

# Cashmore Oaklea

## July 2015 Newsletter



12 Month Old Seedstock Ewes

## Increasing Lamb Survival!

A couple weeks back Don and I attended the very well run BestWool - BestLamb Conference held in Bendigo. It was surprising to find that a low number of stud breeders actively measure, either by pregnancy scanning or tagging new born lambs at birth, the number of lambs weaned per ewe. Data presented unfortunately shows that many lambs are lost at birth or soon after that through improved management practices and better genetics, could live.

Apparently only 8 merino studs, and 10 research flocks from the merino wool industry routinely do so, which is astonishing considering that merinos contribute 65% of the DNA into the 20 million lambs slaughtered each year. Perhaps this is one of the reasons we are seeing a shift to Maternal Composite sheep, which looks set to accelerate as the number of merino ewes falls below a critical, self replacing threshold.

Our 55,000 pregnancy scan records entered this year and the 5000 lambs we will tag at birth and coupled with the new Lambplan mating module will allow us to work on improved lamb survival is certainly leading self replacing sheep breeding and production for our clients flocks.

## The 3 P's!

Our after dinner speaker at Bendigo was the well known ex Carlton Football Club coach David Parkin, author and motivational speaker. His key message to all delegates was that the "attitude you take into the room" will determine what you take away from the conference. While pondering this in relation to the Cashmore Oaklea ram breeding business he then made 3 points that are critical in business and life.

**Passion** - you get more from anything you do if its what interests you.

**Predictable** - People want an expected outcome to be comfortable, happy with a product.

**Persistence** - Those who stay at the game get the results.

On reflecting on the Parkin 3 P's, the Cashmore Oaklea maternal sheep breeding program has all of these ingredients and perhaps they are why we now have a very large flock of the best Self Replacing Maternal Sheep in Australia!

# CASHMORE OAKLEA HAS BRED 15 OF THE TOP 23

A sort of the Lambplan list shows that from Australian Maternal Sires, Cashmore Oaklea has bred 15 of the top 23 in recent times.

The size of our breeding program numbering 7000 recorded ewes and commitment to performance recording over 25 years has been instrumental in achieving this.

We continue to breed sheep with fast early growth, which deliver far reaching production benefits relating to conversion efficiency, stocking rate, reproduction rate and weight of lamb produced per Ha.

We have the most fertile maternal flock in Australia and easily the most worm tolerant.

Added to this we are now restricting adult ewe size so that daily feed maintenance costs can be capped.

## INDEXES AND PURCHASING RAMS

Lambplan have developed the MAT\$ index to serve the needs of maternal, dual purpose and self-replacing sheep. This index balances growth, muscle and fertility characteristics, while maintaining or improving fat cover and the survival traits of birth weight and worm egg count. Importantly this index has been developed taking into consideration the correlation that exists between the various economic driver traits.

The index is expressed in dollar values. A dollar index of 140 indicates that a ram will produce \$15 extra value for every ewe joined each year compared to a ram with an index of 125. Therefore over three years, if a ram mates with 200 ewes, the extra value produced by that ram will be  $\$15 \times 200 = \$3,000$ .

As there are good linkages between the various flocks and breeds in the maternal analysis comparisons can be made between these flocks and breeds.

## 271 YOUNG RAMS IN THE TOP 300

90% of the top 300 Young Maternal Rams in Australia are at Cashmore Oaklea.

A search on the Sheep Genetics web site shows that at the 1st of June 2015 Cashmore Oaklea have 271 out of 300 of the top indexing 2014 drop maternal (Composite, Coopworth and Border Leicester) rams in the country. These rams have index values of 138 to 147. The remaining 29 rams have been bred by 9 different breeders and 8 of these rams are by Cashmore Oaklea sires.

We are often bemused that producers are prepared to pay high prices for well presented low performing rams that are going to contribute little to their flock or their bottom line.

Much has been said about the New Zealand corporate bred rams that are coming into Australia. Until these breeders are prepared to compare their sheep with Australian bred sheep the information that they provide to ram buyers is a nonsense and meaningless. We have and continue to use several sires from NZ as a benchmarking process to compare where we are and the vast majority of these sires have nothing to contribute to our breeding program.

## PREGNANCY TESTING

Sheep Genetics (LAMBPLAN) are in the process of developing a mating module which will allow breeders to record, prior to lambing, what sire each ewe was mated to, mating date, her adult or prior to mating body weight and condition score, her mating and scanning group and most importantly their pregnancy scanning results.

Cashmore Oaklea have been asking for this for many years now and are pleased that at long last some action is being taken by Lambplan

Lambplan have sent to us 48,000 pregnancy test results that we have recorded on our own fully pedigreed ewes in Pedigree Wizard over the last 8 years. We are now in the process of going through all of this data to check for any anomalies and to make sure that we have the mating and scanning groups and mating times correct. Lambplan will now be able to run this information through the system and we should receive more accurate and timely fertility ASBV's.

There are 2 major benefits to industry of using pregnancy scanning results:

The 1st being better accuracy of fertility ASBV's. An example of this is at Cashmore Oaklea where we mate 2,000 stud ewe lambs each year, we then demote half of each age group out of the stud into our commercial flock. This gives us about 2000, 2 to 7 year old ewes in the stud and 5,000 in our flock. Up until now Lambplan have only been using the lambing information from our 4,000, 1 to 7 year stud ewes but we will now pick up an extra 5,000 records each year. Some sires (we use 50 to 60 each year) have many more daughters demoted to the flock than others and we will now be able to have much more accuracy on how their daughters are performing fertility wise.

