



MERINO The Top Sire

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Newsletter of The NSW Stud Merino Breeders' Association

October-December 2007

Wool Parades return to the "Royal"

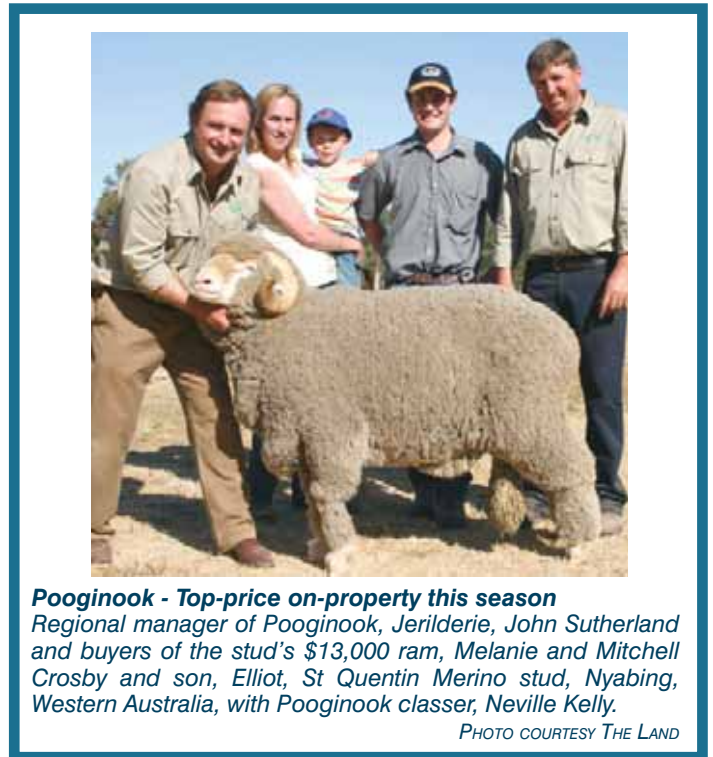
The Sydney Royal Easter Show will be home to the latest in Australian wool fashion in 2008, showcasing award-winning garments from the 2008 Australian Wool Fashion Awards (TAWFA).

Playing a small part in the Sydney Royal Easter Show in years gone by, TAWFA parades return with a bang this year coinciding with the milestone of 200 years of Australia's successful international wool trade.

The Fashion & Style Pavilion will not only be home to the parades, but also will showcase a celebration of the 'History of Wool' giving show patrons the opportunity to touch, smell and experience a woollen extravaganza. There will be two screens running with imagery or DVDs continuously as well as a static display area.

TAWFA managing director, Liz Foster, who is also coordinator of the parades at the Easter Show, has tracked down all previous winners of TAWFA's supreme award and hopes to feature many of these award winning wool garments in a retrospective display in the pavilion.

The garments will hit the catwalk from Thursday 20 March, with parades taking place four times daily, with an extra showing in the evening on weekends and public holidays.



Pooginook - Top-price on-property this season

Regional manager of Pooginook, Jerilderie, John Sutherland and buyers of the stud's \$13,000 ram, Melanie and Mitchell Crosby and son, Elliot, St Quentin Merino stud, Nyabing, Western Australia, with Pooginook classer, Neville Kelly.

PHOTO COURTESY THE LAND

President's Message

It is only two months since my last message and sadly in that time the season has further deteriorated for most of us. I hope and pray that Christmas and the New Year herald a lasting break to this horrible drought.

The wool market continues to defy the rise of the Australian dollar and must be close to historical highs, relative to the \$A. This continued demand is very gratifying and it is hoped that ongoing targeting campaigns by Australian Wool Innovation will enable this demand to be sustained.

