



2019 Newsletter

Welcome. . . It would be hard to imagine another time since European settlement where the fortunes of two States situated side by side have been so different. Having been to the Bendigo Sheep Show and Hamilton Sheepvention over the past month we have driven through a large portion of Victoria and spoken with many of its sheep producers. They are absolutely buzzing. Back to back cracking seasons and the highest combined wool, lamb, mutton and surplus stock prices has resulted in the perfect storm of good fortune. On the other hand, for the vast majority of NSW, what has been discussed as one of the worst droughts on record continues with virtually no sign of a reprieve. While the fantastic sheep industry commodity prices have certainly helped to minimise the financial burden of this prolonged dry spell the mental and emotional challenges as producers run out of fodder, water, capital and patience can't be understated. Mandi and I really hope that our clients and all farmers dealing with the ongoing drought have a network of friends and family to give them the ongoing support required.

One of the wonderful things of having a family owned and managed seed stock operation is the friendships and relationships that grow with our clients over time and we sincerely hope that they feel this is a two way street and our door/phone lines are always open for anyone that wants to talk to someone about how they are going. It's come to my attention recently that in many cases it's not actually the drought that is causing a lot of the anguish but often the frustration of having a period of unprecedented high sheep commodity prices and not being in a position to fully capitalise on them.

One thing I am convinced of is that the genetics, Trigger Vale has developed in our White Suffolks but more particularly our Poll Merino's, are designed to maximise the opportunities presented by Victoria's "golden period" and probably more importantly give NSW producers the genetic tools to minimise the effects of the drought. The only good thing that has come out of our own "2018 worse drought year on record", was to witness first-hand both at home and at many clients farms how a Merino that has been designed for 20 years to be more resilient and robust through improved genetic fat and muscle can still perform well. I have absolutely no doubt that Trigger Vale

Poll Merino's pick up condition score a lot quicker when surplus feed is available and/or carry it for longer when feed runs out. I believe fundamentally as sheep farmers the profitability of our enterprises depends on how efficiently we convert the dry matter our farm producers into saleable product.



2018 Sale Rams off to the West

The next opportunity for both old and new prospective clients to obtain our top of the drop Trigger Vale rams in on Friday 6th September at our 42nd on-property auction sale. The sale will commence at 12.30pm with inspection of rams after 8.30am. A light luncheon will be provided from 11.30am. Some post sale refreshments will also be supplied, and we hope all people involved in our auction can join as for a drink and a debrief after what is always a busy day.

Our auction sale represents the beginning of our ram selling season and we will have a large selection of quality rams in both breeds available for private treaty at reasonable rates. Please contact us to organise a time for selection or simply to have an obligation free inspection and discussion about the Trigger Vale genetic advantage.

Good luck to all for the remainder of 2019 and we particularly hope for some spring rainfall to provide some relief and replenish water supplies for those operating in drought conditions.

www.triggervalesheepstuds.com.au

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

Over the past two years with a significant price increase for wool many composite breeders have been reassessing the benefits and costs of putting a higher weighting of wool traits in their breeding programs. Trigger Vales Maternal Merino's with our industry trait leading growth, fat and muscle ASBV's are ideally suited for this role of improving the wool value of a composite breeding program without sacrificing what makes the composite model so profitable. Or in other words you don't want to "throw the baby out with the bathwater". While this is all great in theory there had been little independent trial work in this space to get a handle of the benefit/trade-offs for breeders contemplating going down this path. Below is a broad summary of the fantastic trial work done by Dr Jason Trompf on his own farm at Greta Victoria. It is without doubt the most thorough work in this area and highlights that with the right Merino genetic base like Trigger Vale's some very positive results are possible.

Maternal Composite Trial

What traits and balance of traits deliver the 'best' outcomes?

Dr Jason Trompf

This was the key question for our farm, and this is how we went about finding the answers. Our farm is in north east Victoria and it receives an average annual rainfall of 650mm, with a typical growing season length of 6-7 months. Our enterprise is predominantly focussed on meat production per hectare, running 3000 composite ewes at high stocking rates (approximately 20 DSE/ha average).

