

Trigger Vale

meat the market



2004 Newsletter

Meat the market using Bond & White Suffolk Genetics

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TriggerVale on-property auction September 3rd, 2004

Welcome

Welcome to our second Trigger Vale newsletter. We had terrific feedback from our 2003 newsletter and we believe that they will become the best format for informing old, new and prospective clients about Trigger Vale and industry news. We hope that wherever you are reading this your season although probably late is ticking along O.K. It certainly would be nice to have an early autumn break for a change.

There are currently two closely connected issues dominating the sheep industry landscape at the moment. The first is the current record low in the size of our national sheep flock (latest estimate is 96 million which is down from a peak of 170 million in 1990) and the second is the record prices being paid for lamb and mutton. It is clear that the lack of regular supply is the reason behind the record prices and while they put a smile on all our faces, the level of the national flock is so low that our industry is under threat. Regardless of quality, marketing or image the foundation for any product success is continuity of supply. With the rapid growth of our export markets we have become a lot less dependant on the domestic market however if the national flock doesn't start a rapid rebuilding phase many of these export markets will be lost. The recent closure of Harden Abattoir is a stark reminder of just this.

In the meantime it's interesting to note that the things that we can influence to increase our own profits during this period of opportunity will also help on a national level as it involves producing more meat. At Trigger Vale we are 100% focused on achieving maximum genetic gains on the traits that will drive increased profits for our clients. The key areas that are important in improving our client's bottom line are fertility, growth rates (feed conversion), meat yields and animal health. How

this is being achieved is discussed in more detail in other sections of this newsletter.

In summary however the single biggest change we have made in the previous 12 months is the use of technology to speed up genetic progress. This has involved 3 embryo flushes and transfers of our highest performing Bond ewe and A.I programs in both the Bond and White Suffolk Studs. The progeny of these initiatives are on the ground and look very exciting.

The other area I would like to touch on is the shortage of young store ewes. If we have a half decent spring the availability of ewes to replace CFA ewes will be very low and at extreme prices.

For our clients currently joining Trigger Vale Bond rams to at least a portion of their Bond, Merino or 1ST X ewes this problem is solved as they are breeding their replacements. For clients planning to source ewes from traditional store sales it might be time to consider this option for a percentage of your current flock. Another point to consider is what is the breeding value of your XBD

ewe lambs? Particularly in the case of Bond or Merino White Suffolk X ewe lambs as they may have a higher value in the spring as breeders.

Once again we plan to have our catalogues available on our web page (<http://www.bondsheep.org.au/triggervale/default.htm>) one week prior to our sale. Some other points of interest is our very successful local lamb marketing campaign continued with Lockhart IGA again this year and we have a French undergraduate of Agricultural Engineering joining us for 3 months work experience from mid July.

In closing as much as we like to hear about the good results obtained by Trigger Vale rams its also important that if you have a problem with a ram that we receive feedback. As seed stock producers our rams must fulfil ours and your high standards and expectations. If they fail to do so we need to know so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify any problems. Please don't hesitate to contact Andrew, Philip or Jim about any questions or concerns you may have regarding your sheep enterprise or to arrange an obligation free inspection. We are in the business of maximising your sheep enterprise returns.

At Trigger Vale we are 100% focused on achieving maximum genetic gains on the traits that will drive increased profits for our clients.



Trigger Vales Embryo and A.I. Programs

In the 5 years since we started serious performance testing by using Lambplan we have identified a couple of bloodlines which are clearly superior to the average. The real aim of performance testing is to identify the truly elite top 1% of genetics from your overall population group and then use them extensively to increase your overall rate of genetic gain. Having measured over 1200 ewes since we began Lambplan one ewe is a clear standout as our most elite ewe. See below for ewe summary.

The most pleasing aspect of all with this ewe is that the good performance figures are backed up by outstanding progeny. Of the seven lambs she has raised so far 3 ewes have been retained in the stud, 2 rams have been used in the stud (both used in 2004), one ram sold at our auction sale and the 2003 drop ram is the standout and number one ranked Lambplan ram in this years sale rams which are still to be classed. To have a ewe breed this consistently is some thing very special and since she is nearly 7 years old we decided to put her in an embryo program to maximize the number of her progeny available in the future. The first flush was to our top stud ram OOL024 and the other two flushes used Dohne semen we purchased for our AI program. We marked 14 lambs overall which was a little disappointing and quite expensive per lamb but the positives are we now have 14 of our best ewes progeny on the ground in the one year. The comparison between the Bond and Dohne X lambs will be very interesting as for this group they will all have the same dam genetics.