Of concern to us all is the continuing debate in relation to the position of woolgrowers as the 2010 mulesing deadline approaches. The NSW SMBA position is aligned with that of the Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders in that we believe mulesing with mandatory pain relief should be negotiated with appropriate bodies and allowed to continue after the present deadline until alternative methods of blowfly control have been proven as effective as mulesing. We are not convinced that the progress thus far with alternatives such as clips will see them being fully effective. Our stand should be a wake-up call to AWI. We

also need the price of this pain relief to be substantially reduced because if blowfly control measures become too expensive and too difficult we will lose more graziers from the wool industry.

Congratulations are extended to the four young Merino enthusiasts who were selected by the SMBA's publicity committee to attend the National Leadership course in South Australia in February. This course is run by the South Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders with AWI support and attracts nominees from throughout Australia. I thank all who applied and I trust that Ben Watts, James Armstrong, Matthew Coddington and Steve Lindsay will take advantage of this wonderful opportunity.

Kay and I send Christmas Greetings to each of you and to your families. May 2008 bring improved seasonal conditions for us all. Thank you to Carol, Mae and Carol-Ann for your support and encouragement - it makes my position very much easier.

Rob Lindsay
President NSW SMBA

Previewing 2008

Great Southern

The 61st Great Southern Supreme Merino Field Day, Show & Sale, commences on Friday 18 January 2008, with studs in the Harden, Boorowa & Yass area open for inspection from 8.30 a.m. until 5 p.m. In the Boorowa district, Merryville (at Geegullalong), Tara Park, Merrignee & Koonwarra (at Little Range) and Winyar (Riverside Park) will be open. On-property in the Harden area will be Demondrille and in the Yass area, Grogansworth and Bogo.

The Show, which commences at 2 p.m. on Saturday 19 January with sheep to be penned by 12 noon, continues through Sunday. At the 2007 GSSM, show sheep came from all NSW Merino breeding regions as well as Victoria.

Three Victorian judges will officiate at the 2008 GSSM with classes divided into Superfine, Fine and Medium/Strong, with both horn and Poll sheep being judged for each wool type. Superfine judge is Kevin Beaton, Kevlyn, Coleraine, Fine judge is Rod Miller, Glenpaen, Horsham and the Medium/Strong Judge is Robert Harding, Glendonald, Nhill.

The Ram Sale will commence at 11 a.m. on Monday 21 January.

The major sponsor for 2008 is again Rabobank, and other substantial sponsors include AWTA, Four Seasons, Landmark, Elders and The Parklands Apartment Hotel at Dickson.

This will be the second year of the GSSM Show & Sale at Canberra Showground (EPIC) after many successful years in Goulburn. The move to Canberra provides an air conditioned venue and a great opportunity for buyers, exhibitors and interested persons to explore the many attractions the city has to offer during the school holidays, as well as to see top quality Merino sheep on display and for sale by auction.

For accommodation, the committee recommends The Parklands Apartment Hotel in Dickson, ph (02) 6262 7000, email reservations@theparklands.com.au, or visit www.theparklands.com.au

A discounted room rate has been negotiated at The Parklands which has a pool and gym and is reasonably close to the Dickson restaurant area but far enough away to be quiet. Bookings should be made by mid December, asking for "the GSSM rate".

Also close to EPIC is the Red Cedars motel at Watson, ph (02) 6241 2944 or email redcedarsmotel@bigpond.com

Further information:

Charlie Merriman, GSSM president, ph (02) 6385 3396 or email merriman@merrignee.com.au

Tamara Young, GSSM secretary, c/- Binalong Post Office, Binalong 2584 or email tamarayoung@netspace.net.au

New England

The biennial New England Merino Field Days will be one of the first events on next year's Merino calendar, being held on Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 January.

A convoy of coaches offering free travel to member properties will again be a feature of the fixture. Coaches depart Walcha Showground at 8 a.m. on the Saturday and 8.30 a.m. on Sunday.

