

MERRYVILLE NEWS



Newsletter of Merryville Merino Stud, Boorowa

Spring 2017

Volume 25

Wal's Message

2017 saw an outstanding year of price increase for fine wool.

Since I wrote this newsletter last year, the 17 micron indicator has increased by 658c or 43% and the 18 micron indicator gained 606c or 40.3%. There is also some 200c difference for traditional Italian types. Growers who have these types should think carefully about changing as there is now strong demand from Italy as well as China for these types.

Our ewe flock cut an average \$82 per head with cull ewes selling to \$132, averaging \$121, to Fletcher International Exports in Dubbo. This was an increase of 38% on last year.

At the time of writing the wool market has opened up strongly with a record indicator of 1595 c/kg.

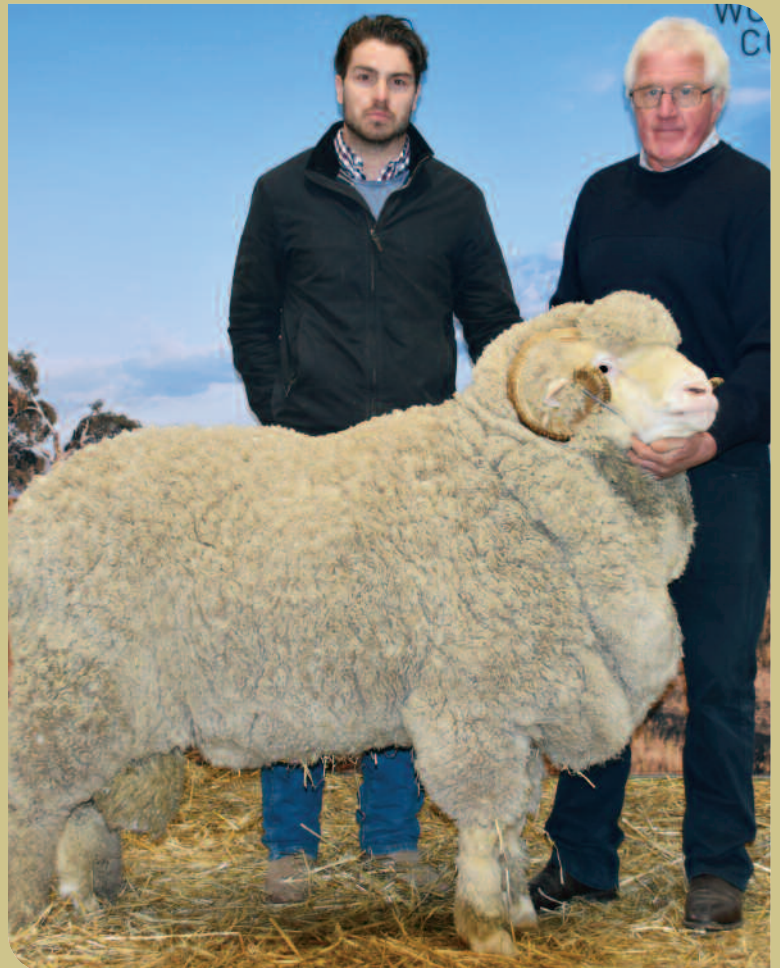
In the showing we have had an excellent year with the Supreme Exhibit, Supreme Poll Exhibit and Most Successful Exhibitor award at the Great Southern Supreme Merino Show in Canberra. At the 2017 Sydney Royal Show Merryville took home the Grand Champion Superfine Wool Ram,

Grand Champion Fine Wool Ram, Grand Champion Fine Wool Ewe and Grand Champion Fine/Medium Wool Poll Ram awards.

This poll ram went on the win his Objective Measurement class cutting 15.8kg at 18.1 micron. No poll ram has ever cut this sort of weight at this micron.

Our group awards included the Roger Birtles Memorial Trophy at GSSM and the Stonehaven Cup at Sydney for the 27th time.

Please also see Scott Carmody's excellent analysis of price trends in the wool industry on the Back Page of this newsletter.



Merryville's Jock Merriman and buyer John Crawford, Rock-Bank Stud, Victoria Valley, Vic, with the \$32,000 equal top-priced ram at Bendigo in 2017. The rising three year-old ram was by Grand Monarch 44th, which was supreme exhibit in Sydney in 2013. This ram's wool measured 15.6M, 2.8M SD, 17.9pc CV and 99.9pc CF.

