



Owen & Helen Huggins

## **Woodpark**

Wilson Road  
Jerilderie NSW 2176  
Phone 03 5886 7149  
Fax 03 5886 7148

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

Stephen & Carol Huggins

## **Eurolie**

Hay NSW 2711  
Phone 02 6993 4616  
Fax 02 6993 4122

[info@woodparkmerino.com.au](mailto:info@woodparkmerino.com.au)

# **Woodpark Merino • Woodpark Poll**

## ***Merinos hit the trifecta***

**Solid wool prices, exceptional stock prices and green grass – it's the trifecta we've all been waiting for and we really feel it will be great times ahead for people in merino sheep and sheep enterprises.**

The year started with such expectation it was going to rain this year and there would be a break in the El Nino.

However some disastrous areas through Victoria and other small pockets, the heart was still in the mouth hoping the much-anticipated break would arrive for all. At last it seems to be here.

The prospect of surplus sheep sales in the spring also look pretty enticing. An agent I spoke to secured young ewes at \$180/head in June because they were concerned about the price later in the spring and thinking they'd be north of \$200 so to hear this from an operator that would normally work at the top end of the market, this is an exciting prospect too.

As far as our rams are concerned, the growth and size that they've got into them now, with many months to go, is really exciting. They're as forward and as mature as I think we've had them at this time of year.

So with a solid feed base underneath them and with warm weather still to come, they should represent themselves very nicely.

It's really a special time for breeding and should be great rewards reaped for those who have bred with an eye to balance, with a focus on breeding a productive animal with a good balance of wool and body type.

We have also continued our build up of information about the sheep, this year gathering data on mature and maiden ewe fleece weights, over the year weighing 3000 fleeces, 40 per cent of our general shearing of 7600 sheep.

*Below: Young rams in Spring 2015.*

**It's hard to know if it's linked to the lovely outlook for Merino sheep, but we have been struck over the past year by the growth in interest in the Merino industry specifically, and agriculture generally.**

**We have seen large and incredibly dynamic groups of uni students who visited us, and the passionate and committed Yanco Ag students with their wether management which has given them great success in their endeavours.**

**Added to our involvement with the innovative Australian Futures project seeking to forward Australian agriculture, it has been a year where we have felt agriculture is both valued and exciting to be in.**

**See the update inside.**





# Woodpark Ram Sale Round Up.

The introduction of a new grade which was almost a bridge between the grade and auction rams and offering extra rams helped keep a lid on auction prices, a long term aim, last year.

We are really pleased with how last year's ram season went.

The encouragement and setting up of a \$1500 grade has been a really good thing, again we've strived to make them stand above the other grades but it's allowed a number of people to step off the auction, and purchase without pressure while still getting a very good article.

The auction sheep will always stand above the best sheep we can breed, but the new grade allowed those few people to step out of the auction, backed off the competition somewhat and we've actually got a reduction in our auction price which is what we've been striving for a few years.

We want to offer as many options as possible and we're not fussed where people step in.

We really believe in the sheep and feel they are value for money at every level. With 500+ rams sold each year and up to 800 available, they should be accessible to all. We just want to present enough options so people can find the place they're most comfortable with when selecting rams.

64 LIVESTOCK THE LAND | Thursday, September 24, 2015

## Woodpark Poll reaches top of \$5000

By BRETT TINDAL

A LOYAL client base that come back year after year chasing some of the best Poll Merino genetics in the country set another strong result for the Huggins family, Woodpark Poll Merino stud, Hay.

They saw 137 of 150 rams sell at auction to a sale top of \$5000 to average \$2031, which was similar to last year's result, even though a few more rams were offered.

Co-principal Carol Huggins said they were rapt with the result as they added more rams to the auction to contain the average, clients went away satisfied with the rams they bought this year and the average was slightly down.

The top ram sold to Dean and Adam Bennett, Bennman Merino stud, Everton Upper, Victoria, for \$5000 for his staple length, body depth, very pure muzzle and cleanness around the eyes.

He was 18.9 micron with a 3.0 standard deviation (SD), 15.9 coefficient variation (CV), 7.2 yearling weight, with a Merino Performance Index of 146 and Dual Purpose Index of 136.