The long list of 25 Merino studs to be mounting displays will be Alfoxton, Auchen Dhu, Cressbrook, Deeargee, Emoh Ruo, Gienna, Karori, Kelvin

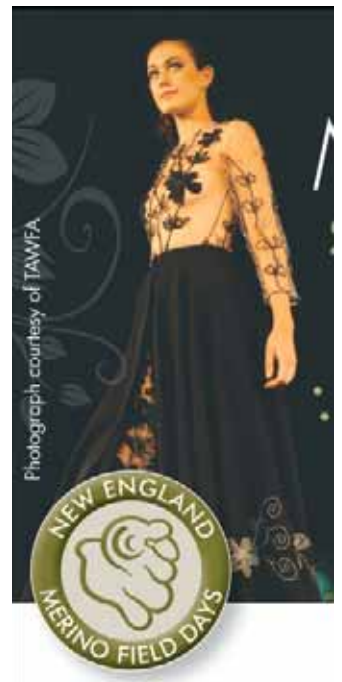
Vale, Longford, Lorelmo, Maisters Swamp, Miramoon, Mirani, Nerstane, Petali, Queenlee, Ruby Hills, Shalimar Park, Stanley Vale, Straban, Waverley Downs, Westvale, Whyworry Park, Yalgoo and Yoorrooga. Ten of these will be at the showground, on display all weekend.

When coaches return to the showground on Sunday afternoon visitors can enjoy a barbecue and bar facilities, listen to a guest speaker and be on hand for the announcement of the Elders Australasian Fleece Competition awards.

Gold sponsor of the NE Merino Field Days is Elders, with Fort Dodge the silver sponsor and bronze sponsorship covered by Bayer, Rabobank, AWTA and Elanco.

Further information:

Janet Carter, secretary NEMFD, ph (02) 6778 7288.



Merino Bloodline Analysis Update

The 2007 copy of the NSW Department of Primary Industries' *Merino Bloodline Performance Analysis* (printed in September) is now available.

In this publication there has been a significant increase in the number of bloodlines that can be reported, from 71 in 2005 to 137 in 2007.

Information in this package and previous analyses can be viewed and downloaded at www.merinobloodlines.com.au

Further information can also be obtained from Sally Martin, project leader Merino Bloodline Performance, DPI sheep & wool officer, ph 02 6382 1077 or email sally.martin@dpi.nsw.gov.au

The annual Elders Premier Clip of the Sale for season 06/07 was held in Newcastle on Tuesday 16 October in conjunction with the N16N sale dinner.

With over 100 clients in attendance the evening was hailed a great success. Growers were present from most areas of New South Wales, South Eastern Queensland and even Western Australia.

All clips sold through Elders Premier Newcastle are eligible for the Clip of the Sale competition which is judged by a panel from five wool buying firms representing major exporters and vertically integrated processors in Australia and overseas.

Once place-getters are determined for each sale, these producers are then eligible to be overall winner for the season.

An encouragement award is also presented recognising a client who, although not a prize winner, has demonstrated commitment and passion to the industry as a whole.

Guests also heard from a number of speakers, including Elders NSW general manager, Bill Frew, last year's winner, Bruce McLeish, and editor of Wool Record, Jonathon Dyson.

Moxham Pastoral Co from Guyra was overall winner for the 06/07 season winning a berth on the next Grower Tour of China to be conducted in April 2008.



Josie Walton, Millers Creek Station, Willow Tree, winner of N08N with Greg Andrews, Elders Premier Wool NSW manager and Craig Brennan, Elders Newcastle wool marketing manager.

Major awards and winners and place getters for the individual sales were as follows:

OVERALL WINNER: Moxham Pastoral Co

ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD: AD & JM Cameron

SALE: N08N

- 1 Millers Creek Station
- 2 Ascot Park Partners
- 3 H M, J A & T J Schaefer

SALE: N12N

- 1 Winterbourne Pastoral Company
- 2 The Sutherland Partnership
- 3 Carbean Pastoral Company
- 3 Heroic Pastoral Co



Rob Dugdale, manager for Moxham Pastoral Co, Guyra, overall winners of the Elders Clip of the Sale for season 06/07.

