

# Cashmore Oaklea - Spring Newsletter 2011



## State Visits.

Don and John recently undertook a number of visits to NSW, SA and Tasmania clients properties. These are very important to the breeding program as they give us a better understanding of what you require from our rams and your particular stage of development and use of self replacing sheep.

We also ran short presentations outlining the breeding programs and offered some management advice on how to get the best from these high performing animals. We hope that you enjoyed them and have been able to take

A brisk -2°C morning at "Ratho", Bothwell, TAS. The oldest golf course outside Scotland.

away and implement some small changes that will increase your bottom line. If you hosted us or assisted in any way thank you. We look forward to being in touch in coming months.

## 2011 Ram Sales

- Premium 350 for Hamilton Sale
- Private Sales on property post sale
- Ram lambs available, 10th Feb. 2012

The 2010 drop rams have been through a full measurement program with the best reserved for our Annual Ram Sale in Hamilton. Those stock at Oaklea have benefited from the good season while Cashmore experienced an extended wet period with 'serious' levels of mud and stress on stock.

The Hamilton Sale rams have been catalogued according to index in the elites and then grouped for traits in the pens of 5.

Middle run rams will be offered from Cashmore and Oaklea post annual sale.

Middle run ram lambs will be available Feb 2012 after final measurements are taken.

Please contact us re delivery as we often have transports available.



1 year old self replacing ewes

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## Cashmore Oaklea

Self Replacing Performance Maternals

Offering 400 Coopworth, Performance Maternal & Terminal Rams

RAM SALE - Friday 21st October, 2011

Hamilton Showgrounds, 12 noon

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



- # 100 specially selected elite Rams
  - # 250 selected Coopworth & Performance Maternal Rams
  - # 50 Poll Dorset & 10 Cashmore Nudie Rams
- Come and Talk to Don & John at the

## Cashmore Park Open Day

View sale rams, stud ewes and lambs.

Thursday 6th October, lunch provided

114 Wilmots Rd Cashmore VIC 3305



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Greetings from South West Victoria and South East South Australia. With a wet summer and a muddy winter behind us we are looking forward to a great spring! This past year our Self Replacing system has delivered great economic and production benefits. We trust you will find the following articles informative and educational on how to manage these sheep.

Regards the Cashmore Oaklea Team

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## Lambing Ewe Lambs

For many years now we have been lambing ewe lambs down at the age of 13 months.

The 2010 mid July to mid August drop ewe lambs at Oaklea were mated for 5 weeks from 28th March to 30th April. 90% of these young ewes are in lamb and they will be lambing at 143%.

The two most influencing factors are the sire the ewe is by and the pre and post mating weight of the ewe. This year's sire effect gave us a range of 123% to 161% for individual sires, this would be a reflection of both the fertility and sexual maturity age of the sire.

The pre mating weights and their effect were as follows: 49kg = 152%, 44kg = 149%, 41kg = 145% and 35kg = 123%. These ewes gained about 4kg during mating.

As can be seen from these figures it is well worth mating ewes at 35kg or better but it is vitally important that they are gaining weight during mating. You will get poor results with heavier ewes if they are losing weight during mating. It is important to put out enough rams as these young ewes will often only be in season for 2 to 3 hours. In selecting the rams you should avoid heavy shoulders and avoid heavy birth weight breed types.

We wean the lambs at 8 to 13 weeks old off these ewes at the end of November, this gives the ewes two and a half months to recover for their next mating. It is important to make sure that these ewes go onto good feed at weaning. Our ewe lambs that reared twins last year have given birth to 178% lambs this year.

We always pregnancy test our ewes and run the ewes that are having singles a bit harder in the last few weeks of pregnancy to ensure that the lambs are not too big at lambing. You can also not disturb the ewes that are having twins as much and they can be lambing down in more favourable paddocks and smaller mob sizes.

Remember to look after these young ewes that lamb because they are one of the most valuable assets on your farm.



12 month old twins. Very profitable ewes.



All ready to go tagging John and Tatjana with 4 X 4 bikes fitted with Pods and Electronic lambing books installed inside.



## Lambing Data Records.

Collection of raw data records for lambs starts from the time we use the computer mating program TGRM to assign which rams are mated to which ewes. Once parentage is established the next information collected is that which happens at birth. Due to the size of the Cashmore Oaklea program and the need for accurate records we have increasingly used new technology with seamless traceability of animals through the various stages now a real possibility with EID tags.

In the past 3 years we have been using a Palm Pilot running a software program that records all the lamb birth data. This has reduced time with lambing books and associated problems with wet paper as lambing can be a difficult and damp affair. This year at Cashmore, due to the wet winter it was impossible to get around in a ute, so 4X4 bikes had Pods fitted. Inside the cabin a shelf was attached and the Palm Pilot and phone attached to the fitted lighter connection to supply power. This enabled up to 180 lambs per day to be tagged in harsh conditions and will allow us to tag in excess of 3000 Maternals, 600 Nudies and 500 terminals. Data can then be exported into the Lamplan database quickly and accurately. This technology is not widely used in industry yet but has been great benefit to us.

## Data Quality And Integrity

At Cashmore Oaklea we take a lot of pride in the genetic information that we supply to our clients. Every endeavour is taken to ensure that the information we supply is correct and has the highest level of accuracy possible. We do not fudge the figures and do not produce graphs that have no relevance to the truth.

