

What a great time to be in agriculture!! Mindful though of our neighbours to the North who are battling possibly one of the worst droughts in living memory, the last couple of financial years would have to be the best times ever to be in sheep and lamb production. What lies ahead though? Some of what's to come will certainly be uncharted waters, however one thing for sure is finished lambs this season will undoubtedly command a substantial premium over store lambs. Though even at this seasons high grain prices, finishing lambs may still be an option, pending on where finished lamb prices are when the time comes and the margin between cost of feed and cwt price of lamb. Interesting times ahead!! Fodder conservation should be high on the priority list and as the season dries out fairly quickly in southern Victoria, summer fodder cropping comes in sooner rather than later.

Once again Sheepvention at Hamilton in early August was a great chance to catch up with a lot of our Western District clients. There were some great conversations around the influence of Chrome Genetics across the board.

Scanning results and marking percentage reports so far are back a whisker on last year, but still very solid. Some really dry weather and declining feed quality leading into joining presented a bit of a challenge, but ewes flushed on a protein source (lupins are the best) have still joined really well. Some cold wet weather down here in August took its toll a bit on some more exposed paddocks.

CELEBRATING OUR 10TH ANNUAL RAM SALE



Lead October Sale Poll Dorset rams

After record ram sales again last season we have catalogued a few more rams for our October sale and have other rams set aside for the January 2019 sale next year. Important to note is that since the Autumn break all the rams at Chrome have been rotationally grazed in one big mob until they were catalogued. Since then all the Auction rams have been run together so as to give a fair comparison between them. The ewes and lambs have had the better sheltered drier paddocks and the rams have been run in the wettest country, so a good test of constitution and do ability.

At Chrome we offer what we consider to be our best rams at our on property auctions, our main sale in mid October and our summer sale in January, with private sales in between October and January Auctions.

October Ram sale catalogue is now available on our website in PDF and excel formats so you can sort by specific data if you wish.

If you would like a catalogue posted please email us.



Lot 441 Lead ICON Southie ram

MATERNALS

Index changes

More ram numbers on the ground last season has enabled us to put together a bigger, more even group of quality maternal rams this year. The depth in our sale group continues to get better every year which in turn means more suitable rams for clients from the early lots through to the last rams sold.

As part of feedback from ram producing flocks, Sheep Genetics have included adult weight as a component in the Maternal Index. My understanding is that in order to place some downward pressure on adult weight there needed to be a change in the Maternal \$ index reference points. So a ram that was in the top 20% this time last year had Mat \$ index of 131 or better. To be in the top 20% this year that same animal would need to be Mat \$ index 153. The reason for this was that to keep the Mat \$ index as close as possible to one index point = \$1 return per ewe mated.

The individual figures which make up the index have not changed.

Micron

One of the big discussion points this year has been around micron and wool prices. We all would like our crossbred ewes to wean 150% lambs, put all of the lambs on the truck in the first draft and ewes to cut 5 kg of 26 micron wool.

But what are the potential trade-offs in doing something radical??

Here are a few thoughts;

- Slower growth and change in maturity pattern
- Less muscle
- More worms – current Chrome ewes hardly ever get a drench
- Harder to manage weaners
- Big drop in fertility, milk and mothering ability

See basic back of the envelope comparison below:

34 Micron Maternal Ewe

Wool Income

4kg @ \$2 = \$8

Lamb Income

1.4 Imbs/ewe @ 22kg cwt @ \$7/kg + \$5 skin = \$220.60

TOTAL Income: \$228.60

27 Micron Maternal Ewe

Wool Income

5kg @ \$7.60 = \$38

Lamb Income

1.2 Imbs/ewe @ 21kg cwt @ \$7/kg + \$10 skin = \$186.40

TOTAL Income: \$224.40

These figures in the above tables were the first ones to come to mind, which means I have not tinkered with them to make them sway one way or the other. Not much in it!! If we can reduce micron while at the same maintaining the other important profitable traits, then there are potentially financial gains to be made.

To get a cross section of where our own flock was at, we micron tested all our maternal sale rams this year. There was a range of over 16 microns, which indicates there may well be individuals here in our own flock that will reduce micron, while at the same time maintain all the other good things. This information has been supplied in the ram sale catalogue this year in the form of a breeding value **YFD** which is the abbreviation for **Yearling Fibre Diameter**. So I would say if you have 10 rams on your list that suit and some are going to reduce micron then why not use the information.

TERMINALS

The highlight of our terminal leg of Chrome is demand outstripping supply over the last 2 or 3 years, selling pretty much all the saleable rams we can produce. Incredible unprecedented demand last season saw almost a complete sellout of our June/July drop Icon Southie ram lambs by the end of the Autumn, our saviour being the 1 yo Southies out of ewe lambs which will be offered this upcoming October sale as one year olds. The Icon Southies are doing a great job on both Merino ewes, crossbred ewe lambs and starting to be more widely used on other stronger woolled crossbred ewes due to their tight downsy skins.

Good reports continue to flow on the performance of the Icon Poll Dorset rams also. Their shorter leg, easy finishing and early maturing attributes are ensuring continuing demand for these rams.

Note: The October sale this year will be the only offering of 1yo and 1 ½ yo terminal rams. The majority of terminals offered at the January sale will all be June/July drop ram lambs.

CHROME HEADING TO HENTY

Chrome will be at the Henty Field Days from the 18th – 20th September. This will be a great opportunity for our NSW/North Vic clients to inspect some of our top end rams.

See you at site 1049A (far north west end)



This year's Chromedale Maternal Keeper Rams



17.089 PWT 14.2
PFAT-0.5 PEMD 2

17.427 PWT 12.8
PFAT -0.8 PEMD 1.7

Poll Dorset Keeper Rams

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 still early days yet and will be interesting to see where replacement ewe prices will settle as we enter the ewe selling season. This year's offering is potentially shaping up to be the biggest offering of Chrome Genetics ewes to date. 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 8th October 11am – 4pm

RAM SALE

Thursday 11th October

Inspection 9.30am Sale commences 11.30am

EVERY 6TH
RAM
FREE

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT....

Matt wrote an article about joining ewe lambs that was published in this years Ram and Lamb magazine. If you are interested in reading this article it is now available on our website.

700 Chrome Maternal Ewe Lambs preg scanned at 157%



CHROME DIARY

Open Day

9th Annual Ram Sale

Henty Field Days

Chrome Genetics Breeder Sale

Summer Ram Sale

Monday 8th Oct 2018

Thursday 11th Oct 2018

18th-20th Sept 2018

Mid December (date tbc)

Friday 18th Jan 2019

www.chromesheepstuds.com.au