The 2nd major benefit is that we will be able to provide much more timely fertility ASBV's. At present the latest lambing information does not come into Lambplan until after the ram selling season and there can be large movements in fertility ASBV's both up and down and in particular on new and young sires. Using pregnancy scanning results will bring about a lot more confidence on what different sires are achieving and bring it about 1 year earlier.

At Cashmore Oaklea we have done a lot of analysis on lambing results over many years and the largest impact on ewe fertility is always the ram that she was sired by.

Some have said to us that pregnancy scanning results are not accurate enough. We have been using John Connell, from SheepScan Australia for many years now and his accuracy rate is at least 98% for empties, singles, twins and triplets.

# WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT THESE RAMS?

We just thought we would let you know about some of the sires that are producing those 271 young rams in the top 300 currently on the Lambplan list.



Sires most fertile ewe lambs in Aust.  
150099-2011-11-0667  
YNLW plus 41%  
Maternal \$ Index 139

11-0667 is the standout ram in Australia for producing ewe lambs with early puberty and high reproduction rates. His pedigree is stacked with animals carrying these characteristics and in our stud flock his daughters pregnancy tested 16% above mob average but weaned the most lambs. Our information indicates that ewe lambs must have a high YNLW sire to wean large numbers of lambs.



Second highest Maternal Ram for Fertility  
150099-2011-11-0716  
NLW plus 24%, Maternal \$ Index 140

11-0716 is currently our highest NLW sire and ranked second nationally to another Cashmore Oaklea ram. A robust, active ram.



13-0997  
High early growth, WWT 9.8  
Maternal \$ Index 143

13 -0997 is an up and coming young sire with well balanced ASBVs, thick body and medium dense wool. He has very fast growth to weaning and sons will suit short growing season situations.



Top sire in Australia  
150099-2012-12-2402  
Maternal \$ Index 146

12-2402 is the top ram on the list with a Maternal \$ Index of 146. This puts him \$18 per ewe mated above 2014 breed average of 128 Maternal \$ Index.

He's also the best ram in the country for FEC ranked 1 out of 9100 maternal rams, with minus 89%, making him pretty well worm proof.

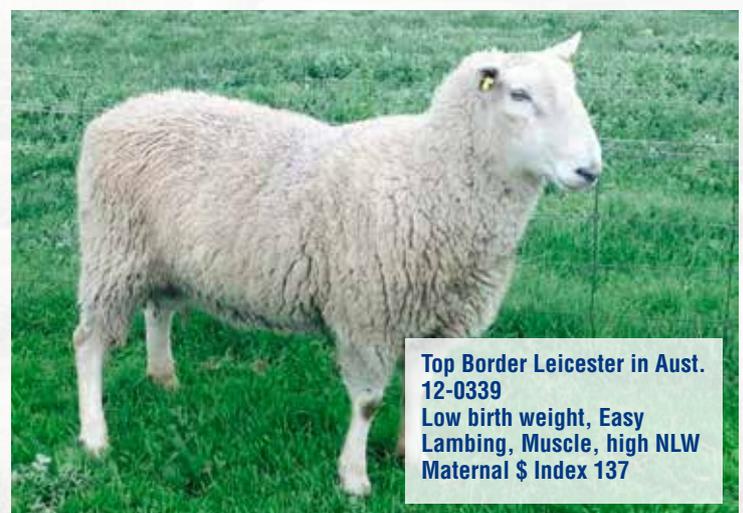
Also ranked #2 for PEMD, eye muscle depth, behind another Cashmore ram.

Is the only ram to be a trait leader, (In top 10%) for NLW, +20% number of lambs weaned that has good muscle. Of interest is that the next 9 high EMD rams have an average NLW of 3.7%.

The point here is that the high muscle message being pushed into industry is not being seen as more fertility and is costing a lot in lambing %.

He's also a curve bender being only 1% higher ASBV from PWWT to Adult WT and caps it off with a low birth weight.

Phenotypically a nice square, medium-framed, dense-wooled sound sheep.



Top Border Leicester in Aust.  
12-0339  
Low birth weight, Easy Lambing, Muscle, high NLW  
Maternal \$ Index 137

12-0339 is the best Border Leicester ram in Australia, Purchased for low birth weight, easy lambing, high NLW, a nice medium compact ram that produces sons good for ewe lamb joinings and merinos flocks in the process of grading up to Composite.



## Are your Maternal Rams a good return on investment?

Our sale rams deliver \$11 per ewe mated per year above industry average. At 7.5 ewes per Ha that is \$82.50 Ha.

Our breeding program delivers genetic improvement of \$2.40 per ewe mated per year compounding.

### Other ram sources:

\$1000 rams – 125 Index ( base level production )

### Cashmore Oaklea rams:

\$1000 rams – 135 Index ( \$10 per ewe mated better )

X 1 year @ 65 ewes mated per year X \$10 = \$650  
X 3 years ( 200 matings ) = \$2000

**Cashmore Oaklea rams return \$2200 more per head  
over their working lifetime.**

## Are you getting fair value for money / return on investment?

# RAM SALE

## FRIDAY 16<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2015

### HAMILTON SHOWGROUNDS, 11am EST

- 400 specially selected Performance Maternal Rams
  - 50 selected Coopworth Rams
  - 25 Nudie Rams

Rams in top 10% Lambplan decile report.  
Lambplan maternal index 133 to 140.

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



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## OPEN DAY

1st of October at Cashmore Park  
114 Wilmots Rd, Cashmore.

Presentations on breeding and production,  
display of sale rams and stud ewes and lambs.



### Cashmore Oaklea Rams

Proudly Australian Made for our environmental  
conditions and market requirements.