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## COOPWORTH NATIONAL SELECTED RAM SALE

MONDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER  
HAMILTON SHOWGROUNDS

60 ELITE RAMS FROM THE TOP 20%

INSPECTION 11.30am

SALE 1.30pm

Catalogues are available on the CGA website or if you would like a catalogue posted contact Richard Wigan or The Secretary.

### CRÈME DE LA CRÈME !!!!!

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Are the Coopworth rams breeders failing their commercial clients?? We can claim that only 33% of the offering, on 29<sup>th</sup> October are in the top 1% of ALL 2011 drop maternal rams in Australia, plus New Zealand Coopworths.

As of 15<sup>th</sup> June, last, Lambplan has bundled all the information from Coopworths, Border Leicesters, East Friesians, Maternal Composites, and New Zealand Coopworths into a single data base. Therefore, what you buy on 29<sup>th</sup> October, can be compared with the purchases your neighbour made at a Border Leicester ram sale in South Australia, or, anywhere, for that matter.

There are not too many ram sales about where one third of the offering is in the top 1% of all their particular breed or type in Australia. Another 20 rams are in the top 5%, while the remainder are in the top 20%. Probably, a bit hard to beat, but the Coopworth ram breeders will keep on trying.

Buyers who analyse all the ram sale catalogue figures and perhaps the averages and look to what progress the breed is making, will see that the overall average index value has gone backwards, by 1%. That is the average of the whole lot. The average of the Coopworths, themselves, has risen from Index 116 to Index 121. These figures are all relative, so to put it crudely, a lot of dud Border Leicesters and dud Maternal Composites with their poor performance figures have given Coopworths a "free kick" going from 116 to 121 without doing anything.

It must be very heartening to go to a sale and know that the performance of the rams you are thinking of buying are in the top 1% or 5% of what is on offer in Australia during ram selling season. Your neighbour, "rusted-on" to Border Leicesters, can no longer claim that they are superior sheep if the figures don't add up. He could before, when the data was analysed separately and the true comparison could not be made.

## THANK YOU

By John Marriott

From the outset, may I say that it is an honour and a privilege to be elected as President of Coopworth Genetics Australia.

I am also conscious that for breed societies to thrive and be able to supply constantly improving genetics to the sheep industry, we need to be continually attracting younger (and new!!) breeders to performance

breeding. While a tall order, I hope to be able to contribute to persuading potential new/younger breeders into CGA in particular, and I extend the challenge to all CGA Council members.

In my view, seedstock will always be in demand, and advancing technology will hopefully make performance recording much easier and more profitable in the future.

## PURE COOPWORTHS

By John Marriott

### IMPORTANT REMINDER:

*All breeders need  
to have their  
latest data in to  
Sheep Genetics  
and include  
DRYs and  
DABs*

Since we have sold our stud, I have had a number of calls from commercial breeders expressing their dismay at not being able to purchase "pure COOPWORTH"!! This begs the question "was there ever such a thing as a 'pure COOPWORTH'? As most people are aware, the COOPWORTH breed originated in New Zealand by crossing the Border Leicester with the Romney Marsh to increase lambing percentages, growth rates and mothering ability.

At the same time, performance recording was introduced in NZ to increase the performance of the important traits that determine the profitability of a prime lamb enterprise. During this time, wool was also a major contributor for profit, and it is reasonable to assume, that if wool had not been so important during this period, 'other' breeds would have been used to develop the COOPWORTH breed.

The principle reason for the breeds' success, is that right from the beginning, performance recording was compulsory, rather than the breed mix of the sheep.

A couple of years ago, the Coopworth Sheep Society of Australia changed its' name to Coopworth Genetics Australia (CGA). The change was intended to reflect the progressive nature of a group of breeders wishing to supply the market with the best possible maternal

genetics, in an environment where 'Composite Breeding' is increasing in popularity.

The current definition of a COOPWORTH is "a sheep of 75% COOPWORTH blood and 25% white-faced, white woolled blood, with two generations of Sheep Genetics Australia Lambplan recording". This is to enable ram buyers to source the best possible genetics for their commercial operations, while at the same time maximizing hybrid vigour and maternal characteristics so important to a lamb production business.

For many, many years, sheep have been evolving to suit the environment that they live in and the purpose that they are bred for (meat, wool, milk, pelts and "sacrifices to the gods"). It's a safe bet they will continue to evolve to suit the needs of a modern society and economy, regardless of what is considered to be "pure"!!

With this in mind, if ram buyers are seeking 'pure COOPWORTH' genetics, it is really incumbent upon them to check the pedigrees of potential sires. At the same time, I think it is important that COOPWORTH ram sellers draw attention to the breeding background of individual rams by displaying pedigrees, just as they should draw attention to the respective strengths of individual EBV's.

