

Hi everyone and welcome to another edition of our spring newsletter. A great early start to the season last Autumn was very welcome, as has been the extremely mild winter, certainly in south west Vic and south east of South Australia. Lamb marking percentages from Chrome clients this year are nearly all up on previous years which is great to hear. A bit of early green feed and better ewe lamb management has seen some of the best results ever across most of our clients' flocks that join ewe lambs. It is heartening as stud breeders to follow the progression of some long-term clients who are really starting to kick some goals.

## Maternal Update

The maternal rams have just been shorn and will be catalogued in early September. Run in one large mob since the Autumn break ensures they are all treated the same, allowing the good ones to float to the top. The wool types are getting better each year, and as a result wether lambs will hold their skins better as the season starts to dry off in late spring. Some subtle pressure to reduce the mature weight of our ewes over the last few years has enabled us to start bending the curve from Post Weaning Weight to Adult, without affecting fertility and other important traits.

## Visual traits

We will offer more visual trait information in our catalogue this year including:

- Foot colour
- Face and nose pigment
- Wool/Skin type

There are lots of other visual traits that could be scored however we felt some of it is an overload of information and we pride ourselves on putting together large even lines of rams. We also guarantee our rams for structural soundness and any rams that we consider not structurally sound do not get offered. If anyone purchases rams they feel do not stack up structurally in 12 months' time, let us know and we will replace, no questions asked.



## Early Lambing Flocks

At Chrome we have put a strong focus on producing an even flock of sheep with emphasis on black noses and black feet, which ideally prefer to lamb no earlier than 1st of June. This emphasis has worked well as the majority of our clients are happy with their time of lambing. Those lambing earlier than June have generally come from a ewe base that have some pink nose genetics in them, mostly Merino crosses, White Suffolk etc. Whilst 2 to 3 crosses of our Chromedales has worked fine to date we have a few clients wanting to continue lambing in May due to cropping programs etc. so, we introduced some "early lambing" genetics a couple of years ago to cater for the needs of these producers. These are Chromedale rams in every other way except that they will produce ewes to lamb a bit earlier and have more pink noses. These will be highlighted in the Chromedale section of the catalogue.

For our mainstream Chromedale clients that have been on them for many years and are happy lambing June/July onwards don't change a thing.

# The BIG Question: What will our 2020 Ram Sale look like?

## On-Property at Chrome

Unless rules change in the meantime, we are still working towards running an on-farm auction for our October ram sale this year. We are yet to plan exactly how it will all unfold however due to the COVID-19 pandemic we will be taking additional steps to make sure everyone can stay healthy and safe when they attend our ram sale.

The rules/requirements are changing regularly but to manage the risk of exposure we will include increased hygiene measures, physical distancing, attendee register, and limiting attendance.

Although we fully appreciate that our ram sale has traditionally been an event where we welcome family members and other onlookers, due to COVID-19 restrictions we request that only bidders and essential attendees come to the sale. If you are unwell on the day please do not attend our ram sale, however contact us and we will arrange for a way to bid for rams on your behalf or log on to the online platform.

Please help us to manage the risks to the health and safety of those who participate at our sale by cooperating with the measures in place.

## ONLINE Platform with Elite Livestock Auctions

We are excited to be integrating our sale with Elite Livestock who will be conducting the live auction based at our on-property auction with real time bidding on-site and online.

Convenient bidding options:

- Bid online in real time simply by logging in using your desktop computer, laptop, iPad, or iPhone
- In person at our on-property auction.
- Phone bidding is available for remote clients with limited internet access.

System will still be pick of pen as it has been in the past.



## How to register/bid online

If you do not have an existing account with Elite Livestock and would like to bid online, you will first need to setup an account. Go to [www.elitelivestockauctions.com.au](http://www.elitelivestockauctions.com.au) and click the signup button. Once registered you will be able to access our sale from the Elite Livestock auctions page.

