

# LEAHCIM NEWSLETTER

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Newsletter No.20



July 2022

## White Suffolks & Poll Merinos Leahcim Wool - Farm to Yarn to You Hummocks Station Tourist Park

### Welcome

Leahcim has seen changes to our business over the last twelve months; with changes in land ownership, developments at Hummocks Station and Leahcim woollen product development.

This last season has been extremely challenging at Snowtown, with the season just getting a start the last few days of May with green feed appearing mid-June. The South East has been much better, with pasture growth developing well from early May. With the late start at Snowtown, environmental confinement feeding was undertaken, which has helped to maintain ground cover and reduce any environmental damage. Early June we transported 1500 ewe lambs to the South East to relieve the pressure at Snowtown.

October last year our family made the extremely hard decision to sell the station east of Burra (Nolan's) and purchase a property at Meningie (Folly Farm). Nolan's has been a very important part of our development as a business, but it was very suited to a commercial run sheep flock. With

the intense nature of our performance recorded Leahcim seed stock breeding and increasing demand for fully measured genetics, the decision was made to purchase Folly Farm. The other advantage of a property at Meningie, is that it is on the route to Willalooka and will be very suited to moving young sheep from Panlatinga after weaning, before ending up at Snowtown for the main data capturing.

Hummocks Station was very lucky to gain a State Heritage Grant from the State Government to finish restoration of the Stables and Trap Shed. This will be utilised to promote our Leahcim Wool "Farm to Yarn to You". This project is expected to be completed by April 2023.

This newsletter will cover genetics, shearing alternatives, Leahcim woollen products, Hummocks Station, and an overview of our rural industries; both threats and opportunities.

The Michael Family



## Leahcim's 2022 Calendar of Events

- ★ Australian Sheep & Wool Show at Bendigo – Friday 15th - Sunday 17th July
- ★ Sheepvention at Hamilton – Sunday 31st July - Tuesday 2nd August
- ★ Leahcim Snowtown Poll Merino Sale – Tuesday 13th September
- ★ Leahcim Snowtown White Suffolk Sale - Friday 16th September

## Overview of Our Rural Landscape - Threats & Opportunities

Having the privilege and information access of Andrew being a Director on the MLA board, our association and involvement with the White Suffolk breeders, plus our relationship with many sheep researchers, has given us some great contact with industry representatives on market insights and trends. Our Red Meat and Wool Industries are seeing outstanding prices and demand for our products especially the products that carry high end traceability and quality.

Firstly, we would like to touch on the traceability. One of Australia's threats to markets for red meat is a breach of our biosecurity from diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) or Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD), which could see our markets and industry severely compromised or shut down. Traceability within the cattle industry is much better structured than the sheep and goat industry because of the compulsory electronic tag identification, EID which does not apply in sheep and goats (except for Victoria). In Victoria any sheep or goat can have its movements traced within 7 days at a 95%+ accuracy, compared to the rest of Australia at 70% accuracy at 30 days. Electronic identification has a two-fold effect on our industry, one for traceability with biosecurity and the ability to isolate animals and the other for product traceability and marketing.

Over the last twelve months the wool industry has seen price rewards for accredited traceable wool systems such as Responsible Wool Standards (RWS) with premiums from 15% to 30%. Leahcim is in the process of becoming RWS accredited not only for our wool sales but also to add value and credibility to our wool processed products (Leahcim Wool - Farm to Yarn to You). Within this newsletter Rosemary has written an article covering the latest development of our wool, from paddock to woollen products. Jemma also has an article regarding Hummocks Station achieving a State Heritage Grant and how wool 170 years on from settlement has evolved.

Traceability in sheep meat has been highlighted with company Gundagai Meats rewarding lamb that has high intermuscular fat (IMF) and high red meat yielding carcasses with 50 cents a Kg premium. 80% of meat processing plants are looking to transition using the MEQ probe or a similar system to identify high value meat that is MSA graded. Having the ability to trace those lambs using electronic ear tags and traced back to the producer for identification will add great benefits and financial reward to the producers. Leahcim has been using genomics for hard to measure traits like Shear force (tenderness) and intermuscular fat for 10 years and are selecting genetics that are trait leaders for that and many other valuable breeding traits.

