

# NEWSLETTER

August 2023



**ASHMORERAMS**

Genetics that Perform

## WELCOME

Welcome to our August Newsletter, produced to keep our greatly valued clients informed with our latest developments and progress.

## Latest News

The past year has been a busy but very rewarding period at Ashmore.

A large harvest saw some amazing grain yields in our district coupled with good prices which was terrific given the cost that went into growing last years crop. Pleasingly, input prices have returned to more normal values with grain prices holding firm. The 2023 season is looking solid here so far, but we will need some spring rains to finish off crops with large potential.

In March, we took on another lease block located at Stockport (280ha) growing our cropping area further which we are really enjoying. We find the mix of sheep and cropping to be complimentary and outside of the extra measurements we take on our sheep, they are run like any other commercial flock.

On the sheep side, our genetics continue to lead the LAMBPLAN database. Currently 10 of the top 20 White Suffolk sires in Australia are either Ashmore rams or bred by our genetics.

We continue to be involved in the Farm Owners Academy Alumni and their farm benchmarking program. A growing number of clients are getting involved in this program also which is fantastic.

On a sad note, Rhonda & Brian's daughter Katrina passed away in May. Katrina lived with multiple disabilities, however due to the dedication of her carers and Rhonda & Brian, she lived significantly longer than expected.

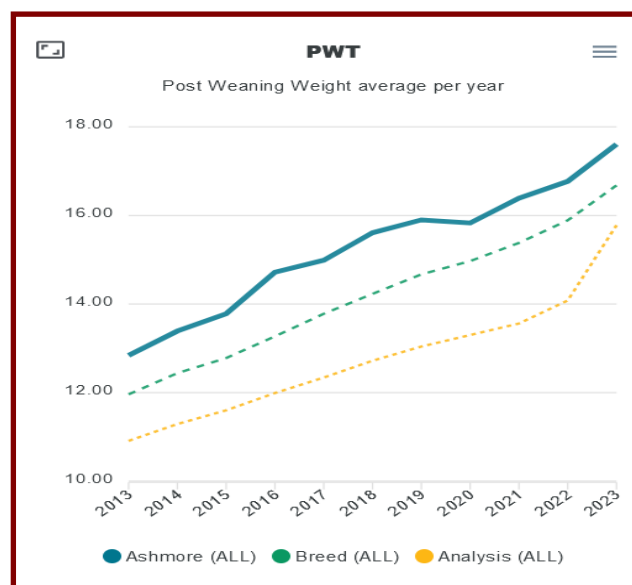
## Time to crunch the numbers

With the softening of the lamb price over the past 6 months it has never been more important to know your cost of production and the key indicators influencing efficiency and profitability.

As an exercise, we put a current lamb price (~\$5/kg CWT) into the PIRSA Gross Margin Guide (Prime Lamb Cereal Zone) with all other costs remaining the same and used 21 micron wool at \$8/kg greasy. While the returns are not as attractive as they were when lamb was north of \$8/kg CWT, the gross margin of ~\$250/ha is still comparable with many of the break crops commonly used in the cereal zone. For many businesses, sheep are part of a bigger system and those producers who play the long game ride out the leaner times to win in the average to better times.

The Farm Gross Margin Guide is on the PIRSA website.

How fast a lamb grows is directly correlated to the speed of turnoff and the cost to get that lamb to slaughter. This is a combination of feed and genetics. Our genetics consistently rank in the top percentiles across all terminals for growth and muscle resulting in faster growing, lower cost lambs.



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## UltraWhite Update

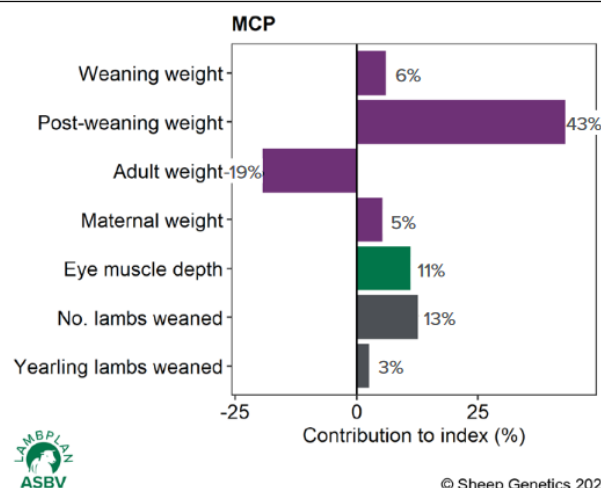
We are steadily growing our UltraWhite numbers and conducted another Embryo Transfer program this year. We purchased 100

embryos from Hillcroft Farms and they lambed down last month. While the stick rate on these was disappointing, we are excited by the genetics in these lambs and we are continually impressed with the shape and structure of these sheep as they develop. We won't be offering any UltraWhite rams at our auction until we have sufficient numbers to do so, however we welcome private enquiry, please just give us a call.

