trade \$ Index optimises the post-weaning fat (PFAT) ASBV at -0.5. The further an animal's PFAT ASBV is from -0.5 the less points are allocated. The index also rewards animals with more positive post-weaning eye muscle depth ASBVs, which is desirable for carcass conformation and yield. The more positive the PEMD ASBV the more points are awarded in the index.

The Export \$ Index is aimed at producing 24kg carcass weight lambs and like the Trade \$ Index uses post-weaning age (7.5 months) ASBVs for growth, fat and eye muscle depth to produce the \$ Index value. The Export \$ Index rewards animals with a post-weaning weight (PWT) ASBV of +10 or greater, optimises the post-weaning fat (PFAT) ASBV at -1.0 and rewards animals with more positive eye muscle depth (PEMD) ASBVs.

Both the Trade \$ and Export \$ Indexes are expressed as dollars/ewe joined/year. In estimating the dollar variation the index assumes a weaning rate of 100% and lamb at \$3.50kg cwt.

Carcass Plus	Predicted 10 yr Response	Relative Response	Contribution to Economic Gain
PWT	2.0 kg	60%	70%
PFAT	-0.3 mm	20%	15%
PEMD	0.6mm	20%	15%

	Trade \$	Export \$
Carcass wt. target	20kg	24kg
PWT target	≥ +6	≥ +10
PFAT target	Optimised at -0.5	Optimised at -1.0
PEMD target	≥ 0	≥ 0



Wagin Woolorama 2009 Show Results

Ram under 1yr

- 1st Jocklor
- 2nd Wesswood
- 3rd Edith Park
- 4th Wesswood

Ram over 1yr

- 1st Codji
- 2nd Wesswood
- 3rd Brimfield

Pair Rams under 1yr

- 1st Sasimwa
- 2nd Wesswood
- 3rd Blackbutt

Ram under 1yr Objective Measurement

- 1st Codji / Sasimwa Tied
- 2nd Valencia Downs
- 3rd .Hedingham

CHAMPION RAM SASIMWA
RESERVE CHAMPION RAM JOCKLOR



Ewe under 1yr

- 1st .Codji
- 2nd Valencia
- 3rd .Blackwood

Ewe over 1yr

- 1st .Brimfield
- 2nd Codji
- 3rd Blackwood

Pair of Ewes

- 1st .Brimfield
- 2nd Valencia Downs
- 3rd .Blackbutt

CHAMPION EWE CODJI
RESERVE CHAMPION EWE BRIMFIELD

Group 1 Ram & 2 Ewes

- 1st Brimfield
- 2nd Jocklor
- 3rd Valencia Downs

Progeny Group

- 1st Wesswood
- 2nd Valencia Downs
- 3rd Brimfield





Hamilton Beef Expo Feb 2009

PEN OF 3 RAM LAMBS COMPETITION

A "Pen of 3 Ram Lambs" competition was held in Hamilton at Beef Expo on the 12th and 13th February 2009. This was a new event for Beef Expo and aimed to enhance the presentation of a wider profile of red meat production. Prime lamb producers are increasingly using autumn joining and ram lambs in their breeding programs. The Beef Expo pen of 3 ram lambs concept was used as the basis for a ram lamb competition.

Terminal sire breeders were invited to present a pen of 3 ram lambs, selected as suitable to mate to BL x M ewes in SW Victoria or the SE of SA. There were two classes, either rams to breed lambs suitable for the Trade (18 to 22 kg) market or the Export (>24 kg) market. Rams were to be selected to breed prime lambs aimed specifically at one of these markets. There was a further division of rams,

those with Lambplan figures and those without Lambplan figures. Judging included both Lambplan ASBV's indices 50 points and visual inspection 50 points.

The Lambplan Trade \$ and Export \$ indices were used for the relevant sections. Each ram's index contributed one third of the points towards the pen's score. The highest current index in Lambplan for each section gained the maximum points and the average index gained 50% of the available points (e.g. A pen of 3 rams that each had a Trade \$ index of 108 (average) gained 25 points.)

The visual inspection points were awarded by the judge Mr. David Pipkorn. He awarded a maximum of 50 points per pen. They were allocated for structure (20 points), market suitability (15 points), evenness of pen (5 points), skin quality (5 points) and breed type (5 points).

There were 10 entries in the Lambplan Trade class. Results for the first 3 place getters.

