



# 2015 Newsletter

## Welcome

Welcome to our 2015 newsletter and Mandi and I hope that wherever you are reading this in our vast country you are still in the game to achieve a reasonable spring and a solid year. After doing the rounds again this year with our display at Bendigo and Hamilton we have caught up with many old and perspective new ram clients and the variation in seasons between different areas is remarkable. The interest and enquiry in particular about our Trigger Vale Maternally focused Poll genetics was very strong. It has really highlighted that we have a very relevant product that suits the current economic parameters driving higher profits for sheep producers at the moment. The many conversations we had over these events highlighted that the focus for many sheep producers has shifted dramatically from lowering micron in their flock to increasing wool cut and most importantly improving lambing percentages. The other really pleasing observation is, what a great job industry is doing through extension programs like Best Bred/ Best Fed, Ram Select and Life Time Ewe Management in educating sheep producers, particularly the younger generation.

Sheep producers are rethinking their breeding objective by introducing traits like maternal fat, muscle and growth to create a more productive balanced animal. This in conjunction with improved management, primarily by pregnancy testing and aligning Condition Score and Food on Offer with the demands of where the ewe is currently in her yearly reproductive cycle, huge productivity gains are achievable. At Trigger Vale we are extremely proud that we identified the importance of these traits over a decade ago and due to careful selection have become what is arguably Australia's leading seedstock source of these genetics. This unique balance of genetics has resulted in many new clients travelling long distances to purchase our rams, this is illustrated by rams being sold to Western Australia, the Western Districts of Victoria, and Central NSW.

Our unique breeding objective, willingness to adopt new technologies and our innovative approach to ensuring that we are breeding industry relevant sheep was further highlighted this year when we had the honour of being awarded the Weekly Times/Coles Sheep Farmer of the Year. While not seeking awards like this Mandi and I were thrilled to have our enterprise judged by an independent panel of experts and have our hard work acknowledged.

On Friday the 4th September will be conducting our 38th Annual on Property sale. Due to the strength and increased demand at last year's sale we have decided to further increase the numbers of rams lotted

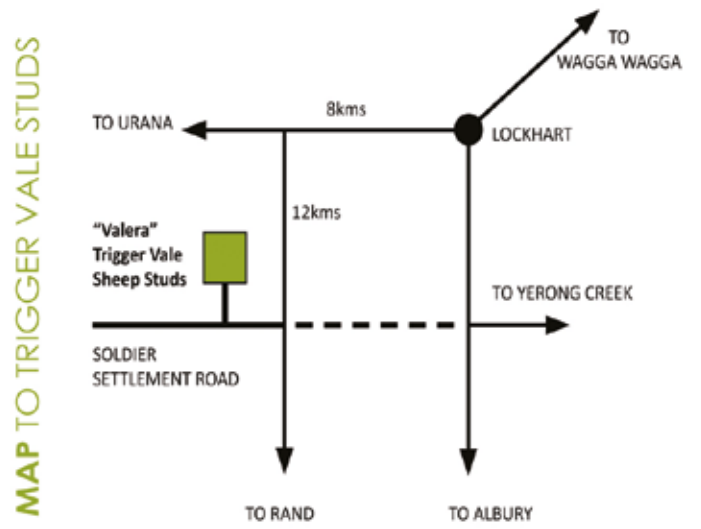
in both breeds. We hope this will provide both new and old clients a greater selection to fill their requirements while ensuring individual budgets can be met.

Due to the extra rams for sale the starting time of the auction has been brought forward to 12.30 pm. A light luncheon will be provided from 11.30 am with inspections from 9.30 am.

We wish everyone plentiful spring rainfall and a healthy and prosperous finish to 2015.



Photo courtesy of The Weekly Times.



## 38<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SALE - FRIDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015

[www.triggervalesheepstuds.com.au](http://www.triggervalesheepstuds.com.au)

Andrew Bouffler: (02) 6920 7656 • Michael Elmes 0429 847 552 • Jim Bouffler (02) 6921 2135

## Staff News

### Staff Changes at Trigger Vale

Many of our clients would have gotten to know Sam Clothier well over the past few years in his role as assistant manager at Trigger Vale Studs and he had become a vital part of our team. Prior to Christmas last year Sam made us aware that for personal reasons he and his new wife Nicole were considering a shift back to South Australia to primarily be closer to their families. Sam was keen to become more involved with his families considerable sheep operation back in South Australia and when he was asked to join a local Stock and Station Agent on a part time basis the shift back was on.

