

CASHMORE OAKLEA WINTER 2025 NEWSLETTER

2025 Edition

CASHMORE OAKLEA



Welcome to the 2025 winter edition of the Cashmore Oaklea newsletter.

As we move deeper into winter, many across the southern parts of Australia have been facing some very difficult conditions. Rainfall has been well below average and for some, the challenge has been immense. The pressure we experience as farmers no doubt influences the industry as a whole and in turn our local communities. Recent rains over large parts of SA and Vic have given many a slight reprieve and the market outlook for prime lambs is looking very strong. However, the pressure valve has not quite been released. It is very important that we continue to get behind each other and support all the cogs that go into making this industry so great; the shearers, suppliers, stock agents, agronomists and all contractors working to support farmers.

Thankyou for supporting Cashmore Oaklea and best of luck for the remainder of the season.

The Cashmore Oaklea Team

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Sheep GENETICS



Congratulations to

CASHMORE OAKLEA

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ENDING

2024

WITH



STAR

DATA QUALITY

Sheep Genetics would like to congratulate and thank you for your hard work and dedication to collecting and submitting high quality data.



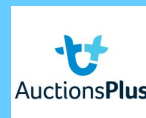
Analysis: 7th of December MERINOSELECT & 15th of December LAMBPLAN 2024

Cashmore Oaklea maintained a 5 star data quality rating from Sheep Genetics in 2024—a timely reward for the effort put in to the collection and submission of high quality data. With Cashmore Oaklea scoring 99% for data quality, this is the highest in Australia for any sheep stud.

2025 Sale Dates

- **Ram Sale**
Friday 3rd October 2025
- **Ewe Sale 1**
Thursday 6th November 2025
- **Ewe Sale 2**
Thursday 4th December 2025

All sales are exclusively via Auctions Plus



Index & ASBVs



'One of the challenges with developing an index is knowing what the correlations between the various traits are.

Most traits have an optimum ASBV that you should be aiming for, if you push it too hard one way or the other, you could have dire consequences on other traits.'

Sheep Genetics is in the process of amalgamating the maternal and terminal databases. There is a lot of work involved in doing this, and they should have it done by mid-2026. They will then revamp the maternal index, and hopefully the new one will reflect how we can gain the maximum financial return with the least input on the sheep we farm. One of the challenges with developing an index is knowing what the correlations between the various traits are. Most traits have an optimum ASBV that you should be aiming for, if you push it too hard one way or the other, you could have dire consequences on other traits.

Fertility traits

Weaning rate (WR) and litter size (LS) are the main drivers for the number of lambs reared. Mature ewes scanning at 190% is the optimum if you are getting 20% singles, 70% twins, and 10% triplets. If you try and push this any higher you end up with less singles and more triplets resulting in higher ewe mortality and lower lamb survival. One of the things Sheep Genetics has never taken into account is the effect of seasonality on fertility traits. An example of this is our 2020 drop ewes lambing in the 1st week of June scanned 190%, they have a WR ASBV of .19 a LS ASBV of .20, (1% empty, 19% single, 68% twin and 12% triplet), their sisters lambing 3 weeks latter scanned 198%. The 2021 drop ewes scanned 186% and 205%, the 2022 drop ewes scanned 159% and 170% respectively. There would be some rams that have high fertility ASBVs that have only ever been tested in spring lambing flocks and may fall back rapidly if compared in Autumn early winter lambing flocks. If you are lambing in autumn early winter it is probably important to know when the stud that you purchase rams from lambs.

Growth traits

Weaning weight (WWT), Post weaning weight (PWWT) and Adult weight (AWT) are the main growth traits. The faster and heavier your lambs grow the greater your returns are. The current Index puts a lot of emphasis on reducing adult weight and as a consequence of this there are flocks who's lambs grow well to 20kg dressed but their growth rate then slows down and they just put on fat. More and more we are seeing the industry paying a premium for heavy weight lambs of the right fat score. We have had a record deficiency in rainfall in the last 18 months and our ewes have endured these conditions remarkably well with no supplementary feeding.

Fat traits

When Lambplan first started, they were trying to reduce fat and it went too far. There is now a push by some people to increase fat in the belief that it will increase lamb survival, this is probably true with Merino's but I think would have little effect on our type of sheep. I am quite happy that 95% of our lambs dress out at fat score 3 and 4 for at 25kg dressed weight.

Intra muscular fat (IMF)

IMF is going to be an important trait in the future but until we know what its effect on other traits is we should tread carefully. In the beef industry the Angus versus Wagyu is a classic example of cost of production versus premium price received. It is a hard trait to measure as it can only be done on a carcass at this stage. One ram we have used has an ASBV of .28 which puts him in the top 3% in the terminal database but in the maternal database he is -.05 which puts him in the bottom 40%, so as you can see we have a long way to go with this trait.



Head on over to the [Sheep Genetics](https://www.sheepgenetics.com.au) website to for further resources.