Another impact on many sheep producers is the effect from worms, and resistance to chemicals, especially in the

eastern states due to the prolonged wet seasons. Leahcim has undertaken a large worm egg counting program over the last two years and that combined with genomics is giving us high accuracies on genetics for worm resistance.

Shearing has become a major problem across Australia with labour shortages and exceptionally wet periods causing animal welfare issues and production losses. Within this newsletter Professor Phil Hynd has written an article outlining what we see at Leahcim as one of the most exciting shearing or defleecing alternative for more than 200 years.

## Hybrid Maternals

### Listening to Clients With an Open Mind and Building Relationships

Leahcim is extremely fortunate to have clients in South America, New Zealand and all sheep growing regions in Australia. These cover some of the most extreme climates and environments which challenges animals for production, profitability, sustainability, and animal wellbeing. Leahcim has always looked to the future with our breeding goals and conversations with Denis Hewitt over the last few years has highlighted the demand for more expansion in our White Suffolk maternal focus.

Below is some background information from Denis Hewitt, Crookwell NSW:

The Michael family have decided that it is time to provide some information on a new project that they have started within the White Suffolk stud with the working title "Hybrid Maternals". As I have been fortunate enough to have some involvement from inception, Andrew contacted me and asked if I would provide some background.

Like others in my area (NSW Southern Tablelands), my wife Dorothea and I run a prime lamb enterprise in conjunction with a commercial Merino flock. For many years now I have mated my secondary Merino ewes to Leahcim White Suffolk rams and retained the female offspring to use as the Prime Lamb dams with very satisfactory results. This cross is not the norm in Southern NSW as most F1 ewes are still Border Leicester/Merino derived.

Although this WS/M cross have been working very well for us, we began to have discussions with the Michael family about "tweaking" things a little with the aim of breeding a better maternal White Suffolk. Some of the traits that we agreed were important were:

- Sound feet. We are in a high rainfall area (830mm av) and the integrity of sheep's feet is paramount. It was agreed that black foot pigment should be an important criterion to strive for.
- Worm resistance and low dags.
- Fertility and fecundity.
- Waterproof wool at a low enough micron to have a

reasonable value.

- Good carcase attributes. It should always be remembered that half the offspring from the first cross will be wethers. And yes, like some of you, I have had experience trying to finish BL cross wether lambs. Additionally, good growth, fat, muscle, and EQ ASBVs will add to the F2 lamb performance.

So, it was agreed that the idea had merit and the next step was to actually try to breed some sheep that met the criteria. The advice of Jason Trompf was sought and provided, and a sire was selected to be mated by Alistair to a selection of Leahcim White Suffolk ewes in Jan 2021. The resulting lambs were then put through the full Lambplan process alongside the White Suffolk's. The ASBVs generated were very acceptable and the phenotypes were very good. Interestingly, the black feet appear to have transmitted almost 100%. The female progeny has been retained at Leahcim and have been mated to a sire suited to a continuation of the project. The ram portion are at my property and have been mated to 900 Merino ewes to lamb in September. At this stage everything looks positive, and plans are afoot to push on with the project.

The Maternal sire used at Leahcim was Cashmore Oaklea 192440:

Tag	WWT	PWWT	PFAT	PEMD	MCP+	PWEC	
192440	10.95	16.2	-0.29	3.28	169.3	-76.43	<div></div> = Top 10% of Industry <div></div> = Top 20% of Industry

Leahcim used as a link sire Woolumbool 173980 to increase accuracy in the White Suffolks for both Terminal and Maternal production. His data is included in the table below which also includes a list of sires used at Leahcim to produce this years sale rams:

