

# Pooginook®

the home of the balanced Merino

2008 Drop Ewes at Pooginook

## Time to increase dual purpose Merino ewe numbers

Sheep demand from processors and re-stockers have seen prices climb to record levels in 2010. We have waited a long time to say, "the industry is back for those dedicated breeders". The sheep meat market continues to have a strong outlook which underpins the fluctuating wool market. The meat and wool processors and increasingly the re-stockers are offering sound returns for the Merino sheep.

The decision at Pooginook (PGK) has been to increase sheep numbers. Rotational grazing, strategic feeding of weaners and the additional usage of Stud Park North has enabled the business to mate 5700 ewes to lamb in June 2010. The scanning result has shown a potential marking percentage of more than 110 percent for the ewes joined.

Pooginook continues to build data to submit to Sheep Genetics (SG) and to benchmark Pooginook's unique genetics with the wider industry. Some examples of this include:

- Seven leading sires have been entered in Merino Sire Evaluation Trials during the past three years.
- Final results for PGK Diamond in the Longreach Trial are available on the Pooginook website: [www.pooginook.com](http://www.pooginook.com)
- 1400 Stud ewes have been single mated this year.
- Rams and ewes will be on display at the Bendigo Wool Expo, the South West Slopes Field Day and the Nyngan Expo.
- Three client teams have entered the Peter Westblade Memorial Merino Challenge.

The Pooginook breeding direction continues to focus on breeding a dual purpose plain bodied Merino offering a balance between carcass, fertility and quality wool production. Rams for sale this year will have Australian Sheep Breeding Value (ASBV) data available to assist with ram selection so buyers can achieve their breeding objectives. Information available includes:

- Eye muscle and fat depth scanning has been completed this year on the specially bred ram and ewe weaners.
- Growth rate data has been collected on all weaners
- Wool and fleece weight data collected
- PGK Open Day to workshop ASBV's and visual traits.

Two major concerns of the Merino industry is the perceived lack of fertility and growth rate in current bloodlines. However, there are Merino flocks performing in these areas and the ASBV data indicate Pooginook is one of them. Clients continue to show us that good management combined with good genetics is increasing their profits. The genotype to meet the wool and meat market today is in the Pooginook Merino.

I welcome you to join us at the Pooginook Open Day.

John Sutherland

June 2010 - edition 39

### POOGINOOK DIARY

- Open Day - 21 July
- Top of the Drop Auction - 28 September

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"Thinking and breeding for the future"

[www.pooginook.com](http://www.pooginook.com)

# What's happening at Pooginook

Bruce Farquharson, a Veterinary Consultant with more than 30 years experience in the sheep industry, inspected the Pooginook breeding ewes early in March 2010 before scanning.

*"The ewes are in excellent condition. You can expect a very good pregnancy rate and a high conception rate. If the ewes are maintained in this condition through until lambing you should have good results."*

Scanning results showed maiden ewes averaging 45 percent twins and the mixed age ewes averaging 51 percent twins. The AI ewes had a conception rate of 84 percent (industry average 75 percent) with a twin rate of 48 percent. We expect to mark 114 percent of lambs to ewes joined.

*"The higher percentage of conceived twins in the ewes is the result of good nutrition since weaning in 2009, and compared with last year will give 10 percent more lambs."*

Bruce Farquharson visited Pooginook as lambing commenced and made the following comments.

*"The ewe condition at the start of lambing is ideal. This should result in a higher survival of lambs and higher growth rate of lambs as a result of higher milk production."*

He also went on to say "Lamb losses around the birth period can be minimised by improved management. The survival of lambs from scanning to marking should be at least 90 percent of single lambs survive and 80 percent of twin lambs survive. If these targets are not being attained then there are management strategies that can be employed to minimise the losses."

There are four major causes of lamb loss:

- Dystocia or difficult birth
- Exposure from cold weather
- Starvation from the ewe deserting the lamb
- Predation from foxes

Management strategies to minimise these losses will be discussed by Bruce at the Pooginook open Day on July 21.

50mm of rain fell at Pooginook one week before lambing. The ground temperature is still high and will encourage good pasture growth and should result in a good lambing for 2010.

## Out and About...

**The year started well** for many in Eastern Australia, with widespread summer rains and floods for those in Northern NSW and Southern QLD. Pooginook ram buyers in these areas have welcomed the rains and are looking forward to the benefits of better lambing's and the potential for higher stock prices.

On a recent trip to Northern NSW and Southern Qld, the countryside looked fantastic, with the native perennial grasses near the top of the fences and the livestock in prime condition.



10 month wool Merinos lost in feed at Henry McDonalds St George property in May 2010

Strong demand for sheep from processors and re-stockers alike has brightened the outlook for many Merino producers.