The AI program in the bonds involved using 2 different Dohne Sires (refer Bond Sire Battery) over 60 of our pedigree ewes. The decision to trial Dohne genetics was made due to 3 factors.

1) There are only 2 ways to source genetics that may lead to genetic gain. They are within flock or between flocks. You would have to be kidding yourself if you thought that within your own flock there are all the best genes for traits that drive sheep profitability. The dual purpose, self replacing maternal type of sheep has had a dramatic increase in its gene pool over recent years through the introduction of breeds such as Dohne, SAMMs, Centre Plus Merinos, Merinotechs, Gromarks etc. and we made the decision with our client's profitability in mind to investigate what the Dohne has to offer. If any of these breeds have characteristics that could improve our genetics without compromising our product we will be willing to experiment with them.

2) The Dohne as a breed has had a breed evaluation program in place since its development in South

Africa. Although in our opinion it is no where near as advanced as Lambplan for Australian conditions it is still based around Estimated Breeding Values for the traits that drive profitability. At the time we sourced semen from Dohne rams that had high EBV's for growth and yearling body weights.

3) There is an amazing buzz around the Dohne breed in Australia at the moment with rams selling to \$16000 and most flock rams having a reserve of \$3000. By getting Dohne semen and benchmarking the 1st X progeny with our Bond 2004 drop we will clearly see how we compare to the Dohne as a dual purpose breed. With the progeny already 3 months old there seems very little difference in the lambs making the \$829 (last years TriggerVale Auction average) seem good value for money. If we benchmark and our Bonds compare favorably or better then we know we are on the right track, if however in the unlikely event that the Bonds don't compare then we have found a pool of genes that can increase our rate of genetic gain. In summary in the future we will be searching the Australian wide pool of dual purpose genetics and sourcing semen that we believe could increase our client's profitability.

With regards to our WHITE SUFFOLK'S, the ability to source genetics that will increase our stud's performance is a lot easier. There are close to 600 white Suffolk studs in Australia and the only difficulty is choosing which rams will give our clients the highest productivity gains. For our 2004 joining we decided that instead of spending \$4000 on a average stud sire we would invest that money in semen in what we believe to be two of the breeds absolute leading sires (refer White Suffolk Sire Battery). Mount Roran 38 is a very exciting young sire and comes from a WA stud which is very commercially orientated owned by Guy Bowen. Depta Grove Prestige is by far the highest profile White Suffolk ram at the moment and the following CV speaks for itself.

CV for Prestige;

- Born a triplet in August 2001 (raised as a single), used as a ram lamb in December 2001,
- He was shown at 12 months of age in Hamilton, 13 months at the Adelaide and Melbourne Royals.
- Champion White Suffolk Ram at the 2002 Royal Adelaide Show, 2002 Royal Melbourne Show and the 2002 Hamilton Sheepvention
- Supreme All Breeds Champion Ram at 2002 Hamilton Sheepvention
- Winner of the Performance classes at Adelaide and Melbourne.
- He is the sire of the Champion White Suffolk Ram at the 2003 Royal Adelaide Show and at the 2003 Royal Melbourne Show.
- He sired the Supreme All Breeds Champion Progeny Group of 4 at the 2003 Royal Melbourne Show
- First son sold for \$35,000 (Obliterating long standing records for meat sheep; White Suffolk record was \$24,000. Terminal Breed record was \$27,500. On-property Terminal Breed sale record was \$25,000).
- His second son sold for \$33,000
- The only 9 stud sons offered from his first drop averaged \$15,722
- The only daughter released, sold for \$750

Trigger Vale 97S053							INDEX
PWT	YWT	YFAT	YEMD	YFD	YGFW	NLW	80:10:10
4.45	4.01	-0.31	0.62	0.51	0.52	0.08	128
Micron: ADULT 23							
Comments: Currently our No.1 stud ewe. Fantastic balance of ebv's with high positive growth, eye muscle, wool cut, and number of lambs weaned and a negative fat result. This ewe has given birth to 8 and raised 7 lambs in four matings losing a twin lamb in the drought. To have an adult micron of 23 at 6 years of age is also an outstanding result.							