Stud	Breed	Trade Index Ram1	Trade Index Ram2	Trade Index Ram3	Lambplan points /50	Structure /20	Market Suit /15	Evenness /5	Skin Qual /5	Breed type /5	Visual points /50	Total points /100	Place
Bruan	PD	112.9	114.7	115.9	40.5	18	14	4	5	5	46	86.5	1
Waratah	WS	114.8	112.6	112.7	37.8	16	14	3	5	4	42	79.8	2
Bruan	PD	113.5	112.9	112.8	37.1	17	13	3	4	5	42	79.1	3

There were two entries in the non Lambplan Trade class. Results as follows:

Stud	Breed	Trade Index Ram1	Trade Index Ram2	Trade Index Ram3	Lambplan points /50	Structure /20	Market Suit /15	Evenness /5	Skin Qual /5	Breed type /5	Visual points /50	Total points /100	Place
Konongw ootong	PD	-	-	-	-	15	11	3	3	5	37	1	
Duenclin	WS	-	-	-	-	12	12	3	5	4	36	2	

8 entries were received in the Lambplan Export class. Results for the first 3 place getters:

Stud	Breed	Export Index Ram1	Export Index Ram2	Export Index Ram3	Lambplan points /50	Structure /20	Market Suit /15	Evenness /5	Skin Qual /5	Breed type /5	Visual points /50	Total points /100	Place
Bruan	PD	120.3	121.2	120.7	42.8	17	14	4	5	4	44	86.8	1
SW Genetics	Texcel Comp	119.3	120.9	121.4	42.5	17	13	3	5	4	42	84.5	2
Bruan	PD	118.5	120.1	117.8	39.3	18	14	4	5	4	45	84.3	3

2 entries were received in the Non Lambplan Export class. Results as follows.

Stud	Breed	Export Index Ram1	Export Index Ram2	Export Index Ram3	Lambplan points /50	Structure /20	Market Suit /15	Evenness /5	Skin Qual /5	Breed type /5	Visual points /50	Total points /50	Place
Duenclin	WS	-	-	-	-	16	13	4	4	5	42	42	1
Konongw ootong	PD	-	-	-	-	15	12	4	5	5	41	41	2



Beef Expo cont...



WARATAH WHITE SUFFOLKS CAME SECOND
IN THE LAMBPLAN TRADE CLASS



JUDGE, DAVID PIKORN,
MAKES COMMENTS ON THE ENTRIES.

Royal Launceston Show

9-10 OCTOBER 2008

JUDGE GRAEME COLLINS, 'MERRIBOOK' VICTORIA

Ram Shorn Under 1 1/2 yrs

1st Sunnybanks

Rams Shorn Under 1 1/2 years pen of 2

1st Fairbank

Ram Shorn born on or after 1st August

1st Sunnybanks 2nd Fairbank

CHAMPION RAM - Sunnybanks

RESERVE CHAMPION RAM - Sunnybanks

Ewe Shorn over 1 1/2 years with lamb:

1st Sunnybanks 1

Ewe Shorn under 1 1/2 years

1st Fairbank

Ewe Shorn pen of 2 under 1 1/2 years

1st Fairbank 2nd Sunnybanks

CHAMPION EWE - Fairbank

RESERVE CHAMPION EWE - Fairbank

Group 1 ram plus 2 ewes under 1 1/2 years

1st Sunnybanks 2nd Fairbank

Hobart Royal Show

22-23 OCTOBER 2008

JUDGE BEN PRENTICE, 'KURRALEA', NSW

Ram Shorn Under 1 1/2 years

1st Sunnybanks 2nd Penrise

Ram Shorn born on or after 1st August:

1st Sunnybanks 2nd Fairbank

Rams Shorn under 1 1/2 years, Pen of 2,

1st Penrise

Ram Lamb

1st Sunnybanks 2nd Penrise

CHAMPION RAM - Sunnybanks

RESERVE CHAMPION RAM - Penrise

Ewe Shorn under 1 1/2 years

1st Fairbank

Ewes Shorn under 1 1/2 years, pen of 2

1st Sunnybanks

CHAMPION EWE - Fairbank

RESERVE CHAMPION EWE - Sunnybanks

Group 1 Ram plus 2 Ewes under 1 1/2 years

1st Sunnybanks



Canberra Royal Show Results

Ram, Showing Milk Teeth – shorn and untrimmed

- 1st JE & KM Prentice ‘Kurralea’
- 2nd JE & KM Prentice ‘Kurralea’
- 3rd D I S Mitchell ‘Rene’
- Highly Com. MJ & DJ Long

Pair Rams, Showing Milk Teeth, Shorn and untrimmed

- 1st JE & KM Prentice ‘Kurralea’
- 2nd MJ & DJ Long & ‘Pendarra’
- 3rd A & M Dissegna A & M ‘Warburn’
- Highly Com. D I S Mitchell ‘Rene’

