



ASHMORE
WHITE SUFFOLKS
Genetics that Perform

NEWSLETTER

August 2016

Ashmore JIVET underway

We are extremely excited to be conducting a JIVET project in collaboration with SARDI and University of Adelaide. JIVET stands for juvenile in vitro embryo transfer and involves flushing eggs out of 4-8 week old ewe lambs, fertilizing these eggs with semen in a test tube and transplanting the viable embryos into recipient mothers.

The 10 ewe lambs that will be used as donors were lambs born out of our Embryo Transfer program and select 2015 drop Ashmore ewe lambs. They have been chosen using predicted ASBVs based on their parents as well as assessment of structure and breed type. They have also been screened for genetic diversity using a selection tool called MateSel to ensure that we don't flush lambs that are all highly related.

We have also taken DNA from these lambs to get a more accurate early prediction of performance for production and eating quality traits using the Sheep CRC 12K SNP chip. By the end of August these lambs will have been flushed, eggs fertilized and the best embryos transplanted into surrogate mothers.

JIVET technology is a game changer for ram breeders in terms of shortening the time between generations and speeding up genetic progress. The first lambs will drop in February 2017 and when they are 4-6 weeks old we will do a second JIVET round where the best of those lambs will be flushed. All up, we plan to do 3 cycles of JIVET each taking 6 months so by the time the first donors who are currently 6 weeks old are 18 months old, they will have progeny, grand progeny and great grand progeny. Hard to believe but that is what is possible with the JIVET technology – extremely exciting stuff!



A six week old JIVET candidate...she will have 3 generations of lambs by the time she is 18 months old...a superstar in the making!

In terms of predicted genetic merit, the ewe lamb donors sit in the top 1% on LAMBPLAN as do the sires we are joining them to, so the progeny will be on the cutting edge of performance for terminals in Australia. By the time we get to the 3rd JIVET flush they will be the leaders of the pack in Australia - 2 years ahead of time.

There are also research questions being addressed within this work. SARDI are attempting to assess whether flushing lambs at younger ages (4-5 weeks) is more successful than lambs that are slightly older (6-8 weeks). University of Adelaide are looking to test whether a blood marker can be used as a predictive tool for how well a lamb will flush, hence being a useful pre-selection tool to remove lambs which may produce nil or very few eggs.



Blood being sampled for testing by Dave Kleeman of SARDI

Flock Rebuild

Rebuilding the ewe flock has been a major priority since the fire to ensure we produce enough lambs in 2016 to service demand in 2017.

We set ourselves the goal to maintain the number of lambs we produce as well as maintain or improve the genetic performance of these lambs compared to 2015, which was an incredibly ambitious target given we lost all of our adult breeding ewes in the Pinery fire during November 2015.

At the time of writing we had tagged 650 lambs and expect over 700 stud lambs in total, hence we will achieve our goal of exceeding 2015 drop numbers which is a major achievement.

Furthermore, early indications are that the performance of these lambs are expected to exceed that of the 2015 drop which again is a significant achievement given our situation at the start of 2016.

To achieve this we spared no expense investing in three ET programs, three AI programs and now three cycles of JIVET as well as sourcing breeding ewes from top studs, using semen from our top rams as well as the best across Australia. We have left nothing to chance to make sure the 2016 drop are the best we could possibly produce and ensure we don't slip in terms of being one of the leading performance studs in Australia.



Ashmore ewe lamb delivering the goods at 12 months of age.



The 2016 annual sale is going to be our biggest and best ever lineup!

2016 Sale Preview

Our annual on-property ram sale will be on Monday 26th September. We will present approximately 180 flock rams bred by the top performance sires in Australia.

Our top 180 rams average 204 on the Carcase plus index which put them all in the top 10% of 2015 drop rams in Australia. This represents one of the highest performing flock ram sales in Australia.

Keeping abreast of all the LAMBPLAN ASBVs and indexes can be a challenge given that many clients only revisit this information once a year. With this in mind, if you would like some help interpreting the information or identifying which rams would best suit your situation, we would be only too happy to assist, please just give us a call.

All of the information you see in our sale catalogue is publicly available information and appears on the Sheep Genetics website. Additional indexes can also be found on the Sheep Genetics website or we can produce a customized catalogue with the specific information you are after – just let us know. We will also upload an excel version of the sale catalogue to our website.

Catalogues will be posted out in early September and uploaded to our website. We hope to see you on 26th September.

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