Tag	WWT	PWWT	PFAT	PEMD	IMF	SHRF5	TCP	LEQ
173980W	10.2	14.9	0.4	3.1	0.7	-3.6	152.2	164.4
180117	13.2	19.4	-1.3	3.0	-0.8	3.4	165.0	153.0
200035	11.5	17.9	-0.5	3.4	-0.4	0.9	163.9	161.7
200094	9.9	16.2	-0.2	3.1	0.1	-1.6	157.2	162.1
200108	11.6	17.8	-0.2	2.3	0.1	0.8	153.2	156.5
200111	9.9	17.0	-0.0	2.6	-0.2	0.1	151.9	152.4
200131	10.5	16.8	-0.2	3.3	-0.6	-1.2	160.9	153.7
200150	11.7	19.0	-0.4	2.5	0.1	1.3	159.2	163.1
200193	11.8	18.7	-0.7	2.3	-0.2	2.0	157.2	158.2
200216	11.3	17.4	-0.4	3.6	-0.8	0.6	162.0	152.5
200228	11.5	17.9	0.3	4.0	-0.7	0.7	159.6	154.1
200230	11.5	17.5	-0.3	3.1	-0.2	1.5	158.7	159.4
200563	12.5	18.2	-0.6	4.4	-0.9	1.9	170.3	157.2

## Leahcim Poll Merino Focus

Leahcim's high value wool and meat focus that combines leading animal welfare and wellbeing will be extremely important as our social license to farm is questioned and pressured to supply a sustainable product. We are extremely excited with the progress the sheep have made in recent years towards a well-rounded animal that is genuinely easy care, fit for purpose and producing what our customers require. The information below gives a small insight to the working sires used and progeny that will be for sale in 2022:

Tag	Sire	Poll	YWT	YFAT	YEMD	YCFW	YFD	YFDCV	YSL	EBWR	YFEC	EBCOV	LDAG
202651	173721	PH	15.2	0.6	1.4	28.0	0.2	-1.6	17.3	-1.2	-41.0	-0.38	-0.37
202796	182185	PH	9.8	1.1	1.3	14.0	-0.9	-2.6	13.7	-0.8	-30.7	-0.08	-0.10
202881	182185	PP	11.5	1.0	1.2	18.2	-2.3	-0.3	8.1	-0.7	-35.5	0.24	-0.23
203002	162058	PH	8.7	1.0	1.1	21.8	-1.5	-0.9	12.3	-1.0	-7.0	-0.24	0.07
203061	173721	PP	13.8	1.3	2.2	15.5	-0.9	-1.6	9.5	-1.1	-21.9	-0.66	-0.71
203142	182259	PP	10.1	0.9	1.0	22.6	-1.8	-2.3	15.5	-1.2	-14.4	-0.53	-0.33
203185	182295	PP	7.1	1.1	2.8	23.3	-1.8	-1.3	11.1	-1.0	-2.1	-0.50	-0.21
203349	173253	PP	11.9	1.7	2.6	15.2	0.1	-2.0	10.5	-1.4	-44.3	-0.24	-0.39
203547	192176	PP	10.4	0.7	1.1	19.6	-1.0	-1.7	14.5	-1.0	-29.2	-0.45	-0.04

## Making The Most Out of Your Data Decisions

Sheep genetics plays a major role in Leahcim's progress of production, profitability and management, which will impact on our clients and the industry. There are a few areas that we would like to cover that are important when making informed genetic decisions regarding selection.

In 1990 merino sheep within Sheep Genetics started with a zero ASBV (some other breeds started information prior to that) and since that time most breeds and animals have made genetic gain, so we see ASBV's for individual traits have increased as to the indexes. Every few years Sheep Genetics undertake an enhancement of the data and information to bring it in line with new research information from the information nucleus flocks, and scientific research. This enhancement can and usually changes rankings of traits to bring that in line with development from research and improved technology. MLA, Sheep Genetics and UNE have installed a new computer that has a much larger capacity to handle the ever-increasing amount of data and its demands.

When comparing ASBV's, Flock Profile's and indexes over different time periods, remember to use the current percentile band table available on the Sheep Genetics website to compare changes. Also, when comparing the data, check the accuracies on the data to see how reliable that information is as it will affect the repeatability of performance.

Indexes are a weakness within Sheep Genetics for Merino's and Maternal's, not so much Terminal for a number of reasons. Firstly, there has been no review on the index structure since 2014 and with the massive changes in premium products, both meat and wool and the world-wide pressure on animal welfare, the 2014 indexes are totally outdated. For example; an extremely expensive ram sold in 2020 which now has very good accurate data and sits in the top 5% in EVERY index, his individual ASBV's are: TOP 1% fleece weight, BOTTOM 10% micron reduction, CV of fibre diameter, breech wrinkle, fat, muscle (bottom 30%), tenderness, intermuscular fat, and weaning rate. There are many cases where the indexes totally miss the mark of guiding breeders for progress. We would urge all readers of this newsletter to email Sheep Genetics and suggest they develop a new index that suits our industry in 2022 as a priority.

