

Woodpark Poll

Stephen & Carol Huggins

Eurolie

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Low micron, heavy fleece, solid carcase

A long-term emphasis on breeding for profitability with the rare combination of sheep that cut a large amount of low micron wool, on a fertile, productive, body with solid carcase traits, is key for ever changing markets.

Woodpark Poll Merino Stud principal Stephen Huggins said in a recent Rural Press (Australian Community Media) article, it was the balance of many factors that counted.

The Woodpark Poll stud is known for its low micron and high fleece weights atop a solid carcase and a productive, fertile sheep.

"We don't singularly focus on eye muscle and fat, for example. It's equally important to have a balance of fleece weight and density, low micron, good carcase and easy lambing to back up our results in trials and other benchmarking," Mr Huggins said.

Mr Huggins said market conditions are signalling the need for a versatile sheep type that can perform at the top of different markets and meet changing requirements.

In the recent interview with Rural Press, he said: "For the last two years, which have been quite good years, the two- to seven-year-olds have tested at 17.8-17.9 micron across the total clip, while our young weaner lambs come into the 16-17 micron range.

When the 2–7-year-old ewes were shorn in the February-March general shearing, there was a 1-1.2 micron spread across 5500 stud ewes.

"That gives you good fleece value and to have a maximum output in the current market from all facets, is a bonus.

ACM/Queensland Country Life's Linda Mantova wrote: "Mr Huggins said the stud's focus on a sheep which delivered on many fronts had come to the fore in recent conditions, which had highlighted the importance of having versatile sheep which were not singularly focused on one trait.

"This is not something we are striving for but something we have actually achieved with proven data to back it up, "Mr Huggins said.

"A balanced approach gives a higher income stream from the total components of production – we find if the right approach to breeding is taken, there doesn't have to be a counter production step.

"A plain but fibre dense skin that is mobile on the carcase will have a waxy white wool that is both water and dust repellent.

"And when that skin is on a deep and wide spring of rib sheep, that is an easy-doing, high conversion rate sheep.

That mobile skin produces a lot more secondary fibres that are both soft and fine, resulting in high fleece weight with low micron on a deep bodied, robust, easy care animal, with easy lambing and fertile with high survival rates.

Mr Huggins warned against single trait dominant sheep, and said at a time when commodities might slip, whilst it was important to have growth and carcase traits, it would be unwise to focus on this at the expense of production of quality wool.

"In the past 10 years we have added a kilogram of wool while maintaining micron at 18. It is a process we started in the early 90s of freeing up sheep, deepening the carcase, while concentrating on soft and white crimpy wools with great handle and style.

"That goal has not deviated in the past 30 years."

This unwavering belief of breeding for balanced animals, using outside genetics sparingly, has delivered an extremely predictable, uniform and consistent sheep type that has ticks in all the right boxes.

- · Soft, white, low micron wools
- High weight, uncomplicated fleece
- High feed conversion from low feed input
- · Fertile, easy lambing
- Barrelly, robust sheep
- High yielding carcases

Lot No	Description	Bales	Mic	CVD%	CF%	Curv	SCH Dry Yield	Length SL
399459	AAAAM	2	17.3	19.6	99.4	59	69.6	75
399460	AAAM	10	17.1	20.5	99.5	61	69.4	75
399463	AAAM	3	16.7	21.1	99.4	57	67.4	60
399465	AAAM	5	16.9	20.3	99.5	61	68.4	70
399468	AAAMBKN	10	16.1	19.4	99.8	62	58.6	63
399471	MBLS	3	16.5	19.1	99.5	62	43.5	
399472	AAAM	5	18.5	18.6	99.3	52	67.6	107
399477	AAAM	3	18.1	18.3	99.5	57	68.2	111
399480	AAAM	3	17.9	20.0	99.5	52	68.3	104
399483	AAAM	5	17.9	19.2	99.3	55	65.6	105
399486	AAAMBKN	9	17.3	19.8	99.5	56	56.6	88
399490	AAAMBKN	9	17.0	20.0	99.5	59	56.5	106
399494	MBLS	3	17.1	19.4	99.3	68	42.3	

See inside for full shearing wool results

9 month old unshorn ewe weaners

2yo maiden ewes



WOOL MAKES MONEY FOR SHEEP PRODUCERS

Please find following our test results for our February-March 2023 shearing.