Mr Bennett said they loved the ram's good dense staple length, very white wool, structure, and great depth of barrel.

"We like to look at the sheep first and make sure he is right, but we are starting to look at the Australian sheep breeding values (ASBVs) a bit more to complement the sheep we like visually," he said.

Bill Coghill, "Dewhurst", Urana, paid to a top of \$4400 for three poll rams averaging \$3200, to join to 1600 ewes mainly joined to poll rams averaging 19.5 micron across his flock.

His top ram went back to the well-known Sir Thomas sire who gave him a great length of wool at 18.4 micron, 2.6 SD, 14.1 CV, one of the highest yearling weight figures in the catalogue at 9.7 and the extra meat traits they would get from Sir Thomas.

Mr Coghill said he was moving to an eight-month shearing, so he needed a ram that could keep the staple length up.

Stud classer Michael Elmes, Smartstock, Narrandera, paid \$4400 for the next lot, a stylish poll sire with an 18.7-micron fleece, a 2.2 SD, 11.8 CV and the only ram in the front line of the catalogue to have a 100 per cent comfort factor.

Mr Elmes bought the ram for Keith and Noeline Davies, "Gladys Park", Caragabal, and said he had a perfect top line, coupled with being a good wether producer, with a high yearling weight of 10, good fins and a perfect comfort factor.

Long time supporters of the Woodpark program Gregor and Andy McNaughton, Seaspray, Vic, have been buying rams from the Huggins family for 35 years and this year again loaded seven top end poll sires for a \$1879 average and paying to \$2500.

Mr McNaughton said they have been using polls for 20 years and were the first to take poll rams back to the Gippsland area from the Riverina.

He runs 8000 ewes, of which 5500 are Merino, with 3500 of these joined back to these poll sires, while 2000 are joined to Poll Dorset rams, with another 2500 first cross ewes joined back to Poll Dorset rams also.

The McNaughton's produce 400 bales of Woodpark Poll Merino wool every year and 100 bales of cross breed wool, with their adult sheep averaging six to seven kilograms of wool cut at 20 to 21 micron, while their weaner lambs averaged about 18 micron.

Mr McNaughton aimed to buy the stronger micron rams, but said it was becoming harder every year as the rams become finer.

David and Richard Bibby, "Burrup", Tattayoon, Vic, paid to \$3600 and averaged \$3040 for five

LEFT: Woodpark poll Merino stud principal Stephen Huggins, Hay, with top-priced buyers Dean and Adam Bennett, Bennman Merino stud, Everton Upper, Victoria, who paid \$5000 for the top-priced ram.

RIGHT: Woodpark poll Merino stud principal Stephen Huggins, Hay, with top-priced buyers Dean and Adam Bennett, Bennman Merino stud, Everton Upper, Victoria, who paid \$5000 for the top-priced ram.

Mr McNaughton aimed to buy the stronger micron rams, but said it was becoming harder every year as the rams become finer.

David and Richard Bibby, "Burrup", Tattayoon, Vic, paid to \$3600 and averaged \$3040 for five

his way through the catalogue buying rams to \$3000 down to \$800 to average \$2043 across the seven he loaded, while L.W. Drew and Company, "Northwood", Brockleby, bid strongly at the top end paying to \$4000 for four rams averaging \$3100.

Kreutzberger Ag, Walbundrie, bought six at \$2200; P.J. and T.A. Unger, Alestown, purchased four at \$1980, while D.J. Boland and J.L. Peavey, Giffard, Vic, wound out the chequebook, buying seven at \$2271.

Rounding out the sale L.D.S and M. Farrant, Deniliquin, secured nine at \$1544; the Sleeman Family Trust, "Riversdale", Jerilderie, set a floor in the market with 12 at \$1492; T.H., V.M. and J.E. Cochran, Pine Lodge South, Vic averaged \$1329 for seven; R.A. Whitby and Company, "Wilga", Narrandera, bought seven at \$1400, and Gary and Kaye Davidson, Walpa, Vic, played hard late in the sale securing four at \$2375.

The sale was conducted by Landmark and Elders with Peter Godbolt and Ron Rutledge as the auctioneers.