Ram, showing milk teeth, shorn and untrimmed, born after 1st June

- 1st A & M Dissegna A & M ‘Warburn’
- 2nd EC & JE Dixon ‘Ashbank’
- 3rd D I S Mitchell ‘Rene’
- 4th D I S Mitchell ‘Rene’
- 5th MJ & DJ Long & ‘Pendarra’
- 6th A & M Dissegna A & M ‘Warburn’

Ram, Two Tooth and over – shorn and untrimmed

- 1st A & M Dissegna A & M ‘Warburn’
- 2nd Jarrod Alcorn ‘Jarrabay’
- 3rd Yanco White Suffolk Stud

CHAMPION RAM

JE & KM Prentice ‘Kurralea’

RESERVE CHAMPION RAM

JE & KM Prentice ‘Kurralea’



CHAMPION RAM WON BY ‘KURRALEA’
HELD BY BEN PRENTICE

Ewe, Showing Milk Teeth – shorn and untrimmed

- 1st D I S Mitchell ‘Rene’
- 2nd MJ & DJ Long & ‘Pendarra’
- 3rd EC & JE Dixon ‘Ashbank’
- Highly Com. A & M Dissegna ‘Warburn’

Pair Ewes, Showing Milk Teeth, Shorn and untrimmed

- 1st EC & JE Dixon ‘Ashbank’
- 2nd Jarrod Alcorn ‘Jarrabay’
- 3rd MJ & DJ Long & ‘Pendarra’
- Highly Com. D I S Mitchell ‘Rene’

Ewe, showing milk teeth, shorn and untrimmed, born after 1st June

- 1st D I S Mitchell ‘Rene’
- 2nd A & M Dissegna A & M ‘Warburn’
- 3rd D I S Mitchell ‘Rene’
- Highly Com. MJ & DJ Long & ‘Pendarra’



Canberra Royal Show Results cont...

Ewe, Two Tooth and over – shorn and untrimmed

- 1st A & M Dissegna A & M 'Warburn'
- 2nd Jarrod Alcorn 'Jarrabay'
- 3rd Yanco McCaughey White Suffolk Stud

CHAMPION WHITE SUFFOLK EWE

EC & JE Dixon 'Ashbank'

RESERVE CHAMPION WHITE SUFFOLK EWE

D I S Mitchell 'Rene' '

Group, Consisting of 1 Ram & 2 Ewes

- 1st D I S Mitchell 'Rene' '
- 2nd EC & JE Dixon 'Ashbank' '
- 3rd MJ & DJ Long 'Pendarra' '
- Highly Com. A & M Dissegna 'Warburn' '



Edenhope Carcass Competition

WINNING PEN OF PRIME LAMBS FROM THE EDENHOPE PRIME LAMB COMPETITION 2008.

LAMBS ARE SHOWN HERE WITH OWNER ASHLEY CALDOW.

CHAMPION LAMBS WERE BOTH SIREN BY "MURRANBOOL" WHITE SUFFOLK RAMS.

Courtesy Bruce Shepherd



New LAMBPLAN Search

A TOOL FOR MARKETING AND SELECTION

THE LAMBPLAN WEBSITE HAS RECENTLY BEEN UPDATED WITH A NEW SEARCHABLE DATABASE

The Sheep Genetics website hosts the world's most comprehensive database of genetic information for the Australian sheep industry.

This extensive database covers different breeds and breeders across all production systems and geographical locations. The Sheep Genetics website is one of the most useful marketing tools for sheep breeders facilitating animal searches by clients and potential clients and providing a place for semen and sale catalogues.

The Sheep Genetics website has three main functions:

1. Providing access for sheep breeders' data to be submitted to the Sheep Genetics database.
2. Providing access to Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) for breeders and commercial producers through a searchable database of animals for potential use in breeding programs and commercial enterprises.
3. Providing news, information and examples of using ASBVs within a breeding program.

The website also provides a range of educational material to assist in the understanding and utilisation of ASBVs. It has links to Sheep Genetics publications, service providers, research and technical information and individual breeder sites.

It is important to note that the Sheep Genetics website and search facility are available to the public and you do not have to be a Sheep Genetics subscriber to access them.

UTILISING THE WEBSITE

To access the search facility you need to visit the Sheep Genetics website and select either MEIRNOSELECT or LAMBPLAN in the menu column on the left hand side of the page.

Once selected you will have the option of either 'search' or 'reports' – choose search here. This will open up a new window where you can access the Sheep Genetics database and search on Merinos, terminals and the maternal breeds.

The following pages outline how to use and interpret the search facility.