What was SA gain was certainly Lockhart's and our loss as both Sam and Nicole had thrown themselves into the local community life, especially the Lockhart Football and Netball Club, and were extremely popular around town.

Sam really believed in the Trigger Vale breeding program and his opinion and input into selection and breeding decisions was highly regarded. He was always hard working, conscientious, and just a great bloke to spend each day working with. Sam and Nicole from all reports have settled well back in SA and recently purchased their first house in Naracoorte.

With the departure of Sam we were then faced with the difficult prospect of finding a replacement. As luck would have it we didn't have to find anyone as he found us. Only a couple of weeks after Sam gave notice we received an e-mail from Western Australia from a young bloke wondering if we had a position available. It only took one conversation over the phone with Rivers Hyde to see what an impressive young man he was with a knowledge and passion for sheep breeding well beyond his years. River's family have a mixed farm at Ongerup in WA with an extensive cropping program, large Merino commercial operation and the Kohat White Suffolk Stud. River's natural eye for a superior animal and interest in objective measurement to ensure measured repeatable genetic gain means he has become a great sounding board for me with his opinion held in the highest of regards.

The Lockhart Football club have also benefited with them getting another great clubman and player.



Rivers Hyde

### Maurie Richards

*We would like to acknowledge the recent passing of Maurie Richards. Maurie sold legacy badges at our Auction Sale for as long as any one can remember. This was a mighty effort and our sale this year wont be quite the same without Maurie's presence. Rest in Peace Maurie.*





## The Importance of Maternal Fat

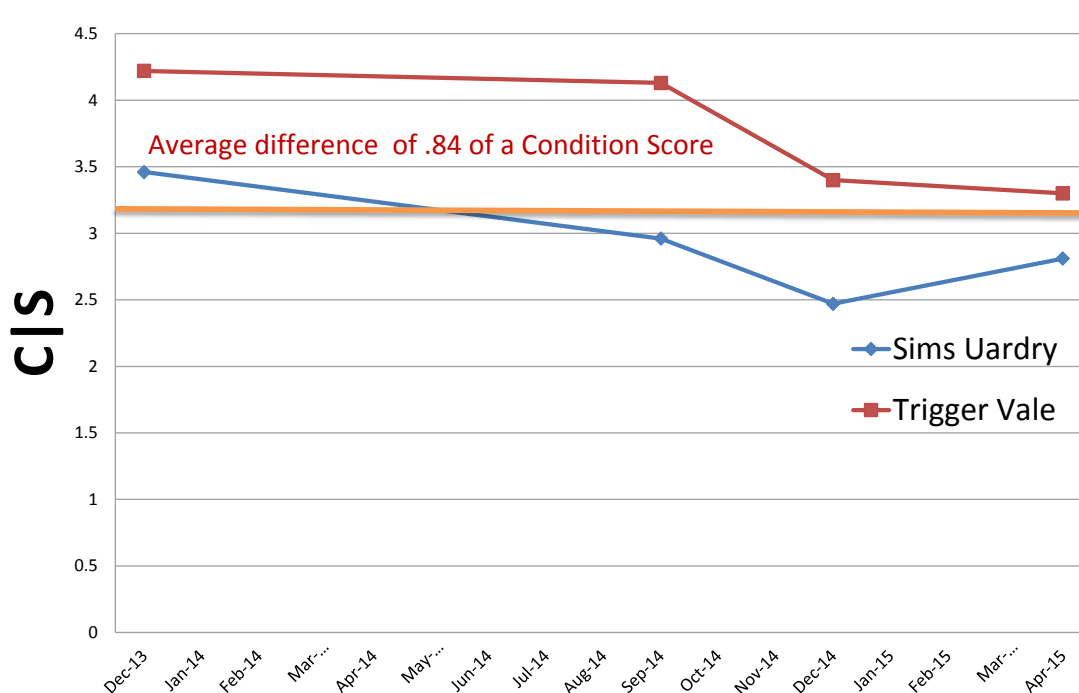
If you are an old client or have ever heard one of my presentations at an industry event or Trigger Vale field day you would be aware of the huge importance we have placed on breeding genetic fat into our Polls. I became aware of the importance of selecting for fat during my Nuffield Scholarship studies when I heard about the PHD work of Mark Ferguson which illustrated that higher levels of fat is positively related to conception and lamb survival rates. Like all important profit driving traits at Trigger Vale we know the only accurate way to improve them is to objectively measure, find the individual animals in your flock that are above average and reproduce from them. The only accurate way to do this and track progress over time is in the form of Estimated Breeding Values (EBV's) generated by Sheep Genetics.