The components of our breeding objective we were assessing in the trial included; ewes with good doing ability and early maturity to enable them to be run at high stocking rates, with speed to turn-off and better ewe lamb performance (selected with emphasis on high weaning



Trigger Vale 110744 daughter with her twins

weights, muscle and fat) and number of lambs weaned (NLW) but in particular high lamb survival. We also wanted to evaluate the pros and cons of moderating adult ewe size and increasing fleece values.

ASBVs and visual appraisal were used to source 5 different Maternal ram groups, which included; Maternal Merino, Maternal Composite, Terminal-Maternal, New Zealand Composite and Maternal White Suffolk. The wether progeny were sold as lambs and the ewe progeny were retained and measured in the trial, which is ongoing, and the ewes are currently on their fourth lambing.

Extensive measurements were recorded each year to assess the ewe's total production (wool and meat value), as well as measuring traits that impact cost of production like condition score, adult weight and worm burden. This has been critical to inform the gross margin analysis for comparing the profitability of the six genotypes on a production per head and profit per hectare basis, which was conducted by Farming Systems Analysis, John Young, WA. Specific measures taken, include;

- (i) ewe liveweight and condition score each year,
- (ii) ewe welfare/cost of production indicators including worm burden, lameness and survival rates,
- (iii) meat production- including number and weight of lambs weaned and lamb carcass value, and
- (iv) wool production including fleece weight, wool quality and fleece value.

An interesting outcome from the trial is that there is more than one-way to achieve similar outcomes. For instance the profitability of the Maternal White Suffolk sired ewes was driven by them consistently being a high meat producing genotype through high scanning rates, lamb survival and marking rates, relative to other ewe groups, as well as the fact the economic analysis showed that they could be stocked more heavily due to higher body condition score throughout their life. Whereas the Maternal Merino group was in complete contrast to the White Suffolk group, consistently having the highest wool return driven by finer micron and moderate fleece weights, and meat production per ewe or per hectare that was around average across all sire groups. Hence it is critical for sheep producers, particularly those with dual purpose flocks, to measure total production from their ewes (meat and wool) when comparing genotypes.

A summary of the outcomes in performance of the Maternal Merino (Trigger Vale) sired ewes are;

- **Reproduction** - above average reproductive performance throughout the trial, except for when lambing as ewe lambs. As 4-year old ewes (this year) they had the highest scanning rate of all groups at 198% to ewes joined (marking rates are not yet available),

- **Wool production** - the highest fleece values throughout the trial, driven mainly by a significant reduction in micron (4.1 micron below the average for all groups) and along with a slight increase in fleece weight (0.2 kg over the trial average),
- **Meat and wool returns per ewe** - achieved the equal second highest value of production from meat and wool per ewe at \$241/ewe over the trial,
- **Profit per hectare** - the most profitable per hectare over the trial when the analysis was based on the actual liveweight of each group and second most profitable per hectare if the stocking rate estimates in the analysis are based on standard reference and genetic fatness.

In order to thoroughly evaluate different genotypes, it is critical to understand your system efficiencies/benefits, cost-of-production and welfare outcomes, not just measuring production alone. The Maternal Merino ewes performed above average in these areas. The MLA/MDC support we received for this trial helped enabled collection of detailed information for the evaluation.

For more information on this trial and to see the sheep firsthand there is a series of forums throughout Victoria in late Aug/early September. For more information on the Climate Smart Farming forums see attached link

<http://www.lambsalive.com/climate-smart-farming>.

The forums aim to assist producers to **make the most of this season and prepare for the next.**



Trigger Vale Sired F1 Ewe Lamb

New Staff at Trigger Vale

One of the best things about my job is getting to go to work everyday with young people who are passionate about our sheep industry and hope to make a career in Australian Agriculture.

Over the past few years we have had Sam Clothier from SA, Rivers Hyde from WA and currently Dana Clutterbuck from Edenhope, Victoria who have all come off family farming operations. I would like to think that with over 30 years of experience and having one of the most progressive and innovative seed stock operations in the country that in a small way we are helping educate the next generation of sheep producers to face the challenges of a changing marketplace.

Dana spent a year with Southern Australia Livestock based out of Naracoorte, SA in the Stock and Station game before a chance encounter with her parents in Bendigo lead her to us. Trigger Vale sponsored her in April to attend the SA sheep expo in Adelaide where she participated in 4-day youth sheep education program. Dana has fitted in to the local community joining the Lockhart Netball Club and is a member of the local womens footy team. Go Dees.