SALE: N16N

- 1 P R & C E Ivey
- 2 G R Clark & Sons
- 3 Yalgoo Partnership
- 3 Europambela Grazing Co Pty Ltd

SALE: N19N

- 1 Moxham Pastoral Co
- 2 D R & B I Cameron
- 3 A D & J M Cameron

SALE: N22N

- 1 G D & W L Baxter
- 2 J A & N N Cox
- 3 H N & R J Sanderson

SALE: N34N

- 1 J P Clark
- 2 H M, J A & T J Schaefer
- 3 Orungal Pastoral Co
- 3 L N & G J Levingston



Encouragement award winners, Adrian and Joe Cameron.

Livestock - Buy & Sell OnLine

OnLine Livestock has become a major source for livestock and livestock information throughout Australia.

Currently undergoing an update, it will offer a full directory of businesses and contacts, a forum, news, events area, auctions and sales, and national classifieds for livestock.

OnLine Livestock came about when property owners, Phill and Kylie Moores, found information was scattered and never easy to find in one location. Frustrated, they decided to start such a venture.

"The idea was to create a one-stop shop, allowing advertisers and viewers to easily buy, sell or source information at the one location," Mrs Moores said.

Advertisers have the choice of a one-off monthly advertisement for \$20 or a \$200 annual subscription allowing unlimited advertising for any amount of livestock.

The yearly subscription also offers a profile page to advertisers, set up like a directory system.

"Here you can place information about you, your farm or property, and of course your livestock," Mrs Moores said.

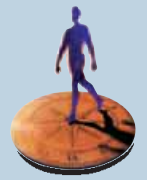
The new revamped Online Livestock Super Site will have its official launch in February 2008, but will be available online by the end of 2007.

As a special promotion and until further notice, OnLine Livestock (see ad page 7) is offering free listings to readers of *The Top Sire* for all livestock classifieds.

Visit www.onlinelivestock.com.au

Education's vital role

Young farmers see bright future



Rabobank

Knowledge, business skills and sharing experiences are vital for success in a volatile agricultural environment according to a group of leading young farmers who say they see opportunity and a bright future for themselves in the industry.

The group was made up of 36 of Australia and New Zealand's most promising young farmers, who had gathered in Christchurch to attend Rabobank's second Farm Managers Program (FMP) held last month.

Among the key challenges that the participants - who came from as far as Port Hedland, Western Australia and Te Anau in the South Island - identified as looming large in their futures were globalisation, labour management, technological advancement, diversification, the scale of farming and the importance of environmental image.



FMP participant, Bruce Wickham and Ben Russell, Rabobank's general manager rural New Zealand at the FMP graduation dinner in Cashmere.

Each of these challenges also presented an opportunity according to the group, providing they had the skills necessary to capitalise on it and a willingness to embrace change – something Charlie Mackinnon, operations manager of family sheep and cattle business Kaladbro Pastoral Co, Victoria, said would remain a constant challenge in the agricultural industry going forward.

“You have to evolve and adapt in this business or you are going to fail. There is certainly a bright future if you can embrace change and look for the opportunity it brings; that's something that was really reinforced at the FMP - it was life changing.

“The course really reaffirmed my positive view of agriculture.



Hugh Ball, Moree, NSW, Charlie Mackinnon, Casterton, Vic, Richard Gee, Fingal, Tas, Luke Moody, Gore, South Island, NZ, Craig Slack, Emerald, Qld, Hugh Cruikshank, Coolamon, NSW and Doug Brown, Cromwell, South Island, NZ.

Sitting in a room with like-minded people who are young, intelligent, positive and driven really gave me a kick along,” Mr Mackinnon said.

Education is an area that Mr Mackinnon thinks could be emphasised more for young farmers as they grapple with the challenges of working within family businesses, adapting to technological advancement and meeting changing consumer demands.

“Because the nature of this business changes so rapidly – and the pace of change will only increase – I see education as vitally important. Education is an empowering way to prepare for the future and to secure as much control over the outcomes for your business as possible,” he says.