Merryville On-Property Unhoused Ram Sale

Friday 8th September 2017 – 1pm at "Beverley", Boorowa

ENQUIRIES

Wally Merriman Ph 02 6385 3333
Landmark, Boorowa Ph 02 6385 3666

George Merriman Ph 02 6385 3282
Elders, Boorowa Ph 02 6385 3107

Sydney Success



1



2



3



4



5

Merryville Wins 27th Stonehaven Cup and another four Grand Champion Awards in 2017.

1 Merryville took out its 27th Stonehaven Cup group win at the 2017 Sydney Royal Show.

This equates to an impressive 33% of trophies awarded in the 82 competitions since 1935 when the cup was donated by Lord Stonehaven.

2 Grand Champion Fine/Medium Wool Poll Ram 'Merryville Cas'. Also winner of the 6 tooth & over Objective Measurement class.

3 Grand Champion Fine Wool Ewe, cut 12.4kg wool.

4 Grand Champion Superfine Wool Ram 'Ringmaster Superior 14th' cut 12.9kg of wool at 18.4 micron.

5 Grand Champion Fine Wool Ram 'EM Supreme 2nd' cut 14kg of 18.7 micron wool.

Merryville

GSSM 2017

Supreme Exhibit
 Supreme Poll Exhibit
 Most Successful Exhibitor
 Grand Champion Ram
 Grand Champion Poll Ram
 Champion Sale Ram
 Roger Birtles Memorial March Shorn Group – 1st
 Champion March Shorn Ram
 Champion March Shorn Poll Ram
 Champion March Shorn Poll Ewe
 8 rams sold to a top of \$21,000 and average of \$7,000

Top price of \$21,000 sold to a Demondrille/Bocoble/Conrayn Merino Studs syndicate

Second top-price of \$15,500 to Lochness & Thalabah Merino studs

Armidale 2017

Top price of \$14,000 sold to Lynoch Pty Ltd, Armidale

WC & MA Doak, Bundarra \$9,000
 David Grills Partnership, Armidale \$8,000
 Nerstane Pastoral Co, Woolbrook \$8,000
 9 rams sold to a top of \$14,000 and average of \$6,167

Mudgee 2017

Top price of \$7,000 sold to T & W Price, Pyramul NSW

Towalba Merino Stud, Peak Hill \$5,000
 6 rams sold to a top of \$7,000 and average of \$3,250

Royal Canberra Show 2017

Most Successful Exhibitor
 Supreme Fine Wool Exhibit
 Supreme Medium/Strong Wool Exhibit
 Grand Champion Poll Merino Ram
 Champion August Shorn Ewe
 Champion Fine Wool Ram
 Champion Medium/Strong Wool Ram

Sydney 2017

Objective Measurement Ram 6 tooth & over – winner
 The Stonehaven Cup – Best Exhibit of five March Shorn Sheep – winner for the 27th time
 Most Successful March Shorn Merino Exhibitor
 Most Successful Superfine & Fine Wool Exhibitor
 Most Successful Exhibitor in March Shorn Poll Merino Section
 Grand Champion Superfine Wool Ram
 Grand Champion Fine Wool Ram
 Grand Champion Fine Wool Ewe
 Grand Champion Fine/Medium Wool Poll Ram

Bendigo 2017

\$32,000 equal top price Merino Ram sold to John Crawford, Rock-Bank Stud, Victoria Valley.
 A strong sale saw Merryville sell 9 rams averaging \$8,844 with a top of \$32,000.

Highlights

Merryville clients

CONGRATULATIONS to the many clients who have continued to enjoy success in the past twelve months, including:

2016 DUBBO WINNERS

- Peter & Jayne Lette, Conrayn, Berridale – 2016 Rabobank Australian Supreme Merino Ram.

2017 GSSM WINNERS

- The Walton family, Wurrook, Rokewood – Champion August Shorn Ewe, Champion August Shorn Superfine Wool Ewe, Champion August Shorn Fine Wool Ewe, Champion August Shorn Superfine Wool Poll Ram, Reserve Champion March Shorn Superfine Wool Poll Ram.
- Peter & Jayne Lette, Conrayn, Berridale – Reserve Champion March Shorn Superfine Wool Ewe, Reserve Champion August Shorn Superfine Wool Ram.
- Demondrille Partnership, Murrumburrah – Grand Champion Ewe, Junior Champion Ewe, Champion March Shorn Ewe, Reserve Champion March Shorn Ewe, Reserve Champion March Shorn Ram, Champion March Shorn Superfine Wool Ram, Reserve Champion March Shorn Superfine Wool Ram, Champion March Shorn Fine Wool Ewe, Champion March Shorn Fine/Medium Wool Ewe, Reserve Champion March Shorn Fine Wool Ewe.

