



**ASHMORE**  
**WHITE SUFFOLKS**  
 Genetics that Perform

# NEWSLETTER

## August 2017

### Welcome

Welcome to our August Newsletter, produced to keep our greatly valued clients informed with our latest developments and progress.

### Preview of Ashmore Ram Sales

Our two ram sales are fast approaching, creating a very busy, but stimulating period in our yearly work program. We have some extremely exciting high performance rams on offer this spring. The very top rams sit around 225 on the Lambplan Carcase Plus index, which puts them in the top 1% of all terminal rams. The average C+ index for each of our two sale teams is 200 placing at least half of our sale rams in the top 10% of all terminal sires.

Details of the two sales are:

#### Wasleys Sale

- At Ashmore, 1460 Wasleys Road, Wasleys
- 25<sup>th</sup> September 1pm, inspection from 11 am
- 160 rams
- Includes specially selected stud ram offering
- Average Carcase Plus index 200

#### Farrell Flat Sale

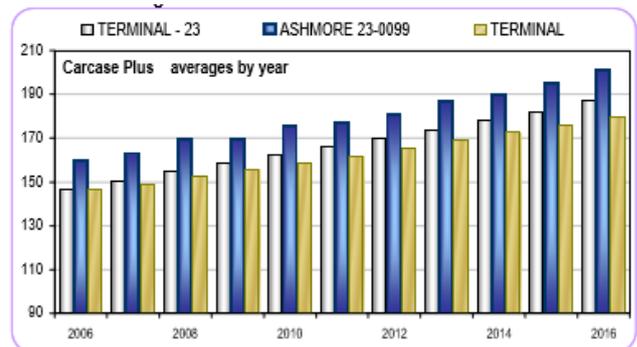
- At Wheetelände Ram Shed, Wheetelände Road, Farrell Flat
- 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1pm, inspection from 11 am
- 80 rams
- Strong in Wheetelände genetics
- Average Carcase plus index 200



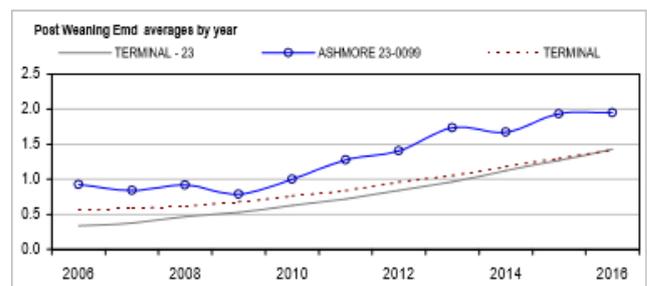
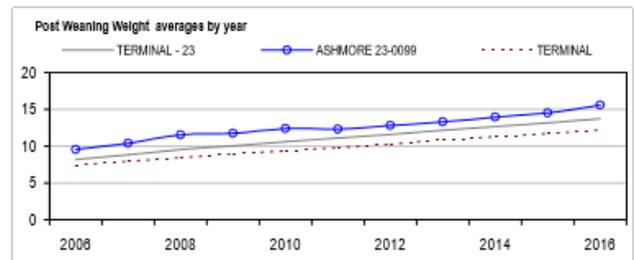
Catalogues available on our website from late August; hard copy posted in early September.

### Impressive rates of genetic gain

We pride ourselves on being ahead of the pack for measured and verifiable performance levels. The genetic trend for Carcase Plus shows that we are around 4 years ahead of an average White Suffolk flock and 5 years ahead of an average terminal flock.



Similar trends can be observed in the graphs below for the key traits of Post Weaning Weight and Post Weaning Eye Muscle Depth.



These performance levels give a clear advantage to any commercial producers who select them, translating into lambs that will grow faster than average; have more meat in the expensive cut areas than average; and overall the lambs are more profitable than average. Thus, they can put more money in your pockets.

[www.ashmorewhitesuffolks.com](http://www.ashmorewhitesuffolks.com)

## Our 2017 lambing is biggest yet

We are on the home stretch with our 2017 lambing. Over 800 lambs have been tagged and recorded at birth so far, with another 200 lambs expected in the remainder of August.

The ewes are currently lambing down at around 180%, driven by a large number of triplets (23% born triplet). Ewe lambs started to drop last week. The maternal strengths embedded in our genetics ensure these fertility levels create extra profits, and not extra problems!

We are proceeding with our second JIVET (Juvenile In-Vitro Embryo Transfer) program with the goal of further accelerating our genetic progress. This program will be carried out by Dr Simon Walker and the team at SARDI, on the best 6 ewe lambs out of our 2017 ET program, lambing down in June. We are hoping for and expect a better stick rate on the embryos than our initial program run a year ago.

Prior to conducting the test tube (*in-vitro*) fertilization of the eggs from our donors, the SARDI team extensively tests the semen for fertilization rate on eggs sourced from abattoir ovaries. Eleven elite rams were tested for fertilization rate. This yielded some very interesting results with the fertilization rate varying from the highest ram producing a 91% fertilization rate, down to the lowest with only 35% of eggs fertilized. Pleasingly for us, the 3 Ashmore rams in this test produced the 3 highest fertilization rates; 91% and 90% (x2), well above the average of 68%.



Dr Simon Walker and SARDI team harvesting eggs on 8 week old ewe lambs.

## DNA Parentage put to good use

Normally our paddock mating program has been with single sire joining; one ram running with a mob of ewes. Thus we know the sire pedigree for all the lambs from that mob.

This year, for the first time we conducted a syndicate joining; putting 6 rams out with 200 ewes. We did this as we had an outstanding sire team of with minimal inbreeding, plus it helped simplify an early joining during harvest.

At birth we tagged the lambs and recorded the dam pedigree as normal, but collected blood at tailing for DNA matching to identify the sire. This is all about making technology work for us and in this case, it really allowed us to manage our breeding program in a way that simply wasn't possible that long ago.



Blood cards collected at tailing for DNA Pedigree testing.

There were a couple of interesting observations to come out of this data. There was a genuine ram effect with the most virile ram (Ashmore 140120) siring 37% of lambs, while the poorest result was a ram siring only 8%. It also showed 42% of multiple birth lambs were from different sires out of the same ewe. This data really demonstrates what actually happens in commercial flocks each year with multiple sire paddock matings.

From a ram perspective, good conception rates are reliant on virile rams with plenty of good quality semen serving lots of ewes. Pleasingly and based on the data we have and supported by feedback from our clients, it seems our rams are producing the goods in that department.

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September - Ashmore Ram Sale - Wasleys - 160 rams**

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October - Ashmore Ram Sale - Farrell Flat – 80 rams**