For more information on how to use this feature please contact the Sheep Genetics office on (02) 6773 2948 or email info@sheepgenetics.org.au

The screenshot shows the 'Sheep Genetics - LAMBPLAN - Search' page. It features a left-hand navigation menu with breed groups: BORDER LEICESTER, COOPWORTH, CORRIEDALE, EAST FRESIAN, and SAMM. The main content area is titled 'TERMINAL SIRES' and includes a 'TERMINAL SIRES ASBV enquiry' section with fields for 'Stud/Flock' and 'Animal Id', and a 'Breeder Search' section with a field for 'Stud' or 'breeder name'. A 'Members Login' section is on the right. Callout boxes provide the following information:

- Indicates where you are within the search facility:** Points to the top navigation bar.
- Allows you to search for a stud or flock by entering the full/part of the name or the Sheep Genetics breed and flock code:** Points to the 'Stud/Flock' search field.
- Allows you to search for an animal by entering its full 16 digit Sheep Genetics ID or any part of it:** Points to the 'Animal Id' search field.
- Members login - secure area where searches can be saved and all of your animals can be viewed regardless of your web status:** Points to the 'Members Login' section.
- Select the breed group you want to search by:** Points to the left-hand navigation menu.
- Basic stud search, this will give you the contact details of studs listed with Sheep Genetics in the different breed groups:** Points to the 'Breeder Search' section.
- This link allows a simple search based on predefined criteria:** Points to the 'Search ASBVs by breed, ASBV, drop, and other options' link.
- Breeder details can be found by using this search field:** Points to the 'Breeder Search' field.

Initial Search Page – The first thing you will see



General criteria – allows you to specify the sex, age and even ID of an animal. Progeny and breeder information can also be included

Indicates where you are in the search section

Members login – access saved searches and your animals not visible to others on the web

By ticking the trait leader box, specify that you want animals returned on the results that are in the top 10% for the particular trait

Avg = the breed average for the particular trait based on the current drop of animals. This acts as a reference point

Min Acc. % - allows you to define the level of ASBV accuracy for each of the traits listed

This section allows you to define the particular traits and indexes you are interested in

Min and Max allows you to set limits of the ASBVs for the particular trait

By clicking here you are able to get a description of all Sheep Genetics traits

Percentile band reports can be viewed by clicking this link

Results can be sorted a range of ways by using this menu

Advanced Search Page – Allows you to conduct a more comprehensive search of the Sheep Genetics database

By selecting default or all gives you the ability to see all ASBVs available or a predefined default number

By ticking these boxes you can have accuracies displayed and ID in different formats

These search boxes allow simple searches based on stud, ID, sex, breed and age

Trait descriptions can be obtained by clicking this link

This menu allows you to search using previous or saved searches

Access to the advanced search can be gained here

Animal ID	BWT	WWT	PWT	PFAT	PEMD	PWEC	C+	Trade\$	Export\$	Dorper\$
160001-2007-070099	-0.12 74%	7.3 81%	11.4 75%	-0.5 63%	0.3 69%	-	166	109	112	125
160048-2007-070181	0.37 66%	9.8 77%	16.2 77%	-1.5 44%	-0.9 72%	-	198	110	118	136
160001-2007-070109	0.34 76%	10.1 87%	14.1 76%	-1.1 89%	1.6 69%	-	198	113	118	135
160027-2007-070093	0.27 64%	7.5 81%	11.2 81%	-1.0 98%	1.0 82%	-	177	110	115	126
160001-2007-070112	0.34 75%	9.6 82%	14.4 75%	-0.5 63%	1.1 68%	-	187	113	116	133
160032-2007-070100	0.72 75%	11.6 77%	17.4 71%	-0.4 67%	0.8 71%	-	199	115	118	136
160048-2007-070085	0.44 68%	8.8 75%	11.7 72%	-0.9 44%	1.0 71%	-	179	110	115	132
160048-2007-070098	0.35 70%	6.5 75%	11.2 72%	-1.0 67%	0.5 72%	-	172	109	114	131
160001-2007-070094	0.48 76%	10.3 87%	18.2 75%	-0.8 44%	1.1 70%	-	195	113	117	137
160048-2007-070123	0.35 60%	9.7 75%	14.3 72%	-0.9 37%	0.9 71%	-	192	112	117	132

Results Page – What is returned after search criteria has been entered



President's Report to AGM, Albury, 2009

At a time when our agricultural and economic climate is shrouded with uncertainty, the lamb industry and more specifically, the future of the White Suffolk breed has never looked brighter and presents many exciting challenges and opportunities. The demand for lamb across the world is increasing and at present, Australia is the only lamb producing country capable of satisfying this increasing demand. With the Asian market amongst those developing an insatiable preference for lamb, coupled with an accelerating increase in their standard of living, the future of our lamb exports into this very close and accessible market is unlimited.

