

LEAHCIM NEWSLETTER



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Newsletter No.6

August 2008

White Suffolks & Poll Merinos

Welcome to Leahcim's 6th Newsletter

The rainfall in July has certainly gladdened our hearts and hopes and we trust that by the time you receive this newsletter, everyone has cause to be more optimistic about the seasonal prospects.

Through this newsletter we wish to inform you of our latest developments and news. The most important of these is that we are offering our Poll Merinos at **one venue only** this year. That will be at our annual Poll Merino Sale on 16th September (see article). Industry challenges that are receiving a lot of press coverage

have continued to support the breeding direction we undertook many years ago and give us confidence we are travelling in the right direction. The sale support we received at last year's two on-property sales was very gratifying.

We offer our sincere thanks to everyone who showed confidence in Leahcim genetics in 2007 and bid on our offerings. We trust they will work well for you and that we will receive your support in the future.

Regards; Andrew, Rosemary, Luke & Stewart Michael, 'Leahcim', Snowtown, SA
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We encourage you to check out our website as a source for more information

www.leahcim.com.au

Calendar of Events

- ★ Adelaide Show - White Suffolk Judging - Friday 5th September
- ★ Adelaide Elite Sale - Sunday 7th September
Leahcim & Leahcim Lam offering 3 White Suffolk rams
- ★ Leahcim Poll Merino Field Day & Sale - Tuesday 16th September 1:30pm
Offering 120 Poll Merino rams 13 months of age
Field day will commence at 9.30 am
- ★ Leahcim 21st Annual White Suffolk Sale - Friday 19th September 1:30pm
Leahcim & Leahcim Lam offering 110 White Suffolk rams



One sale venue only for Poll Merinos

**Tuesday 16th September at Leahcim
Poll Merino Sale & Field Day**

Inspection & Guest Speakers from 9.30am

With the rising cost of travel, plus time commitments, it was decided to offer all Leahcim Poll Merino genetics at one venue only and not hold our normal inspection day in August. The venue will be on our Leahcim property at Snowtown, and it will also include some guest speakers who would normally have been invited to our inspection day. Having a longer inspection time on sale day, with guest speakers, will give clients extra time to listen to the speakers and inspect the Leahcim sheep.

The sale will be held at a new venue, but on the same property. We have built onto our shearing shed, and this has given us many advantages:

- All displays under cover
- All sale sheep under cover
- Kitchen & toilet facilities
- Extra penning and drafting area
- Better ramp & loading system
- Better parking
- There's a 700 metre airstrip available on the Leahcim property

A map showing the location of the Leahcim property and shearing shed is on the last page of this newsletter.

So, no Leahcim Poll Merinos will be offered at the Adelaide Merino Ram Sale or Classings Classic this year.

Format for Poll Merino Sale Day

- Inspection & Guest Speakers - 9.30am
- Tea & Coffee available
- Lunch Provided 12.00 – 1.30pm
- Auction of 80 rams to start at 1.30pm, SA time (Ring selling)
- Mini Auction of 40 rams, 5 rams per pen (pick of the pens)
- to commence 15 minutes after the completion of the main auction
- A limited selection of White Suffolk rams will be penned and be for sale on this day only.
- Arrangement for delivery of rams will be made at the completion of the sale.

Leahcim Poll Merino Genetics

This year's sale rams are a great selection, with wools that show all the SRS® characteristics for density and length, plus whiteness, deep crimping and well aligned wool.

The ASBVs also reflect that this selection criteria has allowed Leahcim to increase wool weight while also improving carcase ASBVs. Leahcim is a trait leader for reducing CVs (YFDCV) and I feel that selection for skins with even skin thickness is the main reason that our CVs continue to be reduced.

The sires used for the 2008 sale rams have performed exceptionally well at Leahcim and through-out the sheep industry, including Chile & U.S.A.

Leahcim 050154, with his very advanced (Primary Fibres of 12 micron and skin measurement of .7mm) and totally wrinkle free skin has helped many flocks progress their breeding of outstanding wools on a meaty carcase; plus the bonus of outstanding uniformity across the industry. Leahcim 050009 and 050024 are both sired by 010249; a trait leader when first used for fleece weight (YCFW%) and he has passed his genetics on to these young and exciting rams. Leahcim 050024 (sold for \$25,000 and pictured right) has a YCFW% of +29 and with his length of carcase and deeply crimped white wool, this makes him one of our leading sires.



Sale Rams of interest in 2008

Lot 2. 070527 (sire 050154) has excellent skin and wool, plus great micron and CV reduction capacity with +5.7 carcase ASBVs

Lot 11. 070914 was born in October. He has no ASBVs but has excellent wool measurements, micron 16.0, CV 15.6 and SD 2.5. Jim Watts wants this ram to be bench marked against the sires at Leahcim next year. This ram lamb has outstanding depth of crimp and lustre in his fibre.