2017 CANBERRA ROYAL WINNERS

- Peter & Jayne Lette, Conrayn, Berridale – Grand Champion Fleece, Most Successful Merino Fleece Exhibitor.

2017 SYDNEY WINNERS

- Demondrille Partnership, Murrumburrah - Supreme Merino Exhibit, Supreme Merino Ram, Supreme Merino Ewe, Grand Champion Fine/Medium Wool Ram, Grand Champion Fine/Medium Wool Ewe, Reserve Grand Champion Superfine Wool Ram, Reserve Grand Champion Fine Wool Ewe, Reserve Grand Champion Medium Wool Ewe, Champion Fine/Medium Wool March Shorn Ewe, Champion Fine/Medium Wool March Shorn Ram, Champion Medium Wool March Shorn Ewe, Reserve Champion Fine Wool March Shorn Ewe.
- The Hoadley Family, New Plains, Blayney – Grand

Champion Ultrafine Wool Ewe, Champion Ultrafine Wool March Shorn Ewe.

- The Van Eyk family, Shalimar Park, Walcha – Grand Champion Ultrafine Wool Poll Ewe, Grand Champion Superfine Wool Ewe, Reserve Grand Champion Ultrafine Wool Ram, Champion Ultrafine Wool March Shorn Poll Ewe, Champion Superfine Wool March Shorn Ewe, Reserve Champion Ultrafine Wool March Shorn Ram, Reserve Champion Superfine Wool August Shorn Poll Ram.
- Leo & Judy Blanch, Westvale, Wollun – Grand Champion Ultrafine Wool Ram.

2017 AUSTRALIAN FLEECE COMPETITION

- Mont Waters, Beltana, Jingellic – Commercial Ewe or Wether 14.5 mic & Finer: 1st, 2nd and 3rd.
- Peter & Jayne Lette, Conrayn, Berridale – Stud Ewe or Wether 15.5 mic & Finer: 2nd, Stud Ewe or Wether 15.6 – 16.5 mic: 1st, Stud Ewe or Wether 17.6 – 18.5 mic: 1st and 4th.
- The Rayner family, Pomanara, Sallys Flat – Stud Ewe or Wether 15.5 mic & Finer: 3rd, Stud Ewe or Wether 18.6 – 19.5 mic: 3rd.
- The Nicolson family, Bonneys Plains, Epping Forest Tas – Commercial Ewe or Wether 15.5 mic & Fine: 1st, 3rd and 4th.
- Beverley Merinos, Redesdale, Vic – Stud Ewe or Wether 15.6 – 16.5 mic: 2nd, Stud Ram 17.6 – 18.5 mic: 1st.
- Demondrille Partnership, Murrumburrah – Stud Ram 17.6 – 18.5 mic: 2nd, 3rd and 4th.
- Gaynor Martin, Rocky Flat, Guyra – Stud Ram 18.6 – 19.5 mic: 2nd.

2017 BENDIGO WINNERS

- The Crawford family, Rockbank, Victoria Valley – Grand Champion Ultrafine Wool Ram, Reserve Grand Champion Superfine Wool Ram.
- The Walton family, Wurrook, Rokewood – Grand Champion Merino Ewe and Victorian Bred Merino Ewe of the Year, Grand Champion Superfine Wool Ram, Grand Champion Superfine Wool Ewe, Grand Champion Fine Wool Ewe.

Beverley Scanning

Our Merryville maiden ewes have been scanned in lamb at rates of up to 85% with 1500 flock maidens scanning at 80%. The total scanning rates on all flock sheep, including maidens, was 85%. Our ewes are currently lambing as we go to print.

Grand Monarch 44th

Grand Monarch 44th was Supreme Champion in Sydney in 2013 and cut 14.1kg at 18.9 micron. This year he has sired the top-priced ram at Bendigo to the Rock-Bank Merino Stud (\$32,000) and the second top-priced ram at GSSM to a syndicate of Garry Seaman, Lochness Stud, Fullerton and John Williams of Thalabah Stud, Laggan (\$15,500). Other sons sold at Bendigo to Alan Johnstone, Tas (\$7,000) and Alimold, Boorowa (\$6,000). There are some 28 lots sired by Grand Monarch 44th in the sale.

Hamilton Giant



Wurrook's Grand Champion Merino Ewe of the 2017 Australian Sheep & Wool Show and Victorian Bred Merino Ewe of the Year was sired by Merryville Hamilton Giant. Hamilton Giant also sired Wurrook's 2016 and 2015 Supreme Merinos at this show. Merryville's Sydney 2015 Grand Champion Fine Wool Ram 'Giant Test' was also sired by Hamilton Giant.