ASBV's within Sheep Genetics are highly accurate and all the individual trial data and breeders' experiences reflect that if you use individual selected ASBV's that are required to drive your breeding goals, you will maximise your genetic gains.

Secondly the sheep and goat industry are running a very poor second and third to the cattle industry regarding traceability with regard to biosecurity and animal performance because of the lack of compulsory electronic

ear tag identification nationally. As mentioned earlier in the newsletter, biosecurity needs good traceability through EID to keep our red meat industry safe from devastating diseases. The wool industry is suffering from poor industry leadership regarding mandatory declaration with the NWD (National Wool Declaration) with only 60% of wool declared regarding pain relief and mulesing.

The sheep meat industries lack of traceability without an eNVD (Electronic National Vendor Declaration) for biosecurity, traceability, and treatment will create problems both domestically and internationally. Our export markets for sheep meat will require traceability on issues such as pain relief management and mulesing status if they are going to import our products, this in a very competitive market where every other country able to supply meat have unmulesed animals.

MLA will have a new eNVD app available very soon that is not reliant on connectivity, easy to use and will help with traceability from farm through the supply chain. We are extremely hopeful that this will be a great asset for our red meat industry allowing much quicker and more accurate traceability with biosecurity and product identification. It has been rumoured that there might be some government assistance with purchasing electronic tags which will assist, but the benefit of using an electronic based system is so valuable to the producer and the whole industry, subsidies would be a bonus.

Leahcim continues to increase the testing on all of the important industry production, quality, and welfare traits both physically and within the use of genomics. We have continued to increase our worm egg count across both breeds and are very confident that our accuracies and performances on this trait will be very helpful to many of our clients. Leahcim 182185 sits in the top 5% for YWEC and Top 10% for LDAG with an accuracy of 89%, combined with top 10% for PWT and top 20% for YFD. His progeny in the sale will certainly offer breeders in high rainfall and worm country the ability to maximise production and profit.

## Biodefleeceing

Alistair and Andrew met with Phil Hynd at Roseworthy three years ago after having concerns regarding shearing and animal welfare issues. We were also looking for a possible alternative to shearing.

After reading a research paper Phil had written we could see great potential in this research especially with regards to improved animal welfare, improved wool quality from the biological defleeceing and creating flexible management and worker availability.

Below is an article Phil has written for our newsletter that give a broad outline of the Defleeceing without too many technical details.



Leahcim is extremely positive that this or similar technologies will revolutionize wool harvesting.

## Next Generation Wool Harvesting: A New Approach To Replace an Old Technology

Prof. Phil Hynd and Dr Sarah Weaver - Davies Livestock Research Centre, The University of Adelaide

We are all aware of the increasing problems associated with conventional shearing of sheep using technologies that have changed little for many decades. Issues relating to shearer availability, shearer injuries, animal welfare issues, cost, and timing of shearing are all contributing to the current crisis. Let's be clear though, it isn't that we haven't made significant attempts at great cost to the industry to develop alternatives! It is not a trivial challenge to find an alternative that is cost-effective; able to be used on all classes of sheep; has no adverse effects on animal production, health and reproduction; is safe for the operator; applicable to all regions of the country; and preferably can be applied by unskilled labour.

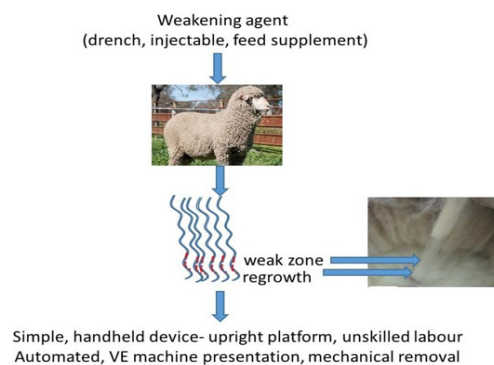
Many millions of dollars have been spent on developing robotic shearing and biological defleecing alternatives, with only one process reaching commercialisation (BioClip®), which has since been withdrawn from the market. The problem has been that we have attempted to replicate the process of severing fibres like conventional shearing does. For robotics this means ensuring a sharp cutter and combs travel very close to the skin with the potential for injury as sheep move. For biodefleecing the target has also been severing the fibres by stopping cell division in the base of the wool follicle, thereby momentarily stopping wool growth and causing the fleece to be shed. The latter results in wool loss in the field, unless nets are used, and these bring their own problems of double handling and removal of high VM wool from nets. Without nets the sheep are exposed to sunburn and cold stress.