The results show the how tight the specs are in our wool clip and the low micron.

And when we know the sheep cut 7.5-8kg of wool, at \$11-12/kg, GST exclusive, times 7.5-8 kilograms, there is an \$75-85 of wool on each sheep's back.

When sheep prices are so low, you have to have another

aspect of them to make money from them.

This is real, live, data - the actual specifications from our February and March shearing.

It's every line of wool and shows the tightness of the micron and other figures across the ewe clip.

At \$11/kg of wool and 7 kilograms plus on every sheep, it's actual income.

ALL WOOL WOODPARK POLL MERINO 3-7 YR OLD EWES FEB-MAR 2023 SHEARING

	No of	Net	Clean	Fibre Diameter						SCH	
Description	Bales	Wgt	Wgt	Mic	CV%	S.D	сом	CUR	VM	DRY	Lgth
AAAM	6	1139	790	18.1	17.2	3.1	99.7	54	2.4	69.4	111
AAAM	9	1731	1174	18.1	17.7	3.2	99.7	54	3.0	67.8	105
AAAM	8	1534	1034	18.4	17.9	3.3	99.5	56	2.7	67.4	101
AAAM	8	1526	1039	18.3	17.1	3.1	99.7	53	2.9	68.1	113
AAAM	5	952	643	18.7	17.6	3.3	99.5	53	2.3	67.5	109
AAAM	6	1136	784	18.5	18.4	3.4	99.5	52	2.1	69.0	102
AAAM	5	949	630	18.5	17.9	3.3	99.6	55	3.3	66.4	104
AAAM	7	1359	894	17.9	20.6	3.7	99.2	55	2.9	65.8	102
AAAM	10	1924	1228	18.3	18.2	3.3	99.4	55	3.2	63.8	104
AAAM	6	1159	715	17.8	18.7	3.3	99.7	51	4.5	61.7	100
AAAM	13	2427	1590	17.8	18.6	3.3	99.6	56	2.7	65.5	104
AAAM	13	2468	1572	18.6	18.1	3.4	99.4	54	2.8	63.7	114
AAAM	10	1904	1133	17.8	18.5	3.3	99.7	52	4.8	59.5	100
AAAM	2	316	187	18.0	18.4	3.3	99.7	53	4.5	59.2	54
AAAMPCS	8	1366	735	17.3	20.5	3.6	99.6	57	8.7	53.8	101
AAAMPCS	8	1348	725	17.4	19.3	3.4	99.6	53	8.8	53.8	92
AAAMPCS	8	1393	779	17.1	19.2	3.3	99.8	57	7.7	55.9	96
AAAMPCS	9	1549	906	17.6	19.5	3.4	99.4	57	6.9	58.5	102
AAAMPCS	9	1554	847	17.7	20.4	3.6	99.2	59	8.4	54.5	112
AAAMPCS	10	1672	915	17.4	20.4	3.5	99.7	54	7.6	54.7	110
AAAMPCS	13	2227	1198	17.4	19.7	3.4	99.6	56	8.6	53.8	95
MBLS	11	1985	754	17.7	20.4	3.6	99.2	72	15.7	38.0	81
MSKNPCS	1	124	78	18.3	19.3	3.5	99.4	54	5.7	62.9	
MLKS	4	732	367	17.1	21.2	3.6	99.3	60	6.7	50.2	
STNMPCS	8	1468	565	17.9	25.1	4.5	99.0	60	12.4	38.5	
Totals &											
Averages	197	35942	21282	17.9	19.0	3.4	99.5	56	5.3	59.2	103

ALL WOOL WOODPARK POLL MERINO 9 MONTH OLD WEANERS

									Staple
Lot No	Description	Bales	Mic	CVD%	CF%	Curv	Yield	VM	Length
399459	AAAAM	2	17.3	19.6	99.4	59	69.6	2.2	75
399460	AAAM	10	17.1	20.5	99.5	61	69.4	2.1	75
399463	AAAM	3	16.7	21.1	99.4	57	67.4	2.4	61
399465	AAAM	5	16.9	20.3	99.5	61	68.4	1.9	70
399468	AAAMBKN	10	16.1	19.4	99.8	62	58.6	7.0	63
399471	MBLS	3	16.5	19.1	99.5	62	43.5	14.3	

