



# Woodpark

Merino and Poll Merino studs



## Ewe beauty! Competition successes reward flock breeding efforts

Wonderful success in big ewe competitions made for a great start to the year for several Woodpark clients this February.

In a two week period in February, four Woodpark Merino and Poll flocks were recognised for their excellent management. In the NSW Central West, 2010 drop ewes from the McDonald family's "North Condobolin" Condobolin district flock won the well-regarded Don Brown ewe competition at Condobolin. The flock is classed by Stuart Hodgson and the ewes were commended for their great outlook.

Meanwhile Ian and Jane Menzies' "Moonbah", Condobolin flock, classed by Michael Elmes, was awarded third

place in the Don Brown. Further south, just one week before, longstanding Woodpark clients Joel and Fiona Porter's "Ramsay", Booroorban got the nod of approval from judges in the Peppin Shaw Riverina Ewe flock competition at Hay after a trying few years when they were close runners-up. The Ramsay flock is also classed by Stuart Hodgson.

Meanwhile, Rowan and Sarah Houston and family's "Budgewah", Hay, Poll Merino flock won the Central section of the Peppin Shaw and also snared the Best New Entry award. Their flock, which has paid great attention to wool quality over the past few years, was fourth overall. The flock is classed by Craig Wilson.

## Woodpark Merino and Poll Merino studs

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## Australian genetics in Argentine show success



*Pictured: Junior Champion ram at Esquale Exhibition, Patagonia, with his management team*

A Woodpark Poll ram has sired the junior champion of Argentina's Esquale Exhibition, held in Patagonia in southern Argentina in January this year.

The two tooth ram was named junior champion ram in the event which is a prelude to the major Argentine sheep show, Comodoro Rivadavia.

It was the quality, whiteness and length of wool about the young ram that caught Esquale judges' attention.

The 18.3 micron Woodpark Poll ram that sired the young ram was bought in 2008 by Patagonia's Shaman Pastoral, which has been in the Bunge family for four generations.

The 18.3 micron ram was one of several bought in the trip from several studs in the operation's ram buying trip. It was used in AI programs over up to 8000 sheep.

Shaman Pastoral manages 25,000 ewes and 2000 breeding cattle across four properties in Argentina's Patagonia region.

The ram was selected for the Argentinians with the assistance of their Australian advisor, Michael Elmes, Narrandera.

### **2011 ram sale**

108 Poll Merino rams averaged \$1931 and topped at \$4200, just three days after a record-breaking Hay sheep sale. Long standing Woodpark blood flocks were active at the sale, and the top price of \$4200 was paid for a big 19.8 micron ram, bought by David and Richard Bibby, Burrupa, Tattyoon.

## Stock watch

Woodpark blood sheep for sale are now advertised on our website. We are often contacted by people seeking Woodpark blood sheep to purchase so this could be one more avenue for you to advertise your sheep, whether for sale in the yards or in the paddock.

We invite you to provide details of sheep you may have for sale through the year, particularly in the spring selling season. We will post the information on our website and alert any industry contacts.

## Wether trial updates

It's wonderful to see people continuing to enter their sheep in trials and competitions to assess their sheep against others in the industry. Craig Wilson, who administers the Temora wether trial site and the associated sire and wether evaluations said anecdotally the flocks who tend to enter such competitions are already progressive and keen to improve their flocks.

The latest Temora wether trial is hosting sheep from the Lieschkes at "Blossom Farm" Henty; the Weirs at "Ellesmere" Barmedman and the Readings, "Brynavon" Callawadda. This follows on from a great result by the Hay's Houston family's Budgewah flock and the McNaughtons' "Burong" flock from the Gippsland at the same site.

We are always keen to hear news of how sheep and wool have performed, from the local show and ewe and wether competitions to the wool floor and sheep saleyards.

In the Bookham wether trial, now in its second year, our own wethers have ranked first for bodyweight and sixth for wool among some excellent sheep operations, which has been a thrill.



*Brothers David and Graham McDonald and Graham's son James at "North Condobolin" during the 2012 Don Brown ewe competition.  
Pic: Carol-Ann Malouf*



"A MOVE to an eight-month shearing program from a 12-month program should increase flock health, productivity and weaning percentages in the McDonald brothers' "North Condobolin" Merino flock at Condobolin.

Co-principals David and Graham McDonalds' maiden ewes took out top honours from 17 flocks entered in the 2012 Don Brown Memorial Merino Ewe Competition held across two days throughout the Condobolin district last month.