In terms of our breeding direction, we thought we would outline some of the key things we intend to focus on in the type of UltraWhite that we intend to breed.

### 1. Maternal Carcase Production index—a different approach for our UltraWhites

When we started breeding UltraWhites the temptation was to use the TCP index as this is what is familiar to many people in the terminal industry. Our view is that if these animals are to be run as a self-replacing ewe base, then the Maternal Carcase Production (MCP) index is more appropriate. The MCP index focuses on growth, carcase and reproduction traits, while aiming to cap mature size. The graph opposite lists the traits in the MCP index and how they contribute to the overall balance of the index.



### 2. Growth more important than ever

How fast a lamb grows is directly correlated to speed of turnoff and the cost to get that lamb to slaughter. With the softening of the lamb price, efficient production is as critical as ever. We see this as an opportunity with our extensive knowledge on performance breeding, to breed UltraWhite rams that grow faster than average through selection on ASBVs.

## Gundagai Rewards

Troy took another truck load of White Suffolk lambs to Gundagai Meat Processors (GMP) in March to obtain carcase data on a number of sire lines. These lambs tested really well, with 38% achieving the GLQ premium lamb grade which attracted an \$0.80/kg bonus over the existing price. Average Lean meat yield was 56.4% putting our consignment in the top 25% of all consignments processed at GMP. The feedback from the supply chain team at GMP over the past 2 years has been that "our lambs have great shape over the leg and loin". In time we plan to send some UltraWhite lambs to start accumulating carcase quality data on them also.

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*Ashmore lamb at GMP March 2023. 25.1kg, IMF 5.5%, LMY 55.4%, GLQ Score 6.3. \$20 bonus on this lamb!*

## It's your Birthday!

We have been tagging lambs on their day of birth for more than 30 years with over 14,000 birth weight records in our database. We record birth weight, sex, pedigree, birth type, rear type, maternal behaviour, udder score & any defects. The other super important piece of information that is collected on that day is the actual date of birth. This might seem rudimentary, but the date of birth is used to calculate age which is critical for traits like growth that are influenced by age. To calculate growth ASBVs in LAMBPLAN, the



weights of each animal are adjusted by their age along with birth type, rear type, sex and dam age, so having accurate birth dates is critical.

Now that DNA technology is readily available, it is possible to save a vast amount of labour and just DNA test all lambs for pedigree and enter an 'average' birth date for the lambs born. For example if you lamb over 5 weeks and wean those lambs at an average of 90 days old, the lambs born on the first day are 35 days older than the lambs born last resulting in significant differences in weight but potentially assigned the same age. The early lambs are inflated against the average and the late lambs the opposite.

Just to be clear, DNA is a fantastic tool and we fully support using it. We currently use it for pedigree verification if we aren't 100% sure. We also use it to improve accuracy on hard to measure traits like marbling and lean meat yield on elite males prior to selection, hence all stud sires used at Ashmore are genomically tested.

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## Ashmore Ram Sale 2023

This year's ram team are shaping up to be our best offering yet. Many of the sires featured in our sale team are trait leaders for a number of traits as well as sitting in the top 20 terminal sires in Australia on multiple indexes. We would like to outline a few important things to note in relation to this year's ram sale.

Details of the sale are:

- At Ashmore, 1460 Wasleys Road, Wasleys SA
- 25th September 12.30pm, SA (CST) time
- Inspection from 10.30am
- 200 rams, Average TCP index >151
- Auctions Plus including audio streaming will be used on entire ram offering
- Catalogues & excel version available on our website with hard copy posted early September
- Footage of physical attributes of every ram on Auctions Plus
- Structural scores of every ram available when catalogue is ready.
- Free delivery of every flock ram incl interstate buyers for the purchasers convenience and to minimize biosecurity risk

*This year's sale team will include 200 rams in the top 20% of all terminal rams on LAMBPLAN.*



If you have never been to our sale, here are some of the reasons our clients keep returning:

- Over 30 years of measured performance
- Commitment to quality data—5 star rating
- Leading LAMBPLAN stud
- Excellent structure
- Elite eating quality genetics
- Rams are guaranteed
- Free of OJD, Brucellosis, Footrot, Lice
- Free delivery on flock rams

**Ashmore Ram Inspection Day, Sunday 3rd September, 262 Woolsheds Rd, Wasleys**

**Ashmore Ram Sale, Monday 25th September, 1460 Wasleys Rd, Wasleys**

200 Rams with average Terminal Carcase Production Index in top 20% of Terminals

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