Merryville Annual Highlights

2016 On Property Ram Sale

In September, the 17th Annual On-Property Ram Sale saw 144 rams offered to a top of \$5,500. The sale averaged \$1,880 across the board, with all buyers getting an opportunity at the level they were prepared to spend.

Tony & Winsome Price, Boiga View, Pyramul, NSW purchased the \$5,500 top priced ram. The second lot of the sale, the 2014 drop, Ultrafine wool ram tested at 17.2 micron, with a 2.6 micron SD, CV of 15.1% and CF of 100%. The Prices have been using Merryville blood for 45 years.

The second top priced ram was purchased by MF & FG Allen of Teesdale, Victoria for \$4,500. This Superfine wool, August shorn ram tested at 17.3 micron, 2.5 SD, CV of 14.5%, CF 99.9% and was sired by Hamilton Giant Syndicate. The Allens had earlier purchased an Ultrafine wool ram sired by Brilliant Monarch Super 9th.

Neil Collins again travelled from Southeast Gippsland, Vic, to secure lot 4 of the sale for \$4,000. The Ultrafine wool, March shorn ram was a September 2014 drop ram by Merryville EM. Mr Collins also took home lot 39 for \$3,000, a Superfine wool, may shorn ram who tested at 15.9 micron, 2.8 SD, CV of 17.6 and CF of 99.5.

The top priced Poll merino ram was secured for \$4,200 by new buyer Ken Williams of Four Mile Creek, via Orange, NSW. The fine wool, may shorn, 18.0 micron ram was sired by Pemcaw Poll and had a SD of 2.9, CV of 16.1 and CF of 99.4%.

2017 On Property Ewe Sale

There was a change of date for our 2017 Stud and Flock ewe sale. Previously held in conjunction with the GSSM Field Day in January, our 33rd Annual On Property Ewe Sale was held on Friday 10th February 2017 at "Geegullalong", Boorowa, NSW.

A smaller offering of 329 stud ewes sold to a top of \$230 per head and an average of \$171. Brothers Michael and Brett McDonald of Williamsdale again paid the top price for the first pen of, 19 CFA Ultrafine wool stud ewes.

The Hoadley family, Blayney, returned to the 2017 sale to purchase both stud and flock ewes. They took home 48 fine wool, CFA stud ewes along with 150 x 1.5yo flock ewes.

First time buyer, Cameron Clark of Young, NSW, bought 3 lots (85 head) of medium wool, CFA stud ewes and paid a top of \$195.

BJ Chivers came for Wangaratta, Victoria, to secure the remaining flock ewes. These 185 CFA flock ewes averaged \$103 per head.

2017 Great Southern Supreme Merino Show and Ram Sale

Merryville Stud again sold the top priced ram at the 2017 GSSM Ram Sale in Canberra. The first lot of the sale was knocked down for \$21,000 to a syndicate of merino studs. The Demondrille Stud, Murrumburrah, Conrayn Stud, Berridale and Bocoble Stud of Mudgee paid \$21,000 for the 17.7 micron ram. Sired by a Brilliant Example Syndicate, the 30 month old, superfine wool ram weighed 123.5kg.

Merryville sold another ram for \$15,500 to another syndicate of Garry Seaman, Lochness Stud, Fullerton and John Williams of Thalabah Stud, Laggan. This 113kg fine wool ram was a son of Grand Monarch 43rd with a 18.6 micron fleece, 2.8 micron SD and 15.1 CV.

Neil Collins of Yarram, Victoria, returned to the sale to secure lot 3 for \$6,000. Sire by Merryville Zipper, the 18.8 micron rams had a SD of 2.7 and CV of 14.4

Of the 8 rams Merryville sold, they averaged \$7,000 for the sale.

During the show Merryville was awarded the Supreme Exhibit, Supreme Poll Exhibit, Most Successful Exhibitor, Grand Champion Ram, Grand Champion Poll Ram, Champion Sale Ram, Champion March Shorn Ram, Champion March Shorn Poll Ram, Champion March Shorn Poll Ewe. Merryville was also proud to win the Roger Birtles Memorial March Shorn Group class.

News from Geegullalong

After a good start to the year the season fell away with 205 ml falling till the end of July, but feed held enough to cover lambing.

We were lucky enough to get a paddock of Wedgetail wheat in early February and grazed all the adult ewes which allowed us to spell pastures over autumn.