ALL WOOL WOODPARK POLL MERINO 2 YR OLD MAIDEN EWES

									Staple
Lot No	Description	Bales	Mic	CVD%	CF%	Curv	Yield	VM	Length
399472	AAAM	5	18.5	18.6	99.3	52	67.6	3.3	107
399477	AAAM	3	18.1	18.3	99.5	57	68.2	3.0	111
399480	AAAM	3	17.9	20.0	99.5	52	68.3	2.5	104
399483	AAAM	5	17.9	19.2	99.3	55	65.6	2.9	105
399486	AAAMBKN	9	17.3	19.8	99.5	56	56.6	9.3	88
399490	AAAMBKN	9	17.0	20.0	99.5	59	56.5	8.7	106
399494	MBLS	3	17.1	19.4	99.3	68	42.3	14.0	
AV			17.6		99.4	64			

Annual Sale Monday, September 25th, 2023

Jerilderie Racecourse • Inspection 9.30 AM, Auction 1.00PM

Live Video Interfaced with: * Auctions Plus** Grade ram selections commence Monday October 2



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AUSTRALIAN MERINO PRODUCTION TRIAL TOP GRADES FOR MEAT AND WOOL

- Woodpark Poll's Eurolie flock 3rd highest weight gain
- Rowan family's Woodpark Poll blood flock second highest wool value
- Fletchers International-supported Australian Merino Production trial, April 2021-March 2023
- Backs Mulquiny family's Woodpark Poll blood sheep being highest value sheep fleece and carcase combined in Peter Westblade Memorial Merino Wether Challenge, in 2022

The Woodpark Poll wether team entered in the Australian Merino Production trial has recorded the third highest daily weight gain in the trial's Condobolin wether comparison, collated in the last week of July.

The result backs solid wool results including the Rowan family of Coleambally's "Neyliona" flock recording the second highest wool value at the trial's April shearing, and on the back of the Peter Westblade Memorial Merino Wether Challenge results of 2022 which showed the Mulquiny family's wether team was the most profitable team with wool and carcase combined.

The Australian Merino Production trial includes teams of teams of 30 wethers which are feedlotted together at the Fletcher International's Condobolin district feedlot.

The wether trial production data gathered in the last week of July showed that the Woodpark Poll commercial "Eurolie" flock wethers entered the trial at just under – 90 per cent – of the average intake bodyweight of the trial at 40 kilograms.

The June drop Eurolie wethers are now the third heaviest team, with at least one of those two teams, being March drop. The Eurolie wethers then jumped to 119pc, or third heaviest,

after feedlotting.

The Eurolie team has gained 349 grams a week, compared with the trial average of 250 grams a week, putting them at heavier than several high profile bloodlines, all sitting around that average.

All sheep were feedlotted at the Fletchers International Condobolin district feedlot and were set to be killed and assessed at Fletchers on August 8.

The Australian Merino Production trial is designed to measure the impact on profitability of two separate environment and management systems, providing the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the effects of dust and vegetable matter on relative clean wool yields and wool prices.

The teams of 30 wethers, were inducted in April 2021, and the teams split into 15 wethers each at Fletchers Condobolin feedlot and 15 wethers each at the Kooringal stud's Wagga district property.

The wethers were shorn at both sites in April this year and will be again next year, with the Rowan family of Coleambally, recording the second highest wool value in the March shearing.

WOOL CHEQUE ADDS UP IN SOFTER MEAT MARKET

Woodpark Poll Merino are turning their first cross sheep back into merino joinings to retain the wether portion for a year, get their best wool clip off them, then turn them off, with the extra Merino joinings also offering more ewes for sale and selection.

Woodpark Poll principal Stephen Huggins said the value of a wool clip in a softer meat market was increasingly important.

