

If you're not in dairy, the last few years are certainly a great time to be in agriculture. Exceptional lamb and mutton prices over the last few years have really made prime lamb production a standout leader in the ag sector. The last 12 months or so has seen many new records set across the country and with a likely reduction in supply, another strong selling season could be looming.

The Hamilton Sheepvention held recently, over 3 big days was once again a great opportunity to catch up with lots of our clients. It was absolutely fantastic to hear many great testimonies about the incredible job Chrome genetics are doing out there for commercial producers.

Those of you that came through would have appreciated the evenness for type in the 1 yo pregnant ewe lambs on display. The Perendales displayed the shorter leg, more moderate frame females we've been striving for over the last few years. The Chromedales were the complete package, lovely balanced ewes with great scan rates.

We weren't at all surprised the "wool" topic was hardly mentioned. Amazing what 12 months can do. As a general comment, if you want to breed sheep with drastically finer wool, it can be done but there will most likely be a trade off. At Chrome we see micron testing as a way of taking the coarse edge off the wool clip, we will supply micron EBVs again this year with our sale rams for those that want to use it. By all means look to breed sheep with finer wool, as long as it's not at the expense of other important commercial traits. At the end of the day in our system **"the weight of lamb weaned per hectare has a far greater impact on the bottom line, rather than worrying about 5 or 10 bucks more worth of wool per head"**

Benefits Of A 3 Week Joining

After many years selecting for maternal traits, we found the majority of our maternal ewes lambing in the first cycle and very few in the last 2 weeks, from a 35 day joining. This prompted us to trial a 3 week joining period this year. The use of vasectomised rams as teasers, as well as a high protein lupin flush has worked really well. The overall scan rate is 11% up on our 5 year average.

A couple of benefits from a tighter lambing so far have been better allocation of feed in lambing paddocks and being able to mob up and shift those early lambing ewes out into the colder paddocks to make room for the next batch of lambing ewes, which has included the ewe lambs, in those better sheltered paddocks. The other benefit going forward is that all our replacement ewes bred from the early conceiving ewes, will most likely be early conceivers themselves resulting in tighter lambings in subsequent years. Lamb marking has also been undertaken earlier at a better age –not too many big ones!! All the later lambing ewes are in lamb to terminal sires which means that the progeny all get sold from these lower performing ewes. The low number of "Drys" scanned overall, (1.7%) has really minimized the amount of "wastage" ewes that get sold.

See below our 2019 results from a 3 week joining:

Mob	Scan rate from 3 week joining (Maternal Sires)	% Dry from 3 Week joining	Scan rate after a further 4 week backup ram (terminal sire)	% Dry from total Joining
2yo Stud maternal and commercial ewes (lambled as ewe lambs)	151%	13%	165%	2.5%
3-6 yo Stud Maternal and commercial ewes	181%	10%	196%	1%

Program Outline:

Day

- 14 Teasers into ewes
- 7 Commence daily feeding Lupins @ 500gms/hd/day
- 0 Teasers out and Rams in
- 2 Stop Lupin feeding
- 21 Rams out

Leave rams out for about 2 weeks then back in with terminal sires for 4 weeks.

We aligned this backup joining with our ewe lamb joining to keep management simple.

Vasectomised Rams

We have had a couple of enquiries from clients about us supplying vasectomised rams for use as teasers as we have done in our program. The plan is for us to supply rams already vasectomised by a vet ready to go. There is no doubt a commercial benefit in ewe lambs and 2yo maidens and certainly tightens up the lambing period in older ewes as well. There will be a limited number available. Talk to Matt if you are interested.

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST TEAM MEMBER

We would like to welcome Brianna Cudmore to our Chrome team. Bree is originally from Gippsland and has been with us since late June this year, arriving just in time for lamb tagging (ha ha). Her enthusiastic approach and willingness to learn about sheep and pasture management is great and has slotted in really well as part of our team. Bree is very keen on her working dogs and competes in a number of trial events on the weekends. Keep up the good work.

