

PETER WESTBLADE MEMORIAL MERINO CHALLENGE 2010 – 2012

Peter Westblade was a true visionary, he epitomised the real Australian spirit of hard work, compassion and devotion to a cause.

Peter was passionate about breeding profitable sheep. Being a strong supporter of a balanced approach to all things, his legacy lives strongly amongst those who had the fortune to know such a great man.

The Peter Westblade Memorial Merino Challenge 2010 -2012 has been developed to assist merino breeding operations make more informed decisions on their merino genetics. It has been deliberately designed to show the entrants in the trial and the wider sheep industry the genetic opportunities that exist for them to be more financially sustainable into the future.

The Peter Westblade Memorial Merino Challenge 2010 -2012 is designed to encompass all of the various strains and bloodlines of merino sheep, it is unique in that it will fully examine both the wool and meat components of the entrants teams.

The Australian sheep flock is at levels not seen for a 100 years, the sheep industry must make a stance and show how this wonderful animal can be used to provide essential food and fibre for future generations.

PETER WESTBLADE MEMORIAL MERINO CHALLENGE 2010 – 2012

RULES & CONDITIONS

1.0 Entry

- 1.1** Nominations to participate in the Peter Westblade Memorial Merino Challenge 2010 - 2012 will be accepted from self replacing sheep operations and are expected to be received from across Australia.
- 1.2** The Merino Challenge will be conducted at the Temora Agricultural Research Station and “Yarragundy West” Lamb Feedlot Collingullie. As with the previous wether trials run at Wagga Wagga, Alectown and Taralga, Craig Wilson will continue to assist in the coordination of all activities with the assistance of Moses & Son staff and NSW Industries and Investment sheep and wool officers.
- 1.3** The Merino Challenge will accommodate a maximum of fifty (50) teams of wethers each team to comprise thirty (30) wethers. Any commercial self replacing strain of sheep or their crosses including, Horn Merino, Poll Merino, Dohne Merino, Bond and South African Meat Merino may be nominated for participation in the Trial.
- 1.4** The Merino Challenge will commence in April 2010 after the wethers have been shorn to standardize wool length. After shearing each team of wethers will be randomly split into 2 groups of 15. This will give 2 groups of 750 wethers. These 2 separate mobs will be known as the Meat Challenge and the Wool Challenge sheep.
- 1.5** The entrant must either purchase rams directly from the stud nominated as their bloodline source, or have bred their own rams and not be actively selling rams. The entrant must have bred all sheep nominated, with the wethers carrying the entrants registered ear mark and NLIS tag. Studs nominating their own commercial flocks are ineligible.

- 1.6** Entrants will be required to select their team of thirty (30) wethers by the following process: -
- 1.6.1** The Entrant will yard a minimum 90% of his/her wether drop, *born after April 1, 2009. Ideally July, August, September 2009. A minimum of 300 wether lambs must be penned.*
 - 1.6.2** A CWL or Moses & Son representative will at random, draft fiftyfour (54) wethers from the above group.
 - 1.6.3** The Entrant will immediately select his/her team of thirty (30) from the random group of 54 wethers. The selection of the 30 wethers will be in line with the entrants breeding objectives and will occur without the use of objective data.
 - 1.6.4** After selection the team of thirty (30) wethers will immediately be ear-tagged, with two permanent tags, under the guidance of the CWL or Moses & Son representatives.
- 1.7** The Entrant will liaise with Craig Wilson or a coordinator in their region for the delivery of his/her team of thirty (30) wethers to a central location for trucking to the trial site. All teams must be on-site prior to the even up shearing anticipated to be in the first week of April 2010.
- 1.8** If any form of footrot is present in a flock, this flock is ineligible to participate. A vendor declaration and animal health statement will be required to support the footrot free status of a entrants flock.
- 1.9** Wethers are expected to arrive unshorn to allow for the even up shearing. Entries may be accepted from teams that have been shorn prior to Jan1st 2010.
- 1.10** Merino Challenge wethers may be mulesed, clipped or non mulesed.
- 1.11** Flocks that have previously tested positive to Ovine Johnes Disease must show a strong history of Gudair Vaccinations. If OJD positive flocks are entered the merino challenge wethers must be vaccinated with Gudair by 16 weeks of age. All other teams that have not been vaccinated as lambs will be vaccinated with the Gudair vaccine on arrival.