Because we have nothing to hide, all genetic information and accuracies on all sheep that we produce is available on the LAMBPLAN website. It is important when purchasing animals that you know the information supplied is true and at what level of accuracy. If you need to know how to access this information feel free to contact John, Don or the staff at Sheep Genetics

We now have over 55,000 animals on the LAMBPLAN data base and this year we will tag and fully performance record around 4,000 lambs.

These lambs will have full pedigree, birth weight, birth and rearing type, weaning weight, early post weaning weight, post weaning weight, yearling weight, fat and muscle depth, wool weight, scrotal circumference and individual worm egg counts recorded. All dry ewes and dead lambs are also recorded thus giving us higher accuracies for number of lambs born and reared. We also record adult ewe weights and pregnancy test results on all ewes including several thousands of those that have been classed out of the stud into the flock.

We run our stud sheep in large management groups with up to a 1,000 lambs in a group and this assists us greatly in getting accurate data. Our sheep are also run under very strict commercial conditions and we put our young rams under a lot of pressure to get their worm egg counts up. This results in the client being assured that the rams we produce to sell are firstly alive and then going to preform as their ASBVs indicate.

## QELPA , Quality Ewe and Lamb Producers Australia

The recently formed QELPA group is looking to add value for members by increasing the flow of information across various sections in the lamb supply chain.

A recent activity has been the tracing of carcasses through abattoirs using electronic tags and measurement and calculation of lean meat yields from self replacing maternal wether lambs. Members now have hard data showing that yields are considerably above industry average and very acceptable to domestic and export market specifications.

The QELPA group also ran a very successful ewe sale at Hamilton on 27th June 2011. Six members began preparing ewes by collecting data such as age, weight, sires mated to, mating dates, pregnancy scan rate and general health details. The aim was to provide better documentation and support to customers so that they could confidently purchase and then successfully manage ewes with large numbers of lambs scanned in utero.

A suitable venue was selected to aid presentation with 3400 ewes yarded with a spit lamb well received for lunch.

A large crowd attended with ewes sold to 3 states and feedback indicating very successful lambings.

For further enquiries please contact Andy Sutherland on Mobile 0408 528 684.



## What is Genomics?

At present all the raw data seedstock breeders collect is placed in a database and then used to calculate the breeding values we use to target animals to differing market driven outcomes. The limitation with this approach is that some traits are costly and difficult to measure such as worm resistance and others such as fertility need a large amount of records spread over long time periods and can only be collected from adult animals.

If we could collect DNA at an early stage in a lambs life and use younger animals in the seedstock breeding programs we can increase rates of genetic gain and hence commercial productivity.

To do this we need to know which genes or combinations create changes in traits.

The CRC Information nucleus flock has been set up with a wide range of genes from the Australian Sheep industry as a reference point for Genomic research. Measurements for numerous traits have been taken and in simplistic terms we are now able to overlay the DNA profile upon these actual trait changes. A few years back we were looking for a small number of genes that had major effects however this has not proven successful. For example we now know that growth is influenced by 100's of genes, not a small few.

Also that the recombining of genes across generations causes drift and that new animals need to be added to the reference population each year and the oldest data dropped out.

At this stage eating quality, carcass, wool and parasite traits will be improved by use of this technology. The values created will be called RBVs, Research Breeding Values and will be added to our EBVs to increase accuracy and enhance genetic gain.

## Pregnancy Scans.

After big summer rains many XB ewes in southern Australia built up condition score and had the opportunity to present high pregnancy scan rates. The ewes at Cashmore and Oaklea were no exception with a great scan occurring before day 90 during pregnancy. People sometimes ask what are expected lambing percentages from our ewes and I guess this year you could answer that we are at the "upper end of genetic potential".

2011 PREGNANCY SCANS		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Oaklea Maternal	# in mob			15	40	260	310	352	500	578
	Scan %			214%	221%	199%	203%	193%	174%	121%
Cashmore Maternal	# in mob	2	1	11	50	63	215	256	430	603
	Scan %	200%	200%	164%	214%	219%	203%	196%	182%	110%
Cashmore Terminal	# in mob	2	7	14	25	22	70	90	130	180
	Scan %	150%	183%	171%	184%	200%	199%	197%	153%	83%
Cashmore Nudie	# in mob		1	11	12	20	47	95	110	140
	Scan %		200%	191%	183%	205%	196%	180%	154%	105%

We collected condition scores and related them to pregnancy scan rates recently and discovered that our sheep are very responsive. If we assume our ewes to be 70 kg at condition score 3 each condition score equates to 8 kg. This extra weight translates to 40% at preg scanning. Taking this further if we can get 75 % of embryos to marking this is 32% more lambs at marking.

Also of interest is the break down of how many lambs fall in each birth rank. I analysed 7000 2 to 7 year old ewes and the break down is as follows.

Empty	Single	Twin	Triplet
3%	18%	64%	15%



Drafting 3 ways off preg scan trailer

The very accurate John Connell, preg scanning 2011



The interesting point is that the percentage of twins stays constant at about 65% with increased lambs coming from the reduction of singles and the increase in triplet births. If you ask around you will rarely find flocks twinning above 70%.