About 15 years ago we proposed a different approach!

Instead of severing the fibre, what if we could provide a treatment (feed supplement, drench or injectable) that produced a brief weak point in all the fibres across the body. This weak point would be sufficiently weak to allow the fleece to be removed several weeks later, after a covering of wool has regrown underneath the weak zone. The device to break the weak wool could be a simple mechanical device or a high-throughput automated machine. The latter would be a device which would not require cutters or close skin contact; would not produce second cuts and would not create skin pieces or injuries to sheep or handler.

The process is illustrated below:

Figure 1 - An alternative wool harvesting approach based on fibre weakening, regrowth of protective coat and removal by fibre-breaking machine. The photos of 'shorn' sheep are from this process



Note the even pile of residual protective wool. Note also that leg and face hairs are not removed. The middle photo shows a staple being broken by applying a very small force to the fibres which break at the zone of treatment.

Before I describe the progress we have made towards this new method I need to explain some history because it is relevant to why we have come up with this and not someone else. I am a Rural Science graduate with Honours from New England University. I completed a PhD in animal nutritional physiology at The Waite Institute, University of Adelaide where I worked on the cellular and biochemical processes involved in wool growth in the follicle. I was the Program Leader for Wool Genomics and Program Leader (Education) for the Premium Quality Wool CRC. I was appointed Head of School of Animal Science and Professor of Animal and Veterinary Sciences at the Roseworthy Campus. I continued my interest in wool growth and realised the potential for the approach outlined here with support from AWI Ltd. However this support did not continue until recently when AWI approached us to further develop the idea. Dr Weaver is a postdoctoral research fellow (and from a wool producing family). She has worked with me on many aspects of this project for 15 years.

So the first question we needed to tackle was "but will the wool fall out in the paddock during the regrowth period"? To address this we treated a large number of sheep and then managed them under normal grazing conditions at Roseworthy farm for up to 10 weeks. There was no difference in wool loss between the controls and treated sheep. An excellent result but there may need to be a plan B for saltbush/bluebush country (like confinement feeding).

The next question is 'how does our treatment work and what is the best treatment and application method'? This is where we are at present. We have just completed a thorough review of the biochemistry and think we have a good handle on what is happening and what might be the best target compounds. We have not ruled out drenches

or feed supplements but there are problems with shy feeders for the feeding approach and there are issues with the volume of solution we would need for a drench. An injectable appears most likely as the best candidate but we need to do quite a bit of R&D to ensure we have the best compound and that it meets all the criteria listed at the start of this article. We have engaged very clever mechanotronic engineers at The University of Adelaide to develop the mechanical device(s) that will remove the weakened fleeces. Ideally we see sheep being presented on a VE-type machine to the mechanical device. This process has the potential to allow small mobs to be harvested at the most appropriate time for the enterprise with unskilled labour. It will also improve wool quality, and animal welfare. I often compare it to the wine industry which rapidly went from manual grape harvesting with high-labour input, and hard physical work using secateurs and buckets, to machine harvesting. Not only is it now more efficient, it has also improved product quality at reduced cost.

We are very excited by the progress we have made but do not underestimate the challenges before us. As I said at the outset if it was a simple problem it would have been solved a long time ago but I believe we are closer than ever to finding a solution to an increasing problem for the survival and growth of this wonderful industry!