1st draft of wether lambs from Oaklea processed in November 2024

Below are the statistics on our 1st draft of lambs that we had processed at Thomas Foods Stawell

They weighed 50.4kg on the 4th of Nov with no curfew which gave us a 48.6% yield, they were yarded and weaned on the 9th of November and processed on the 11th.

The lambs were approximately 135 days old, we got an 85% lift, they were reared at 145% and their mothers were run at 7.3 ewes per hectare with no supplementary feeding in one of the worst seasons ever up until the spring.

They were all Cashmore Oaklea Maternals, and they returned \$201.28 including a \$5 skin.

Dressed Weight	% of Lambs	Av Wt	Av fat mm	Fat score	Av LMY	Av IMF
30>	4	31.3	20.3	4.1	59.4	4.1
27.5 - 29.9	10	28.5	19.5	3.9	60.7	4.0
25 - 27.9	24	26.0	18.3	3.7	61.9	3.8
22.5 - 24.9	40	23.7	16.3	3.3	63.3	3.7
20 - 22.4	21	21.6	14.9	3.0	64.6	3.7
<20	1	19.3	14.0	2.8	65.2	3.4
Overall	100	24.5	17.0	3.4	62.9	3.8

Fat mm	% of Lambs	Av Wt	Av fat mm	Fat score	Av LMY	Av IMF
25	1	29.2	25	5	58.7	4.3
20	42	26.1	20	4	61.0	3.9
15	53	23.4	15	3	64.1	3.7
10	4	22.3	10	2	66.1	3.7

LYM	% of Lambs	Av Wt	Av fat mm	Fat score	Av LMY	Av IMF
65 - 73.6	28	23.2	15.3	3.1	66.9	3.6
62 - 64.9	34	24.2	16.5	3.3	63.5	3.7
59 - 61.9	22	25.9	18.4	3.7	60.7	3.8
56 - 58.9	16	25.7	18.5	3.7	57.4	4.3

IMF	% of Lambs	Av Wt	Av fat mm	Fat score	Av LMY	Av IMF
5 - 6.1	8	25.2	17.2	3.4	61.8	5.4
4 - 4.9	32	24.8	17.3	3.5	62.6	4.4
3 - 3.9	45	24.6	17.1	3.4	63.4	3.5
2 - 2.9	15	24.1	16.3	3.3	63.9	2.7



What's happening on the farm at Oaklea

The 2024 season brought on some real challenges and learnings for us, in particular the management of our younger ewes. They were put under the most pressure following on from their maiden season and in hindsight needed some extra care leading in to lambing. Having said that, the entire flock proved to be extremely resilient. Our commercial flock managed to rear lambs at 145% and 85% of the whether lambs were sold straight off mum at 135 days to dress at 24.6kg.

In February we purchased an extra 274 acres adjacent to our Pasfields block in Kongorong. This farm has a 21-ha pivot and is split into 11 paddocks with very good tree lines throughout. We will look to lamb the stud ewes down on the new farm and are expecting some improvements in the lambing conditions and an additional weight gain for the lambs. With the paddocks freed up at the home farm we have taken on an extra 240 trade heifers which we will look to move on at the end of the year.

Following on from last season's tight conditions, we were fortunate enough to receive decent rain from late July through to late October. This reset the paddocks well and we came into the new year with the livestock looking a lot fitter and healthier. The commercial flock's average weight at joining (2nd of Jan) was 74.95kg. These ewes turned themselves round exceptionally, given the fact that they weighed 66kg at scanning the previous year. They dropped an average of 3.2kg during joining and scanned at 181%. 2.6% were dry, 9% were triplets, 22.4% were singles and 66% were twins.

Having split the data into age groups it was quite evident of the pressure the last 18 months has been on our 2022 drops. On the back of their maiden year these ewes were really put through the ringer last season, and it showed up in their 2 yr old performance. Now into their third joining, they had a 159% scanning rate which directly relates to their condition which was 10 kg lighter than the 21 and 20 drop ewes; both groups scanned at 188%. See below for a break down of weights and scan results between the 3 main age groups within the flock.

Overall, we were pleasantly surprised with the scan results. Given that they are lambing in June, with no supplementary feeding (apart from flint rock!) and being run at 7.5 head/ha.

Roughly 800 stud ewes were single sire mated for 6 weeks from the 27th Jan and scanned at 181%. At joining they weighed an average of 65kg and at 68.5 at scanning. All sheep older than 2 yr old were condition scored and averaged 3.4 at joining and 3.2 at scanning. We have moved these animals to our new block to lamb there this season.

