

Prime SAMMs offer alternative in Wickepin

WITH the wool industry struggling Wickepin farmer Ken Martin and his partner Lee Parker, turned to the Prime SAMM breed six years ago in order to provide another alternative to their farming system.

Ken and Lee, who farm the family's 6000 hectare property east of Wickepin with Ken's father Syd and brother Steven, bought their first Prime SAMM rams in 2004 and have been mating them to Merino ewes ever since.

Ken said they first became interested in the breed after reading about it in the paper.

"We were looking for a breed which would provide another string to our bow and another marketing option," Ken said.

"To us the Prime SAMM seemed like the better option as it is not too far removed from the Merino, in that they still produce a white wool and have very little contamination problems."

Today the operation mates 1400 Merino ewes to Prime SAMMs for mainly prime lamb production.

They haven't been keeping any of the F1 progeny previously but after buying some first cross ewes mated to Poll Dorsets at a clearing sale and seeing the resulting lambs, this could be about to change.

"The lambs out of the first cross Prime SAMM ewes by the Poll Dorsets are thumpers and we can turn them off a little earlier than the Prime SAMM-Merino lambs out of Merino ewes," Ken said.

"So I think down the track we might keep a flock of about 500 first cross breeders in the future."

Ken said they have two lamb drops on the property, April and June and he expects to turn off the top 20-25 per cent of the April-drop Prime SAMM-Merino lambs by the end of September.

"Usually we turn them off at around 42-44kg liveweight and they dress out at about 43-45pc," Ken said.

"In good years we can sell them straight off mum, otherwise we put them into our feedlot and feed them pellets.

"What I have noticed is they are good feed convertors and smart eaters - they put on weight with not too much feed.

"They seem to be better doers compared to the Merino lamb."

Ken said he thinks he would be able to peel off a top draft of lambs out of the first cross ewes now at the weights.

"Not only do the lambs out of the first cross ewes get to the weights a little quicker, they also dress out slightly better," Ken said.



Another bonus Ken said was their easy care nature.

"They have less wrinkle and don't get fly blown as much," Ken said.

And in terms of management Ken also can't speak highly enough of the breed.

"They are certainly easy to maintain and when it comes to weaning, the lambs are much better," Ken said.

"You can just take them off their Mum and drive them down the road with no problems."

☐ Ken Martin with some of his Prime SAMM cross lambs.

WA Prime SAMM members

ARRA-DALE Perenjori
08 9971 5026
ARMCO Gingin
0417 957 583
BILLABONG York
08 9641 2215
BRYN-AWELON
Kellerberrin
08 9045 9025
BULBARLI Toodyay
0429 687 440
CAPOLINGA Kondinin
08 9889 1110
COONIGAN Wickepin
08 9888 1140
CRYSTAL RIDGE
Kojonup
08 9833 1237
CULLAM Jerramungup
08 9835 1021
ENOKURRA HILLS
Mingenew
08 9972 6033
GRACEFIELD Katanning
08 9821 2181
GULNARE
Dumbleyung
08 9863 4116
HAMPSURE Esperance
0427 715 751
HONI MONI Cunderdin
08 9626 2092
MULLOORINA
Wongan Hills
08 9672 1007
MURRAY Beverley
08 9646 1336
QUINTARRA Esperance
0427 711 376
ROCKDALE Dumbleyung
08 9863 4182
ROMILLY HILLS Beverley
08 9647 1055
ROYSTON Jerramungup
08 9835 4036
SANDOWN Badgingarra
08 9315 4114
SHIRLEE DOWNS
Quairading
08 9645 0212
SPRINGDALE York
08 9641 1438
SUNNYSIDE Nyabing
08 9823 5022
THORNTON PARK
Brookton
08 9642 4038
TIARRI Lake Grace
08 9871 9040
URALLA Pingaring
08 9866 8053
WENDALLA Mogumber
08 9651 9072

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Contact your nearest
Prime SAMM
breeder
to find out more
about the breed.