## 2021 Sales

### Leahcim Poll Merino

#### Sale Summary

	2021	2020	
<b>Offered</b>	300	250	Thank you to all clients for purchasing Leahcim Genetics.
<b>Sold</b>	300	250	
<b>Top</b>	\$18,000	\$26,000	
<b>Av</b>	\$3,240	\$2,688	



*Pictured with the \$18,000 top price ram at the Leahcim Poll Merino Ram Sale are purchasers David and Devon Ridgway, (Ridgway Advance), Andrew Michael and Nutrien Bordertown's Jack Guy.*

### Leahcim White Suffolk

#### Sale Summary

	2021	2020	
<b>Offered</b>	132	120	Thank you to all clients for purchasing Leahcim Genetics.
<b>Sold</b>	118	114	
<b>Top</b>	\$3,000	\$3,600	
<b>Av</b>	\$1,354	\$1,099	



*Pictured with the \$3,000 top price ram at the Leahcim White Suffolk Ram Sale are Alistair Michael and auctioneer Gordon Wood. Ram purchased by Seriston White Suffolks.*

## Leahcim Wool - Farm to Yarn to You

### Rosemary Michael

Reading my Leahcim Wool article from last years newsletter, I really can't believe it was 12 months ago. I think I can say, in all honesty, Leahcim Wool has been a major part of my life since those first boxes of spun woollen yarn arrived back at Leahcim Farm and I'm enjoying every aspect of this beautiful product.

Probably, the most exciting thing I can share with you, about our Leahcim Wool - Farm to Yarn to You, is the reaction we get from everyone who takes the time to lay their hands on a ball, or a skein of some Top of this 100% home grown, Australian Product. It is this reaction that makes me realise, we have something very special. Along with the wool, people love the fact they are talking with the farmers that grow the wool on their own family farm, and that it has been fully grown and processed without leaving Australian Shores.

There are a lot of people out there today that are so aware of looking after our farmers, our environment, and our world. They are looking for products that are ethically and sustainably produced, so we can continue to grow in a clean, green, sustainable way for many generations to come. At Leahcim, we are doing everything possible to keep our part of the planet as sustainable as possible, so we can pass on this great land that we have inhabited to many generations to come.

In last years newsletter, I said Bendigo Sheep and Wool Show was to be our first real display of Leahcim Wool. As we all know that didn't happen! Andrew and I did load up



the rams and the wool, and everything needed for our display. We then travelled 9+ hours to get to Bendigo – within 2 hours of our arrival, it was announced the state of Victoria was to go back into lockdown at midnight. We had 4/5 hours to get back across the South Australian border to avoid being in isolation for 14 days. We did it! That was almost 12 months ago. And the sad thing is we are still dealing with Covid19, in fact I'm dealing with my first bout of it as I write this article.

In September 2021, the Clare Valley SA have an event called The Festival of the Lamb – I was honoured to be asked to take our Leahcim Wool there. I was also asked by Denny Polden, ANZ Bank Clare Branch, as a customer/producer, to have a table in their marquee at the YP Field days, Paskeville. Both these days were an excellent start to show interested people what we are doing with our wool, and tell them our unique story.

Our most recent display of Leahcim Wool was at Fibre Feast SA, this was a one-day event held at Ardtornish Primary School in Adelaide SA. Andrew and I spent the 6 hours there telling our story and selling our beautiful wool. We thank everyone that came along and supported us and talked with us on these days.

In March, I went to Halls Gap for the Grampians Textures 2022 with Andrew and our very dear friend Sue Piggott. I was very fortunate to do a week long weaving course with the very talented Liz Williamson. We also had a stall at the Makers Market, a twilight market held for 2 hours on the Saturday evening. This gave us another opportunity to display and sell our amazing Leahcim Wool.

Last year we had another 2 bales of wool sent off to be processed – half of this wool was spun into 4ply and 8ply, and the other half was spun into 2/23 and commercially dyed. At the time of writing this article, the 2/23 is at Silver Fleece in Adelaide being commercially knitted. We are very excited to see our Leahcim Wool come off the knitting machines. Hopefully we will have finished products very soon to be able to share with you all. In the meantime, we have taken another 5 bales of Leahcim Wool to be processed. It has been scoured and made into Tops, and now waiting at Cashmere Connection for its turn to be called to Bendigo Mill for spinning.

It's that time of the year again, when we are planning our trip to Bendigo Sheep and Wool Show. We will be located on Outside Site 244 in a marquee with our Rams and Wool all displayed together. Please come along and see us.

