Cashmore Oaklea
Spring 2012 Newsletter

12 Month Old Seedstock Ewes

Robust Stock

It's a great thing that the earth rotates through an elliptical orbit and has started to track a bit closer to the sun with spring finally arriving. Being further south than many Australians, winters can be a little long and our stock start to feel it. The Oaklea sheep are jammed up against the SA coast and contend with wind and salt laden sleet during lambing and the Cashmore sheep trudge through mud and forage for a bit of hunger. One benefit this has brought in the past 30 years of intensive recording is producing stock that are hardy, bounce back and are inherently robust after tough times. This is a positive comment that is increasingly arising in conversation with clients as Cashmore Oaklea sheep expand through self replacing systems. If the predictions of climatic variability are correct, sheep of the future will need these characteristics.

Maternal Across Breed - Transparency Achieved.

The 15 th of June 2012 was a watershed day for the lamb industry as it heralded the start of across breed maternal ASBVs provided by Lambplan. From this date onwards a direct comparison can be made between Border Leicester, Coopworth, East Friesian and Composite Maternals. The Border Leicester data has been used as the base due to its size and stability and animals are ranked either up or down from this level.

For Cashmore Oaklea, as producers of maternal sheep DNA, and not breeds, this is the moment that Don and I have worked long and hard for which commenced in the late nineties when the Maternal Central Progeny Test research was initiated. Following from this came maternal Lambplan runs and gradually genetic linkage across the maternal breeds grew. The importations of new DNA from the Northern Hemisphere via NZ opened breeder's attitudes to testing animals outside their chosen breeds and then incorporating those benefits. This linkage is the foundation to the across breed analysis.

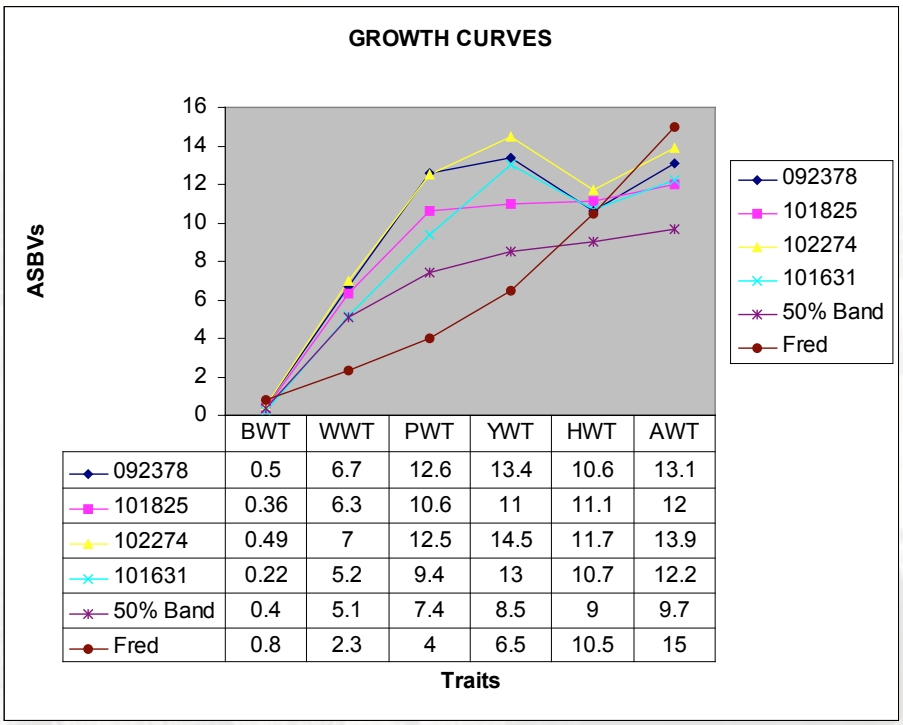
So this ram selling season purchasers and ourselves need not second guess where the best maternal animals from any breed are anymore. We can simply search the Lambplan web page and rank the animal to the percentile band and let the new transparency show through across all maternal breeds.