## Opportunity for Coopworth Sheep Breeders? Lean Meat Yield & Eating Quality Producer Demonstration Sites

*Are you interested in participating as a producer demonstration site and seeing the benefits of improving Lean Meat Yield (LMY) and Eating Quality (EQ) of Lamb in your flock?*

Latest industry research has developed new breeding values that will allow faster progress for LMY while at the same time ensuring that we maintain or improve EQ and the nutrient composition of Australian lamb.

Producers and processors are collaborating in a new three-year MLA funded research validation project working with producers to boost profitability by improving LMY and eating quality. We want to demonstrate the value of newly developed Research Breeding Values (RBV's) for these hard-to-measure traits by evaluating the progeny of specific rams. These RBV's were an outcome from the Information Nucleus Flock in the Sheep CRC and the Sheep Genomics Projects. They will be tested by following the progeny from sires selected according to these RBV's from paddock-to-plate.

Two pilot sites have been established in Victoria and their lambs are on the ground. These lambs will be processed and tested at JBS Brooklyn.

We are now looking to establish additional sites across Victoria, (also across SA, Tasmania, NSW and WA) for the next mating season. On each site, ewes will produce at least 200 lambs for slaughter after being artificially inseminated (AI) to eight different sires, with at least 25 lambs to be sired by each ram to be tested. Ewes will be allocated to individual sires, AI mated and lambled separately. The lambs will be identified according to sire and weighed at weaning and monthly until slaughter.

*If you interested in being part of this innovative and industry initiative to improve our lamb production, and*

*Have 300-600 ewes that are able to be AI mated to terminal, maternal or Merino rams to produce lambs for slaughter?*

***Then, we need you....***

If you would like more information about the project, requirements and funding please contact:

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### INTRODUCING OUR NEW PRESIDENT:

*The CGA are pleased to announce that John Marriott has accepted the President's position. John has been involved with the CGA for nearly 30 years*

## THE HELMSMAN SELLING SYSTEM

By John Marriott

It has always been mandatory for the members of Coopworth Genetics Australia to record a number of traits in their breeding program that reflect the important aspects of a maternal sheep.

Sheep Genetics Australia's current Maternal Index is,

- Birth Wt. (kg) 11%
- Wean Wt (kg) 23%
- MWWT (kg) 5%
- Post WT (kg) 25%
- Post Fat (mm) 4%
- Post EMD (mm) 5%
- NLW (%) 16%
- PWEC (%) 8%
- YGFW (%) 3%
- YFD (micron) Nil

With an increasing interest in selecting

animals for their genetics strengths, the Helmsman system of transferring livestock from vendor to purchaser has a number of advantages.

- It allows buyers to move anywhere across the catalogue to purchase animals of their choice, that best suit their breeding goals.
- It allows buyers the opportunity to tailor their purchases to suit their budget.

It provides good feedback to vendors as to the important traits that purchasers are seeking.

Of course, genetics is not the 'be all and end all' of a Coopworth. They must be structurally sound, and able to produce as many fit & healthy lambs as possible. Just another issue that Helmsman allows you to consider!

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I wish to unsubscribe from the Coopworth News. Please fax to (03) 5571 1142

## CAPTURING COOPWORTHS

We know our Coopworths are a great type of sheep in many ways and the CGA would like demonstrate that through photos. We would like to build up a photo file that can be used to promote Coopworths through promotional material, newspapers and our website. So if you have any Coopworth photos of rams, ewes, lambs, carcasses, or a ewe showing it's great maternal instincts, etc please send them into the secretary by email. Keep in mind the better quality the photo is the more ways we can use it.

Happy Snapping! ☺

" The views/  
opinions  
expressed in  
this newsletter  
are not  
necessarily  
those of the  
Council of  
Coopworth  
Genetics  
Australia".

## PRODUCER'S SHARE OF THE RETAIL PRICE?

The following information was calculated on 200kg CW beef animals, but there is a fair probability that the same applies to lambs and mutton in Australia.

Australian producers 30%  
New Zealand producers 43%  
United States producers 45%

For Australia, it is roughly: 30% for the producer, 10% for the processor and 60% for the retailer, whereas in New Zealand, the producer gets 43%, the processor 10% and the retailer 42%. In the United States, farmgate cattle prices are approximately 20% higher than in Australia, yet US retail meat prices are about half the price in Australia. A big problem in Australia is the monopolies. JBS and Cargill are global meat traders and the sustainability of the Australian industry is of little interest to them. They account for half of Australia's processing capacity. Last year, The New Zealand Economic Service calculated sheep farmers received 39% of the lamb retail price. Would Australian producers get that much?

*Suggestions for future articles, comments on past newsletters, and  
"Letters To The Editor" would be appreciated.*

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