Calculating EBVs courtesy of: Lambplan 2004 Handbook

Key points:

- Performance information from the following three key areas is used to calculate an EBV:
 1. The animal's own performance for a particular trait;
 2. The performance for genetically related (correlated) traits; and
 3. The performance of the animal's relatives for those traits.
- Genetic correlations are what happen on average in the population. There are animals that break these correlations and they can be valuable to select for desirable but uncommon combinations of traits.
- Information obtained from related animals increases our knowledge about the value of the genes of any given animal

Actions

- Accurate pedigree, performance records and visual trait assessment are needed to develop accurate EBVs.
- The performance of an animal for a specific trait can be measured using scales, equipment such as ultrasound scanners, or observation by the breeder.
- Knowing the genetic relationship (pedigrees) for individuals and their measured relatives is important.

Animals own performance

The performance of an animal for a specific trait can be measured using scales (body weight, fleece weight), equipment such as ultrasound scanners (eye muscle depth, fat depth) or observation by the breeder (number of lambs born, structural soundness). These records are an expression of how good or bad the animals genes are for that trait given the environment in which that animal has been managed. It is important that an animal's performance is adjusted for the environment, as only the genetic value of an animal is passed on to its progeny.

Table 4 compares the performance of two individuals. Animal 030015 has a weight that is greater than its group average. Animal 030231 has a weight that is less than the group average. It is important to remember that animals are only compared with other animals that have been run in the same environment (management group or cohort) when estimating whether their performance is greater or less than average.

Table 4: Comparative performance of two animals

Animal	Weight at 100 days (adjusted)	Likely genetic value for weight
Group average	31 kg	
030015	35 kg 4 kg above average	Better genes than average for growth
030231	27 kg 4 kg below average	Poorer genes than average for growth

Genetically related traits

In many cases, one or more genes affect more than one trait and the traits are said to be genetically correlated. Measuring or observing a second trait can provide more information about the desired trait than a measure of the trait alone.

Table 5 shows that eye muscle depth and fat depth (both adjusted to constant weight) are positively correlated there are some common genes that affect both traits and they, on average, cause an increase or decrease in both traits.

For animal 030015, the fat depth is higher than the contemporary group average. As this is positively correlated with eye muscle depth it is likely that its genes are better for eye muscle depth than that measured.

Table 5: Positive correlation between eye muscle depth (EMD) and fat depth

Animal	EMD	Fat depth	Likely genetic value for EMD
Group average		3.0 mm	
030015	31 mm	3.5 mm Above average	Better genes for EMD
030231	31 mm	2.5 mm below average	Poorer genes for EMD

Where the genes have opposite effects on two traits the relationship is known as a negative genetic correlation. An example of this is milk

yield and percentage of fat and protein in the milk (in sheep, goats and dairy cows}. Females with higher milk yield tend to have poorer genes for percentage fat and protein in the milk.

It should be noted that genetic correlations are what happen on average in the population. There are animals that break these correlations and they can be valuable to select for desirable but uncommon combinations of traits. To find these animals all traits of interest must be measured.

Performance of relatives

Related animals share some common genes. Measuring relatives of an individual is effectively looking at more samples of the genes that they have in common.

Information obtained from related animals increases our knowledge about the value of the genes of any given animal. Half siblings (animals that have a common sire or dam} on average share 25% of their genes, therefore if you have a record on an animals half siblings you have further information on the genes of the animal of interest

In Table 6 there are two animals with the same EMD from families with differences in average EMD values. Animal 030001 comes from a family with an average EMD greater than the average of the population. It is likely that its genes are superior for eye muscle depth. While animal 030002 has the same EMD, because it comes from a family that has below average EMD its genes are likely to be poorer for that trait. This is a good example of why it is important to look at the genetic information supplied for carcase traits rather than focusing on the actual scan measurement.