This was illustrated at the 75th Annual Urana Sheep Sale in February 2010 where Merino ewes topped at \$188 scanned in lamb to the re-stocker. Clients reported selling dry ewes to the butcher for up to \$114/head off shears in May 2010.

There is a feeling of renewed optimism among growers and industry. The challenge will be to maximise lambings in 2010 and beyond to capture the benefits of this demand.



Pooginook Rams involved in the re-enactment of Tom Roberts Painting "The Shearing of the Rams"

Pooginook rams from Paraway's property, Steam Plains, were shorn by 72 blade shearers in the recent re-enactment of the Tom Roberts painting "The Shearing of the Rams". This event was held at Tuppal Station near Tocumwal NSW.

## Client Benchmarking



Eric McKenzie with six month old ewe weaners

Pooginook clients **Rob Taylor**, Grenfell NSW, **Eric McKenzie**, Bethungra NSW and **Craig and Bruce Perry**, Serpentine Victoria, entered their Merino wether lambs in the Peter Westblade Memorial Merino Challenge in April 2009.

There are 50 teams of 30 wethers, from all mainland States entered in two categories; 15 wethers from each team of 30 are to be run in a feedlot and slaughtered in August 2010; with the remaining 15 in each team to be evaluated over a period of three years for growth rate, wool cut and quality.

Craig Wilson, who instigated the trial, says "with so many Merino wether lambs being slaughtered before they are 14 months old, it is vital to know the effects that genetics is having on traits such as growth rate and muscle development".

**Craig and Bruce Perry** report that they sold 850 head of 10 month old wether weaner's, in the paddock for \$87.37 after cutting 4kg of wool. They report a 94 percent pregnancy rate in their mixed age ewes.

Pooginook clients **Kym, Peter and Jill Mosey**, 'Twin Creek' Kapunda South Australia, have gone the extra step to increase their wool quality by using in shed fleece testing.

Ian Bradtke has been completing the fleece testing at the Twin Creek general shearing for the past eight years, and Kym says "it is another aid, along with visual classing, and pregnancy testing to increase the overall quality of his flock".

Kym found Pooginook by looking at SG, trial and test results. He says, "the flock has maintained size while improving the quality of the wool. The management tips and service he has received from Pooginook has resulted in a more even and productive flock."



Ian Bradtke with wool testing machine in the Mosey's woolshed.

# and About...



Pat Brown, Matthew Browning, Georgie Sutherland, Richard McFadyen and John Sutherland with winning hogget Ewes.

At East Borambil, Condobolin, where the Pooginook bloodline has been in place for 22 years, the hogget ewes won the prestigious Central West Ewe Competition in March 2010. This competition, finds the top flock from the first two placegetters in the three dominant Central West Ewe Competitions.

The Don Brown Ewe Competition has seen the East Borambil flock finish in the

top three placegetters for the past six years including a win in 2008.

Judge Tom Ashby from North Ashrose SA, commended the flock for outstanding evenness, great constitution and soft well crimped wools.

John Sutherland, the East Borambil Property Manager made the following comments about the flock;

- We used scales to monitor weaners and class the hoggets to achieve target weights.
- Twin bearing ewes are stocked accordingly to allow their lambs to achieve growth rates until weaning that will make them competitive with the singles at classing the following year.
- The target is to maintain ewes in body score three throughout the year.
- The percentage of ewes to lambs joined has averaged 112 percent during the last three years. The main aim is to improve lambing percentage and growth rates in weaners. Predator control at lambing is carried out on the property.
- In September 2009, the top 70 percent of wether lambs were sold to Castricum meats. The average live weight was 38kg and realised a gross price of \$51/head at 16-18 weeks of age. We aim for a high weaner growth rate up to 12 months to improve returns from the meat processor for wether lambs.
- The flock gross margin in 2009 was \$85.75/breeding ewe. Only Pooginook rams were used.

## Technology at Pooginook

### Eye Muscle Depth - EMD

Specially bred ram and ewe weaners were scanned for eye muscle and fat depth in April 2010. An ultra sound measures the depth of the prime cut along the backstrap at the 12/13 ribs site. This reading combined with weaning and 300 day weight enhances the data for carcass traits. This data is submitted to SG along with all other wool data to generate ASBV's for each animal on the key production traits.