## Every grade offers value for money: Woodpark Poll reaches top of \$5000

By Brett Tindal, The Land, September 24, 2015

**A loyal client base that come back year after year chasing some of the best Poll Merino genetics in the country set another strong result for the Huggins family, Woodpark Poll Merino stud, Hay.**

They saw 137 of 150 rams sell at auction to a sale top of \$5000 to average \$2031, which was similar to last year's result, even though a few more rams were offered.

Co-principal Carol Huggins said they were rapt with the result as they added more rams to the auction to contain the average, clients went away satisfied with the rams they bought this year and the average was slightly down.

The top ram sold to Dean and Adam Bennett, Bennman Merino stud, Everton Upper, Victoria, for \$5000 for his staple length, body depth, very pure muzzle and cleanness around the eyes. He was 18.9 micron with a 3.0 standard deviation (SD), 15.9 coefficient variation (CV), 7.2 yearling weight, with a Merino Performance Index of 146 and Dual Purpose Index of 136.

Mr Bennett said they loved the ram's good dense staple length, very white wool, structure, and great depth of barrel.

"We like to look at the sheep first and make sure he is right, but we are starting to look at the Australian sheep breeding values (ASBVs) a bit more to complement the sheep we like visually," he said.

Bill Coghill, "Dewhurst", Urana, paid to a top of \$4400 for three poll rams averaging \$3200, to join to 1600 ewes mainly joined to poll rams averaging 19.5 micron across his flock.

His top ram went back to the well-known Sir Thomas sire who gave him a great length of wool at 18.4 micron, 2.6 SD, 14.1 CV, one of the highest yearling weight figures in the catalogue at 9.7 and the extra meat traits they would get from Sir Thomas.

Mr Coghill said he was moving to an eight-month shearing, so he needed a ram that could keep the staple length up.

Stud classer Michael Elmes, Smartstock, Narrandera, paid \$4400 for the next lot, a stylish poll sire with an 18.7-micron fleece, a 2.2 SD, 11.8 CV and the only ram in the front line of the catalogue to have a 100 per cent comfort factor.

Mr Elmes bought the ram for Keith and Noeline Davies, "Gladys Park", Caragabal, and said he had a perfect top line, coupled with being a good wether producer, with a high yearling weight of 10, good fats and a perfect comfort factor.

Long-time supporters of the Woodpark program Gregor and Andy McNaughton, Seaspray, VIC, have been buying rams from the Huggins family for 35 years and this year again loaded seven top end poll sires for a \$1879 average and paying to \$2500.

Mr McNaughton said they have been using polls for 20 years and were the first to take poll rams back to the Gippsland area from the Riverina.

He runs 8000 ewes, of which 5500 are Merino, with 3500 of these joined back to these poll sires, while 2000 are joined to Poll Dorset rams, with another 2500 first cross ewes joined back to Poll Dorset rams also.

The McNaughton's produce 400 bales of Woodpark Poll Merino wool every year and 100 bales of cross breed wool, with their adult sheep averaging six to seven kilograms of wool cut at 20 to 21 micron, while their weaner lambs averaged about 18 micron.

Mr McNaughton aimed to buy the stronger micron rams, but said it was becoming harder every year as the rams become finer.

David and Richard Bibby, "Burrup", Tattayoon, Vic, paid to \$3600 and averaged \$3040 for five

big framed gutsy wool rams from Woodpark to join with his 2500, 19-micron ewes.

Richard Bibby said they switched to polls when they came back to the Woodpark stud about seven years ago and believed the poll rams were better doers and more fertile.

"We sold wether lambs - 12 months of age - averaging 21kg dressed at 550cents a kilogram recently, returning \$110, after shearing them a month ago and cutting four kilograms of wool off them," he said.

Mr Bibby said he looked at the ASBVs and tried to pick the rams with good fleece and yearling weights for early maturing patterns to allow them to get the lambs off earlier.

Rowan Houston, Budgewah Pastoral Company, Hay, again picked his way through the catalogue buying rams to \$3000 down to \$800 to average \$2043 across the seven he loaded, while L.W. Drew and Company, "Northwood", Brockleby, bid strongly at the top end paying to \$4000 for four rams averaging \$3100.