Elite Livestock Auctions have a support team to ensure you are up and running for the sale day. For technical support please call 1300 153 135

**PICK OF THE PEN OPTION WILL BE ENABLED - NO NEED TO NOMINATE YOUR CHOICE LOTS PRIOR.**

**SIMPLY "CLICK & SUBMIT" ONLINE AT THE FALL ON THE HAMMER - TAKE ONE TAKE TWO TAKE THE PEN.**

Agent rebates will remain the same at 3% for those agents introducing clients prior to the sale. Settlement of accounts will be still done through selling agents Kerr and Co Hamilton.

## Support

We are fully aware with the current situation in Victoria that there will be some clients who will be unable to attend our sale. We will be providing full support for all clients who may wish for assistance in their ram selection and can have an independent assessment if requested. We can also arrange someone to bid on your behalf. We will be providing extra information on the visual traits for each ram to assist with your selection.

## Delivery

As in the past, we will be offering free delivery to most destinations including SE South Australia, Southern NSW, and Tasmania. We understand in the current climate, delivery will be even more important to some of our clients and we expect an increased demand for this service. As of the current time a border pass can be obtained to get rams across state borders. If there are changes to the regulations, we will be in touch with our interstate clients.



## SIRES WITH PROGENY IN THE UPCOMING OCTOBER SALE



# Maternals

CHROME Chromedale Sire 17.1317

CHROME Perendale Sire 17.1850

## Open Day – Monday 5th Oct

Our Open Day will be taking all the same steps as our ram sale to ensure the health and safety of all who attend and will follow COVID-19 protocols at the time.

The open day is most important if you intend to bid online but would still like to view the rams. We request that anyone wishing to come to the open day please register your interest by contacting Tanya preferably via email [office@chromesheepstuds.com.au](mailto:office@chromesheepstuds.com.au). In the event we need to limit numbers on farm at any one time, we may need to allocate time slots, in which case we will contact those who have registered.

## CHROME GENETICS EWE SALE

In the second week of December each year Chrome has its annual ewe breeder sale on Auctions Plus involving Chrome and our clients' surplus commercial ewes. Marketed under the Chrome Genetics brand our clients consistently receive premiums above current market values and are linked into our event advertising.

Many parts of Australia are still in a flock rebuilding phase so demand for breeding ewes should remain strong as well as support from repeat buyers that buy annually at our sale. We have had some early enquiries about ewes already, so if you have some surplus ewes of any description, ranging from ewe lambs right up to cast for age ewes with sound mouths please consider this sale before offloading them somewhere else! You can be involved in this sale using your agent of choice, the sheep just need to be assessed by an accredited Auctions plus assessor. If you are interested, please give Matt a call.



# Terminals

VALMA 17.0044

Photo supplied by Valma Stud, Andrew McLauchlan



## Vasectomized Rams

We have had a couple of enquiries from clients about us supplying vasectomized rams for use as teasers as we have done in our program. There is no doubt a commercial benefit in ewe lambs and 2yo maidens and it certainly tightens up the lambing period in older ewes as well. A 90% conception from a 3-week joining is very achievable. Ideally there needs to be a 4-6 week gap between the vasectomy and using the teasers so we need to know in advance as rams need to be pre ordered prior to surgery. There will be a limited number available, so if you are interested please book your interest with Matt asap.

# CLIENT CORNER



## Richard & Nikki Kirkland, Millicent, SA

HIGH growth muscular Chrome Poll Dorset rams are doing the job over composite ewes for the south-east South Australian prime lamb operation of Richard and Nikki Kirkland.

The Kirklands operate the family farm in the Furner area in south-east South Australia on about 2700 hectares of mainly black flat country in a normally 630mm+ annual rainfall.

The Kirklands predominantly ran Merino wethers, but over the past 20 years moved into a Merino ewe to Merino ram wool base then to breeding first cross ewes and to composite ewes for prime lamb production about four years ago.

Increasingly over recent years, the Kirklands have been making the trip to buy Chromedale and Icon Poll Dorsets from Matt and Tanya Tonissen near Hamilton in Victoria's south-west.