Adult Weights and Curve Benders

For some time now all maternal sheep breeds in Australia have been increasing the growth rate of their animals. This is seen as a positive change in ASBVs provided by Lambplan for all the different times measured along a lambs growth path from birth up until adult weight. Examples of this are that Coopworth animals have increased 6.8 kg at 225 days of age, being post weaning weight while Cashmore Oaklea animals have increased 8.2 kg.

A sheep's growth is set at the time of fertilisation when the DNA of a ram and ewe is combined to form the embryo that grows into a fetus. So genes for growth are expressing themselves at the time of birth. At two years of age our sheep have had weights taken representing key stages in the production cycle of slaughter lambs and preparation of females to enter the breeding flock which provide a growth path for each animal. Below is a graphical representation of four top Cashmore Oaklea maternal sires all showing well above average early growth and a tendency to have lower adult weights. The 50 percentile band for 2011 drop animals in the maternal data set shows the present growth curve of maternal sheep and a fictitious animal Fred, which has a curve you don't want, a high birth start, slow early growth and ends up with a large mature size.

One of the costs in any animal breeding enterprise is the amount of maintenance energy required to sustain breeding female throughout the year, with larger female requiring more energy. So rather than just increasing growth rate with correlated increases in adult weight we are looking at animals exhibiting fast growth early, preferably in the first 100 to 200 days and then maturing out to moderate weights of 65 kg for adult ewes. This has been talked about for some time but due to previous selection indexes and a lack of data collected by many breeders no real changes occurred. Maternal sheep are just starting to exhibit the growth curves on this graph so if you believe your sheep are to large use growth pathways and also the adult weight ASBV to drive changes. We have had many conversations with clients about adult weights however few seem to act when ram selection time comes. The adult weight ASBVs at Cashmore Oaklea are backed up by 10 years of historical records, more than any other flock so use them to you advantage.



	BWT	WWT	PWT	YWT	HWT	AWT
092378	0.5	6.7	12.6	13.4	10.6	13.1
101825	0.36	6.3	10.6	11	11.1	12
102274	0.49	7	12.5	14.5	11.7	13.9
101631	0.22	5.2	9.4	13	10.7	12.2
50% Band	0.4	5.1	7.4	8.5	9	9.7
Fred	0.8	2.3	4	6.5	10.5	15


A leading curve Bender Sire 102274

Why Faster Growth Rates

Industry research indicates that in the Hamilton area only 45 % of pasture grown is consumed by prime lamb businesses with 70 % utilisation the upper level to aim for, after which pasture degradation and composition changes occur. Clearly there is much room to consume some of the already paid for pasture produced and convert it into red meat.

Higher grow rate animals offer a number of benefits

1 Faster and more efficient turn off of lambs
2 Option to lamb later and still market same carcass weight
3 Increased lambing % due to higher ovulation rates as day length decreases
4 Increased stocking rates as peak energy demand is closer to spring feed flush

In the past 10 years Australia has increased the average carcass kill weight of lambs from 17.5 to 21.5 kgs with a component of this being faster growth genes in our sheep and lambs. The point here is if processors stop increasing target kill weights and our sheep continue to grow faster we then have the opportunity to apply the above advantages to our grass based systems and increase the utilisation of pastures and take all the added advantages of fast growth rate sheep.

Maternal Seedstock ewes

Breeding stock

We have been receiving a number of enquires for breeding females and at this stage will be offering ewes and ewe lambs in an Auctions plus format in early December 2012. These will be surplus to our own requirements with July August drop ewe lambs in the 35 to 40 kg live weight range and some medium age ewes with lambs recently weaned from them.

Cashmore Park offered 2000 ewe lambs in the June 2012 QELPA sale and combined with clients Cashmore Oaklea has offered 10,000 young breeding ewes to industry in the past 3 years.