Pregnancy scanning showed overall conception was slightly up but with a lot less twins with the studs holding % of 115 and flocks 123. This twinning rate is what historically happens as the last two lambings have been very high. Twins and single bearing ewes have been separated and are lambing well with some kind weather and consistent fox baiting.

We are trialing Rosalind barley this year and so far, it is exceeding expectations compared to Wedgetail wheat sown at the same time as barley has been a great supplementary feed for us and is not a common crop in our area.

Let's hope we can finish the season well and good wishes to you all.

- George Merriman

One Oak Magnussen

One Oak Magnussen was bought at the One Oak Dispersal sale in 2014.

He was the winner of the Objective Measurement class in Sydney 2013.

He cut 18.4kg at 18.6 micron and was the heaviest ram at 18 micron that has contested the OM class in Sydney.

In Sydney last year his progeny was 1st and 2nd in the OM Ewe class cutting 13.6kg and 11.8kg respectively.

He also sired 4th place in the ram class at 13.4kg. He sired the Reserve Fine/Medium wool ram and the reserve medium wool ram.

There is approximately a dozen rams in this year's sale sired by One Oak Magnussen.

Merryville Stud Structure

The Current Breeding Families

STYLE

** all micron tests shown are on full feed*

ULTRA FINE

This type traces back to the original Ravensworth sheep and is about 80 years old. The sheep range from ultrafine (it is not uncommon for some to be tested to 14.0 micron) to 16.5 micron. Pure Saxon wool with style and high spinability

Average of Adult Ewes	16.5 mic	4.5 kg cut/hd
Sires Used		
Ringmaster Centenary 3rd	16.7 mic	
Goulburn Supreme by Ringmaster Francesco	16.1 mic	Supreme Exhibit at GSSM in 2010
Brilliant Monarch Super		

SUPER FINE

This type traces back to the original Ravensworth sheep and is about 80 years old. The sheep range from ultrafine (it is not uncommon for some to be tested to 14.0 micron) to 18.5 micron. Pure Saxon wool with style and high spinability

Average of Adult Ewes	17.5 mic	5.1 kg cut/hd
Sires Used		
Ringmaster Superior 9th	18.1 mic	AI
Grand Monarch Super 5th	17.4 mic	Long bodied, Superfine. Not shown.
Francesco Syndicate		Three sons of Ringmaster 40th Francesco by Ringmaster 37th Francesco. Francesco was Grand Champion Superfine Sydney Sheep Show 2000 and has been a major superfine influence.
Merryville Giant Test	17.4 mic	Grand Champion Fine Wool Ram Sydney Royal 2015, cut 16kg wool.

FINE

Larger framed, heavier cutting, 66s 70s type, staple length 90mm, white – highly crimped wool, genetic source of the Merryville Commercial Flock and represent about 40% of stud numbers

Average of Adult Ewes	18.5 to 19.0 mic	6.0 to 7.3 kg cut/hd
Sires Used		
Giant Test	17.4 mic	
EM Supreme Syndicate	18.4 mic	Supreme Exhibit Sydney Royal 2010. Cut 15.6kg, weight 128kg.
Big Brilliant Syndicate	18.6 mic	Supreme Fine Wool Ram at Campbell Town show in 2009, sire of the second top (\$20,000) and third top (\$16,000) price rams at Bendigo 2013
Grand Monarch 44th	18.7 mic	Supreme Merino and Grand Champion Fine Wool ram Sydney Royal 2013. Supreme Merino GSSM 2013.
Merryville 14	18.5 mic	Supreme Exhibit Sydney 2016, cut 15.4kg.
Brilliant Example Syndicates and fine-testing Uniform Syndicates of young rams for progeny testing		

MEDIUM

Large framed ewes with 64s type wool. Main families are Uniform and Grand Monarch which trace back to Wanganella ram 'Sir Francis' 1929.

Average of Adult Ewes	19.0 mic	7.1 kg cut/hd
Sires used		
Grand Monarch 42nd by Grand Monarch 37th	18.9 mic	Not shown, reserved as a 2 tooth. 3rd season.
Uniform 41st	19.4 mic	Reserve Champion Sydney Medium Wool ram 2006
One Oak Magnussen	18.5 mic	Purchased at the One Oak dispersal sale for \$16,000. Reserve Grand Champion Medium Wool Ram Sydney 2013. Heaviest cutter in the Trangie Sire Evaluation.
EM Cas	18.8 mic	Grand Champion Fine/Medium Wool Ram Sydney 2015, cut 16.2kg.

