

## WELCOME

2014 is a special year at Barwon, celebrating 50 years since Rob Yates introduced Poll Dorsets to the stud. It hasn't always been easy, with the constant changes to business and compliance, and greatly variable seasons. One thing that has been consistent is the desirability of Poll Dorsets in the prime lamb market—in conformation, weight and yield.

In recent years there has been an overwhelming supply of advice, research results and management information, often provided by people with little understanding of running a sheep enterprise. Sometimes these 'ideas' add cost without returning additional income.

My aim is to supply prime lamb producers with sires, proven in the sale yards, ready to go straight to the paddock and work. I also hope to be approachable and provide some practical advice and support to clients via this newsletter, our website and in person.

Please feel free to give me a call for information or to give feedback on the rams. This year's sale rams are the same high standard and I hope to see you at the sale on 10<sup>th</sup> October to help celebrate 50 years breeding Poll Dorsets.

Mark Yates



One of the Barwon Poll Dorset rams to be sold at the spring on-property sale on October 10. Photo taken 5 September 2014

## CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF BREEDING POLL DORSETS

In 1965 Rob Yates introduced Poll Dorsets to Barwon Stud. Now, 50 years later, we remain committed to the breed and focused on the commercial attributes of Poll Dorsets. Breeding sires for prime lamb producers across south eastern Australia, we aim for optimum growth rate and fat covering, and structural soundness.

At Barwon we believe it is important to maintain breed characteristics to ensure Poll Dorsets remain the favoured breed for meat buyers and butchers.

## 2014 SPRING SALE RAMS

The sale rams were grazed on Whistler wheat until eight weeks prior to the sale when

they were shifted onto lucerne based pasture and finished with a grain-based ration. They were shorn in mid-August and are looking fit and ready to work. They have had their 6-in-1 vaccination and have been drenched with Genesis Xtra.

## LAMB EX 2014

In July Mark attended LambEx in Adelaide. LambEx is a two-day conference including a number of interesting presentations and opportunities to interact with all sectors of the lamb value chain, from producers to buyers and end-users. In this newsletter we are sharing with you summaries of a couple of the presentations. The full proceedings can be downloaded from a link on the lambex web page: [www.lambex.com.au](http://www.lambex.com.au)

# Dorsets that look like Dorsets

## THE US MARKET FOR AUSTRALIAN LAMB

Kim Holzner, JBS Imports, Greeley LambEx 2014 Proceedings page 21

### Summary

*The future is bright for Australian lamb in the US market. It is a large market with a large population, and solid retail and foodservice sectors that like the product. Whilst other markets are creating more buzz at present, the US has been a solid customer for over 25 years, and will be for a long time into the future.*

US lamb consumption has not changed in the past 20 years, sitting at about 0.5 kg per person per year (compared to 10kg per person per year in Australia). The US sheep flock is about 5 million and supplies only 50% of their total lamb market.

The market is growing due to the moderate population increase (0.7% annually) being driven by immigration; many of these new Americans are from cultures where lamb is more familiar, and they are more likely to be lamb eaters.

There is also improving demand for lamb, particularly in the food service sector, as the economy recovers from the deep recession associated with the global financial crisis. Beef, pork and chicken are the most popular meats, but lamb which is still a niche item, has a premium position in the 'other' meat options being used by chefs and 'foodies' looking for something to differentiate them from the crowd.

Lamb is in many instances a very expensive protein compared to beef, pork and chicken.



It is important that our promotion is of lamb as a category to increase consumption, rather than being too patriotic and focussing only on Aussie lamb. With the inherent qualities of Aussie lamb, our product will naturally rise to the top.

The retail meat director in a supermarket plays a key role in the market because meat is a destination item or core purchase for many consumers. Being a premium item it draws a specific group of customers to the store, driving higher dollar baskets (with higher margins), a key metric for many retailers. Good operators will have a lamb offering and will continue to actively grow the category due to the positive impact on the business as a whole.

Retail meat directors look to Aussie lamb because it is more consistent year round, in terms of supply and specification.

The food service sector is a vitally important outlet for Aussie lamb. Restaurants and (the many) dedicated TV food channels increase awareness in a crowded market. A consumer who has lamb in a restaurant is more likely to try it at home. Foodservice likes lamb because it is interesting but more mainstream than game meat. But as with retail, lamb is comparatively expensive and its pricing at some times of the year can mean it is often on the 'specials' menu, where

price and availability can be managed.

Australian lamb producers need to work with their processors to understand and work towards desirability in lamb conformation, weight and yield.