Table 7: Indicative relative contribution to an EBV

No. records On animal	No. half siblings with record	No. progeny with record	%emphasis from					Accuracy of EBV (%)
			Animal	Sire	Dam	Half siblings	Progeny	
0	0	0	0	50	50	0	0	36
1	0	0	56	22	22	0	0	57
1	10	0	36	10	15	39	0	64
1	50	0	25	3	11	61	0	64
1	10	5	10	5	3	32	49	76
1	10	10	8	5	3	27	57	79
1	10	50	4	2	1	12	80	88

Knowing the genetic relationship (pedigrees) for individuals and their measured relatives is important. Table 7 shows an indicative contribution from the animal's own record and that from related animals. Most recent drop animals evaluated through LAMBPLAN, KIDPLAN and Merino Genetic Services have their own records, full pedigree and at least 10 half siblings with records. In this case, 36% of the information contributing to the EBV comes from the animal's own record, 10% from its sire, 15% from its dam and 39% from its half siblings. The information on how its relatives are performing leads to greater accuracy. If this animal then has 10 progeny recorded, the contribution of its own data drops to just 8% and its progeny's performance account for 57%. An increase in number of siblings and progeny evaluated also contributes strongly to improving the accuracy of EBVs.

Table 6: Likely vs measured genetic values for EMD

Animal	EMD	Family mean EMD	Likely genetic value for EMD
Group mean EMD	30mm		
030001	31mm	35mm Above average	Better genes for EMD
030002	31mm	35mm Below average	Poorer genes for EMD

Bond Sire Battery

02M296							INDEX
PWT	YWT	YFAT	YEMD	YFD	YGFW	NLW	80:10:10
4.09	3.53	-0.4	0.85	0.32	0.39	0.57	129.53
<p>Micron: HGT 24.5 ADULT 25.4 Comments: Truly a ram with Elite dual purpose genetics who has great balanced figures especially for growth and eye muscle. Sired by Trigger Vale 990133 who has had many sons retained in the stud. Dam is our top ranked ewe (07S053) who has been used in our 2004 embryo transfer program. This ram is a twin and represents our rewards for all the work in performance recording since we joined the lambplan program in 1998 and will give our stud and in turn our clients a big genetic lift.</p>							

01N039							INDEX
PWT	YWT	YFAT	YEMD	YFD	YGFW	NLW	80:10:10
2.01	2.5	-0.15	0.25	-0.36	0.37	0.023	116.3
<p>Micron: HGT 23.8 ADULT 25.4 Comments: This ram is another twin out of our top ewe (07S053). A very heavy wool cutter (shown by his 126% GFW as a ram lamb) and structurally very sound. Beautiful soft handling wool on a large frame. First progeny available this spring.</p>							

00L024							INDEX
PWT	YWT	YFAT	YEMD	YFD	YGFW	NLW	80:10:10
2.39	2.56	-0.06	0.44	-0.94	0.21	0.04	118.26
<p>Micron: HGT 24.3 ADULT 24.8 Comments: Very highly rated stud sire. Semen used in first embryo flush with our leading ewe (07S053). First progeny in 2003 auction sale averaged \$250 above our Bond average. Structurally very sound and heavy wool cutter. Semen sold to Falkland Islands 2003.</p>							

02Y067 (Photograph pg 8)							INDEX
PWT	YWT	YFAT	YEMD	YFD	YGFW	NLW	80:10:10
?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
<p>Micron: HGT 22.5 ADULT 22.1 Comments: We think this ram is something very special. Visually the best dual purpose ram I have ever seen. Beautiful long bright high yielding, heavy cutting (GFW 123%) fleece. He stands out even in our group of stud rams with a beautiful head and top line with square hindquarters. If breeds true to type expecting big things. No lambplan figures available yet as he is an upgrade out of our stud No2. flock.</p>							

DOHNE Roseville Park 000077					
BW%	MDmm	FATmm	FW	FD	CV%
8.2	0.2	-0.5	-1.8	0.2	-0.2
<p>Comments: Was imported as an embryo direct from South Africa. Has a great Body Weight EBV % which was the main reason we liked him. Positive Muscle Depth and negative Fat EBV's are other positives. We will have to wait and see how progeny come up at weaning. Semen used in an embryo flush with our top ewe (97S053). Sons sold to \$10,000.</p>					