At the Best Wool/ Best Lamb conference in Bendigo in June one of the presentations made the observation that the Post Weaning and Yearling Fat EBV's are 94% correlated with the actual condition score of the ewe sitting in the paddock. While this result shouldn't be surprising as the EBV's are generated from data collected of the fat levels measured over the sheep's ribs I had never seen it explained in this simple way before. Basically, if you put selection pressure on fat as a trait using EBV's you will breed ewes that will have a better condition score (CS) than ewes that haven't been selected for this trait.

This got me thinking about how does that actually express itself in the real world and it dawned on me that by default we had been running this exact trial at Trigger Vale over the past couple of years. We purchased 80 Sims Uardry stud ewes at their dispersal sale as an experiment and outcross option as they were the bigger plainer bodied South Australian type that could fit in with our program. After a 4 month quarantine period to ensure no bio-security issues the ewes had been incorporated

into our pedigree stud flock and run under exactly the same environmental conditions. Due to the fact that Uardry had never had a strategic breeding objective to improve Maternal fat in their flock and we CS three times a year I realised we had the data to see what difference selecting for fat actually had on the ewes CS. Refer graph 1

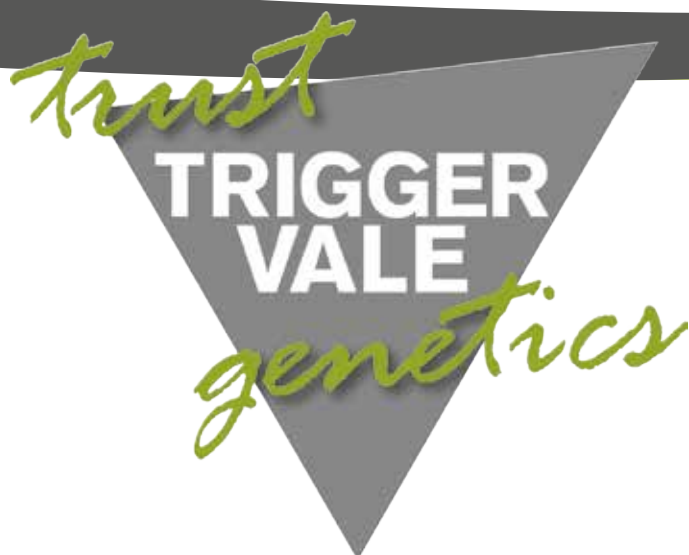
**Conclusion** – Over the 2 year period the Trigger Vale ewes that had been selected for higher fat levels had a Condition Score .84 higher than the Uardry ewes. It's important to note that it's actually significantly higher, as where the lines get closer on the right hand side of the graph is a result of the Uardry's CS dropping too low and them needing to be supplementary fed leading into lambing, slightly biasing the results. As this graph and results started to take shape I got as excited as I have ever been in my sheep breeding career as nearly a whole CS difference on a scale that is only 1-5 is huge. The many benefits of your ewes being in a better CS include easy care, higher lambing %, improved staple strength, higher wool cuts, better lamb growth rates and lower costs (labour and Supplementary feeding).



**Graph 1:**

*Comparison between a flock selected for YFAT against a flock with no selection pressure for YFAT.*

**NOTE:** YFAT highly correlated with Condition Score.



## Industry Benchmarking

With all the pedigree recording and internal measurement we do at Trigger Vale there is no doubt our internal benchmarking comparing individual animals and identifying the superior ones to breed on from is second to know one in the industry. Once we have identified the best genetics in our flock to ensure cumulative genetic progress it is then very important to compare them with the broader Australian sheep industry. It is with this in mind that we regularly enter rams in industry evaluation trials which are run independently and provide a clear picture in how we are travelling in all traits but particularly in the ones that we see as important and have been placing extra selection pressure on.