Leahcim Wool will also be at Hamilton Sheep Vention. There you will find us in the Sheep Tech marquee, with the Rams on site 4 as usual and Leahcim Wool on Site 35B. We would love to see you there.

You can follow me on Facebook @ leahcimwool if you like. I'm not good at social media, but I'm trying to improve

by telling our story and showing you some photos of my exciting journey with our beautiful Leahcim Wool.



*Pictured is a selection of Leahcim Wool - Farm to Yarn to You products*

## **Hummocks Station**

**Jemma Michael**

Here at Hummocks Station, we have had an exciting 12 months!

When I was in high school back in 2012, I was 15 and wanting a bit of pocket money. I got told of some "dirty" work on a property just out of Snowtown, so I approached the owner, got handed a shovel and a wheelbarrow and we stood in front of the now Function Centre Room doors. What I saw in front of me was an epic amount of sheep poo that was about 110cm high! Because of the size of the doors, this was the only way to remove the Sheep poo and if you have ever seen the Function Rooms, you would understand the amount of work ahead. Twenty years previous, back in the 1980's the Shearers Quarters were converted into a shearing shed and now have been restored back to its original heritage. Thankfully it wasn't just me doing it, but the few days I did spend there certainly makes you appreciate the work that went into the Shearers Quarters 20 years ago.

20 years on from the original experience, we have found local builders who know all about restoring old buildings and we have started to refresh our quarters, in between welcoming our wonderful guests. As well as this, we are excited about gaining a State Heritage Restoration Grant to complete work on our Trap Shed and Stables, fixing them up to their original state as best we can, ready for use in the near future. We would like to thank the Wakefield Regional Council, with Les Pearson's assistance and the State Government for making this grant available.

Within 12 months we are hopeful that the Trap Shed will be used to promote and market our Leahcim Wool - Farm to Yarn to You products and show the great history of Wool at Hummocks Station for over 170 years.

We have also recently added a fully self-contained family cabin, the first of its type in the accommodation side. We

gave it a much-needed facelift and added locally attained rock for a wall outside. We have had quite a few guests through its doors already and the views are sensational, whether relaxing out the front or inside the cabin.

When Ann and Steve finished up and set off on a new adventure, we had the family doing everything, from phone calls to cleaning and everything in between. We decided to employ some help and now have 3 fantastic local girls (Kerry Cocks, Tahlia Ebsary, Sarah Frape plus Andrew Cocks when needed) working with us plus two builders. Boy! Do we need them! Their love for Hummocks shows in all that they do for us, and they are a great asset.

We have many group bookings throughout the year and the long weekends fill up fast as word gets around about our special little park, this is a great support for our local businesses as well. We have added 2 new bush camps with a total of 6 sites along the creek. These are becoming a popular option for those wanting their own space, but also wanting facilities a short distance away.

Our accommodation is also used for interstate nurses for weeks at a time, it has been quiet for the last couple of years because of Covid19, but we are now welcoming them back. It gives them a quiet place to rest after their shift work. We also get many businesses using the accommodation, especially with the location close to Highway 1. The use of full kitchen facilities, security, and the beautiful environment seem to be an attraction for those who need to stay for longer periods of time. A home away from home.

The recent addition to Hummocks Station is a joint venture project with Wakefield Regional Council (managed by

Glen Growden) to develop a walking/push bike trail named the "Hummocks Rail Trail". We are very excited to be able to offer tourists, locals and any person interested in a bit of exercise, to view our native plants and wildlife including the resident Echidna that calls the trail home. The trail starts at bush Camp 6 and will eventually go all the way through to Bute (we have 6km developed at this stage). There are beautiful wildflowers along the track and kangaroos bouncing off into the distance. It really does feel like you are in a world of your own as you walk along or ride your bike. The trail follows the railway line to Wallaroo where wool from Hummocks Station used to be loaded years ago, (the old loading site at Hummocks is located at the start of the trail) and on arrival at Wallaroo, would be sent by ship to England to be processed.

We feel we are restoring Hummocks Station to its former glory, for all to see and participate in.



*Pictured is the Trap Shed which will be restored under the State Government Heritage Restoration Grant*

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