DOHNE Far Valley 010125					
BW%	MDmm	FATmm	FW	FD	CV%
5.7	-0.2	-0.1	-0.3	0.1	-2.2
<p>Comments: We selected this ram due to the fact that at the time it had the highest Body Weight % EBV for the Dohne breed of 13.8. Unfortunately this has dropped in the past 9 months but his figures are still quite balanced. Bred by Far Valley stud in WA who are one of the oldest Dohne studs in Australia. Semen used in an embryo flush with our top ewe (97S053).</p>					

White Suffolk Sire Battery

Mount Ronan 020038

BWT	WWT	PWWT	YWT	PFAT	PEMD	Carcase Plus
-0.14	5.26	11.35	9.39	-1.37	-0.54	186

Comments: One of the most exciting young sires in the White Suffolk breed. Fantastic growth and leanness which is essential for achieving high yielding carcasses. We purchased semen from Mount Ronan in WA for our 2004 AI program and believe this ram will achieve huge genetic gains for our stud and our clients. Was joined with many Depta Groves 000205 high muscled daughters and the progeny are already showing exceptional growth and length.

Depta Grove (Prestige) 010343

BWT	WWT	PWWT	YWT	PFAT	PEMD	Carcase Plus
0.55	6.69	12.82	11.86	-0.98	-0.82	185.5

Comments: Without doubt the highest profiled sire of any of the terminal breeds at the moment. He has the great combination of fantastic visual characteristics with fantastic performance figures. The impact this ram will have on the White Suffolk breed was clearly illustrated by the sale of his progeny at Depta Groves 2003 ram sale. A son topped for a world record for a terminal ram of \$35,000 closely followed by others for \$33,000 & \$20,000. He already has around 780 progeny in the lambplan system. By sourcing these types of Elite genes Trigger Vale is ensuring that our clients will be purchasing the best genetics available. For a full resume of Prestige refer to page 3.

Depta Grove 000205

BWT	WWT	PWWT	YWT	PFAT	PEMD	Carcase Plus
-0.07	5.3	9.28	7.32	-0.21	1.02	169.54

Comments: Purchased from Depta Grove (Vic) in 2001 for \$3250. We were looking for a ram to inject growth and muscle into our stud and he hasn't let us down. Has produced some outstanding progeny with many high muscled daughters used in AI programs with the above rams. His sons once again feature strongly in our rams available for sale this spring.

Trigger Vale 03D385

BWT	WWT	PWWT	YWT	PFAT	PEMD	Carcase Plus
0.18	4.86	7.19	5.66	-0.30	0.91	157

Comments: This ram as been the stand out ram of our entire 2003 drop. He always stood out both to the eye and on the scales. Sired by Depta Grove 000205 and has the same balanced EBV's for growth, fat and eye muscle. Beautiful white ram who will be sold at our auction sale in September.



*Prestige at Adelaide Royal Show, 2002
with breeder, David Pipkorn.*

Buying the Biggest Longest Ram Doesn't Equate to Productivity Improvement

Written by: Tom Bull - Sonning Genetics

When talking about ram selection with a number of White Suffolk breeders the same selection criteria usually emerges, 'we just select the biggest and longest ram'. And why shouldn't this make sense to many breeders. They believe that the bigger rams in the sale have obviously grown quicker than the others and therefore will sire faster growing lambs themselves. This common view in many cases is the downfall to productivity improvements in our breed as it's purely subjective and in many cases doesn't take into consideration the environmental factors that impact growth, leanness and muscling.

The truth is how do you know if you are making genetic progress in your lamb enterprise by sticking to visual assessment? Just because the rams you purchased last year were 120kg and the rams you purchased this year were 130kg, does not indicate that you have purchased better rams. More likely any improvements are due to nutrition.

If you ask yourself the following questions, the task of selecting high performance rams visually is increasingly difficult:

- Most rams are sold at 18 months of age. How do you know the rams you are selecting didn't do most of their growing between 12-18 months, of age which unless you are producing hoggets, will be of no economic benefit to your breeding

Just because the rams you purchased last year were 120kg and the rams you purchased this year were 130kg, does not indicate that you have purchased better rams. More likely any improvements are due to nutrition.

program. Lambs are sold between three and twelve months of age. This is the 'profit window' for our industry. Any growth after ten months in most cases is of no economic benefit.

- Rams that are singles, are likely to be significantly bigger than twin rams and especially triplets. This is also going to have an impact on raw scan data or visual appearance.

