



# Kelvale News

2024

Welcome to the Winter Newsletter from Kelvale Poll Merinos, we hope that you are well and the season in your area is positive.

Here in South Australia we have had a very late start to the season following a cooler than average summer and very hot spell in March. Up until the end of June we only had 129mm of rain for the year of which 62mm fell in January. A lot of rain needs to fall between now and the end of the year to receive average rainfall of 450mm.

As a result of the cooler summer and significant rain event in January our Lucerne Seed Harvest was again well below average, the third year in a row! However, the January rain did wonders for our pastures that are predominantly Lucerne based, with next to no rain since.

A huge amount of hand feeding of stock has kept us busy in the lead up to and during lambing. The ewes were in very good condition heading into lambing and this resulted in some pretty good lambing percentages. The feed is

beginning to grow for the stock and if the rain continues the spring should provide good feed. All stock have had a tough Autumn, leading into Winter.

If you follow us on social media you may have noticed that we offered the block we call 'Lucerne Valley' for sale earlier this year. The property didn't sell but we have leased it to another family that we know well. The leasing of Lucerne Valley will not change our breeding program in the stud or the number of rams that we offer on an annual basis. Lucerne Valley is 1000 acres of which 250 acres are set up for irrigated Lucerne seed or hay production.

Our annual Ram Sale is fast approaching on Thursday August 22, from 1pm, with a live interface on AuctionsPlus. Over 200 rams can be inspected and purchased on the day.

We look forward to seeing you soon,

*Stephen and Peta*



# Genomic Testing

Over the past couple of years we have started to dabble with some Genomic testing with DNA. This is mainly with our young sires and our syndicate matings to get parentage on the sire side.

This year we have genomically tested all of our sale rams. In the past by only testing the rams that were syndicate bred, we found that the accuracy of the data would overtake the rams that had full parentage recorded. Therefore, for more accurate data we need to test them all.

This has been completed at a significant cost of \$35 per animal.

In a perfect world it would be best practice to DNA test all mothers and their progeny, however this is far too expensive to justify at this stage. We are hopeful that sometime in the future the cost will come down with more companies entering the market.

It has been interesting to analyse the ASBV data as it has come back and joining it up with the sheep and we are really impressed with the results.

Having allotted the rams for the sale and completed some analysis, the results speak for themselves.

**Staple length** – 97 of the 160 in the main sale are in the top 5% in Australia

**Breech Wrinkle** – 89 of the 160 in the main sale are in the top 10% in Australia

**Clean Fleece Weight** – 52 of the 160 in the main sale are in the top 20% in Australia

We have a plain sheep with plenty of wool cutting ability. The team also have very good early growth with an average of 6.89 for Post Weaning Weigh and 8.55 for Yearling Weight.

So with all data moving in the right direction, there is something for all purchasers.

As a flock we are looking to



improve the muscle and fat and lower the micron as an ASBV. Unfortunately to improve these three traits heritably it will have a negative impact on the traits that we are excelling in. So, if you have a sheep with really good muscle and fat it will be to the detriment of wool cut as does lowering micron will have a negative impact on wool cut.

We often speak about finding a balance in a sheep. Not only the look from the outside but the genetic traits on the inside all have importance.

A photograph of a printed document titled "2024 Kestrel Farm Sale Data". The document is a large table with many columns and rows of data. The data is organized into several sections, with some rows highlighted in different colors (pink, blue, green, yellow) to distinguish between different groups or categories. The table contains numerical values and text labels, likely representing genetic traits and their associated ASBV (Australian Sheep Breeding Values) data. The document is slightly angled, and the text is somewhat small but legible.

## Ram Sale Team

It is always a very anxious time in the lead up to the annual ram sale, as it is the unknown of what will transpire on the day. However, with the climate of the sheep industry in decline last year, the anxiety levels were heightened even more. But we are lucky to have very loyal and reliable clients who support us with the 2023 sale exceeding our expectations, especially with the clearance rate. We thank you all for you patronage and support.

This year with the sheep industry starting to pick up, mainly in the meat markets, things are looking and feeling a bit more positive.

The rams genetically are really good, however at the moment they are feeling the effects of the long autumn. They are picking up in condition all the time but will not be the big, blooming rams of last year.

Some sires to look out for are Kelvale 133. His progeny are showing a balance outlook, great head lift with good bone and body depth with all round figures to match.

AI sires from two outside studs have progeny this drop. Merryanbone North 115 has some very good progeny with outstanding figures. Karbullah 3115 also has several rams who feature in the sale team.

You may also note that there are a number of sec-

ond-generation progeny that relate back to a Glenwood sire.

It is good to see the diversity in the sale rams with plenty of ability to cut beautiful quality wools.

## Kelvale Sale Team

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

[www.kelvalepollmerinos.com.au](http://www.kelvalepollmerinos.com.au)



# Kelvale On Property Auction

***At Emu Flat***  
**675 Emu Flat Road, KEITH**

***Thursday August 22 at 1pm***

***Inspection from 10am***

**160 Specially selected Rams  
plus a mini auction**

***Light luncheon provided.***

## Client Review

### Rob and Kathy Henry Longford, Tasmania

Rob and Kathy have been clients for more than 10 years; they run their sheep at their property at Longford in Tasmania which has an average rainfall of 700mm. They have quite a bit of irrigation with both pivots and hard nose sprinklers.

Rob and Kathy came to us originally as their goals aligned with what we were achieving at the Kelvale Stud, and very similar to where they were heading with their own merino flock. When Dad (David) and I first classed their merino flock they were smallish sheep with plenty of wrinkle. However, they were better than what you would expect of a traditional Tasmanian merino. It has taken a bit of time to breed away from the wrinkle but with the change of classing the ewe flock into wool and frame ewes and correctively mating it has been a game changer. In February 2024 when I classed the ewe hoggetts they had a great stretch about them. We have lengthened the noses, they have developed a great head lift on a large well balance animal. We have increased the staple length to a stage that the Henry's can shear easily every six months or what they are currently doing, shearing every 7-9 months when it suits them. Their merino flock now consists of plain animals that they don't mules.

When I class the hoggetts, the best are kept for the merino replacements and the seconds go into a first cross lamb enterprise. The extra growth and fertility has also benefited this enterprise.

I have been wary about how our rams

would perform in a high rainfall environment, but the results have been very positive and a fabulous outcome for Rob and Kathy.

As a family, we have really enjoyed Rob and Kathy's support, encouragement and friendship on our journey and look forward to continuing this relationship.



*Above is Kathy and Rob with Damien Whiteley from Elders Wool Tasmania. Below are the Hoggetts that were classed in February 2024.*



#### **Kelvale Poll Merinos**

Stephen and Peta Kellock

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