2.0 Management

- 2.1** The Merino challenge will commence in April 2010 following an initial, even up, shearing of all teams. The Meat Merino challenge will conclude with the slaughter of lambs in August 2010. The Wool

Merino challenge will conclude with the second measurement shearing in April 2012.

- 2.2** At entry to the merino challenge site all sheep become the property of Craig Wilson Livestock. As bloodline data will be generated from the merino challenge potential entrants may consider approaching their ram breeder to assist with the cost of supply of the sheep. Merino challenge entrants are not expected to contribute any finances toward the running of the merino challenge.
- 2.3** On arrival a full animal health assessment protocol as used in the other merino challenges will be implemented. This will include the eradication of lice and drench resistant worms. Should any individual sheep fail the initial feet inspection the team will be removed from the merino challenge. Craig Wilson Livestock will meet all costs involved in Husbandry, Management, Testing and Reporting.
- 2.4** As in previous wether trials, the Wool Challenge wethers will be run as they would be in a commercial wool growing operation.
- 2.5** All Wool Challenge teams will be de-pastured together and managed under identical conditions.
- 2.6** Prior to feedlot entry The Meat Challenge sheep will be run on pasture or cereal stubble and backgrounded with cereal grain for a minimum of two months. This backgrounding will remove all previous nutritional effects .At feedlot entry the Meat Challenge sheep will be weighed, scanned for fat and eye muscle depth and given a skin wrinkle score.
- 2.7** At feedlot entry the lambs will be allocated pens based on the average age of the team. Teams will be split into April/May, June/July, August, or September/October Drops.
- 2.8** The Meat Challenge sheep will be in the feedlot a maximum of 10 weeks (3 weeks induction and 7 weeks full ration) and be *ad lib* fed a ration that has been approved as a finishing ration in accordance with best practice lamb finishing. All lambs will be rotated to different pens after weighing every 14 days. NSW Industry and Investment officers will oversee the body weighing, scanning, setup and management of the feedlot.

- 2.9** Any individual Meat Challenge sheep that are deemed to be shy feeders and have not gained weight prior to the fourth weighing (Day 42) will not be included in the assessments. Any team that has more than 3 wethers which have not gained weight or have died prior to day 42 will not be published in the results. Teams will need a minimum of 12 wethers at slaughter to be published and included in the results.
- 2.10** The Meat Challenge wethers will be slaughtered in late August 2010 at Fletchers International Exports abattoir at Dubbo NSW and analysed for traits such as hot carcass weight, skin score, eye muscle depth, meat colour and potentially lean meat yield.
- 2.11** All available technologies will be used in determining the measurements needed for comparison and these may be displayed at various times.

3.0 MEASUREMENT – Wool Challenge

- 3.1** Prior to shearing, each year a sample of fleece will be taken from the midside of each sheep and tested for fibre diameter, cv, staple length, staple strength(finances dependant), wool colour and scoured yield.
- 3.2** Wethers will be body weighed and scored for fleece rot and wool colour.
- 3.3** At shearing, all wool from each sheep will be weighed and commercial values will be calculated using long term (5 year) average prices.
- 3.4** Commercial Values will take into account a fleece's classified wool type, tested fibre diameter staple length, staple strength and yield, as determined by independent AWEX-ID accredited wool valuers.
- 3.5** Using the fleece values determined in 3.3, team average results will be calculated each year, by dividing the sum of the individual wool values by the number of wethers present in the team at shearing.
- 3.6** The value of the carcass will be estimated each year using average body weight multiplied by expected yield then multiplied by the current mutton price. Carcass traits including fat depth, eye muscle

depth, condition score and growth rates may also be included in the summary of data.