Over the week, the group participated in sessions led by business experts on topics such as business planning, people management, financial management, time management and succession planning, with the content of each session developed and presented in such a way that it was directly relevant to young farmers. Group projects and an interactive environment also provided the opportunity for networking and the sharing of ideas between the Australian and New Zealand farmers.

The first course of its kind in Australia and New Zealand, the Rabobank Farm Managers Program has been developed to fill a void in the industry, providing participants with a forum to develop business skills and establish a valuable network with other experienced young farmers within the course.

For more information on the Rabobank Farm Managers Program, please contact Kobie Tesoriero, business programs manager on (02) 8115 2241 or by email bmp@rabobank.com

Rabobank Australia is one of Australia's leading rural lenders and a significant provider of business and corporate banking and financial services to the Australian food and agribusiness sector. For information phone 1300 303033.

Shaping the Wool Industry

Time Out with M200 Ambassador Liz Foster



Liz Foster's involvement in the wool industry spans two worlds – that of her own experience growing up as a woolgrower's daughter and as a partner in her husband's wool enterprise to the world of high fashion and catwalks.

For more than 23 years Liz has been one of the key drivers of The Australian Wool Fashion Awards (TAWFA) conducted annually in Armidale and supported by Australian Wool Innovation Limited (AWI). Initially taking on what was described as a "secretarial role", Liz is now TAWFA's managing director.

She has seen enormous changes over the last 23 years, with both the numbers of entries and industry recognition of the Awards' growing significance

"Initially the awards attracted more home-based craftspeople. For example people would knit garments and it was more of a craft competition," explained Liz.

"Now the Awards have become a major wool industry event and are designed to showcase the use of Merino wool by national and international fashion designers and students."

A turning point for the Awards was the involvement of notable fashion designers as judges, starting in the late 1980s when Jenny Kee, a designer synonymous with Australian fashion and the use of wool was the Awards' first "celebrity" judge.

"After that the industry perception of the Awards and the calibre of entries started to change," said Liz.

"Once we had a name, we had the hope of younger people being involved and changing the way young designers viewed wool. We were fighting a negative image of wool - wool was seen as itchy and people had memories of school days and uniforms. We were trying to make it a fibre young people would embrace.

"It has been a long road to educate students about wool and to get the fibre into secondary schools and fashion colleges."

TAWFA now generates a huge amount of interest and because it has a number of categories, the Awards attract entries from young and upcoming designers, fashion colleges and high schools.

There is also a special category targeting professional/semi-professional designers which gives entrants access to the newest fabric available through AWI.

"The relationship with AWI gives us the opportunity to provide designers with the latest in fabrics and that category results in some fabulous designs."

Liz says there have been many highlights during her time at the helm – the growing number of entries, the involvement of younger people, "big-name" judges and giving people a start in the fashion industry.

"Through the Awards we have had many people go on to find employment in leading fashion houses and it has been great to be part of that."

Liz also has her sights set on one more goal – commercialisation of Award entries.

"That is the one thing we haven't achieved and I would really like to reach a stage where we are able to market some of our garments."

Liz and her husband Don live on 1205 acres near Armidale and run 3000 superfine Merinos.

"Wool is our life," she says, adding that both are fifth generation woolgrowers.

"Don has built our enterprise up, and has really achieved his vision for the place with the quality and micron that suits our farm. I would have to say that wool has been very good to us through good years and bad."

Liz's vision for the industry is linked to both aspects of her life – her role with the Awards and as a woolgrower.

"I would like to see wool come back, as it was in the boom days, to being a very profitable commodity for woolgrowers. Linked to that I would like to see wool marketed more smartly."

"I guess that is my vision with the wool awards, to try to put wool out there. When I was growing up everything was wool, but wool didn't keep up with other fibre trends.

"However that is changing now through research and development. People want a product that they can throw in the dryer, that doesn't burn, is warm and dry and cool. Wool has all these qualities now and that is the message we have to get to young people.