"Because we have a finer micron - our flock average micron is about 17.8 - and we know through fleece weighing and bale numbers that we can count on 7-8kg of wool per head, we know we are going to make money. In fact we are confident enough that we are going to reduce our first cross lamb production and increasing Merino joining numbers. This will mean we will have more Merinos, and we will hold onto our wether portion a bit longer so we can shear them before selling, as well as having more Merino ewes to sell," he said.

"Since we bought 'Narrawong' 17 years ago, we have used our fairly small first cross operation to move any lesser sheep into, which allowed us to build and retain retain numbers while still classing sheep out of the main flock," Mr Huggins said.

"We have always been singularly focused on our Poll Merino operation. When we later took on 'Willah' (in Victoria's Western District), we stopped doing any terminal joinings on Narrawong, as we had lifted the quality of the Narrawong flock to a standard we were happy with."

"We had a mix of Merino and terminal joinings at Willah as it's such a good area for first cross lambs, but with the changeover to Booabula at Wanganella late last year, and as we have the opportunity to move surplus Narrawong and Eurolie sheep down there, we will reduce the first cross portion.

One of the foundations of this thinking has been results from wether trial and sire evaluation results for Woodpark Poll blood flocks over the past 10 to 15 years.

"We realised the Merino lambs were performing nearly as well as the terminal sire lines, plus they were producing a woolclip that had real commercial value in the face of a softening meat market," Mr Huggins said.

"The best thing is we're getting value from the wool," said Mr Huggins.

"That wool clip even at only \$70-80/head, is means we are going to get way more value out of a sheep unit than just a first cross lamb turned off. It might not be for everyone but it's working for us."



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630 Woodpark Poll rams sent across south-eastern Australia

It was a privilege to move 630 Woodpark Poll Merino rams to new homes across south-eastern Australia last year as many, including ourselves, were dealing with floods and other logistical issues as they selected and took delivery of rams.

We are grateful for the support of those who attended our largest ram auction, taking home about 175 rams and about 450 more rams in grades at home.

The Land's Brett Tindal said buyers sought a bulk of quality wool and carcase attributes: "The Woodpark Poll Merino ram sale went off with a bang, following the trend of other high profile Poll Merino ram sales earlier in the month, averaging north of \$4000 and selling to three states.

"It was the high quality white wools buyers were chasing, with every client not only talking about the wool quality but the fact these rams could go to Gippsland's high rainfall areas, through to 11 inch rainfall country around Longreach in Queensland.

"The versatility of the rams to suit a variety of climates, while maintaining a stylish white wool that was attractive to every buyer, drove the sale."

The Huggins family set a new benchmark for the stud at \$4245 across the 147 of 150 rams sold at the main auction, before the Selected grade rams averaged \$3032 at a mini auction.

The top ram was a 19 micron ram with tremendous body shape and carcase with outstanding stylish white wool, backed with ASBV figures in the top five per cent for yearling weight at 11 and top five per cent for MP and DP indexes at 172 and 165 respectively.

The top ram was secured for \$15,500 for Mathoura Station, who run 6000 ewes and look to breed 20 to 30 rams themselves a year for their own needs.

New buyers at the sale, JAB Shorter and Sons, Narrabri, secured the second top ram at \$11,000 and another top sire at \$7500 to kick start the sale. Volume buyers included first time buyer Lisa Sheen, manager, Merrowie Station, Hillston, who secured 12 rams at auction, joins 7500 ewes and is moving to a non



The \$15,500 top ram with Elders wool representative, the late Clyde McKenzie (Deniliquin) - a long time friend to the stud; and Carol and Stephen Huggins, Woodpark Poll Merinos. Hav.

The Woodpark Poll Merino ram sale went off with a bang, following the trend of other high profile Poll Merino ram sales earlier in the month, averaging north of \$4000 and selling to three states.

mulesed operation and looking for plainer bodied sheep.

"We want rams that are not over 20.5 micron and must have growth figures above 7 for their ASBVs, and a good barrel and length of body, with free growing, soft handling wool," she said.

Peter Unger, MV Agriculture, Alectown, secured 14 rams to join with his 2500 Merino ewes, chasing the heavier cutting, free growing sheep with plenty of carcase still underneath them.