As a breed, we have continued to grow in respect of commercial reputation, market suitability and market share with, the only benchmark the industry has, the MLA lamb survey results, indicating a further significant increase in our majority share of the Australian prime lamb market. These results more notably have shown a strengthening of our share of the second cross lamb market indicating that our promotion in this area is continuing to have an effect. For the first time we also have some indication of the use of White Suffolk genetics within the Maternal side of the lamb industry with around 10 % of all prime lamb dams derived from a Suffolk/White Suffolk base. This equates to close to 20% of all non merino breeding ewes, once again vindicating the promotion focus in this area and the acceptance of the versatility of the White Suffolk breed.

So how can we continue to make further gains in an industry that has seen national sheep numbers drop to record low levels and the mix of genetics within the national flock the most diverse we have ever seen? In addition to this, many issues have sidetracked the lamb industry over the past decade. The trend toward excessive leanness, the prediction of 40kg lamb carcasses and the lure of producers chasing export weights regardless of the cost of production have all sent mixed messages to both seedstock breeders and commercial producers. It is probably true to say that all these have in some way, confused what is basically a fairly straightforward product to produce.

That is to produce a lamb that satisfies consumers from the point of value for money, processors in regard to meat yield and, most importantly, is profitable for

lamb producers and hopefully, to achieve all this as efficiently as possible. The White Suffolk breed has an unequalled advantage in today's prime lamb market in that we retain the ability to mix genetics and adjust the conformation of our breed to quickly satisfy market preference. This unique advantage, coupled with the vast range of expertise within our membership ranks will ensure that whatever challenge confronts the prime lamb industry in the future, the White Suffolk breed will be better situated to make adjustments and meet those challenges. To ensure we do not become sidetracked by issues that seemingly contradict the main issue, which is the efficient production of high yielding, well muscled lamb carcasses that are consistently good value for money at the consumer level, all members need to ensure they keep up to date with all that is happening within the Australian Prime lamb industry.

To this end, the Association has in the past 12 months taken significant steps to ensure that its members have access to a wider range of relevant information. The development of the Strategic Plan by members at the 2008 annual conference identified member education, working with end users of lamb and transfer of information as high priorities. Much has been done to respond to this issue with an updated and more relevant website, relevant information being relayed to members through email and an increasing emphasis on commercial aspects through our promotion and newsletters.

Much more can and will be achieved over the next few years but it is not just the responsibility of the Association, but every White Suffolk breeder, to ensure they are producing a product (genetics) which ticks all the boxes of those who have to handle that product. This responsibility extends to all areas of every members individual seedstock business including advertising and promotion, quality and suitability of sires and honesty to the commercial sector.

The Association is available to provide support to members where required, and is not the total controlling influence over each members operation. The unparalleled success and growth of the White Suffolk breed has been based on years of individual members exercising their right to experiment and implement different genetics, breeding strategies and ideas, then sharing these ideas



President's Report to AGM, Albury, 2009 cont....

freely with fellow members, but at all times respecting the right of fellow breeders to achieve their own objectives using a different strategy. This respect of our fellow White Suffolk breeders is paramount in maintaining this development within our breed and should extend to all areas related with seedstock production including the use of specific genetics, breeding strategies, performance recording, etc. etc. The Association has never and should never play a controlling influence in dictating how breeders achieve their breeding objectives, but will play an increasing role of support to every member of the Australian White Suffolk Association.

Much has been achieved at the administrative level over the past few years and I am sure the Association now has in place the level of service and professionalism that will ensure we remain one of the more respected, innovative and proactive Associations within the Australian sheep industry.

As I have mentioned, many changes have taken place within the Association in recent years and I am indebted to the committee who have put in many hours of work, not just at organized meetings but over the computer and phone. While on the surface it may at times seem like very little is happening, I can assure members there is always some issue traveling through cyberspace between committee members through emails and despite the seemingly endless amount of discussion, we do allow ourselves time to enjoy the experience. We have recently initiated a Future Forum program which it is hoped will ensure a smooth transition of new ideas and members onto the Federal committee and also provide opportunities for members to have an increased input into the future direction of the Association and become familiar with all that is associated within the administration of the AWSA. We encourage those within our membership who want to do a little more than breed sheep to become involved with the Future Forum program.