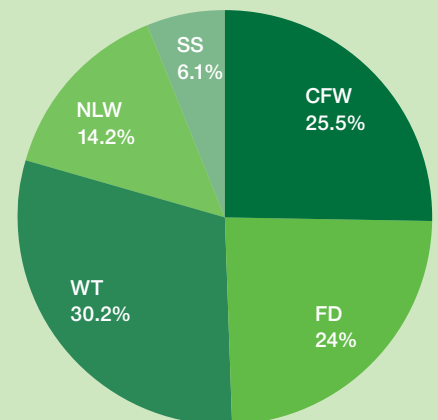
Xavier Maher -Pooginook Overseer and Kate Gill from Advanced Livestock Services scanning a ewe hogget at 300 days in April 2010.

### Australian Sheep Breeding Values – ASBV's

Pooginook has been submitting performance data to SG for many years. This data along with other records from Merino breeders and sire evaluations around the country has been entered in to a national database. ASBV's are another tool that allows stud and commercial breeders to compare the genetic potential of rams and ewes and is used in conjunction with visual selection methods.

Pooginook is using a 7 percent Dual Purpose Index (7 percent DPI) which combines relevant ASBV's into one figure that ranks animals for their suitability to a particular production system. The 7 percent DPI aims to represent a medium wool self-replacing production system with moderate emphasis on fleece weight and fibre diameter plus high emphasis on live weight, number of lambs weaned and maintain performance of other traits.

The pie chart below illustrates the emphasis each trait has in the make up of the 7 percent Dual Purpose Index.



Dual Purpose 7 percent: Moderate decrease in FD. Small increase in CFW. High increase in WT and NLW. Maintain SS

CFW: Clean Fleece Weight  
 FD: Fibre Diameter WT: Weight  
 NLW: Number of lambs weaned  
 SS: Staple Strength

Source: Sheep Genetics

## 175 Stud and Selected Rams for Auction at Pooginook 12.30pm Tuesday 28 September 2010

Catalogue available at [www.pooginook.com](http://www.pooginook.com) from mid September.

■ Balanced Merino ■ ASBV's available ■ Fertility growth quality wool ■ Strong network of Pooginook growers

### Pooginook - Sire Watch

Details of three outstanding sires single mated in 2009

#### PGK - Silver

Primary ID - 81290 (Age 2 yrs)  
 Name - PGK Silver  
 Sire - PGK 031324 Gem  
 Fibre - FD 20.7, SD 2.8, CV 13.6,  
 CF 99.6 (August 09)  
 GFW% - 131  
 BW% - 116  
 7% Dual Purpose Index - 129.5  
 Silver was single joined to 91 special  
 stud ewes and achieved 60% twins.

#### PGK - Ranger

Primary ID - 82065 (Age 2 yrs)  
 Name - PGK Ranger  
 Sire - PGK 030582 Diamond  
 Fibre - FD 19.5, SD 3.4, CV 17.4,  
 CF 99.4 (August 09)  
 GFW% - 100  
 BW% - 121  
 7% Dual Purpose Index - 124.7  
 Ranger was single joined to 117 special  
 stud ewes and achieved 57% twins.

#### PGK - Elaroo

Primary ID - 82222 (Age 2 yrs)  
 Name - PGK Elaroo  
 Sire - PGK 050018 Balance  
 Fibre - FD 19.7, SD 2.6, CV 13.2,  
 CF 99.7 (August 09)  
 GFW% - 126  
 BW% - 98  
 7% Dual Purpose Index - 136.9  
 Elaroo was single joined to 90 special  
 stud ewes and achieved 62% twins.

## Pooginook Open Day

**Pooginook Woolshed  
 Wednesday 21 July  
 9.30am - 3pm**

### Guest Speakers:

- **Stuart McCulloch, CEO AWI  
 Future Direction**
- **Dr Bruce Farquharson,  
 Animal Nutritionist  
 Profit from Merinos**
  - **Workshop  
 ASBV for ram buyers**
- **Pooginook management  
 and breeding direction**
- **Rams and Ewes on display**

We look forward to seeing you,  
 Jock Campbell

## 2010 Flock Rams Available

Pooginook will again have a well grown selection of rams available for private sale from mid September onwards. Up to 1000 rams will be available from Pooginook in grades from \$500 up to \$1000. Further inquiries are welcome. Contact the Sales Manager, Pat Brown for an appointment on 02 6954 4676.



Pooginook Ram Sale 2009

## 2010 Calendar of Events

Pooginook is hosting an important industry **Open Day** on 21 July 2010.

Pooginook is out and about with stock on display.

- 19 June - Hay Sheep Show
- 16-18 July - Bendigo Sheep Show
- **21 July - Open Day at Pooginook**
- 7 August - Nyngan Expo
- 20 August - Riverina Field Day at Deniliquin
- 2 September - Guest exhibitor South West Slopes Field Day
- **28 September - Pooginook Ram Sale - Top of the Drop**

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