- Most Terminal Sire breeders start lambing in April and finish with the ewe lambs lambing in September. How can you visually adjust and

compensate a ram lamb born out of a 3 year old ewe (in the prime of her maternal life) versus a ram born out of a 14 month old ewe lamb (struggling to maintain her own growth and the growth of her lamb).

The simple answer is that the selection of terminal sires on a visual appraisal and/or raw weight and scan measurements only, hampers the genetic progress, not enhances it. This really highlights the need for estimated breeding values in our industry to maintain

high rates of productivity improvements.

Australia has only one performance recording system that uses Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs). LAMBPLAN adjusts all data to take into consideration the environmental factors that impact growth, muscle and fat. The other thing that puts it ahead of the rest is that it measures meat sheep at ages which are critical to lamb production.

Below are a number of the features that selecting rams on LAMBPLAN offers:

- All scan data (muscle, weight, fat) is adjusted to take account of animal age.
- All scan data is adjusted to take account of animal birth type (single, twin, etc).
- Scan data is adjusted to take account of animal rear type (if the lamb was raised as a single, twin etc).
- Scan data is adjusted to take into consideration the age of the dam.
- Scan data is adjusted to take into consideration the animal's management group.



*Stud Ram
02Y067 -
Possibly the best
dual purpose
ram we have ever
seen. Photo taken
4 weeks after
joining to 100
ewes*

- Adjusted scan data is combined with similar data from related animals to produce estimated breeding values (EBVs).
- LAMBPLAN EBVs are based on thoroughly researched heritability and genetic correlations-based on Australian meatsheep data collected through LAMBPLAN.
- EBVs allow comparison across groups, across years and across flocks.
- On farm data is linked with routine progeny test systems.
- As a breed I believe we need to focus more on estimated breeding values for key ages

(weaning and post weaning) and less on the visual appearance at 14-18 months of age (the age most rams are shown and sold in spring). Do not read this as structural correctness is not important. I have been one of the biggest drivers of the need to have independent structural assessments conducted on all our sale rams in 2003. We do need sound sheep that will reproduce in a commercial environment. Without this, all the high performance genes in the world will be of no commercial relevance if they can't be passed onto commercial progeny.

A FEW INTERESTING FACTS

It is impossible to lick your elbow.

If a statue in a park of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air the person died in battle. If the horse has one front leg in the air, the person died as a result of wounds received in battle. If the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.

In Shakespeare's time, mattresses were secured on bed frames by ropes. When you pulled on the ropes the mattress tightened, making the bed more firm to sleep on. Hence the phrase "goodnight, sleep tight".

It was accepted practice in Babylon 4,000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is honey beer and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the honey month we know today as the honeymoon.

In English pubs, ale is ordered by pints and quarts. So in old England, when customers got unruly, the bartender would yell at them "mind your pints and quarts and settle down". It's where we get the phrase "mind your P's and Q's".

Many years ago in England, pub frequenters had a whistle baked into the rim or handle of their ceramic cups. When they needed a refill, they

used the whistle to get some service. "Wet your whistle" is the phrase inspired by this practice.

In Scotland, a new game was invented. It was entitled "Gentlemen Only Ladies Forbidden"... and thus the word GOLF entered into the English language.

AND FINALLY

At least 75% of people who read this will try to lick their elbows.



A Bond Ewe with 6 month old Bond Lamb bred by Trigger Vale clients the Moncrieff Family, West Wylong.

TRIGGER VALE AND FERTILITY

When you look at benchmarking results for sheep enterprises time and time again the main driver of profits is fertility. The two factors that will have an impact on fertility levels of individual flocks are genetics and management. There is very little Trigger Vale can do about our client's management but the following is a list of things we are doing to improve fertility levels.

- 1) Trigger Vale has been pregnancy testing for the previous 5 years. In both our stud and commercial Bond flocks a ewe must fall pregnant every year of her life including maidens. This means that from 2004 onwards if you purchase a Bond ram from Trigger Vale its dam has had a lamb every year of its life. The flow on effect of this in our client's flocks should be considerable in the next few years.
- 2) We don't single and twin when we pregnancy test as our commercial clients may not test. There is no point selecting genetics that can only raise twins if they are identified and given special treatment. This way the genetics connected to twinning will survive and breed on in a commercial environment.
- 3) When classing for what rams and ewes are retained in the stud we will always lean towards progeny that are twins.
- 4) If a ewe has trouble lambing then she is instantly culled from the flock.