Sale Ram Percentile bands

This year we have an amazing run of rams to offer industry with all 450 Maternal and Coopworth rams catalogued in the top 10% ranked on Maternal Index from the Across Breed maternal analysis. Also in the top 10 % band are 266 for NLW, 245 for PWT, 110 PWEC and 125 born from one year old ewes.
These rams have been analysed within all the Composite, Border Leicester, East Friesian and Coopworth rams performance recorded in Australia and also New Zealand Coopworths.
Specially selected from over 2,300 rams that were born at Cashmore Oaklea in 2011 they have been run under strict commercial conditions to allow robustness to show through.
Our 2011 drop stud lambs were sired by over 50 different sires and their dams were by over 160 different sires. This gives our flock great genetic diversity and enables us to make tremendous genetic gain for a myriad of different traits.
We are very proud to offer such high quality animals and past experience makes us sure they will perform well for you.

Pwwt 245 Rams

NLW 266 Rams

Percentile Report
Analysis MATERNAL Dated 15-Sep-12
Animals born in 2011

	Bwt	Wwt	Mwwt	Pwwt	Pfat	Pemd	Ywt	Pfec	Ygfw	NLW	PSC	Maternal$
Band	kg	kg	kg	kg	mm	mm	kg	%	%	%	cm	
0	-0.7	11.8	3	17.4	3.2	4.7	20	-80	50	26	6.9	141.6
1	-0.2	9.1	1.5	13.2	1.1	2.3	14.5	-62	37	18	4.4	132
2	-0.1	8.7	1.3	12.6	0.8	1.9	13.8	-57	35	16	4.1	129.9
3	0	8.4	1.2	12.2	0.7	1.7	13.5	-55	34	14	4	128.7
4	0	8.3	1.1	11.9	0.6	1.6	13.2	-52	33	13	3.8	127.7
5	0	8.1	1.1	11.7	0.5	1.5	12.9	-50	32	13	3.7	126.9
10	0.1	7.6	0.9	10.8	0.2	1.1	12.1	-43	30	10	3.4	124.1
15	0.2	7.2	0.7	10.2	0.1	0.9	11.5	-37	28	9	3.1	122.2
20	0.2	6.9	0.6	9.7	0	0.7	11	-33	27	8	2.9	120.7
25	0.3	6.6	0.4	9.3	-0.1	0.6	10.6	-28	25	7	2.8	119.5
30	0.3	6.3	0.3	8.9	-0.2	0.5	10.2	-25	24	6	2.6	118.4
35	0.3	6	0.2	8.5	-0.3	0.4	9.8	-21	22	6	2.5	117.4
40	0.4	5.7	0.2	8.2	-0.4	0.3	9.4	-18	21	5	2.4	116.5
45	0.4	5.4	0.1	7.8	-0.4	0.2	9	-14	19	4	2.2	115.6
50	0.4	5.1	0	7.4	-0.5	0.1	8.6	-11	16	4	2.1	114.7
55	0.4	4.9	-0.1	7.1	-0.6	0	8.2	-8	14	3	2	113.9
60	0.4	4.6	-0.2	6.7	-0.6	-0.1	7.8	-4	11	2	1.8	113
65	0.5	4.3	-0.3	6.3	-0.7	-0.2	7.3	-1	9	2	1.7	112
70	0.5	3.9	-0.5	5.8	-0.8	-0.3	6.8	3	7	1	1.6	111
75	0.5	3.6	-0.6	5.4	-0.9	-0.4	6.3	7	5	0	1.4	110.4
80	0.5	3.2	-0.7	4.8	-1	-0.5	5.6	12	3	-1	1.2	109.2
85	0.6	2.6	-0.9	4	-1.1	-0.6	4.8	19	1	-1	1	107.8
90	0.6	2	-1.1	3.1	-1.2	-0.8	3.8	29	-2	-3	0.8	105.8
95	0.7	1	-1.4	1.7	-1.4	-1.1	2.2	49	-6	-4	0.4	102.5
96	0.7	0.7	-1.5	1.3	-1.5	-1.2	1.8	56	-7	-5	0.3	101.4
97	0.7	0.3	-1.6	0.8	-1.6	-1.2	1.3	64	-9	-5	0.2	100
98	0.7	-0.1	-1.8	0.1	-1.7	-1.4	0.5	72	-11	-6	0	97.4
99	0.8	-1	-2.1	-1.4	-1.8	-1.6	-0.8	89	-14	-7	-0.3	92.4
100	1.1	-5.5	-3.7	-7.5	-3.3	-3.4	-8.3	226	-53	-17	-2.4	78.9