The "North Condobolin" flock has enjoyed a consistent breeding and selection program for more than 12 years, according to David McDonald who with his wife Jenny runs the 2500 self-replacing Merino ewe flock of Woodpark blood. The flock is run in partnership with brother Graham, his wife Marjorie and their son James, who also manage a prime lamb production enterprise of 2500 Merino ewes joined to British breed rams on "Scrublands", adjoining "Kiacatoo" to the west of Condobolin.

Last October was the first shearing to mark the change and was the maiden ewes' second shearing.

Their first was in February last year, moved forward from the flock's traditional March shearing to line-up with October.

Their wool measured 19-micron, while older ewes averaged 19.5- to 20-micron with an average fleece weight of five kilograms.

"We haven't gone to six-month shearing because the staple length at eight months is close to the 80 millimetre mark," David McDonald said.

"We'll stick to 80mm until we are confident of what is the appropriate wool length for the market."

Mr McDonald said the tensile strength of the flock's wool was a "stand-out".

"The lowest was 40 Newtons per kilotex and highest was 53, so this clip averaged somewhere in the mid-40s," he said.

Last season's lambing rate at marking was 118 per cent. "At the end of the Merino ram joining we put in a British breed ram for two weeks," he said.

"After scanning we ended up only taking out 115 dry ewes which were culled, although we do give maidens another run."

Mr McDonald couldn't give a reason for the higher lambing percentages. "One of the twinning mobs was trail-fed grain during lambing when we were short on feed, and one mob wasn't," he said.

"But both mobs each reared 150pc of lambs; I really can't put my finger on the success because it is much better than we are used to.

"Except I do wonder whether it was due to the number of mice around and contented foxes, as fox numbers are horrific out here."

The "North Condobolin" flock was previously on Wanganella blood, however, Woodpark was introduced about 14 years ago, with the assistance of then classer, the late Ian Munro.

Stuart Hodgson of Wagga Wagga has classed the flock since Mr Munro's death. "We have 'plained' our sheep up and they have naturally fined down with the bloodline," he said."



### **Woodpark at Hamilton Sheepvention:**

The five Woodpark Poll rams offered at Hamilton Sheepvention this year delivered the highest price we have received at auction for a Woodpark Horned or Poll ram when they topped at \$5500.

It was paid for the 18.8 micron ram which went first from the pen.

The next ram sold for \$4000, with all five rams selling to \$3100 average across the pen.

We were quite proud of the rams which had great weight and size after a good season provided them with an excellent start, and we really appreciate the support of those who attended and bid at the auction.

We also had a full display at Sheepvention after a smaller outing last year, with a lot of interest in the fact the Woodpark sheep are our own breeding and sired by Woodpark Poll rams.

Our policy of breeding from within with sparing outside introductions appeared quite a rare feature.

### **Temora sire evaluation update:**

We have been pleased with the results of progeny of our ram 09-700 in a trial of sires from several studs from through Australia, including leading performance driven studs.

He has been compared with some of the best young rams in the country and done exceptionally well. This includes topping the 10% + SS index.

And we have several sires who performed better than him in our own in-flock testing.



*Above: On August 1 the Huggins children were straight down to the Eurolie wool shed after school to check out shearing.*

*Just three weeks later the 189 bales of wool were offered at auction, with good competition holding through until every bale sold.*

*After eight months shearing, the wool tested well with fleece yield mainly around 69 and 70pc, the lowest being 64.9 and the highest 72.2.*

*The wool length was also excellent for the shearing interval, with the fleece lines being mainly above 80mm and the remainder in the 70mm range.*

**Woodpark Knowledge Network:** We are planning another catch-up for sheep breeders early next year with options including a low stress stock handling course. In the past about 30 people gathered for informal talks from knowledgeable industry members, a great chance for discussion with other breeders. All people and any suggestions welcome.

## **CALENDAR 2012**

### **JULY**

**Friday, Saturday and Sunday 20-22**

***Australian Sheep and Wool Show Bendigo***

### **AUGUST**

**Monday and Tuesday 5-6**

***Hamilton Sheepvention – pen of five ram auction and individual display***

**Friday 17**

***Riverina Sheep Expo, Deniliquin***

### **SEPTEMBER**

**Thursday 6**

***South West Slopes Stud Merino Field Day, landra Castle, Greenethorpe***

**Monday 24**

***Annual Ram Sale, Jerilderie***

## **Annual Ram Sale**

**Monday**

**September 24,**

**2012**

**120 Rams**

**Jerilderie**

**Racecourse**

**More information:**

**[www.woodparkmerino.com.au](http://www.woodparkmerino.com.au)**