One of our committee members will not be standing for re election this year and I thank Penny Holmes for her invaluable input. The importance of having a female voice on our committee over the past 4 years cannot be understated and I am sure Penny will still have an important role to play in some aspect of the Association into the future. Thank you Penny for your time and commitment to the Association.

Thanks also to the secretariat, Rob and Nikki who play such an important role in the smooth running of our Association. Their dedication and loyalty to our Association goes well beyond that of a paid position.

To Bizboost who administer Webmanager, organize the flock book and compile and print the newsletter, the same applies and we thank the whole team at Bizboost for their efforts. Pete Angus will not be re applying for the position of Promotions and Advertising Officer and we thank Pete for many years of work for the Association, initially as a member on the committee, then as our representative in the office and more recently as our advertising and promotions officer.

The hours of work that have gone unclaimed by Pete are significant and we thank Pete for his dedication and unselfish tireless work for the good of all members of the Association. To all members of the committee who have once again put in many hours of work and travel to ensure that the Association continues to run effectively, a big thank you. Much has been achieved over the last few years and I suspect (I know) many of the meetings have extended well over time but the members of your committee have always been prepared to remain focused until all business was addressed and resolved.

Finally as this is the end of my 3rd year as President of the Australian White Suffolk Association, I would like to thank all who have assisted and supported me during my term as President. It has been an honour to work with the committee and members of this exceptional Association and I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as President, and will continue to serve the members of this Association through the Federal Committee. And to conclude, a sincere thank you to my wife and family who have endured 3 years of extended telephone calls, time away from home, meetings and generally putting up with me living in our office for extended periods of time.

Thank you
Murray Long



AI Forum

A very successful AI forum was held at the 2009 Annual Conference in Albury with some good suggestions from all the members that participated. The results of this forum are currently being written into a small booklet that will be available to all members and breeders of sheep throughout the industry. The suggestions have all been recorded and collated however if you have some experiences that you consider may be of value then contact the Secretary as soon as possible and pass on this information so that it may be included in the publication. The booklet is about half way through the process of being put into print after which it will be sent to AI technicians for the inclusion of additional information and checking of information after. We expect it to be close to publication by the Annual Conference in 2010.

Any information relating your experiences with Artificial breeding programs would be appreciated and will only add knowledge to the information we already have documented and make this publication one that should improve the success rate for all breeders using modern breeding technologies

Murray Long

Maternal White Suffolk

The issue of White Suffolk genetics in producing 1st cross ewes has been given a boost by figures from the latest MLA lamb survey showing that we currently have around 20% of the non merino ewe base for prime lamb production. This topic was also raised at the National Conference in Albury and for some years now, producers have been singing the praise of White Suffolk first cross ewes for production of 2nd cross lambs.

The MCPT trial conducted some years ago highlighted just how good the White Suffolk was in producing 1st cross ewes with some great results from sires that were selected with no consideration given to maternal traits. So what can we do to put some emphasis on the maternal traits in an effort to make our breed even better in this area? Lambplan is one system that has breeding values that relate to maternal traits and it is through attention to a few measurements that we can focus on areas such as adult ewe weight and fertility issues, without compromising the carcase value of our genetics. Because White Suffolk genetics have already been used in many of the Maternal breeds, we already have some good linkages in the system but we are unable to run the White Suffolk breed in an across breed analysis for maternals. We will however have access to many of the important breeding values that are relevant to Maternals such as Number of Lambs Weaned (NLW), Maternal Weaning Weight (MWWT), lambing ease, gestation length and maternal behaviour scores.

Maternal behaviour score is obtained by scoring ewes on their reaction to the tagging process at birth, the further the ewe walks away from her lamb while you are weighing and tagging, the lower her mothering ability. Some good relationships have been found between Maternal behaviour scores and several production traits such as growth rate and NLW.

Score 1. Excellent mother - Ewe stays closed to the lamb during the tagging process.

Score 2. Ewe retreats but stays within 10 metres returning immediately once lamb is tagged.

Score 3. Good mother - Ewe moves more than 10 metres away, circles around continuing to show interest in lamb during the tagging process.

Score 4. Average mother - Ewe moves up to 20 metres away but returns cautiously after tagging.

Score 5. Poor mother - Ewe moves more than 20 metres away and has to be bought back to the lamb after tagging

There are a few simple measurements which will assist in selection for better maternal characteristics within the White Suffolk breed. Weigh all ewes prior to joining and ensure that all data relating to joining time and conception date are entered into the system. When lambing begins keep good records on number of lambs born and any deaths, missing lambs, lambing ease, dry ewes etc and enter these values into the data base. Do not leave any ewes out of the system simply because they lost their lamb or failed to lamb. There may soon be provision to enter number of lambs scanned in utero into the data base so if you scan ewes prior to lambing, keep this data. Any information relating to fertility and weaning will add accuracy to information that is already in the Lambplan data base and enable us to build some good maternal information.