MURGHA

The Murgha stud was established with ewes bought from the Murgha dispersal sale pure Wanganella blood. Highly regarded at the time, esteemed studs such Uardry, Koonawarra and Pemcaw can trace their origins back to the Murgha dispersal sale. The sheep have been joined to Merryville medium types and are like a separate family in the Merryville medium type

Average of Adult Ewes	19.0 mic	7.1 kg cut/hd
Sires used		
Sons of East Mundulla	19.4 mic	East Mundulla by WA Purple (contains Merryville blood) out of a Collinsville Olympic ewe (Merryville background). First drop produced Grand Champion Medium Wool Ram, Campbell Town 2009, 19.8 micron, 142 kg.
One Oak Magnussen	18.5 mic	Purchased at the One Oak dispersal sale for \$16,000. Reserve Grand Champion Medium Wool Ram Sydney 2013. Heaviest cutter in the Trangie Sire Evaluation

POLL MERINOS

The type and style of the Merryville Poll Merino sheep mirror the Merryville horned types and families

FINE

Average of Adult Ewes	19.0 mic	6.0 kg cut/hd
Sire Used		
Uniform Poll 13th	18.5 mic	Champion Fine Wool Poll at Bendigo and Dubbo 2005

FINE/MEDIUM

Average of Adult Ewes	19.3 mic	6.8 kg cut/hd
Sire Used		
Pemcaw Poll	18.7 mic	Purchased at Dubbo 2012 for \$44,000 cut 13.7kg wool, weight 131kg.
Merryville Poll ES	18.2 mic	

Merryville Poll Merinos

The Merryville Poll Merino Stud continues to perform at the highest levels.

In 2015 Merryville Poll Merino Stud won the following:

GSSM: Junior Champion Fine/Medium Wool Poll Ram, the Champion March Shorn Fine Wool Poll Ram (who went on to become Reserve Champion March Shorn Poll Ram), the Champion March Shorn Fine/Medium Wool Poll Ram and the Champion March Shorn Fine Wool Poll Ewe (who became the Reserve Champion March Shorn Poll Ewe).

This Junior Champion Fine/Medium Wool Poll Ram then placed 3rd in the Objective Measurement Class at the 2015 Sydney Royal Show. With a 19.5 micron fleece this was the highest yielding and most valuable fleece of the class at 82.1% and \$125.39 respectively.

Canberra Royal Show: Champion Superfine Wool Poll Ram, Champion Fine Wool Poll Ewe.

Sydney Royal Easter Show: Grand Champion Superfine Wool Poll Ram, Junior Champion March Shorn Poll Ram, Champion March Shorn Superfine Wool Poll Ram, Most Successful March Shorn Poll Merino Exhibitor.

A lot of these sheep were sired by Pemcaw Poll, an outstanding sire who is proving his worth throughout Australia. As well as the Merryville Champions, he has

sired the Grand Champion Ram at Wanaka in New Zealand in 2015, a top price poll ewe of \$12,000 and a grandson was Victorian Ram of the Year and Grand Champion Poll Ram at Bendigo in 2016.

Merryville Poll Stud's results at the 2016 Sydney Royal Easter Show include:

- Most Successful Exhibitor in March Shorn Poll Merino Section
- Grand Champion Poll Ewe
- Grand Champion Fine Wool Poll Ewe
- Grand Champion Fine/Medium Wool Poll Ewe
- Junior Champion March Shorn Poll Ewe
- Champion Fine Wool March Shorn Poll Ewe
- Champion Fine/Medium Wool August Shorn Poll Ewe
- Champion Fine/Medium Wool March Shorn Poll Ewe

In the Objective Measurement class, a Merryville 2 tooth poll ram had the highest eye muscle depth at 40.0mm, with a fat depth of 3mm. This ram also had the 2nd highest poll fleece value of the class.

At the 2017 Sydney Royal Easter Show 'Merryville Cas' was the Grand Champion Fine/Medium Wool Poll Ram. This poll ram went on the win his Objective Measurement class cutting 15.8kg at 18.1 micron. No poll ram has ever cut this sort of weight at this micron.

Performance & Production

Increasingly shows are including Performance Classes in their schedules to give a more objective view of a sheep's value.

These Performance Classes use objective measurement for both wool and meat, looking at Frame & Confirmation, Body Weight, Fat Depth, Eye Muscle Depth, Staple Strength, Coefficient of Variation and Fleece Value.