Lots 17 & 18. Both these JIVET lambs were born in January 2007 and are excellent examples of the modern Merino. These two rams have been used at Leahcim and have excellent progeny identified this year.

Lot 35. 070478 is a ram with an excellent skin test, a follicle density of 75 fibres per square mm and primary fibres of 13 micron, an excellent sire potential for breeding Merinos for 2010 and beyond.

Lot 80. 070082 has one of the best skin and wools produced at Leahcim for softness and whiteness. He is a JIVET lamb and was used at Leahcim in our syndicate mating of our 7 month old ewe lambs.

2008 Lamb ID

Sires used for this years lambing have taken our level of excitement to a new high. We have proven that with the use of ASBVs, visual classing for carcase structure and SRS® wool quality, plus skin tests, that the genetic gains can be enormous, and that rapid future generational gains can be made. Proven sires 030218, 050024, 050154 have been used as our bench mark rams for this years lambing, plus we have some very exciting progeny from some young sires listed below.

Leahcim 070032 and 070033 were JIVET lambs (2007) that have some of the best skin and wool tested here at Leahcim. The carcasses of their progeny are showing excellent butt shape and muscle.

Leahcim 060004 was Jim Watts' top young ram from last year, his progeny for evenness and very smooth skins look to have bred very well and we look forward to measuring his progeny.

Leahcim 060047 and 060323 have progeny that have excellent long carcasses with good shine and lustre to their skins.

Leahcim 060120 is a real meat machine, and I believe he will give our Merinos the muscle and wool quality to make rapid advances.

*Andrew & Leahcim 060120:
Ywt 7.5, Yfat -0.2, Yemd 0.1,
Ycfw +19, Yfd -0.5, YFdcv -1.7,
DP 7% index 160.*

Leahcim 070065 another JIVET lamb (2007) has exceptional length of carcase and smooth wrinkle free skin and we think he looks very good.
(Lot 18 in sale)



Merinos without Mulesing

Wagga Wagga - April 4th 2008

Landmark, in conjunction with Dr. Jim Watts and the SRS® Company held a workshop titled "Merinos without Mulesing". 120 people attended, including approx 20 progressive Landmark livestock agents, plus a cross section of stud and commercial sheep breeders. The theme of the workshop was to demonstrate how to genetically select animals to be able to cease mulesing, plus the bonus that comes when selecting the right skin and carcase traits. It was the best workshop I have ever been involved in, with the level of information available and the enthusiasm shown by all that attended, making it a great day.

On July 9th and 11th, Landmark held workshops in South Australia at Burra and Keith, with excellent numbers of breeders attending; 120 in Burra and 100 at Keith. The same level of interest and positive comments were expressed by all who attended. As at Wagga Wagga, many breeders commented on how they were going to approach their future breeding

toward 2010 with a focus on using genetics that will help achieve a non mulesed Merino sheep. As a company, Landmark held these workshops to benefit sheep breeders, whether they adopt the SRS® principles of genetic selection or not; this being up to the people who attended. I was disturbed to hear that some stud sheep breeders have criticised Landmark staff, who had helped co-ordinate these days, for being involved with this concept. I congratulate Landmark for being progressive and giving sheep breeders some positive information and options heading towards 2010.



Andrew and Luke displaying one of the typical SRS® mules-free type ewes and pictured below; the clear, wrinkle free hindquarter of the same ewe



Mulesing Debate

There has been much written and spoken about the mulesing issue, but from Leahcim's point of view (as was printed in last year's newsletter), with selection for the right skin and meat traits, it is not necessary to mules and it becomes manageable, plus being more profitable as a result. It really is "No big deal". The following table is of Leahcim's genetic cost advantages made by not mulesing. If we were to put a value on the animal losses, plus skin and reproductive losses, then this figure would be much greater than the \$9.11 shown below.

Genetic cost advantage (per lamb)

• Non mulesed lambs - 3kg-5kg Live weight heavier (Weaning & post weaning) 1.8kg @ \$3.20		= \$5.76
• Clip cost & treatment	Saving	= \$2.50
• Extra time of applying clips & treatment compared to tail docking	Saving	= \$0.10
• Skin and reproduction losses	Saving	= ???
• Animal losses	Saving	= ???
• Wool Value	5kg @ \$0.15	= \$0.75
	Total	= \$9.11

Replacement Sires

\$9.11 x 50 lambs x 5 years = \$2,277.50

Severn Park Dispersal

If anyone had any doubt about the value of the genetic program we have pursued with our Merinos, they need to look no further than the dispersal of the Severn Park flock at Cooma owned by Charles Massy. Instead of

using our words, we'll leave it to the following report that appeared in The Land newspaper. The Massys first used our genetics 8 years ago. From the demand for their sheep and the setting of a national record for average price, it suffices to ask; "Do we have the right type for the industry's future?"