"Through the Awards I hope I am playing a part in educating young consumers and designers about wool and encouraging young people to use and wear Australian Merino wool."

The 2008 Australian Wool Fashion Awards Presentation Parade will be held on Saturday 1 March in New England Girls' School Equestrian Centre, Uralla Road, Armidale. For further information contact Liz Foster, ph (02) 6771 2733.

M200 NSW Ambassadors

The eight Australian industry ambassadors who have assisted in taking the story of 200 years of Australian Merino wool to the world include woolgrowers, a champion shearer, Australian wool fashion awards director (Liz Foster, featured on this page), and other industry representatives.

Those from NSW are Dalton woolgrower, *Kelly Dowling* (featured in the April-June 2007 issue of *The Top Sire*); Andrew McFarland from Oxley Station in the Riverina; and Tony Overton a woolgrower from Walcha.

Australian Sheep & Wool Show Bendigo 2007 – NSW Results

Merryville, Boorowa

Grand Champion Fine Wool Merino Ewe
Grand Champion Fine/Medium Wool Merino Ewe
Champion Fine Wool Ewe
Champion Open Fine Wool Ewe
Champion Fine/Medium Wool Ewe
Champion Open Fine/Medium Wool Ewe
Champion March Shorn Ultrafine Wool Ewe
Reserve Champion Open Ultrafine Wool Ewe
Champion March Shorn Ultrafine Ram
Reserve Champion Ultrafine Wool Ewe

Roseville Park, Dubbo

Grand Champion Fine Wool Merino Ram
Champion Fine Wool Ram
Champion Open Fine Wool Ram
Reserve Champion Open Fine Wool Ram *
Reserve Champion Fine Ram *

Grathlyn, Hargraves

Grand Champion Ultrafine Merino Ewe
Champion Ultrafine Wool Ewe
Champion Open Ultrafine Wool Ewe
Champion March Shorn Ultrafine Ewe

Uardry & Sims Uardry, Hay

Australian Champion All Purpose Ram *
Champion All Purpose March Shorn Ram
Grand Champion March Shorn Merino Ram
Champion March Shorn Fine Medium Ewe *
Champion March Shorn Strong Wool Ram *
Res Champion March Shorn Strong Wool Ram

Bocoble, Mudgee

Champion Ultrafine Poll Ewe *
Res Champion Aug Shorn Superfine Poll Ewe
Champion Superfine March Shorn Poll Ram *
Reserve Champion Superfine Poll Ram
Champion March Shorn Fine Wool Poll Ram
Reserve Champion Fine Wool Poll Ram

Borambil, Balldale

Grand Champion Restricted Merino Ram
Res Champion Restricted Fine/Medium Ram **
Champion Restricted Medium Wool Ram

Demondrille, Harden

Champion March Shorn Fine Wool Ewe

Kilburnie, The Rock

Champion Restricted Fine Wool Ram

Conrayn, Berridale

Group of Three Merinos

Pemcaw, Dunedoo

Reserve Champion Fine/Medium Wool Ewe
Reserve Champion Open Fine/Medium Wool Ewe
Reserve Champion Medium Wool Ram

Auchen Dhu Park, Uralla

Reserve Grand Champion Junior Ram
Champion Junior Ultrafine Ram
Reserve Champion Open Ultrafine Wool Ram

Darriwell, Trundle

Reserve Champion Open Strong Wool Ewe *
Reserve Champion Strong Wool Ewe *

Bullamalita, Goulburn

Champion August Shorn Superfine Poll Ram
Champion Superfine Wool Poll Ram

* = consecutive year award

The 2007 Merino results for NSW studs at Bendigo are reprinted above as the original list we obtained contained omissions and inaccuracies.

