

WAMMCO Info

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WAMMCO International
A DIVISION OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MEAT MARKETING CORPORATION

WAMMCO Winners Look Ahead

The 2010/11 WAMMCO State Prime Lamb Carcase Competition once again revealed a "New Order" of excellence in WA's prime lamb industry, with new breeders joining past performers, to 'lift the bar' on the results of previous years.

WAMMCO's Rob Davidson said the nomination of 30,287 lambs from 123 entries was a record for the competition and top placegetters in the 2009/10 competition would have been placed well back in the latest competition.

"There was a one per cent gain in overall carcase lean meat

yield equating to 230 grams extra red meat a carcase," Rob said.

"That is a remarkable improvement in a single year, but reflects the trend towards increased muscling in our sires and dams used."

The outstanding progress confirmed by this year's contest, also confirms the value of the policies and incentives provided by WAMMCO in helping its producer members to advance.

A series of on-property visits by WAMMCO Info since the competition, revealed a significant degree of enthusiasm and optimism among winners for the future of the lamb industry and some details of their own programs for growth and development. (Other placegetters and contributors will be interviewed for future editions of WAMMCO Info.)

Several producers also indicated support for closer contact with their local consumers of lamb product via their co-operative.

at JERRAMUNGUP

Cullam Prime SAMP stud principal Simon Cullam and his neighbour and ram client Wayne Barrett were still celebrating the Barrett family's win in the 300 lambs and over category and their fifth place win overall, in this year's competition, as well as Simon's third place win in the overall category and Cullam's Producer of the Month title for March.

It was Graham, Chris, Wayne and Marie Claire Barrett's first year in the competition.

The family has progressed to 50:50 sheep:cropping since 2000 starting with Prime SAMP rams from Cullam in 1998 over a solid base of big-framed Merino ewes.

All of the current 5000 ewe flock are second cross or better Prime SAMP ewes and this year, 600 young ewes were mated to produce summer lambs, with the aim of generating out-of season cashflow as well as getting three lambs in two years from each ewe.

"Running a balanced livestock/cropping enterprise also enables us to keep capital costs down," Wayne said.

The Barretts aim to sell around 3800 lambs a year over the scales to WAMMCO and retain a further 1200 ewe lambs for breeding.

"Whereas this was our first competition entry, we have watched the results closely over the past few years and have followed much of the breeding and management

advice of Rod and Simon Cullam and also from WAMMCO and others. We are now finding that we receive regular WAMMCO Select bonuses on more and more of our lambs," he said.

Simon Cullam said he set his sights two years ago on becoming WAMMCO's Producer of the Month and also on winning a place in the State lamb competition – aspirations that were both rewarded in March.

"My father Rod was keen to stay with sheep, despite wool's collapse and was one of the first to see the potential of Prime SAMPs as dual purpose sheep," he said.

"Prime SAMPs hit the ground running and have greatly assisted our enterprise by utilising our more marginal country, freeing more arable country for cropping, and thriving even in tough seasons.

"Last year's LAMBEX was also a great inspiration and prompted me to try keeping older ewes, as well as mating ewe lambs.

"We kept about 330 ewes for mating that would normally have been culled at 5.5 years with good results and also mated about 600 8 month old ewe lambs for a June drop. The young ewes have had their growth rates boosted by 60-70 mm of summer rain, generating solid green feed."

Simon said lick feeders have become an essential lamb management tool not only for maintaining ewes and lambs



Simon and Rod Cullam, Cullam stud, with Jerramungup client Wayne Barrett and Rob Davidson of WAMMCO.

in top condition, but also for acclimatising lambs at foot. He is finding cost and management benefits from spending \$400/t on Easy One pellets instead of using his own grain. Like neighbour Wayne Barrett, he regards WAMMCO Select as a major feature of supporting the co-operative, because he says it more than covers his freight costs to Katanning, as well as providing essential feedback.

at DUMBLEYUNG

Haydn and Mark Edwards, Rockdale Prime SAMP stud, were celebrating the stunning competition performance of their stud clients and neighbours, Terry and Dale Cronin and Jon Ward.

First time entrants, the Cronins won first and second place in the tradeweight section of the WAMMCO competition as well as second place in the overall category. Jon Ward came a close third behind the winning Cronins' entries, in the trade-weight category.

Haydn and Mark, who won three of the past four competitions, did not nominate any Rockdale entries but were delighted that their clients took so many top places in a keen competition.

"These wins in the trade-weight class prove that the Prime SAMP breed can no longer be regarded exclusively as a slow maturing, heavyweight lamb," they said.

"SAMPs have been the 'outperformers' over the past decade, and with some further fine tuning should still be on the money" in ten years time."

At Bunkin Farming Enterprises, Terry and Dale Cronin said the collapse in wool prices had caused them to make the shift to prime lamb production with a move to Poll Dorset, and later, Prime SAMP sires back in the late 1990s.

"This is our fourth year of pregnancy scanning and identifying twins and we only buy rams born as twins or triplets," Terry said.

"We are using smaller 15-20 hectare paddocks equipped with lick feeders for our ewes and are mating maiden ewes straight to SAMP rams. Our best result so far has been 140 per cent lambs and we believe there could be potential with our emphasis on increased fertility, to produce an extra 70 lambs for every 100 ewes."

Dale has also recently joined a local Lifetime Ewe Management group.

Rockdale neighbour Jon Ward believes that apart from genetic gains, the major advances in lamb breeding have been in the field of nutrition and ewe and lamb management.



Terry (left) and Dale Cronin with some of their white tag maiden ewes with twins at foot

Jon said that four years ago he was aiming for his Prime SAMP lambs to reach 22kg and return around \$70 a head. "Now 24-25kg lambs worth well above \$100 are the norm," Jon said.