- We would also like to acknowledge our other permanent staff Hamish Thomas and Rob Morgan for their continued work and dedication to our business. A massive team effort goes into getting our annual drafts of rams up for sale.



ICON Terminals

The terminal leg of Stud operation at Chrome sometimes tends to run under the shadow of our Maternal operation but we can assure you there is just as much emphasis, investment and resources put into these flocks. The use of industry leading sires continues across both the ICON Southies and Poll Dorsets as demand outstrips supply annually, despite us growing our terminal ewe base to 900 mated ewes this year. Our decision a number of years ago to breed shorter leg, early maturing sires has been a winner. Great to see our Poll Dorsets and ICON Southies in demand.

Lambplan have made some changes to the terminal indexes they are using going forward. One of these is to phase out the Carcass plus index and a move toward an index which puts some emphasis on eating quality traits.

NEW Terminal Carcass Production (TCP) Index

Sheep Genetics have introduced a new Terminal index, the Terminal Carcass Production (TCP) index which will be replacing the Carcass Plus index in March 2020. To assist in the transition between indexes, both Carcass Plus and Terminal Carcass Production will be available for the 2019 ram buying season with a more detailed explanation in our catalogue.

Indexes help producers select animals for use within a breeding program when there are a range of traits of economic or functional importance. This ensures that genetic gain in one trait is not made in isolation from other traits. Using indexes in ram purchasing decisions allow producers to make balanced genetic progress towards more profitable sheep.

The TCP index has been created to assist producers to achieve both gains in their major production traits, such as post-weaning weight and muscling, as well as ensuring consumer satisfaction from lamb is maintained through focusing on key eating quality traits such as shear force (tenderness) and intramuscular fat (marbling).

The TCP index, unlike Carcass Plus, is on a scale that is aligned with other Sheep Genetics' indexes and is represented in economic terms with a unit increase in the index reflecting an additional dollar per ewe joined per year. To assist in comparing rams, Sheep Genetics recommends using a percentile band table as a reference, which will be printed in the Chrome Ram Sale catalogue.

A SELECTION OF 2019 SALE RAM SIRES



CHROME 120741

Has progeny in this year's catalogue. An older, well proven sire, which has produced consistent, medium framed progeny.



CHROME 145811

A widely used sire with tremendous bone and depth of body.

Maternals



Kentish Downs 160249

Purchased from the Kentish Downs ram sale in 2017 and has bred extremely well.



Goorama 160203



Lambro 140281

Terminals

CONTACT



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Coopworth • Chromedale® • Perendale • ICON Poll Dorset • ICON Southie®

CHROME GENETICS EWE SALE

In mid December Chrome has its annual ewe breeder sale on Auctions Plus involving Chrome and our clients' commercial ewes. Marketed under the Chrome Genetics brand our clients consistently receive premiums above current market values and are linked into our event advertising.

It's likely that as Australia looks to rebuild sheep numbers that good sound breeding ewes will be a strongly sought after item. This year's offering is potentially shaping up to be the biggest offering of Chrome Genetics ewes to date. We have had some early enquiries about ewes already, so if you have some surplus ewes of any description, ranging from ewe lambs right up to cast for age ewes with sound mouths please consider this sale before offloading them somewhere else! You can be involved in this sale using your agent of choice, the sheep just need to be assessed by an accredited Auctions plus assessor. If you are interested please give Matt a call.

OPEN DAY / RAM INSPECTION

Monday 7th October 11am – 4pm

RAM SALE

Thursday 10th October

Inspection 9.30am Sale commences 11.30am



Ram sale catalogue is now available on our website in PDF and Excel formats. If you would like a catalogue posted please email us.

EVERY 6TH
RAM
FREE



CHROME DIARY

Henty Field Days

Open Day

11th Annual Ram Sale

Chrome Genetics Breeder Sale

Summer Ram Sale

*17th – 19th September Site 1049A
(far north west end)*

Monday 7th Oct

Thursday 10th Oct

Mid December (date tbc)

Friday 17th Jan 2020

www.chromesheepstuds.com.au