2008 SYDNEY ROYAL SHEEP & FLEECE

109th Sydney Sheep Show

Wednesday 26 March - Saturday 29 March 2008

Venue - Bruce Pavilion

- Merinos & Poll Merinos -

Mid-Side Sampling 11 to 25 January 2008
Arrivals Wednesday 26 March by 9.00 a.m.
Inspections Wednesday 26 March - on arrival
and from 8.00 a.m. to 12 noon

Judging Timetable

Wednesday 26 March from 1.00 p.m.
NSW Merino Pair of the Year & Junior Classes
Thursday 27 March from 8.00 a.m.
All other classes
Friday 28 March from 10.00 a.m.
Grand Champions, Best Merino Ram, Best Merino
Ewe, Supreme Merino
Bruce Merriman Memorial Trophy
Otway Falkiner Cup and Stonehaven Cup
Judging of Merino Objective Measurement Class

NSW SMBA AGM Friday 28 March from 5.30 p.m.

Saturday 29 March from 2.30 p.m.
Official Opening and Prize Presentation

RAS/ASC State Merino Judging Competition

Friday 28 March from 1.00 p.m.

FCAS (National) Merino Judging Competition

Friday 28 March from 3.00 p.m.

RAS/ASC State Merino Fleece Judging Competition

Saturday 29 March from 8.00 a.m.

FCAS (National) Merino Fleece Judging Competition

Saturday 29 March from 10.30 a.m.

Saturday 29 March from 5.00 p.m. Departures

- Fleeces -

Delivery of Fleeces to RAS

By Friday 29 February 2008

Fleece Judging

Tuesday 25 March 2008

Sheep and Fleece Entries Close

Wednesday 6 February 2008

For entry information contact Pat Cooper, RAS Sheep
Section Manager, ph (02) 9704 1227, fax (02) 9704 1122,
email pcooper@rasnsw.com.au

RAS of NSW Locked Bag 4317
Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2127

Welcome ...

To newly registered NSW studs:

- **GUNDARIMBAH** F No 5052
G (Spike) Orr, "Wilga", Back Trundle Road, Parkes
- **GRASSY CREEK POLL** P F No 1366
M K Corkhill, "Grassy Creek", Rugby

And re-registration

- **WESTRAY** F No 3007
R O Cannon & L M Tremain, "Westray", Peak Hill

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2008 Don Brown Memorial Merino Ewe Competition - Condobolin District

Monday 18 February & Tuesday 19 February
Presentation Dinner - Tuesday 19 February

Judges

- Andries Pienaar, Klipplaatsfontein Merinos, South Africa
- Roger Polkinghorne, Charinga and Banavie studs, Vic.
- Associate - Daniel Rayner, Pomanara, Sallys Flat

Contact: Carol-Ann Malouf, ph (02) 6895 2274/ 0427 119 535

Successful Stud Changes Hands

Stuart, David and Karen McBurnie of Weealla Merino stud, Balladoran, have purchased the entire Roxanna Poll Merino stud from the Seis family at Dunedoo

Roxanna is a well known Poll Merino stud, established in 1967. It has taken out many broad ribbons as well as exported to Argentina.

Stuart McBurnie said, "The chance to purchase a stud as a going concern is a rare opportunity and we saw it as a chance to expand our business to include both horned and Poll Merinos.

Roxanna will be run at the family's Balladoran properties and will be separate to Weealla stud.

The McBurnies will continue to show Roxanna Polls at Sydney, Dubbo National and local shows.

THE TOP SIRE – Newsletter of The NSW Stud Merino Breeders' Association Ltd – ABN 95 002 659 896

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The opinions expressed in contributed copy in this newsletter are those of the contributor, not necessarily the Association.

Future Industry Leaders

Recently the NSW SMBA called nominations for the second biennial National Leadership Course for industry participants aged between 18 and 35. Four positions were available to nominees from NSW in the course which is to be conducted in Clare, SA, in February 2008. Sponsors include Australian Wool Innovation and the State Merino breeding associations and session delivery is by Rural Directions Pty Ltd.

In fair and equitable assessment, all names and identifying references for the eight NSW applicants were removed from their applications before being presented to a panel of five judges.