Let the dollars speak for themselves!

The final fall of the hammer signalled the end of an era for Merino industry leader, Charlie Massy, at the Severn Park ewe dispersal, but not before setting a national and world Merino ewe auction record of \$8600 and record average price also. Of the 1429 Severn Park ewes catalogued, 1367 sold for an average of \$432 and a gross of \$590,750.

Following spirited bidding, the top price of \$8600 was paid by well-known Merino breeders, the Coddington family, Roseville Park Merino stud, Dubbo, who were keen to secure the mules-free ewe. The three-year-old ewe registered a standard deviation (SD) of 3.3 micron, a co-efficient of variation (CV) of 16.7 per cent, a comfort factor (CF) of 99pc and a fibre diameter (FD) of 19.5 micron.

Severn Park stud principal, Charlie Massy, said the sale's success came as a real surprise to him and he appreciated the support shown by the cross-section of buyers. He said when two of the country's major parent studs, Roseville Park and Haddon Rig, were buying mules-free sheep; it sent a symbolic message to the industry of the direction breeding was moving.

Mr Massy introduced soft rolling skin (SRS) into his operation 25 years ago and has since been able to take four microns off his flock's average fibre diameter; to average 19 micron for the past three shearings. As a result of SRS selection, Mr Massy also hasn't had to mules his sheep for three years.

"I was also encouraged by the fact that this sale really emphasised the importance of female genes. Mr Massy also said having a new generation of buyers using estimated breeding values was a positive outlook for the industry.

Chilean update

In last year's newsletter I outlined the work we are doing in Chile with the Marin family; describing the country, the location and some of the sheep operations of Pepe Marin. This year I classed in excess of 22,000 sheep and set up some breeding goals and strategies for the next 10 years.

The flock 12 years ago was mainly Corriedales, with good carcasses and a low density 28 micron wool. Since then we have changed the flock over to all Merinos or Merino x Corriedale and the low grade ewes are being mated to White Suffolks. Pepe started a White Suffolk flock 6 years ago and now has approx 4,000 top White Suffolk ewes.

Over the past 12 years Pepe has imported some of the top rams and semen from Leahcim, and has expanded the influence of Leahcim genetics in Chile to over 1 million sheep. The expense for the Marin family to do these exports has been enormous, but when you see the genetic gains made in Chile it has been worth it.

The Marin family has just completed building their new sheep abattoir which slaughters 2,000 lambs and sheep per day and can bone out and process 700 lambs per day. The technology that has been used in the abattoirs is unbelievable; they have used the best of the best from all over the world. Pepe says it is up with the best three abattoirs in the world for leading technology.

The abattoir (right) was built by Pepe's own family construction business with one of his brothers designing the building.



I will be returning to Chile next February and will keep you updated on the developments. I would recommend to anyone who is planning to visit South America to make Chile one of your stops; the people are very friendly and I am sure that Pepe would love to see any of our clients.

White Suffolks

Prime Lamb Too Lean?

Leahcim has made a conscious decision over the past 8 years to make some slight adjustments to the breeding goals for our White Suffolk program. Because of the amount of performance testing we have done with both the White Suffolks and the Poll Merinos, we have identified that we need to be very aware of not having our genetics become too lean.

The last 5 years (longer for some of our clients) have been very tough and using genetics that are too lean, or in specific terms, low in measured fat cover, is not ideal for finishing lambs. While the laying down of fat is generally not desirable and basically uneconomic, if they are too lean it will affect meat flavour and eating quality. Fat is important for survival; it is a natural survival protection against the poor feed situations and we have had plenty of experience with these in recent years.

Our selection of sires within the stud for fat (PWFAT or YFAT), is that they must not be leaner than PWFAT -0.7. We believe this will ensure that Leahcim genetics will retain their hardiness and ability to finish under all conditions.

Over the last 10 years the cattle industry has identified that a balanced level of fat or fitness is important for eating quality and do-ability. We must also be aware of this and incorporate it into our breeding strategies.

White Suffolk Sales

Flock Rams

This year we will have a small offering of White Suffolk rams available on the 16th September at our Poll Merino Sale. These rams will be lotted in their price range, and can be selected and taken on the day. This is to cater for clients who primarily breed Merinos but are also seeking some White Suffolks and would like to select them at the same time, rather than wait for the White Suffolk sale 3 days later.