Paula Dean, Notus Downs, Longreach, Queensland, secured 10 rams at auction, seven Selected grade rams and topped up later with grade rams.

Ms Dean said the uniformity of the Woodpark Poll rams gives her the option to buy right through the sale with confidence. "They are really uncomplicated sheep that suit our low rainfall country extremely well," she said.

Wes Stott, Bungeeltap Pty Ltd, Kyneton, Victoria, purchased eight rams, chasing plain bodied, uncomplicated rams, as he was moving to a non-mulesed operation. "I wanted softness and brightness- and targeted the more southern rams in the draft."

Long time supportive agent Jarrod De Marco, Nutrien Mansfield, bought 20 rams to go to the Seaspray area for two long time Woodpark Poll supporters.

The sale was conducted by Elders Nick Gray, Nutrien's Peter Godbolt and interfaced by AuctionsPlus.

Source: The Land

2023 Events

Friday July 14- Sunday July 16 **Australian Sheep and Wool Show**

Bendigo Prince of Wales Showground

We will have our usual two-site display in the Merino tent.

We will have selected rams from our annual Auction, and sires to be retained, at our double size display at the Sheep and Wool Show in Bendigo. Please call past, with the whole family manning the stand, we would love to catch up.

Sunday August 6 – Monday August 7 Sheepvention

Our display will be in the ram exhibition shed - just inside top gate, Hamilton Showground, Hamilton. This year we will not sell rams at the Hamilton Sheepvention, preferring to retain them for our annual auction, to allow all sale attendees equal access to the genetics. Our display site will host a team of auction rams and potential sires at the event which has treated us so well in the past.

Tuesday August 31 South West Slopes Stud Merino Field Day

Harden Showground

Wednesday September 6 On-property Open Day and Elders Riverina Merino Tour

Narrawong, Jerilderie Road, Hay

Please join us to view the stock and country with the entire auction team available for inspection in their home environment. We will host an Elders travelling party from 8.30am, with all welcome from then.

Monday, September 25 Woodpark Poll Annual Ram Sale

Jerilderie Racecourse Showground

Monday, October 2
Private Ram Selections of 800 Grade Rams
On-property at home.

A Snapshot of the Year

Best Pen of Three Rams

LODDON VALLEY STUD MERINO BREEDERS FIELD DAY 2023

The ability to withstand weather extremes while demonstrating quality helped bring home the best pen of three rams award for the Woodpark Poll stud at Loddon valley Merino Field Days early this year.

The award was backed up by the stud's young ewes being awarded runner-up in the Doug Todd Memorial pen of three ewe weaners, judged by the late Doug Todd's wife Elizabeth and daughter Louise Hanmer.

Judges Murray McKenzie, Kilfeera Park stud, and Phil Toland, Toland Poll, said they were looking for consistency and sheep with the least amount of faults.

They noted that despite the surplus of rainfall this year, with the sheep enduring flooding rains, including one five week period of more than 300 millimetres of rain, they had clearly withstood any damage and fared well in unusual conditions.

The focus of the day for us was to highlight the durability of Woodpark Poll sheep. The best pen of three rams competition marked the fifth time Woodpark Poll has received the award since we started displaying at the field day.

We also took a selection of bare-breeched ewes to demonstrate high fleece weight, quality wools with a hand print of bareness around the tail that manages to avoid any plainness.



Woodpark Poll principal Stephen Huggins and client Bernie Mulquiny, Wooroonook, Vic, looking over ewes at the Loddon Valley Merino Field Day early this year.



Charles Sturt University students pictured discussing our breeding program with Stephen Huggins. The students gave up part of their semester break when they again visited us in May as part of their annual tour of sheep enterprises. We always love these tours from young people with such energy and the way they make us think about what we do and why and how we do it.



Thanks to Fox and Lillie and the Hay Sheep Show, our local show, for supporting the industry which gave and gives the Hay region so much. We were thrilled to again be awarded most successful exhibitor in the unhoused stud.