- 3.7 Using the carcass values determined in 3.6, team average results will be calculated each year, by dividing the sum of the individual carcass values by the number of wethers present, in the team.

4.0 MEASUREMENT –Meat Challenge

- 4.1 At entry to the feedlot all lambs will be weighed, scanned for fat depth and muscle depth and wrinkle scored. It is the intention of the merino challenge to make the necessary adjustments for the age variation between teams. If this is not possible results will be presented based on the various age brackets of the teams. The sheep will be routinely weighed every 14 days to determine weight gain.
- 4.2 Prior to slaughter lambs will be held without feed and water for 12 hours then weighed prior to trucking to Fletchers International Exports, Dubbo. The meat challenge wethers will also be mouthed to check that there is no hoggets present. Should any team have hoggets, the individual hoggets will not be included in the team meat challenge results. Any team not having a minimum of 12 lambs at slaughter will not have results published.
- 4.3 At slaughter lambs will be analysed for hot carcass weight, skin score, eye muscle depth, meat colour and potentially lean meat yield and allocated an individual price per head.
- 4.4 Teams will be ranked on Average daily weight gain per team, Average cents per kilogram, Average total kilogram of saleable red meat, and skin value.

5.0 Results

- 5.1 Results of the Peter Westblade Memorial Merino Challenge will remain the property of Craig Wilson Livestock and will be presented to the participants after the completion of slaughter for the Meat Challenge and after each shearing for the Wool Challenge. Results will be used by The NSW Industries and Investment Merino Bloodline Comparison. Craig Wilson Livestock reserves the right to use the results from the merino challenge in presentations and other publications.

Wool Challenge Calculations

Year One - First shearing April 2011

Average Wool value (5 year average) per wether added to the estimated carcass value at approx 18 months of age.

	Year 1	Total Sheep
Wool value	\$45.00	\$ 90.00
Carcass value	\$45.00	

Year Two - Second shearing April 2012

Wool value (5 year average) based on the average of the two shearings, multiplied by 4, to represent lifetime wool production, plus the average carcass value of the two years.

For example:

	Year 1	Year 2	Average	4 X Shearings	Total
Wool value	\$ 35.00	\$ 45.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 160.00	\$ 160.00
Carcass value	\$ 30.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 35.00		\$ 35.00
\$ Grand Total					\$195.00

Meat Challenge Calculations

- Weight Gain - Highest average live weight gain – Finishing weight less starting weight.
- Carcass Price - Highest average cents per kilogram – Calculated by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA)
- Carcass Weight - Highest average total kilograms of saleable red meat – Calculated by MLA and adjusted to average age of team.

- Skin Value - Highest average skin value – As determined by skin valuers.
- Sheep Value - Highest average value team – Calculated by MLA.

Calender of Events

- December 2009 – Confirmation of merino challenge site, publicise the merino challenge.
- December 2009 to March 2010 – Acceptance of nominations
- January 2010 to late March 2010 – Tagging of teams
- April 2010 – Teams arrive, full health protocol implemented. All wethers shorn.
- April 2010 – Meat Challenge sheep trucked to Wagga Wagga
- April 2010 – End of May 2010 – Backgrounding meat challenge sheep
- June 2010 - Entry to feedlot for Meat challenge. Weigh and Scan
- July 2010 - Weigh Meat challenge twice
- August 2010 – Weigh Meat challenge twice
- Late August 2010 - Slaughter Meat challenge sheep.
- September 2010 - Crutch and Click wool challenge sheep.
- September 2010 – Presentation of Meat challenge data.
- March 2011 – Sampling and scoring Wool challenge
- April 2011 – Shearing Wool challenge sheep.
- May 2011 – Presentation of Year 1 data for Wool challenge.
- September 2011 – Muscle Scan Wool challenge wethers
- September 2011 - Crutch and Click wool merino challenge sheep.
- September 2011 – Display wethers at Field Day
- March 2012 – Sampling and scoring Wool Merino challenge
- April 2012 – Shearing Wool Merino challenge sheep.
- May 2012 – Presentation of all data and merino challenge completion.