

WAMMCO Info

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WAMMCO International
A DIVISION OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MEAT MARKETING CORPORATION

at WOODANILLING

Peter and Wendy Bessell-Browne, Naballing Estate, talked about their fourth place success in the overall State Prime Lamb competition with a line of 211 three quarter Prime SAMM lambs entered off the feeders in late January 2011.

The couple started their move into prime lamb in 1991, at first trying Poll Dorsets, then White Suffolks over their Collinsville Merino ewes, before buying their first Prime SAMM rams from Katanning local stud breeders Rocco and Chris De Bellis of Gracefield SAMM stud.

Easy lambings and no mulesing were the first benefits, then as lamb prices began to improve, they welcomed better lambing percentages and faster weight gains.

"We were sacrificing a little on wool and had to add an extra rail to the sheeyards, but we are getting 20-30 per cent more from our Prime SAMM prime lambs, while still cutting 4.5kg of 21-22 micron wool," Peter said.

The couple believe the lamb industry and lotfeeding has made farming on mixed enterprise properties like theirs, more sustainable.

"Our son Lee works on the farm with us and is also a part-

time shearer. We try to do most of our shearing and crutching," Peter said.

"The property has always been well suited to sheep, with ample shade/shelter belts on the contour planted before tree planting became fashionable."

He said the difference between running a wool or a meat flock was that prime lambs finished on feeders produced weight gains of 2.5kg a week or about 1kg of meat a week. That kilogram of extra meat was worth about 1kg of greasy wool, and gives the family a regular cashflow by delivering lambs to WAMMCO throughout the year.

Naballing Estate is currently buying its Prime SAMM rams from Phil and Chris Bairstow, Gulnare Prime SAMM stud, at Dumbleyung and is enjoying an average annual lambing of 105pc.

The family is working towards a closed Prime SAMM flock, enabling the culling of older ewes and to keep improving standards.

They are also keen supporters of the WAMMCO carcass competition, particularly since its scope has been increased,



Peter and Wendy Bessell-Browne, Naballing Estate, Woodanilling.

and applaud the role of WAMMCO and the generous competition sponsors.

While satisfied with WAMMCO's performance, Wendy was keen to see the co-op develop its own brand for marketing to domestic supermarket and food service sectors.

at KATANNING

Consistent competition placegetters since 2005 Barry, Sheldon and Trent Kowald, Capemont Farms, Katanning, reflected on winning the State Prime Lamb Carcass Competition for 2010/11 with a line of 102 Poll Dorset lambs by Hillcroft Farms rams over Willemenup Merino ewes.

Capemont Farms has recorded seven top 10 finishes in the past five competitions with a previous best result of second, and also recording two fourth and two fifth placings.

"We have been keen followers of the competition since John Milton and Rob Davidson showed us the fundamentals of prime lamb breeding," Sheldon said.

The winning lambs were the first Poll Dorset crossbreds to win the coveted title for a number of years and averaged 26.67kg with a fat score of 2.90 and 32pc WAMMCO Select lean meat yield.

Sheldon also entered a line of Rockdale Prime SAMM-Willemenup lambs that won seventh place overall. This consignment also won WAMMCO's January Producer of

the Month title.

"The Poll Dorset lambs probably had a slightly better run than their Prime SAMM counterparts which experienced a tighter finish, but the Poll Dorset crosses were about 3kg heavier and therefore returned more money," he said.

Capemont produces around 3250 lambs each year of which 800 are crossbred lambs, and the balance are Merinos from Willemenup Merino rams from Dick and Colyn Garnett's Gnowangerup stud.

Sheldon was surprised by the close competition and the outcome.

"The competition has grown in stature and scope but to us the producer aim is the same - trying to produce heavier lambs without too much fat," Sheldon said.

"We are keeping a steady course but we are also keeping an eye on any changes that offer to improve our performance."

Capemont is a regular contributor of lambs to WAMMCO, using its own transport to deliver to the Katanning abattoir:



Carcass competition winner Sheldon Kowald, Capemont Farms, Katanning.

"We do our job as producers, and they reciprocate by maximising our returns," Sheldon said.

at LAKE GRACE

Tiarri Prime SAMM stud principal Ross Taylor was overseeing the crutching of 1800 mated first-cross Prime SAMM ewes on agistment from his Lake Grace property at Bremer Bay.

"The alternative to agistment was that they would probably have gone east at around \$100 a head, instead of being worth around \$200 today," he said.

Tiarri took third place in the section for consignments over 300 lambs with 340 F2 Prime SAMM lambs averaging 24.68 kg with a fat score of 2.83 and a WAMMCO Select lean meat yield of 31.8pc.

Ross attributed the growing popularity of Prime SAMMs and their adaption by breeders to WA conditions to the incentives and competition generated by WAMMCO.

"Our stud clients continue to take a keen interest in the State competition and they use it as a measure

as to how the various breeds are progressing," Ross said.

Ross said he had moved his mating back this year in the hope of taking more advantage of green feed and had dry seeded clover and other species to boost pasture productivity.

Lotfeeding is also a major component of the Tiarri operations, having more than proved its viability.

This year, he has mated 620, second cross Prime SAMM ewe lambs after taking them to a minimum 60kg at 10-11 months in the feedlot.

Ross believes lamb prices will continue to make the industry viable and attractive but he is concerned that the increasing retail price of lamb does not force it out of favour. He is also concerned that a swing back to heavy lamb production in the Eastern States may cause a drop in prices.



Ross Taylor (left), Tiarri Prime SAMM stud, Lake Grace, at Bremer Bay discussing his success with Rob Davidson.