We already have some good information in the Lambplan system, with all that is happening in Sheep CRC, there will be opportunities to enter much more than just data relating to carcase traits such as body weights and scanned information. Begin documenting as much information as you can gather on your sheep so that when an option is available to enter additional data on maternal, we will have the opportunity to increase our claim as a very good alternate maternal sire.

Murray Long



Letter to the Editor

LET'S GET SERIOUS AND STOP BEATING AROUND THE BUSH

The White Suffolk breed has made some substantial gains in the areas of carcase attributes and importance to all areas of the Australian lamb industry over the past decade. This has lamb producers with a real opportunity to increase profit margins through increased lambs to weaning, easier management at all levels and higher yielding carcasses. This preference by lamb producers has resulted in the White Suffolk being the sire of choice for first cross prime lamb production for a number of years, and as we recognised would happen, increased profile in the marketplace leads to increased scrutiny of our genetics and the end product they produce. The gains we have made across all areas within our breed are very real and are due largely to the enthusiasm and willingness within our membership to continually improve an already great sheep breed, a fact which has been reflected in the ever increasing acceptance of the White Suffolk at the commercial level of the Australian lamb industry.

HOWEVER....

For some time now, there have been rumblings across sections of the lamb industry regarding the quality of White Suffolk lambs being presented to processors. Several incidents were raised a number of years ago, predominately due to the preferences of some local agents and these were addressed by the committee and we were assured that Whites were not the source of the problem, rather unsuitable carcase shapes across all breeds. However there has been an increase in the frequency of reports

over recent months to the point where price discounts on some White Suffolk cross lambs are being reported with some processors refusing to handle specific drafts of lambs. Some of these are unsubstantiated (hearsay) reports with no substance, some are as a result of deliberate hype generated to achieve gains in other areas but unfortunately, some are real. Most reports seem to be based around the same issue and specific to particular regions, especially in NSW, and even then, these become a little suspicious when one day after a processor states that he has never and will never purchase White Suffolk cross lambs, buys a large consignment of just such lambs at a premium price. A proportion of these reports also fall into the same category as those investigated previously by the committee in that it is not so much the breed genetics in question, but the quality of the lamb carcase that has been questioned by the processor irrespective of breed. However, regardless of the nature or proof of these reports, they are circulating throughout the lamb industry and we as a breed would be foolish to dismiss them as just one off statements, unfounded hearsay or as a result of some form of breed jealousy. The time has come for every White Suffolk breeder to address the responsibility our breed has to all sectors involved in the prime lamb industry. We have quickly reached the position where White Suffolks contribute a major proportion of the genetics used to generate lambs for the Australian domestic and export market and consequently if we are seen as not providing a suitable product for

that market, we need to be open and proactive in addressing the problem area. There are plenty of examples in the livestock industry detailing the consequences of just doing nothing and hoping the problem will go away or sort itself out. Unfortunately none of them have a good end result.

SO WHERE DOES THE PROBLEM LIE?

The problem is in the carcase traits and red meat yield of some lambs. There is no doubting that the easier management traits, high fertility and toughness of the White Suffolk has played a significant part in the rise to prominence of our breed and these characteristics should never be compromised. However if commercial lamb producers are being penalised either through genetic tendency to produce sub standard carcasses or by association with a breed that has a bad reputation, then our current position in the Australian lamb industry is under real threat. The old saying "throw enough mud at the wall and some will eventually stick" has real significance in this situation.

We as a breed have always prided ourselves on the fact that we are proactive, listen to market signals and have the ability to adapt our breeding objectives to change quickly. **Perhaps now is a defining moment in the history of our breed.** We recognised some shortfalls in our carcase traits and addressed them some years ago, making some good gains but these advances have not been consistent across all sheep in the White Suffolk breed with the sire choices of many breeders continuing to dilute the average carcase gains we have made overall. This fact is nothing new to



Letter to the Editor cont....

LET'S GET SERIOUS AND STOP BEATING AROUND THE BUSH

many breeders within our Association and this criticism does not just apply to the White Suffolk breed.

As the heading of this article states, let's stop beating around the bush and address the real issues. When a recent discussion on the future of the White Suffolk breed was raised in the forum session at the National Conference in Albury, issues such as uniformity of type, softness of ears, wool free points and what makes a good show sheep were all enthusiastically raised and only after about 10 minutes of discussion was the importance of CARCASS MUSCLING within our breed mentioned. Surely if we are to continue to supply a large proportion of genetics to the Australian lamb industry, we need to change our priorities as to what are the most important aspects within our breeding programs.