Pfec 110 Rams

Index 450 Rams

Lamb Ex

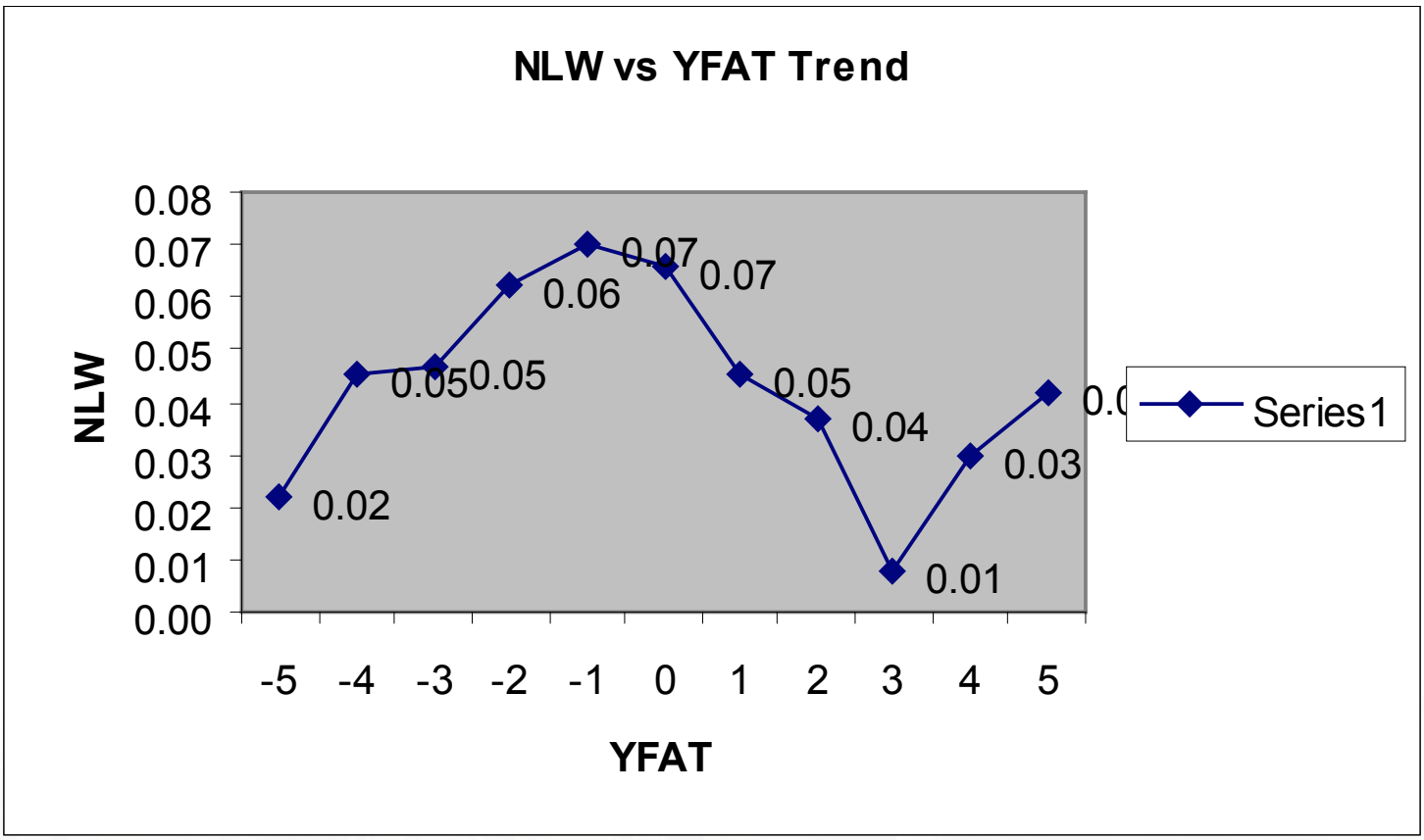
June the 27th saw the Australian lamb industry come together at Bendigo with 600 delegates from all states gathering to hear a great range of speakers involved in all segments of the lamb industry. Presentations from International interests, Government, Marketing, Research involving breeding and management and a large processor presence set the scene for great information sharing. Complimented with 50 trade exhibitions and a gala dinner excellent networking occurred. Cashmore Oaklea was involved in the content of the 2 days, manned a trade stand and John presented on 'Engineering the sheep of the future". A video of this and other speaker's presentations can be found at www.lambex.com.au.