Adelaide Sale Rams

Leahcim & Leahcim LAM will again be offering 3 rams this year at the Royal Adelaide Show. Leahcim 070083 (in the Elders catalogue) has been used as a ram lamb and will have approximately 50 progeny born by sale time. He has excellent Lambplan figures, PWWT +12.7, PFAT -0.3, PEMD +0.8 and is sired by 050046, a ram that has bred extremely well with excellent muscle and butt shape (050046 has photo on web site). Leahcim 070148 is in the Landmark catalogue; his Lambplan figures are PWWT +12.6, PFAT -0.8, PEDM +0.5. This ram is sired by Ella Matta 050068, whose progeny have tested extremely well at Leahcim. They have high growth and muscle and low birth weight. Leahcim 070148 is a very stylish ram with great sire potential and has excellent, tight downs wool.

Leahcim LAM 070085 will be offered in the Landmark catalogue. His Lambplan figures are PWWT +12.0, PFAT -0.5, PEMD +0.9. This ram is also sired by 050046 and is similar to his sire with an excellent high yielding carcass and terrific muscle definition.

Leahcim White Suffolk Sale

This year Leahcim will be offering 100 rams at our on-property sale on the 19th September at our new venue area at the shearing shed.

The rams for this year's sale have grown extremely well, having been drought lotted in February through to April and that has enabled them to reach a stage where they demonstrate their full growth potential.

Last year we had 15 rams passed in at the sale, which meant all clients had an excellent opportunity to select their genetics at good prices.

This year we will be cataloguing the same number of rams with their latest Lambplan figures.

10 high performance rams will be sold in single pens (some of these rams will have been used as ram lambs in the stud). We think they are worthy of being used as stud rams but will also be available to flock ram clients if not sold as studs.

Special Semen Clearance Sale

Over the years we have accumulated a bank of semen from Poll Merino and White Suffolk sires; put down as either insurance or for our breeding program needs at that time. However, as we have progressed, a lot of this semen is now surplus to our needs. Consequently we are offering it up in a special one-off clearance sale at cheaper rates, rather than just dispose of it. It may well be of value to some of you, our clients.

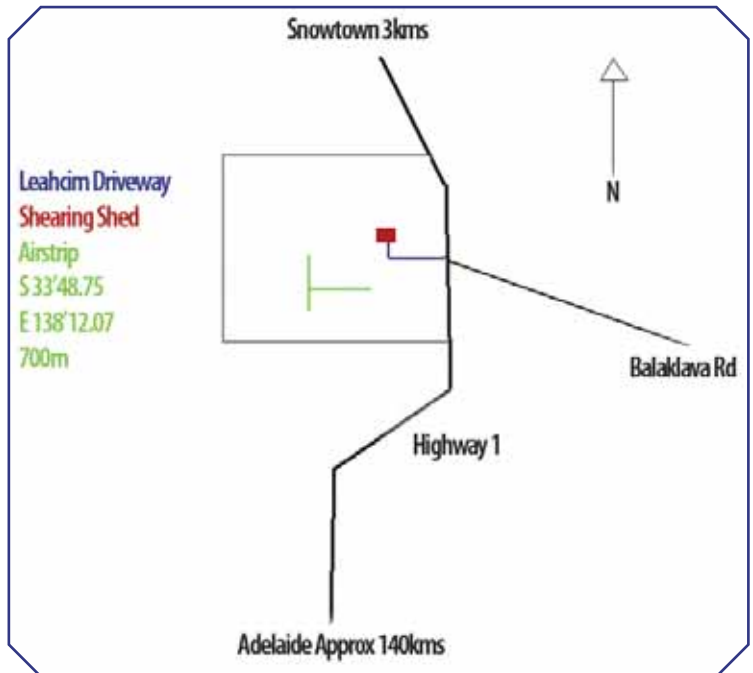
For details on the available semen, check our website (www.leahcim.com.au) and place any orders you might have with us as soon as possible.

Semen Sale Conditions on Leahcim Ram Sales

In relation to our semen sale conditions on any rams we sell, we thought it important to again outline them to avoid any confusion that may exist.

- Purchaser of ram gains 100% possession of the ram.
 - Purchaser owns 50% of semen marketing rights.
 - Leahcim retains 50% of semen marketing rights.
 - There are 2 options for semen sales:
 - (1) All semen sale proceeds and expenses from rams is divided up 50%-50% between purchaser and Leahcim
 - (2) The purchaser may request states in Australia where he would claim 100% semen marketing rights:
eg. Purchaser 100% WA & NSW & QLD
Leahcim 100% SA & VIC & TAS
- Option 2 can be used if the purchaser wishes to have control of a ram's genetics in their own state.

These arrangements must be made with Leahcim and both parties must be agreeable or the 50%-50% conditions as outlined in option (1) will apply.



Leahcim

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