



ASHMORE
WHITE SUFFOLKS
Genetics that Perform

NEWSLETTER

April 2016



The 2015 drop ram lambs the day after the fire – despite being in a paddock that was totally burnt they were largely unscathed!

Pinery Fire Update

By now, many of you would be aware that hundreds of farms across the mid north of SA were burnt out in the Pinery fire in November 2015. The local landscape will be changed forever and our hearts go out to those families that lost loved ones, homes and more.

Every hectare of our place was burnt in a matter of minutes, and while fences, infrastructure and machinery can be replaced, our biggest loss from the fire was undoubtedly our ewe flock.

On a positive note, most of our 2015 drop lambs survived the fire, meaning we will hold our annual on property ram sale on 26th September as planned and the ewe lambs provide us a solid foundation on which to rebuild our genetics. These sheep have been running on agistment at Farrel Flat since November.

We have been overwhelmed with many calls, emails, texts providing tremendous support and offers of help from friends and clients.

The community spirit, kindness and generosity shown since the fires has been phenomenal and has been a major contributor to our speedy recovery.

To those of you that have contributed fodder, fencing materials and other resources to our rebuild, thank you so very much.

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.

Our goal is to maintain the number of lambs we produce as well as maintain or improve the genetic performance of these lambs compared to 2015, which is an incredibly ambitious target.

The highlight of the rebuild of our breeding ewe flock is without doubt the embryo transfer (ET) program. Six top studs across Australia have donated 4-5 of their very best ewes to assist with our rebuild. We flushed embryos from these ewes in January, February and March.



Embryo Transfer by Margie Trowbridge, Brecon Breeders

All up 300 embryos were produced from the program from some of the top ewes in Australia joined to some of the best rams including semen from our own top sires that perished in the fire. The progeny to come out of this are predicted to be some of the highest performing White Suffolks in Australia in 2016!

Alongside this we have invested heavily in quality females at dispersal and mated ewe sales, as well as acquiring ewes from selected studs. The focus has been on studs with a strong focus on LAMBPLAN performance and good data quality.

To optimise the replacement ewes purchased, we have employed as much reproductive technology as possible to multiply the best animals faster, largely using Ashmore semen. In total we have run three artificial insemination programs, three ET programs and are developing a juvenile in vitro embryo transfer (JIVET) program with Adelaide University on some of the very best 2016 progeny to further accelerate genetic gain.

The fires have presented us with a genuine challenge but we are confident we will achieve our goal of producing the same number of lambs in 2016 as well as maintain or improve the genetic performance of these lambs compared to 2015.

Animal Health Protocol

Once all the sheep return to our farm in April, we will be taking every step to ensure that we don't compromise our high health status.

With only bare soil in our paddocks until feed begins to grow, we have built a set of confinement feeding pens to house stock, monitor condition score and feeding and allow pastures to establish.

With sheep returning from a number of different properties we will be implementing a stringent biosecurity induction program to every sheep that comes home. This was developed by Dr Greg Johnson a leading vet on Kangaroo Island.

Actions will include:

- Johnes – all sheep have been sourced from MN3 accredited properties so the risk is very low plus many of these flocks vaccinate with Gudair. This year we will vaccinate all unvaccinated sheep with Gudair and continue this as standard practice going forward.
- Worms – all sheep will be confined for several weeks allowing foreign worms to be concentrated in the confinement area (which will be burnt later in the year) and drenched with a combination of drenches with high efficacy. To ensure we don't create a drench resistance problem, we will graze our own lambs on pastures first to create worm refugia so that the worms from the foreign sheep have our worms to breed which have low drench resistance levels.
- Weeds – sheep with weed seeds not present on our property will be shorn on arrival.
- Lice – all sheep will be treated off shears for lice even though the risk is very low.
- Footrot – all sheep will be inspected for benign footrot by PIRSA upon arrival and as a precautionary measure a footbath protocol (15 mins x 5 days) will be implemented on sheep from higher risk areas.

Ashmore Team Expanding

We are delighted to announce there is a new team member at Ashmore – Elke Fischer is now home, safe and really well.

Elke was born last year just before our ram sale, at 24 weeks gestation. After 129 days in hospital in both Townsville and Adelaide, she finally came home on Boxing Day and has been a joy for the whole family. It won't be long before she is out helping tag lambs with her sisters.



Elke Florence Fischer – from little things...

Be sure to mark **Monday 26th of September** on your calendar, the date of our **Annual Ram Sale – this year 180 rams will be offered**. All the very best for the coming season – we have a feeling 2016 is going to be a good year!

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