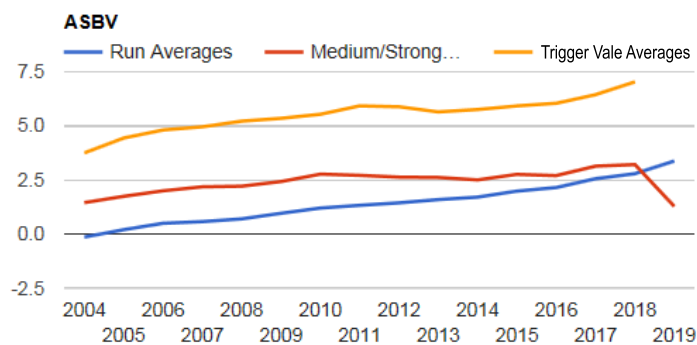
TRIGGER VALE JUST DOESN'T TALK DUAL PURPOSE WE DO DUAL PURPOSE!!

It never ceases to amaze me how many Merino studs use the term Dual Purpose in their marketing and promotional campaign's yet when questioned about what they are doing to improve the carcase attributes of their genetics you quickly learn the answer is very little. At best the answer is usually some mother statement about having "quick growing wether lambs that can be turned off before they cut their teeth". The reality is if as an industry we are going to develop a real dual-purpose animal that supplies quality wool and lamb products targeting customers ever increasing demand for quality, ethically produced traceable products we require seed stock operations to develop advanced breeding programs to achieve this.

At Trigger Vale we have had a breeding program that has an equal weighting of wool, carcase and maternal traits for over 50 years. With the availability of ASBV's to the Merino industry for over 20 years we have used this tool extensively to ensure we have lead industry in the vital carcase traits like Growth, fat and muscle (refer genetic trend graphs 1, 2 and 3).

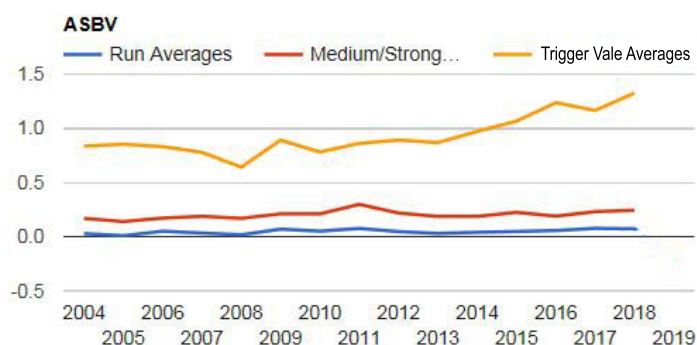
Graph 1

PWT Genetic Trends



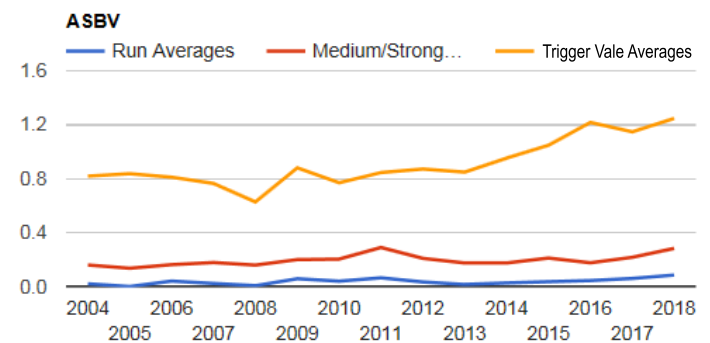
Graph 2

YEMD Genetic Trends



Graph 3

YFAT Genetic Trends



Over the past 5 years the development of genomics and ability to now get breeding values on carcase quality traits like Red Meat Yield, Intra-muscle fat (juiciness) and Shear Force (tenderness) has meant we have been able to incorporate these traits into our program. Trigger Vale has once again been an early adopter of these tools having collected DNA samples on over 20% of all young rams and more importantly have had several stud sires selected to be in Industry's Information Nucleus flock (INF). This is beneficial because all the progeny in the INF gets killed and the actual phenotypic data on these hard to measure carcase traits are captured.