Kreutzberger Ag, Walbundrie, bought six at \$2200; P.J. and T.A. Unger, Alestown, purchased five at \$1980, while D.J. Boland and J.L. Peavey, Giffard, Vic, wound out the chequebook, buying seven at \$2271.

Rounding out the sale L.D.S and M. Farrant, Deniliquin, secured nine at \$1544; the Sleeman Family Trust, "Riversdale", Jerilderie, set a floor in the market with 12 at \$1492; T.H., V.M. and J.E. Cochran, Pine Lodge South, Vic averaged \$1329 for seven; R.A. Whitby and Company, "Wilga", Narrandera, bought seven at \$1400, and Gary and Kaye Davidson, Walpa, Vic, played hard late in the sale securing four at \$2375.

The sale was conducted by Landmark and Elders with Peter Godbolt and Ron Rutledge as the auctioneers.



# Woodpark connecting ag.



**When Senator John Button told the Weekly Times Farm business magazine early this year that he saw agriculture was on the cusp of a wonderful future it was both exciting and daunting.**

Because Senator Button highlighted that agriculture needed to successfully manage some big issues facing the industry to actually achieve the good outcomes forecast for it.

So it was with a great sense of privilege, commitment and hope that we were able to take part in the Australian Futures Project's Actions for NSW Agriculture initiative since late last year. The Australian Futures Project is part-funded by the Vincent Fairfax Foundation which has a long connection and commitment to Australian agriculture.

The project brought together 60 people from different organisations and sectors through agriculture, including producers, and asked them to throw up all the challenges facing agriculture.

Far from being a conference style talk fest, the initiative wanted to actually make something happen, so it then got the people in the room to offer solutions to these challenges. From that, several initiatives were developed and many have now started being put into practice.

Woodpark Poll was one of five founding partners in the Eat Care Connect project which has been developed to help bridge the gap about Australian agriculture. Rather than reinventing the wheel the group aims to support existing initiatives, through providing unbiased information about agriculture and helping ensure agriculture's story is spread as widely as possible.

We believe Australian agriculture is amazing and operates at an incredibly high level. We feel if we can communicate that better as a sector, the industry will be more highly valued and all else should become simpler, whether it's attracting investment, young people or having a positive policy development space.

## LOCAL KNOWLEDGE GENERATION

Stephen and Carol spoke at the Local Land Services annual sheep and livestock day in Hay in May, discussing the intricacies of running a sheep stud in pastoral or rangelands country. The main focus of the day for us was that the environment was not actually the driver of management, but rather the management focused on breeding for the best animal possible which should operate successfully in a variety of environments.

### Rangelands forum attracts ag students

By Sally Ware, Riverina Local Land Services, Hay. Local landholders combined with final year agriculture students from Charles Sturt University and University of Sydney to attend a forum held in the woolshed at Shear Outback last Thursday.

It was organised by Sally Ware from Hay Riverina Local Land Services (LLS), and started with an overview of a local run production enterprise by Stephen and Carol Huggins from Woodpark Poll Merino stud. Geoff Dobby from Sheepcare Consultants at Yanco, discussed options for selling wethers, followed by Murray Long from Clearview consultancy at Wagga Wagga discussing the benefits of selecting rams on genetic merit.

Private veterinarian Greg Curran from Broken Hill spoke about managing livestock for climate variation, followed by local goat producer and President of the Goat Industry Council of Australia Rick Gates who gave an overview of the rangeland goat meat industry. Final speaker on current wool fashion trends was Lucy Capener from Australian Wool Innovation. The travel cost for the 80 students was covered by a grant from Australian Wool Innovation and the forum was sponsored by Riverina LLS.

Catering for the day was provided by the NSW DPI Rural Resilience Programs and Riverina LLS with the venue provided by Shear Outback.

Whilst in the district, the students visited local areas.



Stephen and Carol Huggins, "Woodpark".

## AUSTRALIAN RURAL LEADERSHIP

When 30 current and future leaders of Australian agriculture gather in northern Australia for a gruelling 10 day Kimberley trek in August, Woodpark Poll's Carol Huggins will be among them. Carol is one of two woolgrowers from across Australia who were selected for the program and funded by an Australian Wool Innovation scholarship.

