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Woodpark Merino • Woodpark Poll

“Wool nourishment, quality, cutting ability and sheer size of the sheep”

When Woodpark Poll was awarded its third Best Pen of Three Rams title at the Loddon Valley Field Day in late February, Stock and Land newspaper reported judges Steve Phillips, Deniliquin, and Kevin Crook, Tamaleuca Merinos, Ouyen, said “the rams couldn’t be beaten on wool nourishment and quality, cutting ability and sheer size of the sheep”.

“Woodpark Poll won their third Best Group

of Three Rams in five years, to the delight of stud principal Stephen Huggins, Hay, NSW,” Stock and Land reported.

“The judges ... said they developed a scoring system for the entrants based on traits such as wool quality, nourishment and quantity; and body conformation, size and evenness.

Mr Crook said both judges had readily concluded that Woodpark was deserving

of the top prize. A delighted Stephen Huggins accepted the accolade, which he also received in 2011 and 2013.

“In 2013 our ram 12-342 was standing in this pen of three and won. To have his progeny judged two years later and receive the same award is great,” he said.

In 2nd place was Terrick West Poll Merinos and Hynam Poll Merinos in 3rd place.”

– Stock and Land, March 5 2015.



Kevin Crook, Ouyen, Stephen and Lily Huggins and Steve Phillips, Deniliquin, with the Best Pen of Three Rams at Loddon Valley Field Day this year.

MORE RAMS AT SHEEPVENTION SALE

We will have 10 rams on offer at the Sheepvention Ram Sale this year, as we are putting up an extra pen of five rams.

The rams put forward for the sale include some we were considering retaining in the stud so we are very happy with their quality, which includes rams which should deliver the quantity of well-nourished bright wool needed in the district.

We have included those potential stud rams in the increased numbers at the auction to offer greater access to the Woodpark genetics at the sale.

The rams are on a par with the rams we have retained for our own annual auction.

We have had great success selling rams at Sheepvention since we started about five years ago and this year increased the offering to allow greater access to the genetics at a commercially justifiable price.

Eight of the rams to be offered are trait leaders (top 10pc of MerinoSelect database) for the DP index and seven are trait leaders for the MP index. Their excellent fleece weight and yearling growth figures also put them at the top of MerinoSelect for those traits.



Woodpark Sales 2014

The Woodpark studs sold about 700 rams last year, about 600 were Polls and most in private selections. Extra rams were added to the Poll auction to help meet demand and keep heat out of the sale, with all 140 rams selling to a \$5000 top.

There were several new buyers at auction but it was longstanding clients who underpinned the sale with some good buying. Jerilderie's Sleeman family took home six rams for \$1300 average and the Weir family of Barmedman secured six rams for \$1117 average.

Woodpark's Poll sires to \$5000 peak with good buying through offering

- By Brett Tindal, The Land, 25 September 2014

"The Huggins family of Woodpark Poll Merinos annual sale cleared all 140 Poll rams on offer to average \$2141. The top ram was snapped up by Michael and Jane Corkhill, Grassy Creek Merino and Poll Merino Studs, Reids Flat, for \$5000, after the ram was inspected by nearly every person at the sale.

The ram was a son of Woodpark Poll 10 057 at 17.5 micron, with a 2.3 micron standard deviation (SD), 13.1 per cent coefficient variation (CV), and a yearling weight Australian sheep breeding value of +8.6kg, coupled with a yearling clean fleece weight figure of +23pc.

Mr Corkhill said the 10 057 sire was the attraction, after he bought a ram from the Woodpark Poll stud by the same sire last year, and it had produced some outstanding rams.

Other stud breeders included Max Rayner, Lynford Poll Merino stud, Hargraves, who believed he bought the best ram in the line-up for \$3900 to help bolster the ranks of their newly established poll stud.

But return clients controlled the day as they set to work jostling for front position and the rams of their choice, with David and Richard Bibby, "Burrupa", Tattyoon, Victoria, leading the charge from the outset, paying \$4600 for their lead ram in a draft of five, averaging \$3680.

The Bibby family join 2500 ewes growing 9-micron wool and have bought at Woodpark for six years, chasing good quality wool, fertility, and quick maturing rams to target production of sheep for the western districts of Victoria.

David Bibby said the softness and handle of the Woodpark Poll rams were the reasons they bought at the Huggins family's stud and the ability of these characteristics to handle the conditions.

Rowan Houston, "Budgewah", Hay, runs 4000 ewes and had bought Woodpark Poll for 10 years, looking for high indexing rams with good clean fleece weights.