Due to trade restrictions to South Australia, Trigger Vale has joined the Market Assurance Program for Johnes. We are now MN1 status and gudiar vaccinated making us eligible to sell rams into all states in Australia.

## New Zealand Trial

Last year in our newsletter we reported on some of the early data from a large independent trial being run on the South Island of New Zealand. The trial consists of 32 New Zealand and 5 Australian rams along with 1 Dohne, 1 SAMM, and 1 Corriedale. See Table 1 for a summary of results.



*Andrew inspecting 839 progeny in New Zealand.*

Trigger Vale 110839, the ram in the trial, was selected mainly for wool type as the trial was being conducted in 800ml rainfall country. While solid, he was far from the pointy end of our genetics for growth, fat and muscle so to do so well in these areas was very pleasing. The benefits of doing well in those important maternal traits are illustrated in the fact that his female progeny has the second highest 2 tooth pregnancy % with 17% more foetuses than the trial average. Due to the success of the Trigger Vale genetics in the trial we have been invited to enter another 2 rams in the next stage of the trial so we will keep you up to date on future results.

## 2014/15 New Zealand Merino - Central Progeny Test (40 Rams)

*Table 1: Consisting of 32 New Zealand Merino Rams, 5 Australian Merino Rams, 1 Dohne, 1 SAAM and 1 Corriedale*

	Trigger Vale Sire Average	Overall CPT Average	Sire Deviation from CPT Average	Ranking
Birth Weight (kg)	5.3	4.9	0.4	
Weaning Weight (kg)	27.7	25	2.7	2nd
Post Weaning (kg)	33.7	31.5	2.2	4th
Eye Muscle (mls)	24.4	24	0.4	13th
Carcase Fatness (mls)	2.3	2.1	0.2	7th
Wrinkle Score (1-5)	1.9	2.4	-0.5	5th
Fibre Diameter (micron)	18.9	18.6	0.2	30th
Staple Length (mm)	100.7	93.3	7.4	6th
Worm Egg Count (eggs per gram)	54.9	208.4	-153.5	1st
% Footscore 4 or greater	62.1	86.5	-24.5	2nd
2 tooth Preg. Scanning	118%	101%	17%	2nd

## Industry Benchmarking

In Australia there are two major avenues to accurately benchmark your genetics which are the Sheep CRC nucleus flock or the AMSEA evaluation trials. In 2013 we entered Trigger Vale 110511 in the North East Victorian AMSEA trial based in Seymour. I attended the second shearing of the progeny in April and it was quiet amazing to see firsthand the progeny in their sire groups. The Trigger Vale progeny were quiet clearly the biggest and best finished which is backed up by the weaning data in Table 2.

We have entered another ram in the 2014 trial with the ewes expected to start lambing shortly.

## Falkland Islands

While we have been selling semen to the Falkland Islands for nearly 12 years with great results in what is probably the toughest environment in the world for running sheep. This year, Trigger Vale sold a large volume of semen to what will be one of the largest sire progeny test ever undertaken. Neil Judd, who formerly headed up the Falkland Island Department of Agriculture, has now been employed by the Falklands Landholdings Corp. which runs 350,000 sheep on 308,000 ha.

Neil will be running this extensive trial over a number of years as part of a major flock improvement program and Trigger Vale is both honoured and excited about being involved. If our genetics perform as well as we anticipate in this large scale commercial trial then we can safely say that they can perform and increase overall productivity even under the harshest environmental conditions. We believe the extra genetic fat, muscle and growth that we have bred into your sheep over the past 10 years will be really important in this environment. Stay tuned as results come to hand.



Andrew with Neil & Carol Judd, Falklands Landholdings Corp. inspecting stud rams for semen purchase.

