



Wairere

Romneys • Composites • Terminals

Wairere Newsletter
October 2011

Something for Nothing?

Wairere clients in Australia are getting extra benefits over and above their previous breeding programs, but paying a similar rate for rams. They list the extra benefits as:

- Having sheep tougher than Border/Merinos in wet cold winters or the summer dry. "A condition score better"
- Ability to run more per hectare
- Achieving higher productivity than Border/Merinos
- Obtaining lamb growth rate similar to terminal sires, but with the choice of keeping the ewe lambs for breeding.
- Avoiding the purchase of high cost ewes/lambs for replacements
- Needing less drench. (*Since 2005 Wairere has only once drenched a few adult ewes despite wintering 700 – 800kg liveweight per hectare on the side of a hill.*)
- Enjoying better feet than the traditional Merino crosses.

And there has been no downside: woolskins have achieved good prices.

Achieving full potential. Retired dairy farmer Wayne Dodson has achieved exceptional results this spring, tailing 150% from Wairere Romney/Border Merino ewe hoggets, mated at eight months. He achieved the same performance last spring. I give two 90 day Cydectin injections after weaning, which helps them. And go around them at lambing, which a big operation might not do. But the payback is there ... the two toothed and mixed age ewes do 160 – 170% and the lambs average 23kg."

Wayne calls himself a hobby farmer, with just over a thousand ewes. But the message is there for all of us ... grow our young stock well and the rewards are so much higher in the first eighteen months.

And the rewards last a lifetime with improved productivity every year.

Wairere has had a policy of mating all ewe hoggets since 1966, and lambing them unshepherded. Since 2004 around 2,500 hoggets have been mated each year and only these which get in lamb are retained, usually around 1900 (one exception in 2009, 140 dry hoggets were retained). These Romney hoggets at mating average around 40kg net of wool at 7½ months old.



Wayne Dodson's fourteen month old Wairere/BorderMerino ewe hoggets with 150% lambs at foot, September 2011.

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Wairere manager Simon Buckley with Stephen Creese's management team at Wairere, May 2009. From left: Simon Buckley, Vinny Madden, Stephen's neighbour Tim Gunn, independent agronomist Mark Rouse, Stephen Creese, Sam Hood, and James Brown.

Sheep and potatoes a great mix. Stephen Creese in Tasmania has developed a model integrating storage dams with centre pivots, potatoes and sheep. Between his own property and other properties he manages, he is harvesting around 21,000t potatoes, and running 21,000 ewes, 5,000 hoggets, plus a large cattle herd.

Some farmland in Tasmania, especially sand country, was particularly cheap until recently. This created a favourable entry point, and irrigation allowed intensification. Centre pivots can be towed from one place to another, because there is insufficient water to irrigate all summer. But a good late spring and reliable autumn guaranteed by irrigation allow

average lamb weights of 22kg. Setup cost, including storage dams, has worked out around \$A4,200/hectare, in a 550 to 700mm rainfall area.

Stephen likes the Wairere Romney body depth and muscling, which complements the Australian tendency to have tall, long, shallow animals.

Stephen will also be using Wairere Romney over composite ewes at Mt. Elephant Station in Victoria next mating. The goal there is to reduce ewe size, but consolidate performance in a more robust package.

"Doubled my lambing percentage". Ben Cassidy, Hurunui, North Canterbury, New Zealand. "Ten years ago I took over farming Alexdale. Lambing with Corriedales was at 70% with major issues. Poor mothering, poor feet, high ewe death rate, and high lamb wastage. In 2005 I changed to Wairere Romneys. Lambing is totally unshepherded on hard hill country. Last year we achieved 140% with weaning weight of 32kg average up from 27kg. We have also managed to drop a labour unit.

"The sheep have just got more grunt". Improving sheep performance has enabled me to continue development. We sprayed 400ha of matagouri two years ago.

In 2010 we lambed 143%, one of the few farms in North Canterbury to improve on 2009 lambing".



Ben Cassidy, North Canterbury



Romney cross ewes and lambs at Craig Grant's, September 2011

High performance on low rainfall "fine wool" country. Craig & Jacinta Grant, together with Craig's parents Colin & Beryl, farm 5000 ewes and a 220 cow Murray Grey Stud at Pigeon Ponds, northwest of Hamilton.

The Grants made the decision to phase out merinos some years ago. 1stX ewes were bred to utilise the existing merino ewes, but in recent times a self replacing maternal composite has been developed using the 1stX ewe as a base. The flock is still in transition, and the Wairere rams are helping to provide the type of sheep the Grants see as ideal for their environment.

They are very impressed with the Wairere traits of added constitution and doing ability compared to the traditional 1stX ewes. They also rate extra fertility, moderate mature ewe weights, clean points, tight skins and mothering ability as major benefits.

