



DOHNE

Solutions

BREEDING MORE EWES

There is a dire need to breed more ewes to support the Australian sheep industry.

There has been a campaign, initiated by the Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders, called Breed more Merino Ewes.

At Glen Holme, we strongly support this push.

Much of the national sheep industry is based on using merino ewes for one of four main purposes.

- To breed woolled ewes in self-replacing flocks.
- To breed merino wethers for wool production.
- To supply first cross Border Leicester ewes to be used for terminal lamb production.
- To breed terminal lambs by using mainly British breed rams.

There is serious concern that we have gone below critical mass of merino ewe numbers to support the future of the whole Australian sheep industry. This is due to a long history of using terminal rams over merino type ewes and sending all the ewe progeny to slaughter with the wethers. This is unsustainable.

The recent long-term drought in the north of South Australia and the Eastern states has made this situation much worse. A dry year in Western Australia where whole regions ran low on surface water has seen many ewes sent to slaughter or eastward over the borders.

Clearly there are at least two simple solutions.

1. Breed a greater percentage of merino ewes to merino type rams and retain the ewe portion as breeders.
2. Increase both birth and survival rates so that more young ewes are available as breeding stock.

It will likely be necessary that some ewes will always be needed for terminal lamb production.

Dohne rams are the best key to support the push to “Breed more Merino Ewes”. There are now choices within the Dohne breed to choose new sires with suitably balanced ASBV’s for growth rates, wool production and quality.

Combined with the Dohnes natural ability to successfully raise 120 to 140% of lambs through to weaning and beyond this means that the following are easy to achieve.

- High quality AAAM wool from the ewe flock.
- Prime quality wether lambs with dress out percentages up to 51%
- Surplus ewe hoggets at premium prices for breeding.
- Self-replacing ewe flock thus reducing costs and bio-security risks
- Complete avoidance of contact with shedding breeds, reducing contamination.

At Glen Holme, we have clients who have utilised our Dohne rams over the following ewe flocks: -

- Poll Merino ewes
- SRS Merino ewes
- Border Leicester x Merino ewes
- Composite ewes
- Maternal ewes
- SAMM ewes
- Afrino ewes

Our clients participate in the premium young ewe market because there is a high enough weaning percentage to allow culling rates of 33% at hogget stage. This allows for significant yearly genetic gain through having the luxury to remove the lowest producers.

As a drought recovery strategy, it is hard to imagine a better option than purchasing Dohne rams. There is usually an immediate gain in number of replacement ewes produced. This builds like compound interest as generations increase. As an example, 120% of 120% is better than 100% of 100%, and much greater than 85% of 85%.

At Glen Holme we are in the fortunate position of being able to class out the lower 40% of ewe hoggets due to high numbers to select from. Our rate of genetic gain is measured by Sheep Genetics Australia and reported to us with each new batch of information submitted.

We have wonderful results coming from our entries in Sire Evaluation trials. These are reported in Merino Superior Sires and analyse growth rates, reproduction, wool production and quality.

We totally support the “Breed more Merino ewes” promotion and firmly believe that it is best achieved by using registered Dohne Merino rams. These all come with ASBV’s to assist you to make choices that support your production goals.

Glen Holme Dohnes - Bred for Performance, not fed for appearance!