Andrew McNaughton, Seaspray, Vic, again played in the top end, securing four rams in the first 30 of the line-up looking for well-nourished wools that would suit the Gippsland environment. Mr McNaughton said the rams were a credit to the Huggins family who were able to increase numbers and present the way they did off the back of two tough seasons.

S. and H. Exton, Coolamon, purchased five at \$1760. Glencoe Pastoral Company, Hamilton, Vic, loaded five at \$2100. L., D., S. and M. Farrant, "Calimo", Deniliquin, secured five at \$1560, and Peter Sleeman, "Riverside", Jerilderie, bought six at \$1300.

New buyers Garry and Kaye Davidson, Walpa, Vic, were looking for a new stud after the Middle View dispersed and found their mark buying six rams to a top of \$3400, to average \$2783. Mr Davidson was impressed with the size of the sheep and the quality of their wool.

J.C. and L.M. Clark, "Merriola", Hay, snapped up six at \$1850; D.J. Boland and J.L. Peavey, Giffard, VIC, loaded seven at \$2100, and Dhuramein Nominees, "Collinjen", Moulamein, put a solid floor in the market, buying 12 rams for a \$1233 average.

Sam Weir, "Ellersmere", Barmedman, secured six rams for \$1117. Mr Weir believed he got some really good value rams in his line up for the money he spent. The sale was conducted by Landmark and Elders with Peter Godbolt and Ron Rutledge auctioneers."

62 WOODPARK POLL MERINOS SALE ADVERTISING FEATURE THE LAND Thursday, September 25, 2014

Woodpark's Poll sires to \$5000 peak

By Brett Tindal

The ram was sold at auction, with a 2.3-micron SD, 13.1% CV, with a Merino Production Plus index of 132.

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Woodpark Poll Merino stud principal Stephen Huggins, Hay, and his daughter Helen, are pictured with stud chairman Craig Wilson, Alan Chip, Lisa, and Jane Corkhill, Grassy Creek Merino and Poll Merino Studs, Reids Flat, for \$5000.

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CUTTINGS

BIG TRIP TO BREWARRINA DAY

We made our first trip up to the Brewarrina field day in north-central NSW in June this year.

The sunny day showed the rams to their advantage in an atmosphere of optimism following good rain in the week leading up to the field day, after another tough year.

With the grass growing and a sense of confidence about the wool industry apparent, it was a great day out in an area which helped us through some tough times when Woodpark sheep were agisted in the area through the big dry a few years ago.

WOODPARK POLL HOSTS BRED WELL FED WELL WORKSHOP AT HAY

The informal Woodpark Knowledge Network had another outing when we hosted a Bred Well Fed Well workshop in Hay late last year. Presenter Jason Trompf kept participants informed and interested as he explained the practical applications of selection tools and techniques such as breeding values, before taking the crowd out to go through some Woodpark Poll rams. We hosted the day in tandem

with our neighbours Hazeldean Hay. If there is something you are particularly interested in or you are keen to know about our next information afternoon please let us know.

MERINOLINK

MerinoLink is a group of commercial and stud breeders and industry members which was formed to help farmers access unbiased and impartial information, engage with research and tap into available information and build productivity. Its members are great believers in the Merino and enthusiastic about the industry's future. We were founding members of the organisation, with Carol Huggins a founding board member. We feel it has great synergies, on a larger scale, with our knowledge network. If you would like more information about MerinoLink let us know. Its next annual conference and AGM will be early next year.

LOG ON FOR WOODPARK POLL

We have been delighted by our recent introduction to Instagram. It's a great way to keep in touch about our on-farm program- and occasional non-on-farm moments. Follow us @woodparkpoll #woodparkpoll #merino #pollmerino #wool. On Facebook, search for Woodpark Poll and keep up to date with our news and interesting sheep industry and local district snippets.



Young at heart at Woodpark



Judgement Day: Lily Huggins taking part in junior judging at Hay Sheep Show.

Inset: Kate Hicks, Hay Warm Memorial High School, at the National Merino Challenge.

We feel it is part of our charter as committed members of the Australian Merino industry to foster and develop future industry members.

We love the interest these young people have in our industry and their enthusiasm as they find out new things and try to support them wherever possible.

It is part of the bigger picture of supporting our industry, as well as breeding top quality sheep.

In that vein, we were looking to within when we watched our first junior judge of the new Woodpark Poll generation at our local Hay Merino Sheep Show in June.

Ten-year-old Lily Huggins placed third in the new under-15s junior judging section, an initiative by the active Hay Sheep Show committee to help the industry's younger members learn more about sheep and give them an opportunity to take part in a successful day. The sheep show embraced the desire of younger people to be involved in the Junior Judging and the committee reported there were a strong pool of entrants in the under-15s competition. Lily and we were delighted with her third placing.