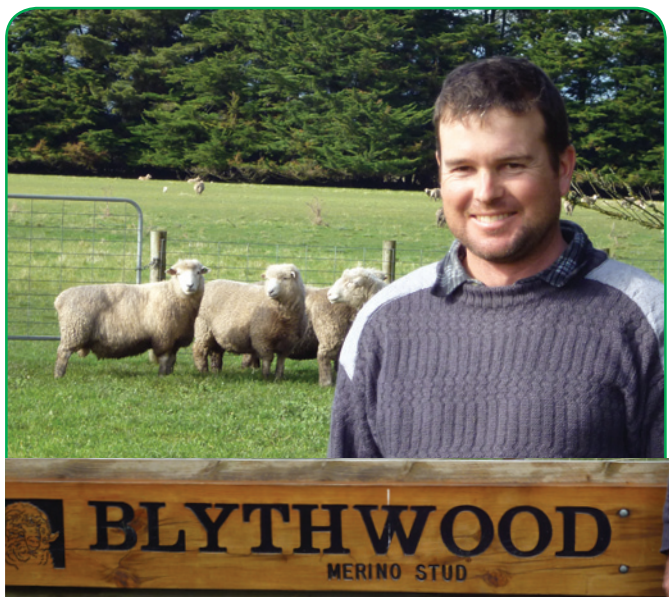
All maternal wether lambs & terminal sired lambs are sold over the hooks together with no skin discounts. Lambs are born from June with 70% marketed as suckers and the remaining finished for autumn and winter sales at an overall average around 26kgs.



Craig Grant with twelve month old Wairere Romney ram hoggets

Merino stud outcrossed to Wairere Romney. Richie Belleville made a one hit change to Wairere Romney over his Merinos in 2007. The results were dramatic.

"There was a major reduction in feet problems with the first cross. And the lamb growth rate was so much better. Overall the reduction in workload was a big relief, and great timing with the lift in lamb values over the last couple of years. I have continued to put Romneys over the Wairere cross, and now have ¾ Wairere hoggets and two tooth's".



Richie Belleville MacArthur Victoria. with Wairere Romney rams, July 2011.
 "The roms are so easy going I haven't lost any since 2007. I won't need to buy any this year."



Wairere Romney rams at Richie Belleville's property showing depth and width of hindquarter which complements the typical long, tall, lean Australian body type.



Wairere TefRom ram lambs, six months old, February 2010. Bare heads and bare legs reduce workload.

Continual improvement. Ewan Price, near Heywood, has continued to see a productivity gap between his Wairere/Border cross and his Border/Merinos.

The 3 to 6 year old Wairere cross scanned 180% this year versus 160% with the 3 to 8 year old Border Merinos. The mixed aged ewes have tailed 153% to ewes mated despite the very wet winter. The Romney/Border cross hoggets scanned 124 %, and the two tooth 167% (lambled as hoggets). The lambs this past season averaged 23kg carcase weight, including hogget lambs.

"I run 20-25% higher stocking rate with the Romney cross. And I don't need to footbath them".

This year, Ewan has taken the self-replacing program one step further, by using Wairere TefRom over the Romney cross. The half Romney will underpin a robust and uniform type, and the Texel and the East Friesian wool type will contribute to a tight bulky staple for a top value woolskin.

The Texel will contribute hardiness and carcase yield, the East Friesian high fecundity, good milking ability, and large frame size with fast growth.

Wairere's reputation. Over the past eight years Wairere has averaged sales of 4,500 rams per year. The Romney is the dominant breed in New Zealand. The Coopworth (half Border Leicester/half Romney) suits good country, which is increasingly going to dairying. The trend to composites (Finn, Eastfriesian, Texel) has been followed by a strong trend back to Romneys over the past five years.



Wairere/Border cross ewe hoggets at Ewan Price's, September 2011

What can Wairere sheep do in Australia? Making your sheepfarming easier and more profitable has always been our goal. We breed a robust, highly productive sheep in a high stocking rate environment on second class hill country. And we breed large numbers so that we normally sell only within the top 20 -25% of ram lambs born.

The Australian environment for sheepfarming is more volatile than many parts of the world. Successful farmers in Australia keep their cost structure low. One of the best ways to do that is to farm sheep which are easycare and have strong constitution. Wairere sheep have been bred to work for you.

Our offer for 2011- 12.

We will select Romney two-tooth rams (14 months old) in November for January air freight to Australia. They will have good body length and a tight, finer wool type. Some rams will be selected direct to order, but there will also be extra rams available at Ewan Price's property near Heywood.

Price: A\$ 1,080 plus freight/quarantine A\$ 1,480

You are welcome to inspect at any time.

In early January TefRom ram lambs (August born) will be selected, and some of the highest growth Romney ram lambs. These ram lambs will also be air freighted in January, and there will also be some, surplus to direct orders, available for viewing and purchase at Ewan Price's.

Price: A\$ 1,000 plus freight/quarantine A\$ 1,400

If freight/quarantine costs less than \$400, the price to you will be reduced accordingly. Bigger numbers will reduce costs.

Here's wishing you another highly profitable year. Best wishes from the Wairere team.

Warm Regards

and the
Wairere Team

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