### SURVIVE AND THRIVE

Jason Trompf, JT Agri-Source LambEx 2014 Proceedings page 73

Jason's extensive presentation focused on the elements of 'lamb alive-do the five' that will deliver the outcomes required.

- Measure well: scanning and calculating losses;
- Breed well: breeding a sheep that has the environmental fitness to be productive in our highly variable environment
- Feed well: feeding the breeding ewes appropriately for their reproductive status;
- Manage well: managing the ewe during lambing to enhance bonding, protection and survival; and
- Adapt well: having strategies in place that enable sheep systems to adapt to climatic variability.

The sheep industry needs a cultural shift. Currently only 10% of producers know the true extent of their lamb losses and

The majority of reproductive wastage (typically >80%) is occurring within 3 days of birth, known as neonatal lamb survival.

# Whites that look like Whites

Only 17% of Australia's breeding ewe flock are pregnancy scanned for multiples annually, yet this practice is a critical part of best practice reproductive and nutritional management.

Interestingly it has been reported that the New Zealand sheep flock, which has widespread adoption of pregnancy scanning for multiples (>85%), has seen an improvement in reproduction rates by 30 percent over a period when Australia's rates have remained unchanged.

even fewer can conduct an energy budget for their ewes. A massive change is required.

Lamb survival is a unique challenge that not only poses a significant constraint to production but also is a looming

welfare issue for the industry. The difference between lamb survival and many other challenges confronting sheep producers is that there are

## LAMB SURVIVAL INDICATOR

Number of ewes joined \_\_\_\_\_ A

Number of lambs scanned \_\_\_\_\_ B

Number of lambs marked \_\_\_\_\_ C

### Indicators:

#### Scanning percentage

$[B \div A \times 100]$  \_\_\_\_\_

#### Marking percentage

$[D \div A \times 100]$  \_\_\_\_\_

#### Survival percentage, scanning to marking

$[D \div B \times 100]$  \_\_\_\_\_

actionable solutions to apply on-farm. These solutions are well researched and currently available and can contribute to dramatic improvements in whole-farm profitability.

Failure of a ewe to raise a lamb contributes to many inefficiencies throughout the enterprise, and an overall reduction in the efficiency of conversion of feed to meat or wool.

The table below lists the main factors contributing to lamb death and summarises the strategies that can be used to address them.

The calculator (right) can be used to determine the true lamb survival and gain a better understanding of reproduction rates.

## Factors contributing to lamb deaths, ultimate reasons for death and potential strategies to improve survival

Factors contributing to lamb death	Ultimate reasons for lamb death	Strategies to address the contributing factor
Low birth weight	Inadequate nutrition Exposure Predation	Nutrition in pregnancy (particularly twins) Sheltered lambing paddocks Fox control programs
Dystocia due to large lambs	Birth trauma	Nutrition in pregnancy (particularly singles) Shepherding during lambing Genetic selection
Ewes lacking energy to complete birth process	Birth trauma Inadequate nutrition	Nutrition in pregnancy Feed-on-offer in lambing paddocks
Abandonment/mis-mothering	Inadequate nutrition Exposure Predation	Ewe condition at the point of lambing Feed-on-offer in lambing paddocks Breeding ewes with better maternal behaviour Mob size and stocking rate at lambing
Poor ewe milk supply	Inadequate nutrition	Ewe condition at the point of lambing Feed-on-offer in lambing paddocks Grain feeding to increase colostrum supply
Predators	Predation	Fox control programs, wild dog community action programs
Adverse weather conditions	Exposure	Sheltered lambing paddocks, paddock aspect in relation to prevailing winds

# BARWON



**Poll Dorset and White Suffolk Stud**

## 2014 SPRING RAM SALE FRIDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER



LUNCH SERVED FROM 12:30PM

50<sup>TH</sup> YEAR CELEBRATION PRESENTATIONS 1:15PM

SALE COMMENCES 1:30 PM

### SALE OFFERING

R. Yates & Co. will be offering 170 specially selected rams  
Approximately 120 Poll Dorset and 50 White Suffolk  
Lambplan figures will be available on sale day, on the website or by request.  
Outside agents fee 3% with notification required prior to the sale.

### Barwon Stud Contacts

Mark Yates 0427 203 524

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02 6921 1511

Peter Yates 0427 203 704

Elders Wagga  
02 6923 4666

Email [mark@barwonstud.com.au](mailto:mark@barwonstud.com.au)



**2015 Autumn Ram Sale**  
Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February

For further information phone  
one of our contacts listed above or visit:



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