



Kelvale News

SRS®

Summer 2017

Hope this finds you well and that your season is looking after you.

2016 ended for us with record annual rainfall since we moved to Keith in 2005, with more than 630mm. An interesting fact, if you added the previous two years rainfall (2015 & 2014) it doesn't amount to what we received last year. The country has responded well and the stock are certainly in great condition as a result. We would be really happy with an average rainfall year to follow up.

Our Lucerne seed crops are going well considering the rainfall during summer. We have managed to have enough hot weather to stress the plants sufficiently to hopefully get a good seed set. Time will tell and we hope that the seed market stabilises following last year's record prices. The bees have been working

and the bee keepers have had an up and down summer with honey. When they have a great year the Lucerne seed crops usually struggle and vice versa.

We are excited this year to be heading to Tasmania in May for the Agfest, where we will put together a display. Our progeny are excelling in Tasmania and we see this as a potential growth area for ourselves. If your going to any of the events listed in this newsletter make sure you come and say hello.

With the livestock and wool markets going so well it is a great time to be in the merino industry. All in all we are hopeful for a great 2017.

Below is a photo of Lucerne pasture in Spring 2016, amazing what a difference rain makes!



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Property update

Well what a season we have had, it is great to see what a difference it makes when we get spring rains. The country at Emu Flat has great cover on it thanks to low stock numbers due to the last couple of dry years. The rest that lower stock number has created will do the country a lot of good. Raising organic matter on the sandy soils and it also gives us an opportunity to renovate more paddocks as we don't need them to graze. We have been claying (adding clay into sandy area) for a couple of years with great results. Following the clay spreading and incorporating we sow a crop of Saio Oats as a clean up crop then sow our pasture mix into the stubble. It is quite expensive but we are achieving high pasture density on sand hills that previously had to be managed very carefully so as not to blow away. This together with water and fence restructuring we are able to control our stocking rates on these paddocks.

We are gradually getting our paddock size down to 10Ha which is giving us great ability to manage our grazing pressure. Currently we have a mob of 570 ewes grazing a 10Ha paddock every 4 days. This stops us from over grazing and under grazing different soil types within the same paddock. It also stops the sheep from camping on sand hills protecting our pasture. Our goal is to have 30-35, 10Ha paddocks for a mob of 800 to 1,000 ewes to rotate through. This will allow for rest periods between 60 –100 days before stock are back into paddocks.

The other change that has helped us significantly in the past few months has been the purchase of a neighbouring property, Lucerne Valley. Of the 1,000 acres, 250 are irrigated for Lucerne Seed with the remainder of the property having well established pastures. We are running all our young stock on the property, where they are thriving. Our ram hoggets are over 8kgs heavier than this time last year and our ewe



hoggets averaging over 46.5kg for the entire drop. We have mated the ewe hoggets in the hope of boosting lamb numbers. It will be interesting to see how this goes as they were only 7 ½ months old and the rams were only in with them for 4 ½ weeks.

Our goal, long term is to run about 2-2,500 ewes on Emu Flat and use Lucerne Valley to grow out our sale rams and replacement young stock. We also have a pasture renovation program on Lucerne Valley, where we will sow about 45Ha of new Lucerne/Chicory mix this year. Annually we aim to renovate 120Ha of country over both properties.



Above is the paddock that has been clay spread last year before the clay was incorporated and the top photo is newly established pasture mix sown last year on clayed country.

See the Kelvale display at the following events during 2017.

Agfest Tasmania

Thursday, Friday & Saturday May 4th-6th

Eyre Peninsula Pre-Sale Expo, Wudinna

Monday July 10th

Merino South East Field Days, Keith

Wednesday July 19th

Hamilton Sheepvention

Monday & Tuesday August 7th & 8th

THURSDAY AUGUST 17th —Ram Sale at Keith

Ram Sale 2016

What a fantastic day! It was great to see the average price come back from 2015 to around \$1800 and passing a few of the rams in. We believe that our rams are affordable and everyone can have a good selection when this happens. The mini auction served its purpose well and clients are finding a few gems amongst the pens.

Thanks again to all the support our clients continue to give us and welcome to new clients who have purchased for the first time. Our genetics are performing well out in the field which gives us confidence to keep pushing to improve our product even further.

Auctionsplus Ewe Sale

In October last year we held a Kelvale Blood Auctionsplus ewe sale. It was great to have support with good numbers for this first sale with more than 2,500 ewes on offer. Unfortunately we didn't get many bids on the day however the phone did ring hot soon after the sale. In our opinion we may have jumped the gun by holding a single bloodline sale and it may have been more advantageous to group together in the main sale. On the day there was a large number of sheep on offer and Auctionsplus separated the offering into three sales during the afternoon.

We would be grateful for any feedback on this



sale option as we would like it to become an annual event. Whether it be a vendor or buyer, positive or negative feedback would be appreciated so that the process can be improved.

50 Year Dinner

What a great night! Even though we were quite exhausted following another great ram sale last year, it was good to relax and sit down with everyone. It gave us the opportunity to have more of a chat with clients to check up on how you are all going as during the ram sale time goes by so quickly. We feel it is important to try to spend time classing Kelvale progeny wherever possible to see how our genetics are breeding and have a genuine chat about it all.

It was very interesting to see and hear a lot of clients mingling with each other and chatting about their individual systems, areas of breeding and the way they go about things on their properties.

A big thank you must go out to Landmark at Keith for helping out and to the crew at Cockatoo Downs for organising. If you are ever looking for a place to camp, this is a family friendly spot just off the road south of Keith.



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