To further our understanding and progress the carcase attributes of our genetics in 2017 Trigger Vale applied and was successful in getting a MLA/MDC co-funded grant within their Fast Track program. The capital cost of the Trigger Vale Fast Track trial was in total over \$70,000 with Trigger Vale contributing 25% and industry through MDC (Levy payers) funding contributing 75%. The project was designed with the aid of Dr Mark Ferguson to generate Meat Eating Quality (MEQ) and cascase yields data on 3 influential Trigger Vale Sires and compare them with 3



This photo illustrates the importance of carcase shape. The carcase 3rd from the right was sired by Trigger Vale 130981 and has a "U" full shape to it. The two carcasses either side of it are sired from two other industry sires used in the project and have a more leggy "V" shape. Buyers want the U shape.

other outside Merino sire types. These included Leahcim, Anderson and Merinotech. For all of the six rams it was essential that they had similar ASBV's especially in the traditional carcase traits like Growth, Fat and Muscle.

The single biggest factor to the trials outstanding success was ram clients Russel and Ricky Luhrs from Cavendish Victoria agreed to host the trial. The Luhrs passion for breeding a truly balance dual purpose Merino resulted in them becoming equally as passionate about the trial as ourselves and meant the attention to detail and accuracy of capturing the vital performance data required to successfully conduct such a trial was obtained at an industry "best practice" level. They selected 120 of their older bloodline ewes which had no relationship with any of the Sire lines used in the trial and 20 were Allied to each sire. The lambs were then grown out under commercial conditions with normal measurement like weaning and post weaning weight, fat and muscle scanning and full genomic testing for parentage and MEQ traits undertaken. The lambs had a finally weight taken and Ricky gave them all a on the hoof carcase shape measurement before they travelled to JBS Bordertown to be killed. Organising the kill and the intricate planning required in obtaining the meat samples needed for further Laboratory testing was a major undertaking and I can't thank Dr Peter McGilchrist (Senior Meat Science Lecturer, UNE) enough for organising this. Our team spent nearly two full days ensuring each animal ID was kept during the process of killing and sampling each of the 89 carcasses in the trial. Racheal Withers (SARDI) was the team leader and her expertise and relationship with JBS was vital to the success of gathering the meat samples and data required. Jarrod Lees a Postdoctoral Research Fellow from UNE assisted Racheal while myself, Ricky and another ram client Peter Hawkins along with his daughter Tara and son in law Rob were the lackeys doing whatever we were told. During these two days I gained an amazing insight into firstly the commercial process and challenges faced by a company like JBS to operate an abattoir and secondly what is involved and the attention to detail required to obtain accurate meat samples to obtain actual phenotypic data for IMF, Shear Force, Ph levels and red meat yield from DEXA technology.

The actual detailed scientific results of the trial are two complexed and involved to go into detail in this newsletter but in summary what we achieved is a much clearer picture of what the impact of what Trigger Vales industry leading growth, muscle and Fat genetics will have on the Meat Eating Quality of our own and clients lambs. It has given us an incredible insight into the processes required to obtain phenotypic data vital to making sure that not only will Trigger Vale clients have industry leading growth and meat yield in their lambs but also high levels of customer satisfaction and hopefully in time a significant price premium. This project has just "wet the appetite" for significant further work in this area as part of the Trigger Vale breeding program. When this is viewed in conjunction with our ongoing selection pressure for elite above average cutting wools and improved maternal performance when Trigger Vale states that we have a true dual purpose Maternal breeding objective, you better believe it. On closing I would like to thank MLA/MDC for co funding this project along with all the industry people and Trigger Vale supporters who helped bring it all together.



5 month old trial lambs at Luhrs-Cavendish, VIC



Post weaning scanning - trial lambs - Chris Parker & Ricky Luhrs



Taking PH samples on the trial lambs



The team collecting meat samples for lab testing



Some of the Trigger Vale sired loins - note the visual IMF (marbling)

White Suffolk News

While the Trigger Vale White Suffolk's news page always sits at the back of our newsletter it's important to highlight that this doesn't reflect the amount of time, effort and resources we place on breeding the most commercially focused Terminal rams possible. Being a part of the Superwhites young sire breeding program not only gives us linkage to the rest of industry allowing us to track with high accuracy our genetic progress over time (refer genetic trends graphs next page) it also allows us to utilise some of the highest genetic merit young rams in the country.