Woodpark Poll was also named most successful exhibitor in the unboxed section. Although we do not usually venture onto the show ring we try to support our local shows.

We also hope our support of the Yanco Agricultural College agriculture students is contributing to the industry's future development.

This year we donated 15 wethers to the school for its animal management class for the second year running.

The school had a great result with the 12 wethers we donated last year, taking them to the Dubbo National Show and Sale to compete in the National Wether Challenge where they were awarded champion school.

Their four teams of wethers were named champion in the Projection class, which is judged on the highest estimated earning capability across a five year period from both sheep and wool. They also won the conformation class and won the highest wool value team, where they were also third, fourth and sixth placed.

We were delighted to again host animal science students from Charles Sturt University at Eurole in June this year.

Our operation has become a regular fixture on their annual tour and every year Stephen Huggins is impressed (and challenged) with the depth of their questioning. We have also hosted several students on their work placements which we really enjoy. We feel attracting and retaining young people in the industry is a big challenge and we hope we can contribute in some small way to working through this problem.

National Merino Challenge sponsorship:

We were invited this year to sponsor a local student in the National Merino Challenge in Adelaide in May. We sponsored Hay War Memorial High School student Kate Hicks who has worked here on many past holidays and is hoping to pursue a career in agriculture.

MERINOS MEASURE UP

The faith people show in their sheep by taking part in wether trials, ewe competitions and show events are both a support for local events and a great way to get information about a flock. It takes time and effort, not to mention expense, but the feedback always provides thought for future direction.

Woodpark blood breeders have had some great results in these areas of late, from Condobolin's Menzies family and their "Moonbah" flock winning Condobolin's Don Brown ewe competition in 2014 and 2013 and the Central West Zone competition in 2014. The McDonald family won the Don Brown in 2012 and came third in 2013.

Recent Woodpark blood wether trial participants have included the Houston and Kreutzberger families with their Budgewah and Kreutzberger Ag teams in the current PWMMC trial. The Weir, Lieschke and McNaughton families entered the previous trial.

BOOKHAM WETHER TRIAL WINNERS 2014

We gained some wonderful information from entering Eurole wethers in the four year Bookham wether trial which finished in 2014. The wethers had the highest total team income and highest average wether return, of \$3133.62 and \$137.66/head, respectively.

Meat value was calculated using the weight of the team after the last shearing in June 2014, and the average mutton price for the 12 months before shearing. Wool values were calculated using the average wool price for the same period.

MERINOS ON TOP FOR RETURNS

As wool prices started climbing through early to mid 2015, to many it seemed just reward for Merino breeders who have held faith with the product for years under tighter prices.

But for many wool producers who also count themselves sheep, meat and lamb producers, the welcome price lift cemented something they already knew. A well balanced Merino enterprise can match it with the best of other enterprises.

As Sandy McEachern, co-principal of benchmarking and agricultural advisors Holmes Sackett, told the annual MerinoLink conference in March, wool sheep enterprises have been more profitable than other broadacre enterprises for years.

Mr McEachern said returns for the Holmes Sackett benchmarked Merino flocks had tracked above other enterprises to a high of \$25 profit/dse in 2011, before falling slightly in 2012 and "coming back to the pack" in 2013 and 2014.

"The Merino's inherent advantage is in their wool production and on average the profits per DSE from wool production are twice that of sheep meat production in the merino sheep analysed. Given that inherent advantage it's ok to still focus on, and specialise in wool," Mr McEachern said.

"Even with fine wool (which has not had the premiums it is used to) you are still able to make profits as good as any other enterprise," he said.

"It is very tempting to think that you have got to be focused on just meat traits, but the benchmarking data does not support this."

