

## *Quality Rams at Affordable Prices*

It feels like the seasons just roll into one another these days, and with another delayed start this year, many of us found feeding carrying straight through into lambing and beyond for the early lambers. Two tough years back-to-back is something few of us would have imagined for southern Australia.

But despite the challenges, there have been some real positives. The red meat markets have been remarkably strong over the past 12 months, with lamb trading above \$10 since June. We copped a bit of flak for suggesting \$10/kg might be on the horizon by 2027 in last year's newsletter, but it's great to see it arrived much earlier. Safe to say we don't mind being wrong on that one!

We've had a much better year compared to last, selling just on 3,000 commercial lambs at an average carcass weight of 26.5kg and \$8.83/kg, giving us a return of \$234 per head. With the national sheep flock still in decline and demand for lamb remaining strong, the outlook for prices over the next couple of years looks encouraging.

While markets and seasons keep us on our toes, one of the real highlights of this year has been having our youngest son, Sam, working alongside us. He's taken on the autumn seeding and spraying, which has allowed us to focus more on the livestock, and you may even see him on the ram delivery runs this year. No doubt this will be short-lived as he turns eighteen and looks to broaden his experience – which we fully encourage - but it's been great having him so involved this season.

### **This Year with Our Chrome Shedders**

It's been fantastic to see our Chrome Shedders continue to develop. With strong demand and growing interest in shedders, we undertook a large Embryo Transfer program this year, with 14 donor ewes to produce 100 Shedder embryos, which lambed in July. This program will help us multiply the very best of the clean shedders going forward and make ram lambs available to our clients at our Jan 2026 Ramsale.

Our 600 F1 Shedder ewe lambs scanned at 140% this year - about where our Chromedales were 6-8 years ago. We're putting a lot of effort into the shedding program, breeding some decent numbers of F1 ewes that will allow us to put some real selection pressure on in the next 2-3 years. Early signs indicate the shedders handle the Summer and Autumn heat well.

To keep pushing for more clean shedding, we've castrated the majority of the F1 male progeny. A highlight this year was a run of wether lambs hooked at ALC in February, averaging 30.5kg cwt at \$8.12 /Kg, which returned \$247.50. Interestingly, before slaughter the buyer estimated them at only 27 - 28 kg cwt.

Our breeding focus in the Shedders remains clear:

- Carcass
- Getting the wool off
- Breeding the classic Chromedale type.
- Feet
- Fertility



(Photo taken Aug 25) Chrome bred 2024 Drop Sires used for the 2025 lambing. All these rams are clean shedders.

**Chrome Shedder rams will feature in our  
Summer Ram Sale to be held on Monday  
5th Jan.**

Approximate numbers on offer:

~ 40 x 1.5 yo Rams

~ 60 x Ram Lambs ready to work



## Update on Our Coopworth Rams

Back in 2019, The Department of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries put a stop to importing sheep genetics from New Zealand. Since then, the Coopworth gene pool here in Australia has become very small, making it increasingly difficult to maintain “pure” lines.

At the same time, many Coopworth composites still meet the Coopworth Genetics Australia criteria, but they’ve shown stronger performance and are far better suited to Australian conditions than the genetics we previously imported from NZ.

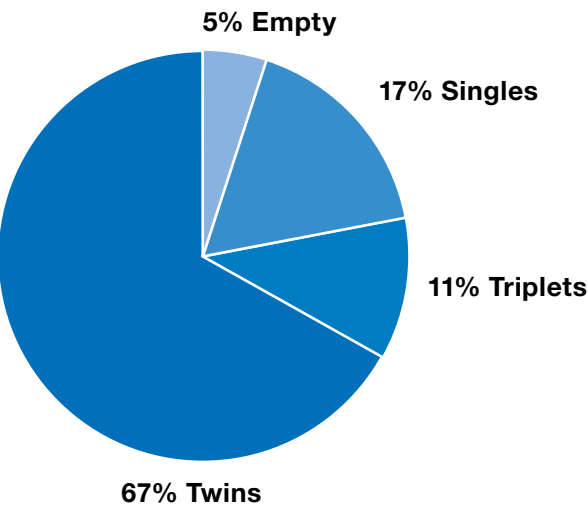
Over time, The Coopworths we all knew 10 – 15 years ago have shifted into a stronger-wooled, composite-style sheep. For this reason, the rams that would normally been listed as Coopworths are now included in the Chromedale section of our catalogue. We’ve identified these rams with a ‘C’ (coarse skin) in the skin type visual score. For the October sale, most Coopworth type rams are in Lots 146 – 165.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to reach out to Matt.

## NAILING THE SWEET SPOT

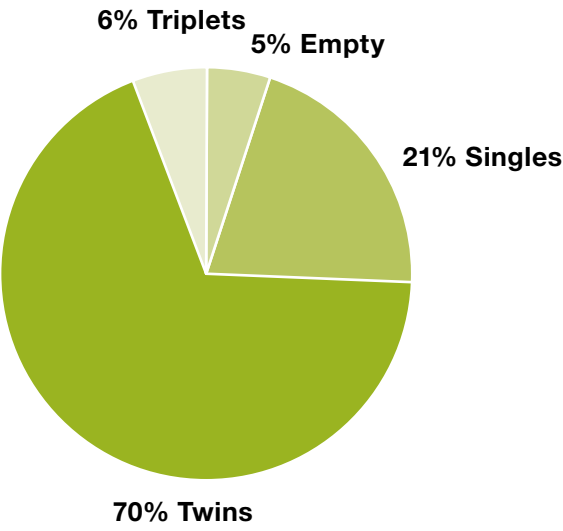
This year we have been really pleased with how our joining program has performed — our scan rates show we’re hitting that sweet spot between productivity and ewe/lamb survival. I thought it worth sharing a bit about our scan rates and joining protocols that we’ve been implementing in our flock over the last few years. Our average scan rate on mixed-age ewes over the past 5 years has been 192%. We think somewhere between 180 – 190% is the sweet spot – high enough for productivity, but not so high that triplets start to compromise survival and management.