Merryville Stud has proven the profitability of both its rams and ewes in the Objective Measurement Classes at the Sydney Royal Easter Show in recent years. In 2017 a Fine/Medium Wool Poll Ram was the winner of the OM 6 tooth & Over Ram class. 'Merryville Cas' cut 15.8kg of 18.1 micron fleece at a yield of 83.5% for a total fleece value of \$277. The 121kg ram had an eye muscle depth of 32mm.

In the Sydney 2016 Objective Measurement 2 to 4 tooth class, Merryville had the second highest fleece value for 'Merryville 14' (the Supreme Merino Exhibit) with a 15.4kg, 18.5 micron fleece with a yield of 72%. A Merryville 2 tooth poll ram

had the highest eye muscle depth at 40.0 mm and a fat depth of 3 mm. This ram also had the 2nd highest poll fleece value of the class.

In Sydney 2015 'Merryville EM Cas' placed 2nd in the Ram 6 tooth and over class with a 125.5kg ram with 18.8 micron wool, a fleece yield of 74.9% and fleece value of \$138.06. A younger poll ram in the 2 to 4 tooth class placed 3rd in his class. With a 19.5 micron fleece this was the highest yielding and most valuable fleece of the class at 82.1% and \$125.39 respectively. In the 2 to 4 tooth Ewe class Merryville secured 2nd place with a 17.7 micron, 12.5kg fleece valued at \$108.23.

Merryville Stud recorded a record wool weight of 18.36kg in the performance class of the 2015 Dubbo Show and Sale. The ram won the class with a micron of 17.8, SD of 2.9, CV of 16.8% and CF of 99.8%. The fleece was valued at \$155.33 and received 160 points from a possible 160 for the fleece value. The eye muscle depth and fat depth also obtained maximum points.

The Objective Measurement Class

for Rams 6 tooth and over at Sydney in 2013 was won by a Fine/Medium ram from the Merryville Uniform family during his first showing. This ram weighed 113.5kg after shearing a 12.4kg fleece of 18.1 micron wool yielding 75.2% and valued at \$116.66. The ram's total value was \$409.00 and its eye muscle measured 42mm with a fat depth of 4.2mm. This eye muscle measurement was the highest in the class. Merryville's entry in the Ram 2 to 4 tooth class also had the highest eye muscle measurement of 41mm.

Merryville won the Objective Measurement Class at Dubbo in 2013 with a ram cutting 14.6kg wool with a micron of 17.4 and 139kg body weight. The ram scored a perfect score for his fleece which was valued at \$126.44. This follows on from Merryville's Castellon ram which cut 14.8kg at 19.2 micron in 2012.

In 2012 in the performance classes at Sydney Merryville placed 1st and 3rd with two rams. The prize winning ram was a 4 tooth while Merryville's 6 tooth ram came third. Both rams scored top in their class for eye muscle depth.

VALE



Marion Gibbins

In October last year, we saw the passing of Marion Gibbins. Marion has been a great servant to the wool industry having been the Secretary of AWGA in the days of grower unrest and from there being one of the architects of the present day voting system whereby growers have a say in who will represent them.

Marion was one of the few people who could cross the breeding divide between the pure science breeders and the practical stud masters and her endeavours in the wool industry will be sorely missed.

Our thoughts are with Adrian, Ruth, Nick, Tammy, James and family.

Cameron Cox

Also during the year, we saw the sad passing of Cameron who was killed in a tragic accident while fighting a bushfire.

This volunteer work was typical of Cameron who was one of the young quiet achievers of the stud industry. "Cameron's Team" took out the Otway Falkiner Trophy at the recent Sydney Sheep Show and one of those rams was Grand Champion Poll. This was testament to Cameron's stud breeding ability.

He will be sadly missed and our thoughts are with Malcom, Jo, Bec, Hayden and Georgia.



Lady Kate continues to grow

This year saw the launch of the fourth collection from Lady Kate and it was our best year yet! Which is a little surprising because it hasn't been a particularly cold winter.

I think the success is down to two main things: One, the reputation of the brand and the quality of the product is growing. I am meeting lots of customers each year who tell me they still wear the jumper they bought in 2014 and it still looks fantastic so it's great proof that the product stands the test of time.

Secondly, overall I have seen people generally have a greater awareness of wool, Merino in particular, and are seeking it out. I think this awareness has grown in the four years I've been running the business and I put that down to marketing campaigns run by AWI and other fashion brands, as well as a general trend away from "fast fashion" and mass-produced synthetic garments with a short life span.

Where to from here? Onwards and upwards! The next challenge for Lady Kate is to expand sales into the northern hemisphere and there's still the question of whether to launch a menswear range which I debate every year!