There are now about 9000 Chromedale ewes and ewe lambs in the Kirkland flock and the family crops 800-1000 hectare of broad beans, wheat, barley and canola depending on the stage of the rotation.

About 30 percent of the Kirkland Chromedale ewe flock is joined to maternal Chrome rams annually to keep the flock self-replacing, but this will go to 50pc next year. Richard said he is pleased with the growth of all the Chrome cross lambs.

“They seem to do as well, these maternal lambs, they finish just as quick as the others.”

The Kirklands initially joined to Poll Dorset and White Suffolk rams from studs other than Chrome, but apart from new maternal Chromedale rams, for his terminal joining, they are now buying Chrome Poll Dorset rams to renew their sire bank. Selection of the Chrome Dorsets is based on physical examination and use of the breeding value figures available.

“I’m not after anything overly big, some of the Dorset studs around here have quite big rams now, massive really – they’ve gone a bit leggy with them,” Richard said.

He looks for low birth weight, good muscle and growth in his ram purchases to give him easy-lambing ewes producing lambs for a quick turn-off and superior feedlot performance.

“Something tough, they don’t have to be overly big, we can grow them big on our feed here.

“I don’t mind a bit of (genetic) fat on them either.”

The average carcase weight of the Kirkland May-June drop Dorset cross lambs sold



Chromedale Ewe with twins at Furner

by October has averaged about 25kg in recent years, targeting the domestic supermarket trade. More than half of the lambs are sold by October.

“We sell the majority in the wool; some will go on a summer fodder crop from November till January and the spring drops go onto bean stubbles.

“As soon as you go above 25kg, they take ages and need a lot of feed, especially if you are lot-feeding them.”

He said lambs have gained 500gms-plus a day on clover pasture. “You’ve got to have the right genetics to do that.”

He said lambs from the traditional Poll Dorsets grew long and big, but don’t yield well, “whereas Matty’s they tend to yield pretty well.”

“The (Icon) rams themselves are nuggety fellas and because they are tough, they tend to last.

“Whereas the other Poll Dorsets we’ve used ... we chew through them every year; they don’t last long.”

He estimates he averaged about \$200-\$220 a lamb for the 8500-9000 lambs sold annually for the last three years.

The Kirklands mark an average of about 130 percent lambs from their mature Chromedale ewe and about 100pc for the ewe lambs. High oestrogen clovers such as Yarloop are a limiting factor to conception but generate high growth weights in the lambs. Lambing percentages were around 100pc with the previous Poll Dorset rams over first cross ewes.

This year the Chromedale cross ewes have scanned at 168pc and the first cross ewes have scanned at 148pc.

“Both lots were up a bit on last year due to different management of high oestrogen clovers,” Richard said.

Richard said the Chromedale ewes are also more efficient, with mature weights of 65-70kg compared to 80-90kg first cross ewes. He believes he is now turning off more lambs per ewe per hectare than with the first cross or Merino ewes but has not calculated it. Last year the property was running about 17 dry sheep equivalents per hectare.

“We are running more ewes per hectare and generating 30-40 percent more lambs.”

Richard has also been able manage the Chrome sheep to minimize drenching. Worm egg counts taken recently came back at 30-60 eggs per gram in the ewe lambs and 0-30 in the grown sheep.

“They were all drenched at shearing in December.

“We didn’t give a pre-lamb drench last year, but counts were up around 100-120 eggs per gram.”

Richard said he hasn’t been targeting low egg count rams.

“That is something Matt (Tonissen) is doing with his breeding in the stud so it should flow through his genetics.”



Another load of Kirkland lambs

## CONTACT



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Coopworth • Chromedale® • Perendale • ICON Poll Dorset • ICON Southie®

## OPEN DAY

Monday 5th October 11am – 4pm

Please register your attendance

## RAM SALE

On-Property & ONLINE

Thursday 8th October

Inspection 9.30am Sale commences 11.30am



EVERY 6<sup>TH</sup>  
RAM  
FREE



Ram sale catalogue will be available on our website in PDF and Excel formats. If you would like a catalogue posted, please email us.



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