Ideally, you don’t want more than **20% triplets**, as they require extra management and can compromise survival. This year, we reckon we’ve nailed it in our mixed age ewes:



This gave a scanning average of 183% from a 3-week joining. Once scan rates exceed 190%, triplets tend to rise into the low 20s, and above 200% scanning, they climb closer to 30% - too high and it affects survival and ewe mortality.

We also had our best ever ewe lamb scanning this year with our Chromedale maternal ewe lambs, scanning 176% from a 4-week joining:



We used teasers on all ewes, which helps tighten up the joining period, enabling earlier marking of lambs and other management benefits.

## Sheep Genetics: Combined LAMBPLAN

Sheep Genetics is set to launch a Combined LAMBPLAN, a unified system that will allow breeders and buyers to compare the genetic potential of all maternal and terminal breeds in a single evaluation. This will enable direct comparisons of Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) across different breeds, helping to make selection decisions more informed and straightforward.

The combined LAMBPLAN is currently available as a research evaluation and will be rolled out in stages, with traits being released from mid-2025 through to 2027. While breeders can access it now, it is not yet fully available for commercial clients. Once the full rollout is complete, it is expected to be available for general use in 2027.

As discussed in a recent SG webinar, there will be some significant changes in the selection indexes, so it will be important to re-benchmark against the new percentiles when the time comes.

We will be keeping a close eye on the development of the Combined LAMBPLAN, as we believe it will be a valuable tool for clients to clearly compare all breeds. For now, the current Maternal and Terminal analyses will continue to run for this selling season.

## SOMETHING NOT SHEEP!

Here at Chrome, we’re always looking for ways to improve our systems - and this year, we turned our attention to something a little different: **dissolved urea applied as a foliar**, inspired by the tow-and-fert machine from New Zealand.

Given the slow, dry start to the season, granular products rely heavily on rainfall to reach the root zone. By applying urea as a foliar, plants can start responding when the next rainfall event arrives, especially deep-rooted perennials like Phalaris. Our brew - 30 kg dissolved urea, Gibberellic Acid, Cobalt (to prevent staggers), and 250 mls of Fulvic Acid (per Ha) as a chelating agent - did an amazing job. The extra feed it produced eliminated supplementary feeding through lambing in mid-July.

Foliar-applied liquid nitrogen is gaining popularity in agriculture due to its efficiency, versatility, and ability to give plants a quick nitrogen boost.

Liquid offers several advantages:

- **Enhanced absorption:** Liquid N is rapidly absorbed, giving plants a fast-acting dose of nitrogen.
- **Even Spread:** Can be applied through traditional sprayers ensuring excellent coverage.
- **Reduced Nitrogen Loss:** With lower volatilization, means less is lost to the atmosphere.
- **Compatibility:** Dissolved urea can be mixed with other nutrients and pesticides, streamlining the process.



Sam played a key role in the project, managing it from start to finish. He built a batching setup from a 1000L IBC shuttle with a series of inlets, taps, and suction filters, which was used with a standard fire pump to mix the products. The system worked well, and it was great to see him take ownership and apply his practical skills so effectively. The only minor challenges were the time it took to mix a batch and a few impurities in the urea — otherwise, everything went smoothly.

## SHARING OUR STORY

We recently had the opportunity to work with Hamish of Square Fish to put together a short video sharing the Chrome journey – from our early days to where we stand today, selling up to 1,000 rams per year. The video highlights Matt’s background, what drives him, and a bit about our sheep breeds, including the new addition of the Chrome Sheddors to our stud.

The video was created in partnership with Sapien Technologies, whose stud program we use every day to collect and manage all our data. Their program is an integral part of how we track performance, measure progress and continue to push our breeding goals forward.

It’s been a great chance to reflect on how far we’ve come, and we’re excited about where we’re heading next!

To watch the video, simply scan the QR code.





## CONTACT



**Matthew & Tanya Tonissen**

PO Box 95, Hamilton, Vic, 3300

Mobile 0417 149 805

Email [office@chromesheepstuds.com.au](mailto:office@chromesheepstuds.com.au)



Chromedale® • ICON Southie® • ICON 25s • ICON Poll Dorset

### OPEN DAY

Monday 29th September 11am – 4pm

### SPRING RAM SALE

Thursday 2nd October

Inspection 9.30am Sale commences 11.30am



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



**EVERY 10<sup>TH</sup>  
RAM  
FREE**



### CHROME GENETIC EWE SALE

December 2025

### SUMMER RAM SALE

5th January 2026

## The Launch of CLP

Many of you will have already heard the news - there's been a big change in the local livestock scene. Craig Pertzel and Shaun Mansbridge have started their own business, **Capital Livestock & Property Pty Ltd.**

Both are well-known and respected agents in the southwest and are joined by a professional team, including Rob Claffey, who will continue to run our ram sales. The same great service and people, just under a new banner.

We look forward to continuing our strong business relationship with Craig, Shaun, Rob and the rest of the team at Capital.

 **CAPITAL**  
**LIVESTOCK & PROPERTY**

**5572 3710**  
[livestock@clp.net.au](mailto:livestock@clp.net.au)

115 Thompson St, Hamilton 3300  
PO Box 900, Hamilton 3300

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