



Kelvale News

SRS®

Winter 2017

Welcome to the new look winter edition of Kelvale News. Hope this finds you well and that you are keeping warm.

Here at Keith we have had one of the best starts to the season ever (as long term locals say), with a significant break in April and great follow up rain in May. The tap was turned off in June with a lot of frosts but early July is starting to show good prospect for rain. We understand that other areas around Australia are struggling for rain and we hope that you get your share soon.

We decided that it was time for a freshen-up with our branding so we have introduced the blue and white striping at the top of the newsletter and this will be incorporated in all of our promotional materials. Our website has also had a significant overhaul and we are really pleased with the results. We encourage you to have a look at the website as all ram sale catalogue

data will be available later in July.

We didn't have the best end to the Lucerne Seed season with yields significantly down on normal average. However we were not alone, and as with supply and demand, the price has increased which has helped to cover the shortfall in yields. We have learnt a lot about the irrigation system at Lucerne Valley and will implement different processes in the coming season.

In early May we attended AgFest in Tasmania where we displayed client rams that were purchased at the ram sale last year. The rams came straight out of mating to the field day site and had plenty of attention and 'pats'. It was very chilly but a great couple of days. Thanks must go to Rob and Cathy for helping us with this opportunity.

We are looking forward to seeing you all on August 17 at the Ram Sale.



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Ewe Production

We have just finished tailing lambs here at Emu Flat with another pleasing result. We achieved 110% from ewes mated which we feel is good. However, when we started to analyse the results we discovered that we have too many passengers.

Most years we pregnancy scan our ewes but things didn't work out this year with our regular scanner and it got too late to complete the scanning. Usually we identify the drys and remove them from the lambing mob and also identify ewes carrying multiples to establish foetal deaths. In other years we have had about 4% deaths for our entire drop which is very good.

This year, 858 ewes that are raising lambs, 323 are raising twins, which equates to about 40%. As we tail our lambs we wet and dry all our ewes so that we gradually take all ewes not raising lambs out of these mobs. We ended up with 19% of all ewes mated not raising a lamb. There were only about 10% of these ewes that have lambled but lost their lamb/s.

Our aim is to achieve above 120% lambs from ewes mated so we need to identify what is holding us back. In our opinion it is glaringly obvious, we have too many ewes not getting into lamb. Every year we identify and mark the ewes that are dry and cull repeat offenders, however this number is not very high. This last season was exceptional for feed through the spring and early summer and the ewes were in good condition going into mating. This was certainly reflected in our AI program which only averaged 75% lambs from ewes that had been Artificially Inseminated, normally we would average at least 100%. When ewes are participating in an AI program they should be a condi-

tion score of 2.5 but heading towards a 3, for natural mating the condition score should be a 3.0 heading towards a 3.5. Our ewes at mating last year were a condition score of 3.5 going towards a 4.5 in some cases, so we believe that they were too fat. So what is the answer, how do we slow them down?? Maybe we will consider a containment area to stop them eating so much grass or utilise scrub areas that have been fenced off.

So here is the sales pitch.....Merino ewe production = \$\$

Last year our ewes raised 115% lambs, were shorn twice where they averaged 3.8kg/head of greasy wool which was valued at just over 1100c/kg.

Wool – 7.6kg @ 1100c/kg gives us income of \$83.60 per head, less a shearing cost of \$7 per shearing totalling approximately \$70 income per head in wool alone.

Lambs – Cull ram lambs sold in April at 11 months of age averaging \$170 per head. They were shorn twice, once at weaning then again in March. The first shearing comes in about even with 1kg of wool at about 700c/kg, just paying for the shearing cost. The second shearing averages 3kg per head at 1100c/kg greasy giving \$33 less a \$7 shearing cost totalling \$26 in wool income per head.

So with this in mind the income from that lamb totals \$196 and when we have 115% lambing we have a value of \$225 per ewe unit plus her wool, totalling \$295 per ewe in annual production.

We have only considered the male side of the equation, if you have a surplus ewe hogget at selling for \$250 per head and CFA ewes selling for \$120-150/ head the value of our ewes is significant.

So on these figures, comparing a prime lamb flock, ewes have to be raising 170% lambs from ewes mated to achieve the same income.

It is a wonderful time to be breeding merino ewes, but we need to maintain a balance of fertility, wool and meat.



Sale Team

The sale rams this year are in exceptionally good order. In late May the 300 plus rams averaged 80kgs at just 12 months of age, with two over 100kg. This is nearly 14kgs heavier than the same time last year. The rams have had quality green feed throughout the summer and have had the opportunity to grow into their potential.

ASBV data is starting to come together with the use of outside sires for better linkages and the continuing of collecting data such as full pedigrees. Most of the rams at the ram sale will have an ASBV for Staple Length which is a big step forward. A raw data measurement will still be collected and printed in the sale catalogue to assist with ram selections.

Sires that have bred well for this drop include two young sires of our own. Kelvale 0017 bred better than expected over top frame ewes, his progeny have great bodies, exceptional skins and white lustrous wool. Out of the sires we have kept for ourselves almost half are by him.

Kelvale 1081 bred some really solid bodies with good positive fat and muscle, good skins and wool out of top wool ewes.

In this drop two outside sires were used in Karbulah from Queensland and Parkdale from New South Wales, both sires have performed well. Kel-

Kelvale Sale Team

The data on the sale team will be available on the website a couple of weeks prior to the sale.

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vale 1272 and 1290 sons have good quality wools shining through.

The ram sale will follow the same format as last year with 140 rams in the main auction and 60 in the mini auction. There will be a lot a good rams throughout and outstanding ones even deeper into the sale as sometimes they are missed when allotting rams a month out from the sale. Make sure that you allow yourself plenty of time to look through the entire sale team.

We look forward to seeing you all on August 17.



Kelvale On Property Auction

At Emu Flat

675 Emu Flat Road, KEITH

Thursday August 17 at 1pm

Inspection from 10am

**140 Specially selected Rams
plus a mini auction of 60 rams**

Light luncheon provided.

Pasture Renovation

Over the past few dry years we have lost a lot of our quality pastures that we have worked hard to establish at Emu Flat. So while we have lower than usual stock numbers we are making a concerted effort to renovate paddocks back to a Lucerne, Chickory and Clover pasture mix. To do this and make it more sustainable moving into the future we are claying sandy rises and establishing more permanent fencing.

The claying allows us to establish more plant numbers on the poorer non wetting sands, which is working really well. Then with the permanent fencing we are able to control the grazing pressure on all paddocks.

Our grand plan is to have Emu Flat established entirely as a breeding block. We will have three mobs of 800 – 1000 ewes grazing 30 to 35 10ha paddocks (a cell) on a regular rotation. Each paddock will give 2 days grazing equating to 60-70 days rest until the mob will be back again. We currently have one cell fully operational and a second will come into operation in 2019.

If you are ever driving through the Keith area pop in for a chat and we would be happy to show you around.



Kelvale Poll Merinos

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