DROP	No Ewes	Preg Scan	%	Mate WT	Scan WT	GAIN
20,21,22	137	3	9%	82.7	80.3	-2.4
20,21,22	984	2	65%	77.1	74.5	-2.6
20,21,22	347	1	23%	73.4	69.4	-4.0
20,21,22	37	0	2.4%	68.5	63.6	-4.9
20,21,22	1505	1.81		76.6	73.6	-3.0
2020	587	1.90		80.9	77.2	-3.7
2021	547	1.86		77.0	75.1	-1.8
2022	371	1.59		69.1	65.6	-3.5

We joined 550 ewe lambs on the 20th March and they are being scanned in the coming days. Whilst they were a bit light on prior to joining – 40 kg on 12th March and 34kg (young ewe lambs born out of ewe lambs last year) we have had them rolling along quite well and appear to be putting on good condition every day. It will be very interesting to see how they scan and what they're performance will be when lambing commences in mid-August.

The recent rainfall events have been very timely and the grass is finally growing. The sheep are in good order and hopefully the season keeps giving us more without the gale force icy winds when we are at peak lambing. But we are in Kongorong, so we won't hold our breath! Al, Don & Catherine



Digby helping draft the stud ewes



Pre-lamb drenching & vaccination



Our commercial flock has commenced lambing

What's happening on the farm at Cashmore Park

Post spring and summer ram sales we moved into sorting stud ewes for structure, taking adult weights and culling on ASBVs and comments from the lambing records. This leaves us with a sound functional flock and some diverse genetics which are needed as we manage a population of animals, particularly so in the Nudies as we have few places to go for an outcross.

Sorting adult rams and further measurements on 2024 drop animals set us up for many possible matings which were made by natural, AI and ET, plus we did it all again in April with 3000 ewe lambs.

Adult ewes went to the ram in fair condition, albeit losing weight and ewe lambs were much lighter than industry recommendations.

Parasite loads have been low, due to the drier season and generally stock are in good health, albeit a little light. We have been feeding some barley but have not gone into containment.

Fodder crops outputs have been very variable, some outright failures but one 40 ha paddock finished 700 lambs, it just seemed to be stocked about right and maintained leaf cover even through dry times.

We managed to spray out the last of the brassicas and have direct sowed pasture mixes containing perennial rye, a little Phalaris and cocksfoot, plus white and sub clovers. Also including plantain and chicory which seems to be persisting well.

Am unsure what to do about the good stands of capeweed we have, do we clean it out or leave it as sheep feed.

Rain has come and we are green, but probably in the green drought stage. Pasture covers about 1000 kg / ha with bare ground evident.

Mid February saw us pregnancy test the Twinner Cattle with a high percentage in calf, very pleasing. Our twin rate is at 20% which I would like to lift and we have started discussions with AGBU on how we can get breeding values generated from our data for twinning. I am looking forward to this next stage with the Twinners as they are pretty good animals now and have the possibility of producing 20% more beef from the Herd.

Regards Johnno K



Twinners Bulls Spring 2024

Lower Methane Sheep

The continuing search for more efficient and environmentally adapted sheep has led us to supply 1000 ewes to a national project looking at reducing methane emissions. The project has developed a mobile, on farm field test with 84 ewes each day run through PACs, (portable accumulation chambers) and measured for CO₂ and CH₄ gas output. Along with weights and DNA, genomic information this data is entered into the Sheep Genetics data base to allow breeding value predictions. Post that will come the challenge of incorporating how much emphasis for low methane selection needs to go into our existing Maternal indexes. Indications are that we could reduce methane emission by about 1% per year while at the same time improving production efficiency and product quality. It seems likely that we will need to test some animals each year to keep the reference population topped up with information.

Dean, Greg and Jock did a great job on a major mob sort to find specific ewes, then kept them coming into the shed in a system down to the second. Timing is very important to data quality.

Al Donaldson and Pete Fitzgerald, UNE Armidale, NSW, spent 2 weeks at Cashmore Park processing 84 ewes a day.



Ewes in PACs



Ewes being released after a 20 minute & 40 minute gas measurement

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Upcoming Events

Ram & Ewe Sales

The Ram sale will be held on Friday October the 3rd and will be the same format as the past couple of years through Auctions Plus.

Rams can be inspected prior to the sale at both Oaklea and Cashmore Park.

- Oaklea Ram Inspections—based on client feedback, rams inspections at Oaklea will be held the week of the 22nd September via appointment.
- Cashmore Park Ram Inspections—a ram inspection day will be held on Monday 29th September at Cashmore Park. Further information to come.

Later in the year, Cashmore Oaklea will again hold two separate Ewe Sales on Thursday 6th November and Thursday 4th December 2025 via Auctions Plus. This is a multi-vendor multi-agent sale, with Cashmore Oaklea bloodline ewes offered from a range of ages. These moderate framed ewes offer great opportunity for establishing new flocks or for use as prime lamb dams. We will be in touch with Cashmore Oaklea clients a month prior to the ewe sales to field interest.

**Come and say 'hi' to us at
Hamilton's Sheepvention —
Sunday 3rd & Monday 4th
August.**



Alex & John at Sheepvention 2024



John Keiller 0409 804 638
Don Pegler 0417 851 466
Alex Lyon 0408 080 445

www.cashmoreoaklea.com.au www.cashmorepark.com.au

cashmorepark@bordnet.com.au
office@oakleafarms.com.au