## 2014 NE AMSEA Sire Evaluation Post Weaning Shearing

### SIRE GROUP: Trigger Vale 110511

Number of Progeny: 31

	MEAN	MIN	MAX	Group Av.	DEV
Fibre Diameter	17.9	15.8	19.8	15.6	2.3
Standard Deviation	3.3	2.8	4.3	3.2	0.1
Coefficient of Variation	18.3	16.3	22.8	20.6	-2.3
Comfort Factor	99.8	99.0	100	99.9	-0.1
Yield	71.4	65.7	84.6	71.3	0.1
Body Weight	31.8	25.0	38.0	27.8	4.0
Greasy Fleece Weight	2.4	1.7	3.2	2.3	0.1

**4kg heavier at weaning is a huge difference and would have significant outcomes for weaner survival and future lamb turn-off rates**





# White Suffolk News

## Branded Lamb Initiative

Fifteen years ago when I was researching the founding of a Terminal Stud to compliment our Polls (so clients get to source both breeds from the one stud), one of the major attraction of the White Suffolk Breed was that the Association was young and vibrant and not bogged down by history and traditional stud rules.

This innovative approach is still alive and well today as the Association is undertaking the required background work to create a national branded lamb product. The scale of this project would make it a world first for lamb and hopefully position White Suffolk sired lamb as the premium lamb product in consumer's eyes.

One of the biggest challenges of such an ambitious project is being able to guarantee any future partners continuity of supply throughout the entire year from producers. As a result the White Suffolk Association is conducting a survey of farmers who produce White Suffolk sired lambs to get an idea of interest in the concept and volumes of lamb that producers might commit. All details can be found on the White Suffolk webpage [www.whitesuffolk.org.au](http://www.whitesuffolk.org.au) and I would encourage all Trigger Vale clients to complete the survey as a first step of becoming involved and ensuring the project gets off the ground.

## Win a Ram Competition

While you are on the White Suffolk website you should fill in an entry in the White Suffolk's Associations "win a ram competition". This gives commercial producers the opportunity to win a voucher for \$1000 plus GST to offset the purchase of a White Suffolk Ram as long as it is from a registered White Suffolk breeder, which Trigger Vale certainly is.

## Superwhites - Trigger Vale 140835

One of the best decisions we have ever made as a seedstock producer is to join the Superwhite young sire evaluation program. This program has about 20 leading White Suffolk breeders Australia wide with all involved nominating their best ram lambs each year. Ten of the very best are selected each year then strategically allocated though out the members flock for benchmarking. For Trigger Vale this means we get to introduce the very best performance based genetics available

while at the same time benchmarking and getting linkage back to the broader industry for our own home grown sires.

Being involved with an astute group of breeders also means you get the interaction and stimulation on broader industry discussion as we attempt to pick trends and stay ahead of the pack ensuring we are breeding rams targeting customers' demands. This has certainly been the case with regards to Genomics and the adoption of using the new meat eating quality traits. Genomic testing can give you breeding values predicting the juiciness and tenderness of a ram's progeny. Superwhites has been selecting rams strong in these areas for the last 3 years flowing through to the member's flocks. This has resulted in studs like Trigger Vale and our clients to be well positioned to take advantage as industry shifts to payments based more on carcase quality.

This year we had the privilege of having TV 140835 selected for the Superwhite team primarily because of its unique combination of leading traditional (birthweight, growth and muscle) and meat eating quality traits. The future is certainly exciting in this space.



TV 140835 Keeper Sire (Semen Available).