Profitable sheep top wether trials

Woodpark Poll blood flocks are again at the top of profitability measures in Australia's largest Merino wether trials, with the Australian Merino Production Trial, carried out by the same team and with similar assessment, as the Peter Westblade Memorial Merino Challenge.

The wether trial data from the current Peter Westblade trial showed the Rowan family's Neyliona flock, spearheaded by Lee Rowan, at Coleambally, was positioned in second place, with our Eurolie commercial flock in Hay in 10th place and other client flocks also demonstrating great results.

The first 17 years of the trial showed Woodpark Poll was the most profitable bloodline for combined carcase and wool traits, after analysis of the more than 400 flocks and 50 stud bloodlines which had taken part in the trial, Australia's largest wether trial

The highlight for us has been the results and consistency of the Woodpark Poll bloodline's performance over the almost 20 year life of the trial. Multiple Woodpark Poll blood flocks have taken part, all at different points of their breeding journey and starting at different points on the trial profit table.

It underscores the value of balanced breeding, achieving high carcase value as well as high end fleece value, and is recognition of the commitment these breeders show to their sheep programs.

It also requires a reasonable sacrifice with the trial currently evaluating two teams of 15 wethers from each flock, one run at Wagga Wagga and one near Condobolin.



Lee Rowan, "Neyliona" Coleambally, assessing his flock's fleece at the Wagga Wagga leg trial shearing.

Bare breech line at Woodpark Poll

The breeding philosophy of balance and production which has delivered a true multi-purpose sheep has led to the development of a bare breech line at Woodpark Poll, offering more options for those with non-mulesed flocks.

Over the past two years we have gathered more than 400 sheep into a bare breech mob, many sourced from the elite Double Studs, so among the best of the best of our stud breeders.

They have been through our classing structure to monitor their performance and have proved time and time again they can maintain big body weights with low micron and meaty carcases, with increasing numbers evident.

Maintaining a high-end level of performance has always been a part of our breeding strategy.

Woodpark Poll have been working towards breeding straight, uncomplicated, plain-bodied sheep for more than twenty-five years.



In this era of heightened importance of ethical sheep breeding, it has become more important than ever to be looking for mulesing alternatives. And it isn't all about anti-mulesing, as having no wool in the area from the vulva through to the udder is a better deterrent for flyblown and stained wool. As with any sheep breeding process, it's a matter of trying to improve what you have rather than starting again - and breeding for a naturally bare breech is no different. Barebreeched sheep are not new to us, with this sheep type evident several years ago when we operated a non-mulesed flock for several years.

Because our program has led toward development of a bare breech sheep we have never had to look elsewhere to provide these bare breech genetics. They already exist in the flock which delivers certainty and predictability and confidence in the production characteristics.

Woodpark Poll's bare-breeched sheep have high production, cutting an average of 7.5-8kg, 18-micron wool. These sheep are productive, they're not just plain or stripped off.

Non-mulesed ram availability

Meanwhile, we have also re-introduced a selection of non-mulesed rams this year, to ensure we can meet the needs of those who wish to access non-mulesed sires - though the majority of rams continue to be mulesed. The size of our stud flock of more than 3000 stud ewes mean our 1000 top-level annual ram offering ensures a large selection of mulesed, non-mulesed and barer breech rams.

We expect to have a number of non-mulesed rams, all selected from our later, August 2022 drop, to give options to those considering or already practicing non-mulesing of their sheep.

We have also identified and not mulesed appropriate rams in this year's drop and breech scored all lambs in the cradle.

After dropping mulesing for four years in the 2010s, we found 60 per cent of the drop was absolutely fine without mulesing, 20 per cent could perhaps have been better off if mulesed but it was not a problem that they weren't and we estimate only 20 per cent still required mulesing.

In the years since, our sheep type has plained up further, even with an extra kilo of wool added, which makes us very comfortable to have a non-mulesed line.

The majority of rams will continue to be mulesed as this is as always about creating options for people whatever their particular desires and needs.

ANNUAL RAM SALE MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2023 150 POLL MERINO RAMS

800 Poll Merino Rams available in grades in days following Ram Sale

JERILDERIE SHOWGROUND - INSPECTION 9.30AM - AUCTION 1.00PM