That is not to say the other traits are not important, we just need to prioritise them in a different order with carcass attributes given higher priority. Perhaps the one area that has been our greatest means of promotion has contributed to our problem. The show ring provides great opportunities for display and promotion of the White Suffolk breed, but does it always promote the type of sheep that are commercially suitable for the Australian lamb industry. Many breeders in our Association would say not and perhaps we have reached the time when we need to take a good look at our commercial breeding objectives when considering the use of just the type of sheep that are attracting high praise, gaining high profiles and influencing the genetic selections of many studs within our Association.

There is no doubt that the eye catching appearance of many of these

sheep and the manner in which they have been prepared is influencing the breeding decisions of many White Suffolk breeders. The statement of a judge at a major Royal show some years ago best supports this fact when, after describing the plaudits of the first 5 sheep he had placed at the top of the line, went on to finish by saying.. "and at the end of the line we have some outstanding carcass sheep that are just what the industry is looking for.."

Surely if we are serious about our commercial image and promotion of what we have to offer the lamb industry, this type of thinking and its influence on sire selection has to be given some serious thought, especially in light of the current criticism being attributed to our breed. Let's stop beating around the bush and admit that some of the more high profile sheep that have been extensively used in the Whites over recent years have not had the best credentials for carcass traits and have more than likely contributed in a number of ways to the situation we now face. The fact is that these high profile sheep, as a result of show success, tend to attract relatively more attention to a wider range of breeders, especially young and new breeders of which we have plenty, either through the publicity emanating from the show itself or the subsequent advertising for genetic sales either through semen or progeny of this high profile sire; great if they are just what the industry is looking for, not so great if they can potentially provide us with the adverse publicity we are currently experiencing.

If the reputation of the White Suffolk

breed suffers any further in the area of carcass attributes, all members will feel the impact and it is therefore up to every member of the Association to ensure that the genetics they are supplying to the commercial sector are producing the exact type of lamb that industry is satisfied with. Just as no one stud or stud breeder created the problem; it should not be left to just a few studs to solve it. We all need to listen to those processing and consuming our lamb, they are our customers and without them demanding our genetics we do not have a business.

We have already witnessed some improved carcass sires being widely used in more recent years that should place us in a more favourable commercial position once the 4-6 years that it takes for these genetics to filter through to the commercial market has passed. Either through performance recording of sires or examining the kill sheets of your client's lambs, it is the responsibility of every member to ensure that the genetics they are promoting will not only raise the credibility of their individual stud but also protect the reputation of the White Suffolk breed. Our sole purpose now should be, not to look and judge what others are doing or have done in the past, but to have a critical look at our own genetics with a view to maximising the carcass value of our sires. Those who think they are immune from any negative impacts that the industry has to offer may find themselves being left behind as the warning signs have been around for a few years.



Letter to the Editor cont...

LET'S GET SERIOUS AND STOP BEATING AROUND THE BUSH

Processors have sent the message out loud and clear, many White Suffolk breeders have already responded, and it is now every member's responsibility to react to their demands, not question their judgment.

We have much to be proud of as a sheep breed, let's not let it slip now that we have achieved probably more than we could have ever hoped for.

We owe it to the commercial lamb clients that have switched to our genetics and benefited from our vision, not to let them down at a time when the lamb industry is set to boom. To lose market share and reputation now would potentially hinder our prospects for many years, to the point where we may never regain our current level of market share.

Let's all put the value of carcase, not what we personally may mistakenly consider ideal carcase traits but what the industry considers good carcase muscling and meat yield, on top of our breeding priorities and continue to elevate the White Suffolk as the premium choice for lamb production.

Murray Long



Global Financial Crisis!!!

Due to the volatility in global financial systems and following turmoil in both the US and European markets, uncertainty also has now hit Japan.

In the last 7 days Origami Bank has folded, Sumo Bank has gone belly up and Bonsai Bank announced plans to cut some of its branches.

Yesterday, it was announced that Karaoke Bank is up for sale and will likely go for a song, while today shares in Kamikaze Bank were suspended after they nose-dived.

While Samurai Bank is soldiering on following sharp cutbacks, Ninja Bank is reported to have taken a hit, but they remain in the black.

Furthermore, 500 staff at Karate Bank got the chop and analysts report that there is something fishy going on at Sushi Bank where it is feared that staff may get a raw deal.

And to top it off, the Saki Bank has been totally drained !! Oh and to really top it off the Karma Sutra bank is f#*%@d!!!