



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

# NEWSLETTER

## April 2018

### Welcome

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

### 2018 Joining Heats Up

We have conducted joining of adult ewes in January including an Artificial Insemination program to benchmark our rams against other top sires in the breed as well an embryo transfer program on our top 12 ewes. Despite doing everything by the text book, e.g. flushing ewes with lupins to increase twinning and teasing two weeks prior to rams going in to stimulate ovulation, we still achieved a really disappointing result based on preg scan results in early April shown below.

Dry	Single	Twin	Triplet
38%	34%	27%	2%

In consultation with our vet, we believe the cause of low conception and relatively low levels of twins in the January joining was due to heat stress.

There is published research showing that temperatures greater than 32°C can impact on the success of embryo implantation.

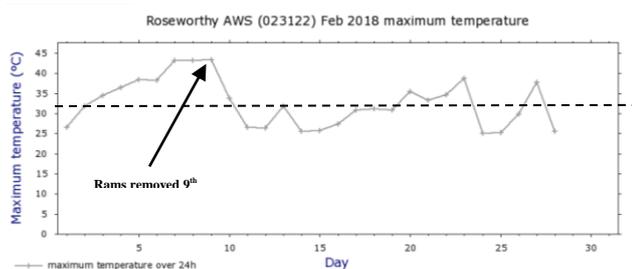
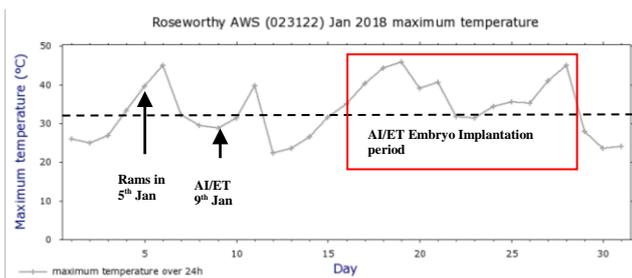
above 32°C including 10 days above 40°C for Jan/Feb – in this instance we had 25% ewes scan dry.

We are hearing mixed scan results – some excellent from early joining where temperatures were relatively mild during that period, and some not so good from later joinings. If you joined during Jan/early Feb and achieved poor scanning results, the heat could explain some of that result.

All of the ewes were run with rams during March so most of the dry ewes should be pregnant from that period, so we will have plenty of rams to supply in 2019. Our back-up ram team is exceptional also, all rams are in the top 5% of the breed on the Lamb Eating Quality (LEQ) index.



Ashmore rams LOVE their job!!!



During the 35 day joining period there were 26 days above 32°C including 10 days above 40°C. A similar thing happened in 2014 with 29 days

### Data, data and more data...

While the 2017 drop is our largest ever, it would also have to be the most intensively measured cohort of lambs that we have produced – around 12,000 records in total. Whilst we enjoy data collection, sampling poo out of 600 lambs isn't super stimulating, nor is putting a tape around 330 pairs of rams balls on a 39°C day! But having electronic tags, a powerful data base (BreedElite) and a sheep handler (Clipex) make *most* of these jobs fast, efficient and believe it or not...quite enjoyable!

The value of accurate data can't be underestimated leading to more reliable estimates of performance through highly accurate ASBVs. Not all studs are committed to data collection, opting for short cuts either in numbers of animals measured (only measure the males or just the 'good ones') or less traits are

measured especially the expensive or difficult to measure traits (birth weight, WEC, DNA, eating quality). So when you purchase an Ashmore ram you know their performance is backed by a power of data.

Data/Trait	2017 drop animals measured
Birth weight, Sire + Dam Pedigree, Date of Birth, Birth type, rear type, mothering ability, udder structure	968
Weaning weight	793
Post weaning weight	742
Post weaning fat and eye muscle depth	640
Post weaning worm egg count	643
Structure – feet, legs, wool type, breed type	640
Post weaning scrotal circumference	329
Blood for DNA – SNP chip or parentage verification	270
Carcase weight, GR fat, Marbling %, Tenderness	80



Loins from the eating quality trial

## Ashmore represent industry

Troy and Nette have made a conscious effort to be involved in a range of industry activities to provide input in to the future direction of important initiatives and committees. A quick summary of these is outlined below.

Nette sits on South Australian Sheep Advisory Group (SASAG) who control the levy funded Sheep Industry Fund and advise the SA Agriculture Minister on sheep industry matters. She also sits on the new Sheep Producers Australia Animal Health and Welfare Committee.

Troy has recently joined the Sheep Genetics Advisory Committee which is essentially the board of Sheep Genetics providing governance

to the Sheep Genetics management team that run LAMBPLAN and MERINOSELECT.

Troy was also recently chosen to represent the lamb industry on the National Livestock Genetics Consortium which provide recommendations to MLA and its Board for funding decisions in the genetics research space for sheep and beef. This year the group oversaw \$50m worth of research proposals.

These roles will certainly keep Ashmore on the cutting edge of what is happening in the sheep genetics research landscape.

Troy is also running a research project on behalf of the Superwhites ram breeding group which is looking to speed up rates of genetic progress in eating quality traits. To date the project has seen blood cards collected on over 2000 rams which will improve the accuracy of marbling and tenderness ASBVs for those rams. The project has also slaughtered 300 cull animals from selected studs including Ashmore, to get carcass data and loin samples to measure marbling levels and tenderness. All of this data will feed into LAMBPLAN to improve the accuracy of ASBVs and in doing so speed up the time it takes to make progress.

## 2018 Field Day and Ram Sale

We will be holding an on property field day on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September and our ram sale will be on 24<sup>th</sup> September.

The purpose of the field day is for clients to inspect the ram sale team in a relaxed manner with a lamb snag and a beer, and with no pressure. For those clients who are busy on 24<sup>th</sup> September such as shearing, we hope that this is convenient alternative format to view the rams before the sale.

At our ram sale we will be offering 200 industry leading rams as well as 20 selected rams which are all stud sire candidates. We are super pleased with the performance of this year's team with the average of the flock rams sitting over 200 on Carcass Plus index and the stud candidates averaging 218 with a top of 223. The stud offering includes a maternal brother (170293) to the top price \$13,000 ram last year.

**Ashmore Field Day, Wasleys – Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September  
220 rams with C+ average over 200 on display**

**Ashmore Ram Sale, Wasleys - Monday 24<sup>th</sup> September  
[www.ashmorewhitesuffolks.com](http://www.ashmorewhitesuffolks.com)**