MERRYVILLE 2018 SALES

ON-PROPERTY EWE SALE
Friday 9th February 2018
Commencing at 2pm

Also selling at ♦ GSSM
♦ Armidale ♦ Glen Innes
♦ Mudgee ♦ Bendigo
♦ Ballarat ♦ Hamilton

George Merriman

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Wool prices strong as demand surges

• By **SCOTT CARMODY**

From 2010 to today there has been a significant upswing in wool prices, resulting in an annualised increase of returns of 4.3% or a compounded 35% increase in wool values over the past 7 years.

The gains in themselves are significant, but what is more compelling, is the manner the prices have chartered. Levels have consistently and steadily improved season on season and is strongly indicative of demand overtaking supply as the key price influencer.

The hugely variable wool types and descriptions Australia now produces has obviously been a key factor in wool price determination. Unlike the pre RPS closure period which saw Australia basically produce 20 to 24 micron Merino wool, we now find ourselves in the unique situation of “not really” producing a global supply of any 1 particular type. Everything from 14 to 24 can be found in commercial quantity in the Merino sector with extremely varying amounts of VM, staple strength ranging from 15 to 50nkt and length ranges of 55 to 120mm largely as a number of growers have changed to 6 or 8 month shearing patterns.

The current trading conditions and indeed those of the past few seasons, is very much a demand scenario leading the price charge. Several commentators keep calling it “supply driven price rise” but a true analysis reveals this theory as false. Australia is testing over 3% more wool than the same time last year and we have also offered more than 6% more at auction. The truth is our growing supply is being over-run by the surge in demand.

AWEX has recorded a 7.4% increase in first hand wool offered at auction

this past season compared to last, and yet a 18% increase in the EMI price over the same period has been achieved. The AWTA has also tested near 5% more weight of wool, affirmation of the real growth of supply year on year. So, it appears that despite this increased supply, there has been an even larger increase in demand as prices continued to strengthen.

Over the past two years, the AWEX Eastern Market Indicator monthly average has risen approximately 480ac/clean kg from 1059ac/kg in February 2015 to around 1550ac/kg today. Year on year comparisons show that the EMI is currently 18% or higher in Australian dollar terms and 21% higher in USD terms, The USD is important in that it is estimated to be the currency that over 65% of wool is traded on.

Prices at auction continue to rise. At the end of the first selling week in March 2017 the EMI hit a new record level of 1551ac clean/kg. Whilst the price gains up to 1430/1440 record levels in mid January were progressive and hard fought for, the rise from those levels to the current 1540 were swift, and significantly, at the same time when the AUD strengthened against the USD from .74 to nearly .80 today... so our major customer China who uses USD to buy Aussie wool were hit on 2 fronts, the physical market and the FOREX.

However, the EMI does not show the whole picture and when examined at individual micron levels, some of the gains become even more impressive. The past two years, 17, 19 and 21 micron wools have gradually climbed the price chart together, closely mirroring the movement of each. In a move out of trend, the past 4 to 6 months has seen superfine and fine wool prices break away from the broader types. Within this shift up, a

large gap has been created between 17 and 19-micron wool prices as the demand for superfine quality has turned up. The monthly average price of 19-micron wool has lifted 679 ac/kg (56%) over the past two years and currently sits at a monthly average of 1878 ac/kg. The strong demand for these micron types has contributed to the average bale price for 19 micron wool of \$2231 (185kg bale).

In the first half of 2017, strong demand out of China and Italy for wool of 18 micron and finer has seen a confident lift in prices for the woolgrower. A large order for finer micron uniforms out of China helped push the prices up, as garment makers continued to source the fabrics for these uniforms to fill their orders. The monthly average price of 17 micron wool types has lifted 871 ac/kg in 24 months. An increase of 67% for the woolgrower leaves the price for these wools currently sitting at 2158 ac/kg, while the average bale will fetch \$2538 (185kg). For the best spinners types, reports of averages over \$3,000 per bale are now commonplace, with some healthy premiums on contract above these levels available from the leading Italian buyer.

Confidence amongst the local buying trade here in Australia remains at a high.

Exporters, mills and agents overseas are still on the hunt for wool so the short term remains extremely positive. China may get small quantity of 17.0-18.5 micron from New Zealand or South America, but Australia is the only country that can supply quantity. So, in reality, Australia has no substantive competitor in 18.5 and finer microns”. Overall, the sentiment in China, and indeed all wool using nations, for Merino wool remains positive, and let’s hope those attitudes remains in play.

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