Jamie Moves

A recent change in our business has been that Jamie Ramage has moved and taken up a new position with a cattle and sheep seedstock business in his local area and to further his agricultural interests. We would like to thank him for his commitment and passion shown to Cashmore Oaklea and the lamb industry during his time with us and wish him all the best for the future.

Maternal Fat Potential.

Recent research into Merino ewes has indicated that those that carry extra fat reserves are better able to withstand periods of low nutrition with reduced weight loss and increased survival of their lambs. It appears that the advantages may only come into affect during poor seasons with results variable across years.
A look at 44,000 Merino ewe records showed a positive correlation between YFAT and Number of lambs Born of 18 lambs /100 ewes for each increase in YFAT of 1mm. I have graphed below 8500 Cashmore Oaklea ewe records which seem to indicate no advantage to NLW with increasing fat levels at yearling stage. This graph is far from being conclusive and is presented to open debate about this subject. The knowledge base of ewe fat levels, condition score, pregnancy scan rates, lamb birth weight, lamb survival and optimum ewe live weights is a fascinating study and will receive much attention by researchers in coming years. The paper presented by Andrew Thompson at the LambEX conference is a must read with excellent data about this field.



Observed Change

We can look at ASBV's and see the numbers on the paper have changed, more growth and more lambs etc, but what are we seeing in our flocks at a farm level? Ten years ago one of the efficiency aims was to get a 65 kg ewe to produce 100 kg of lamb weaned, ie a set of twins at 50 kg at weaning. Don and I are starting to see that happen but it is perhaps best seen in the capacity of ewes to raise lambs at the extreme end, the triplet section. Although we are not aiming to produce triplets we are now getting the best ewes able to rear them and wean 129 kg of lamb, that's right three lambs at 43 kg. In the past our ewes didn't have the DNA to do this, but do now. Also our ewe lambs fertility has lifted with Don scanning 164 % from ewe lambs born to mature ewes in the first heat cycle. These are just two examples with changes observed in many other traits as well. Livestock systems of any species around the world generally have DNA developed about 10 years in front of the management systems required to optimally run the stock. Lets all keep learning how to manage our animals for optimum results!

Self replacing Concept

The self replacing maternal concept continues to grow throughout Australia with many new flocks starting. We find a new outlook is developed when lamb producers take the step and responsibility of thinking about what characteristics they need in their sheep flock and under what management system they will be run.
A few points they seem to consider are

Simple system
Bio security safety benefits
A ewe management focus rather than just a lamb sale value mentality
A long term compounding genetic improvement outlook
Known stock on hand for farm expansion via purchase or lease
Fast capacity to restock post drought or fire destock
Opportunity to value add to many females
Cost effective strategy to replace
Cast for age
Deaths
Pregnancy scan drys
Wet/Drys
Lacking Robustness

We believe that all the above benefits far out weigh a little perceived extra weight from using Terminal rams and find that no clients have returned to purchasing ewes in.
All the large first cross flocks have become self replacing.
Actions are speaking louder than words as enterprises are moving to the money position.

Old Twinning Ewes

RAM SALE
19th October
12 noon
Hamilton Showgrounds
Ram Pavilion
TOP 10% SALE

450	TOP 10%
266	TOP 10% NLW
245	TOP 10% PWWT
110	TOP 10% WORM RESISTANCE
125	FROM 1 YEAR OLD EWES

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EBV =>$$$

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