Over the past 5 years with the introduction of Genomics and Meat Eating Quality Australian sheep Breeding Values we now have more traits to consider in our White Suffolk breeding program. The more traits you include in a breeding objective index the harder it is to improve each individual trait. Michael Crowley from Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) highlighted at the recent Best Wool/ Best Lamb conference in Bendigo that the way our lamb is valued and how we are going to be paid is about to be transformed. DEXA technology will allow every carcase to be assessed on red meat yield at abattoir chain speeds. He also stated that there are promising signs that soon there will be the tools to assess Intra Muscle fat (Marbling of lamb) and Shear Force (tenderness of lamb) at the same time, so a payment grid of the future will be based about not only the actual amount of saleable red meat but also its eating quality. At Trigger Vale we are very proud of the fact that we have always been at the forefront in both breeds of predicting industry markets and trends and are

happy to say because of this our clients will be well placed to benefit from this new payment system. To highlight this point refer to Table 1 which shows the average ASBV's for the sires we have used at Trigger Vale for the 2019 lambing compared to the industry average's.

What's exciting about the above is we managed to keep the key profit driver for Terminals in Post Weaning Weight (PWT) in the top 10 % of all terminals while keeping Birth Weight (BWT) below average. There is a negative correlation between growth and birth weight in that the higher the growth the larger the birthweight resulting in more lambing problems and death. One of the real benefits of White Suffolk's over other Terminal breeds has been on average they have smaller thinner shoulder lamb's aiding lamb survival rates. Secondly, to have a sire group averaging in the top 5% of all Terminals for Meat Eating Quality traits like Intra – muscle fat and Shear Force means we are going to make serious improvement in these areas. Why this is so impressive is the fact that these traits are negatively correlated with the more traditional traits of growth and muscle (PEMD) so Trigger Vale is smashing the natural order of things and moving all the important traits in the direction that will make our clients more dollars.

To aid clients with their 2019 ram selection in this area Sheep Genetics have released a new index called TCP. This Index is targeted to maximize growth and muscling while maintaining key eating quality traits. Trigger Vale will include the TCP index in its White Suffolk Catalogue this year.

Sires Average - 2019 Drop White Suffolks

	BWT	WWT	PWT	PFAT	PEMD	IMF	SF	LEQ
TV Averages	0.31	10.6	16.96	0.35	3.54	-0.106	-0.69	158.5
WS Averages	0.36	9	13.9	-0.5	1.7	-0.5	3.1	129.3

Table 1

Top 3%

Top 5%

Top 10%

Top 30%

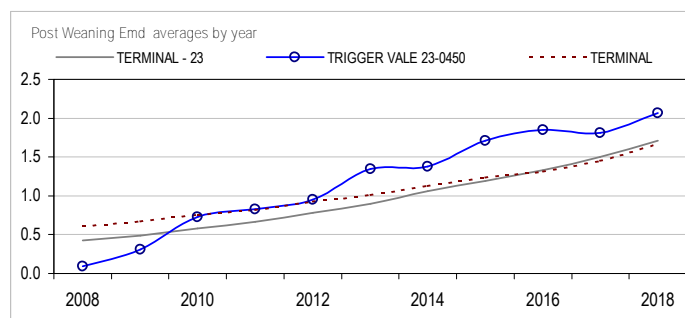
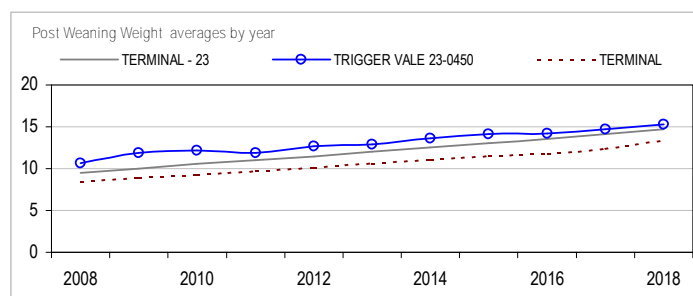
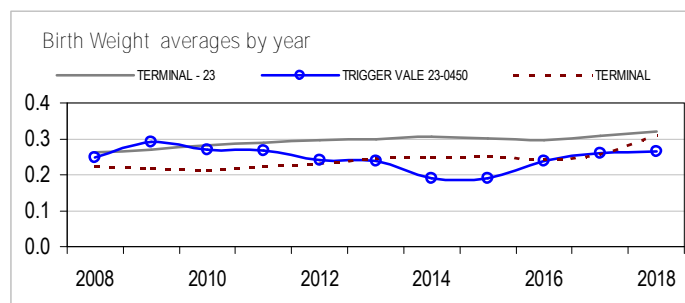
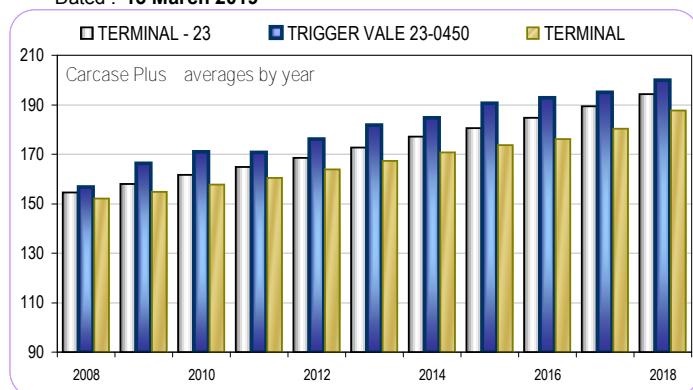
2018 Sales