The aims of the course include the development of leadership skills and promotion and nurturing of future industry leaders. Ideally, at the end of the four-day course they will have developed an action plan for the leadership roles they will take within the industry.

It is worth observing that the applicants, all with a passion for the Merino industry, list as the most critical issues, marketing, rural skills shortage, drought and climate change, mulesing, fibre contamination and shedding sheep and education. Present industry leaders should note that these are the paramount issues on the mind of the upcoming generation of leaders.

A short profile follows of the four nominees who have been selected by the SMBA to represent NSW with a very brief summary of the two issues they perceive to be most critical in the industry, along with their vision.

James Armstrong, 25, is stud overseer for Charles Mills (Uardry) Pty Ltd, Hay where he has been employed for the past three years.



In 2004 he completed a degree in Agricultural Science at the University of Sydney, majoring in Animal Production and wrote his thesis on "Examining Wool Follicle Development in Merino Sheep Skin." A member of the Hay Sheep Show committee, he has also judged recently at a number of area shows.

While James sees the Merino industry as a complex one, he believes that

the two most crucial issues presently impacting on the industry are wool marketing and the pressures on the industry of prolonged drought. Not only does he see a need to generate effective product marketing but also campaigns that combat the negatives of issues such as animal welfare and mulesing.

His vision is to have an industry that attracts the younger generation with confidence, is not shackled by tradition and inefficiencies along the production chain, and that can supply an innovative and fresh product that is directly inline with consumer desire.

Matthew Coddington, 34, is a stud Merino breeder with his wife, Cherie, on their Roseville Park Merino stud of 1950ha, south of Dubbo. He is active on a number of industry bodies including the Sheep Genetics Advisory Group and has served as industry representative on several boards as well as having been a successful 2007 DAFF Pathways to Rural Leadership Course applicant.



Matthew sees the two most critical issues facing the industry as the rural skills shortage and lack of research on the impact of climate change, this latter including water resource management, drought resistant plant species and farming system innovations to ensure that the rural industry can remain viable for the next generation.

He would like to see a truly professionally run industry, conducted as a business, a focussed and innovative entity that is not held back by tradition. He would also like to see fixed price contracts, greater information-sharing, alliances with other countries, wool bodies and retailers, and better labelling of quality products.

Stephen Lindsay, 33, is assistant manager of his family's Cora Lynn Merino stud at Peak Hill, a mixed grazing and cropping enterprise with Merino breeding the prime focus. He



is also a member of the Peak Hill Show Society, the MidState Merino Field Days and the Dubbo National Ram Sale Association.

The critical issues that Stephen sees in the industry are those of mulesing and fibre contamination. While he sees a number of contributing problems to either side of the mulesing debate he also offers suggestions to address this issue, such as lobbying for subsidies or price reductions in currently available products; grower education and further trials of new and alternative options; and education on the 'green' benefits of the Merino.

Grower education is also a facet of the solutions Stephen sees to the problem of fibre contamination.

Ultimately, Stephen would like to see an industry that continues to grow as a highly regarded, united, results focused, highly educated and driven industry.

Ben Watts, 32, is a stud Merino breeder from Molong who also works off-farm running commercial properties. In 2005, while managing a 3500 head fine wool breeding programme, he refined a management programme to produce quality wool to suit specific mill orders at premium prices, travelling to Italy to further his knowledge. Ben's mix of stud breeding and the input of woollen mills mixed with commercial operations allows him to see both sides of our industry.



Since 2001 he has represented the Australian industry on the board of the World Sheep and Wool Congress and was instrumental in placing Australia's successful bid for the conduct of the 2010 World Sheep and Wool Congress to be held in Australia.

Ben sees the lack of marketing in premium retail sectors and a need to increase education on production trends and efficiencies as two industry challenges.

Ben's vision for the industry would see one that is ultimately both financially and environmentally sustainable, and that provides consistent returns to growers through stable prices and demand.