ANNUAL RAM SALE

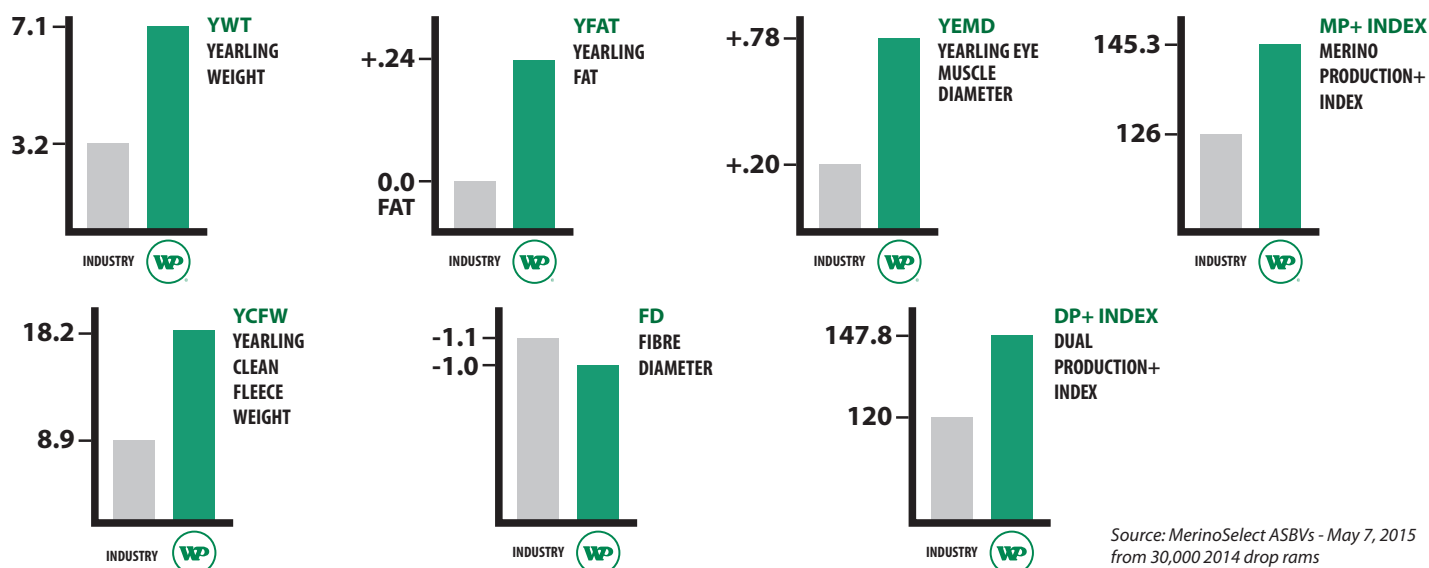
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2015

140 POLL MERINO RAMS

JERILDERIE SHOWGROUND

INSPECTION 9.30AM — AUCTION 1.00PM

AVAILABLE FOR PRIVATE SELECTION IN DAYS FOLLOWING RAM SALE



Source: MerinoSelect ASBVs - May 7, 2015
from 30,000 2014 drop rams

FLEECE WEIGHT, BALANCE: SHOWING UP IN ASBVs

We are continuing to use ASBVs, wether trials, ewe competitions and sire evaluations of Woodpark and Woodpark Poll blood sheep to add to the detailed information about our sheep.

This information is layered over the top of our constant and detailed visual assessment of our sheep for selection and breeding and has been so heartening in the information it has provided.

We initially started internal benchmarking and built that into entering data on MerinoSelect for ASBV generation. We have also this year DNA tested our top 300 rams after testing the waters by taking part in a DNA testing trial two years ago.

The ASBVs have provided some great information. We sent data on all 800 of our potential sale rams to MerinoSelect. The database has information from 30,000 rams, from ram breeding operations through Australia.

The graphs on this page show where the Woodpark rams sit in relation to the rest of the sheep on the database.

Every ram of our 800, is in at least the top 30pc of the rams with data submitted, for one or more traits.

Fleece weight: 185 of our rams are trait leaders (top 10pc) for fleece weight (YCFW). 699 are in the top 30% for this trait.

- 314 rams trait leaders for weight (YWT) and almost all – 736 – or 92.2pc in the top 30% of the industry for this trait.
- More than a quarter of our rams - 252 – are trait leaders for the MP index, which is based on a production system with a wool and meat balance. We were rapt last year when we had 110 rams who were in the top 10 per cent of this index and of course this year's result has an even greater proportion which are at the top of that index - more than double. 557 rams (69.8pc) were in the top 30pc.
- 366 rams are trait leaders for the DP index, which is based on a more meat focused reproduction system. 425 (53.3pc) are in the top 30pc
- 51 rams are trait leaders for eye muscle depth (YEMD) and 242 (30.3pc) of the drop are in the top 30pc.
- 131 rams (16.4pc) are in the top 30pc for YFAT (yearling fat).



Woodpark Events 2015

July 17-19

**Australian Sheep & Wool Show,
Bendigo**

August 1

Nyngan Ag Expo

August 3,4

**Hamilton Sheepvention
Offering 10 rams
Sheepvention Ram Sale**

Friday August 14

Elders Sheep Expo, Deniliquin

Thursday, September 3

South West Slopes Merino Field Day

Monday, September 21

Annual Ram Sale, Jerilderie