00L024 - Seman used in embryo program and exported to Falkland Islands, 2003. Highly rated stud sire.

TRIGGER VALE AND HEALTH ISSUES

The best genetics and sheep in the world are only as good as the health of the animal. Having a healthy flock is certainly one of the main factors in profitability. Ask any producer who has had a dose of footrot, lice, OJD, or brucellosis what effect it had on their bottom line. At Trigger Vale we ensure that when our rams leave they have the best health report card possible including:

- 1) All rams have been OJD vaccinated again this year with the Gudair vaccine. The one thing we learnt with our involvement last year in getting the OJD policy changed was that the only real assurance in the fight against OJD is vaccination. We have also vaccinated the ewe lambs the previous 2 years so we are about half way to becoming an approved vaccinated flock.
- 2) This year we had to do our 3 yearly assessment for our Ovine Brucellosis free accreditation which we passed with flying colours.
- 3) Footrot and lice free
- 4) All rams fully vaccinated with Glandvac. They have been done at lamb marking, weaning and a further booster at around 12 months. The Bonds should be alright for the rest of their lives but we strongly recommend a yearly booster shot for the White Suffolk's.
- 5) All rams have been part of our annual summer drenching program.
- 6) We don't shed or over feed our rams. I have no doubt that we could present every Bond ram heavier than 100kgs and every White Suffolk heavier than 120kgs at our annual auction sale if we really feed them up and shedded them from the elements. Besides looking impressive we believe this achieves nothing and is in fact detrimental to the ram's health. Lambplan performance testing tells us how the ram genetics will perform and excessive feeding can lead to health problems with regards to structure (hocks and pasterns), fertility and libido. This is the reason you won't see Trigger Vale rams in the show ring. We aim to present our rams for sale at a weight and condition which will maximize their performance in the commercial world.

Consultants

A farmer was herding his sheep flock in a remote pasture when suddenly BMW 5-series advanced out of a dust cloud towards him. The driver, a young man in a Broni suit, Gucci shoes, Ray Ban sunglasses and YSL tie, leans out the window and asks the shepherd, "If I tell you exactly how many sheep you have in your flock, will you give me one of them?"

The farmer looks at the man, obviously a yuppie, then looks at his peacefully grazing flock and calmly answers, "Sure. Why not?"

The yuppie parks his BMW, whips out his De11 notebook computer, connects it to his Nokia mobile phone, surfs to a NASA page on the internet, where he calls up a GPS satellite navigation system to get an exact fix on his

location which he then feeds to another NASA satellite that scans the area in a ultra-high-resolution photo. The yuppie then opens the digital photo in Adobe Photoshop and exports it to an image processing facility in Hamburg, Germany. Within seconds, he receives an email on his Palm Pilot that the image has been processed and the

data stored. He then accesses a MS-SQL database through an ODBC connected Excel spreadsheet

with hundreds of complex formulas. He uploads all of this data via an email through his Xircom, and after a few minutes, receives a response. Finally, he prints out a full-colour, 10-page report on his hi-tech miniaturised HP LaserJet printer. He glances at the last page, turns to the shepherd and says, "You have exactly 1586 sheep.'

"That's right. Well, I guess you can take one of my sheep." Says the farmer. He watches the young man select one of the animals and looks on amused as the young man stuffs it into the boot of his BMW. Then the farmer says to the young man,

"Hey, if I can tell you exactly what your business is, will you give me back my sheep?"

The young man thinks about it for a second and then says, "Okay, why not?"

"You're a consultant", says the farmer.

"Wow! That's correct", says the yuppie,

"but how did you guess that"

"Mate, no guessing required " answered the farmer "You showed up here even though nobody called you; you want to get paid for an answer I already knew, to a question I never asked; and you don't know crap about my business.

Now give me back my DOG."

A farmer was herding his sheep flock in a remote pasture when suddenly BMW 5-series advanced out of a dust cloud towards him.

Trigger Vale commercial bred ewe with white suffolk cross 10-12 week old lamb.



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