Interestingly Woodpark Poll's neighbour at Eurolie, Bert Matthews, "Bedarbidgal", Hay, was awarded the other AWI scholarship, which seems a fairly unique situation. It is a huge opportunity and reflective of our belief that we don't just breed sheep but are about furthering and contributing to our industry.



## SHOWING UP AT HAY

**Every year we travel in to support our local sheep show, the Hay Sheep Show, which has been going from strength to strength over the past decade, with every year seemingly offering record entries.**

The commercial entries are always a feature at Hay and this year's great season start made that even more evident, with the shed full almost to bursting.

As shows are not a usual part of our program our entries tend to be clustered in the unhoused section, where this year we were so pleased to again take home the Most Successful Exhibitor Award.

*Olivia Huggins and friends receiving third in the unhoused two tooth ewe section for a ewe which was an early selection by the girls and was fortunate to make it past Stephen for selection into the show team.*

## A STUDY OF SHEEP

**We have had some great opportunities this year to share our passion for the Merino industry with both current and future industry members.**

Over one four day period we hosted about ninety university students over two days then backed it up with a talk about our program before about 130 people at a livestock production day in Hay.

We rounded out that week by working with the Local Land Services in Hay to provide rams and take part in a local Ram Select workshop.

The first of two visits were by Sydney University students who come to the Riverina each year as part of their studies.

The students were from a broad area, many from urban bases, and were interested in both the management program and the environment we operate in.

The second group of students were from Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, who have been visiting us for several years as part of an annual Riverina trip examining different sheep management systems.



Hosting the students is fantastic, seeing such enthusiasm for agriculture and hopefully building on that. It also gives us another reason to think about the how and why of what we do and offers some really stimulating discussion. The external view always gives us something to about as well.

Every year the discussion takes a different turn which often highlights a different aspect of our operation or the industry.



# ANNUAL RAM SALE

## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2016

### 140 POLL MERINO RAMS

#### JERILDERIE SHOWGROUND

INSPECTION 9.30AM — AUCTION 1.00PM

\*\*\* 800 MERINO AND POLL MERINO RAMS AVAILABLE IN GRADES IN DAYS FOLLOWING RAM SALE \*\*\*

## Yanco Ag dominates Dubbo wethers... again



**Yanco Agricultural High School students took yet another swag of awards home from their outing to the National Schools Wether Trial at Dubbo National Show and Sale last August.**

The team was named the champion school for the third year in a row with their four teams of Woodpark Poll wethers.

The school was awarded champion Projection team, along with all four entries in the top six, echoing previous year's results. They also won Champion wool growing and wool value team and were third in the meat value class. Animal Management teacher Ellie Quinn said the team was named in third place as the wethers' earlier maturity meant they had already cut their hogget teeth.

The Projection award is presented to the team which has the expected highest value of meat and wool for the next five years.

Woodpark Poll has donated 12 wethers to the school for the past three years, delivering them after they are inspection shorn and tagged – in previous years the inspection tags have been paid for by the One Oak stud – and delivered in time for the school's Open Day in March.

This significant achievement is a testament to the school's agricultural staff and the great attitude and care shown by the students. We are exceptionally proud to be able to help them out.

## Woodpark Events 2016

July 15-17

**Australian Sheep & Wool Show**

August 1,2

**Hamilton Sheepvention  
Sheepvention Ram Sale**

August 6

**Nyngan Ag Expo**

Friday August 12

**Elders Sheep Expo, Deniliquin**

Thursday, September 1

**South West Slopes Merino Field Day**



*Wool from recent ewe classing at the Rowan family's Neyliona flock, Coleambally. The wool is from a 10 month old spring drop weaner born from a ewe lamb mated at ten months of age. This is but one example of the quality coming from the ewe lamb mated mob.*

*They were also typically the bigger sheep in the mob. Those ewe lambs scanned at 85pc at 13 months of age. The Rowans are dedicated and exacting Merino breeders with a focus on early maturing sheep with beautiful, quality wool, who consistently gain great results.*