There is no better endorsement of your product than the marketplace. In a very tough drought environment throughout NSW we managed a 100% clearance of 86 rams averaging \$1210 at our on-property auction sale followed by a strong clearance of private sales. This represents great value for high performance tested rams. It seems when things are tough people realise quality pays in the long run which is in line with the old saying "that if you are going to have the expense of feeding something you should have the genetics that will respond to give you the best outcomes".



Trigger Vale White Suffolk Genetic Trends:

Dated : 15 March 2019



ON A LIGHTER NOTE . . .

How my Husband & I Terrified a Cab Driver

My husband and I were dressed and ready to go out for a lovely evening of dinner and theatre.

Having been burgled in the past, we turned on the 'night light' and the answering machine, then put the cat in the backyard. When our cab arrived, we walked out the front door and our rather tubby cat scooted between our legs inside, then it ran up the stairs. Because our cat likes to chase our budgie we really didn't want to leave them unchaperoned so my husband ran inside to retrieve her and put her in the backyard again.

Because I didn't want the taxi driver to know our house was going to be empty all evening, I explained to him that my husband would be out momentarily as he was just bidding goodnight to my mother. A few minutes later he got in the cab all hot and bothered and said (to my growing horror and amusement) as the cab pulled away.

"Sorry it took so long but the stupid bitch was hiding under the bed and I had to poke her ass with a coat hanger to get her to come out! She tried to take off so I grabbed her by the neck and wrapped her in a blanket so she wouldn't scratch me like she did last time. But it worked! I hauled her fat ass down the stairs and threw her into the backyard..... she had better not sh*t in the vegetable garden again"

The silence in the taxi was deafening.....

- Today at the bank, an old lady asked me to help check her balance. So I pushed her over.
- I told my girlfriend she drew her eyebrows too high. She seemed surprised.
- I bought some shoes from a drug dealer. I don't know what he laced them with, but I've been tripping all day.
- My friend says to me: "What rhymes with orange" I said: "No it doesn't"
- Life is short, smile while you still have teeth.
- A bank is a place that will lend you money if you can prove that you don't need it.





Est. 1952

Trigger Vale

Poll Merino & White Suffolks

42nd Annual On-Property Auction

At "Valera" Lockhart on Friday 6th September 2019
Inspections 9.00am onwards, Poll Sale commencing at 12.30pm



150 Poll Merino Rams
5 Stud White Suffolk Rams
75 Specially Selected White Suffolk Rams

Vendors: Andrew & Mandi Bouffler 0427 207 656

Sheep Genetic Advisor: Mark Ferguson

Nextgen Agri 64 21 496 656

Stud Classer: Michael Elmes 0429 847 552

Selling Agents: Elders Ltd Wagga (02) 6923-4666

H. Francis & Co Wagga (02) 6921-6366

3% rebate to outside agents introducing clients on day of Sale

Luncheon Available

Catalogue online two weeks before the Sale

MN1
Gudiar Vacc
Brucellosis
Accredited



Rabobank



www.triggervalesheepstuds.com.au