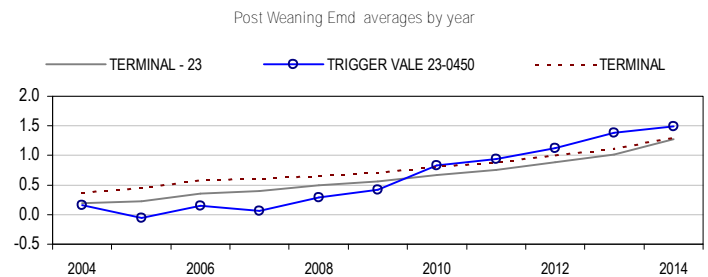
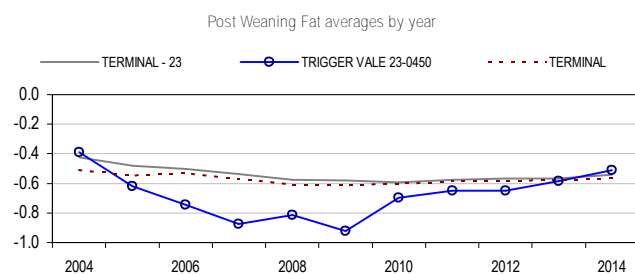
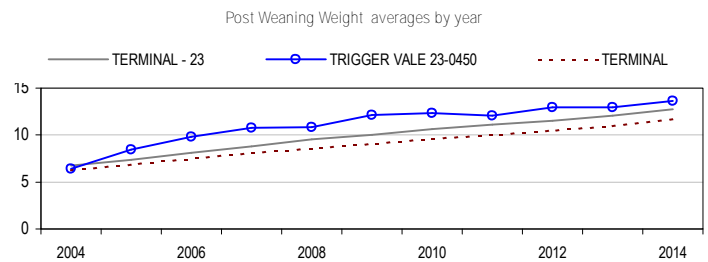
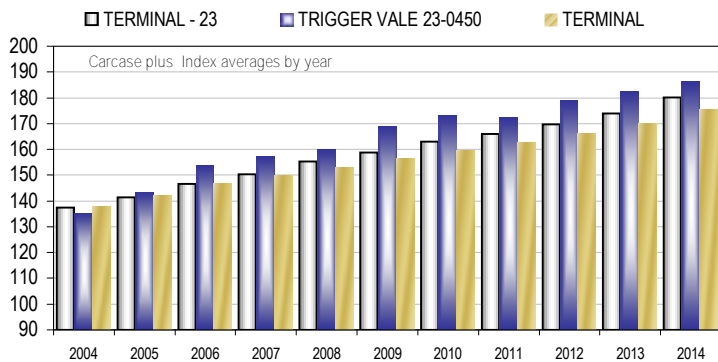
Photo taken off shears just after being pulled out of 100 ewes.

## Semen Sales

	BWT	WWT	PWT	PFAT	PEMD	PWEC	C+	Lamb 2020	LMY RBV	IMF RBV	ShearF5 RBV
TV 140835	0.25	9.4	13.9	-0.3	3.6	-27	213	116.3	0.10	0.19	-1.3



# Trigger Vale White Suffolk Genetic Trends



## On A Lighter Note

A lawyer was just waking up from anesthesia after surgery, and his wife was sitting by his side. His eyes fluttered open and he said, "You're beautiful!" and then he fell asleep again. His wife had never heard him say that so she stayed by his side.

A couple of minutes later, his eyes fluttered open and he said, "You're cute!" Well, the wife was dissapointed because instead of "beautiful," it was "cute." She asked, "What happened to 'beautiful'?" His reply was "The drugs are wearing off!"

**Q: What do you call a sheep covered in chocolate?**

**A: A Candy Baa.**

A policeman in the big city stops a man in a car with a sheep in the front seat. "What are you doing with that sheep?" He exclaimed, "You should take it to the zoo."

The following week, the same policeman sees the same man with the sheep again in the front seat, with both of them wearing sunglasses. The policeman pulls him over.

"I thought you were going to take that sheep to the zoo!"

The man replied, "I did. We had such a good time we are going to the beach this weekend!"

An old lady goes to the doctor and says, "I have this problem with frequent gas. Fortunately, the farts never smell and are always silent. As a matter of fact, I've farted at least 10 times since I've been here, and I bet you didn't even notice!"

The doctor says, "I see. Take these pills and come back next week."

The next week the old lady returns. "Doctor," she says, "I don't know what the hell you gave me, but now my silent farts stink like the dickens."

The doctor says, "Good! Now that we've cleared up your sinuses, let's work on your hearing."

**Q: How many sheep does it take to knit a sweater?**

**A: Don't be silly - sheep can't knit!**





Est. 1952

# Trigger Vale

## Polls & White Suffolks

### 38<sup>th</sup> Annual On-Property Auction

At "Valera" Lockhart on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 Inspections  
9.30am onwards, Poll Sale commencing at 12.30pm



**130 Poll Rams**

**6 Stud White Suffolk Rams**

**70 Specially Selected White Suffolk**

**MN1  
Gudiar  
Vacc**

**Vendors:** Andrew & Mandi Bouffler 0427 207656

**Stud Classer:** Michael Elmes 0429 847 552

**Selling Agents:** H. Francis & Co Wagga (02) 6921-6366

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