

**WHERE YOU CAN SEE
CONNEWARRAN RAMS IN 2016**

24th – 25th July
Ballarat Ram Sale

1st – 2nd August
Hamilton Sheepvention Ram Sale and Site 367

19th October
1st annual on-property ram sale

Any time
By appointment to inspect on property

CONNEWARRAN
1290 CONNEWARRAN LANE, MORTLAKE, VIC 3272



CONNEWARRAN
MERINO STUD

STUD MASTER: RICHARD WEATHERLY
MOBILE: 0407 329 296

STUD MANAGER: HAMISH WEATHERLY
MOBILE: 0423 073 328





MULTI-VENDOR SALES

This year we'll be taking our usual team of five to Sheepvention and a single sire to Ballarat. Our Sheepvention team are good cutting outstanding woolled sheep this year. Our Ballarat sire is a very good all round poll ram. Again, anyone who wishes to view sires on-property prior to the sale is invited to do so.

LAUNCH OF THE CONEWARRAN WEBSITE

Recently we launched the Connewarran Merino Stud website www.connewarran.com.au For our existing clients, those who know us well, the main benefit will be the ability to download sales catalogues and data on the rams we have on offer. For others, we hope it provides you with an overview of the stud, our philosophies, how we operate, and what we can offer. There's no substitute though for a good old fashioned chat, so we consider the most important page to be "contact us". Please do.

EXPANDED PROGENY TEST CAPABILITY THROUGH EID TECHNOLOGY

Progeny testing is a critical component of most stud programs. It certainly is at Connewarran. In 2015 we invested in electronic identification (EID) tags for both our stud and commercial flocks. In addition to labour productivity benefits, the move means a unique ID is now assigned to approximately 1,000 flock lambs each season. Combined with the stud lambs, this expands the number of progeny we can track in a year from around 600 (stud) to around 1600 (stud and flock). The increase should lead to a range of benefits, including:

- The ability to trial a broader range of sires more quickly. This has the potential to reduce our generation interval
- The ability to allocate more ewes to sires being progeny tested. This should increase the reliability of results generated from the test
- The ability to test sires which have potential, but don't make the final stud classing cut, in the flock first and graduate them to the stud if they perform. This should help us to identify good sires that might otherwise slip through, whilst protecting the high quality of our stud ewe base
- The ability to further concentrate proven, elite genetics at the top of the stud through reduced pressure on stud ewe numbers for progeny testing

If any of the above come to fruition, we should be able to step up our rate of genetic gain. If all do, all the better.

Greetings. It's a good time for woolgrowers! Whilst the last year didn't bring much rain, recent months have, and with wool, mutton and lamb prices very reasonable, we feel much cause for optimism. We hope you do to, and that this update on our efforts to bring ever better genetics to woolgrowers is of interest.

Richard and Hamish Weatherly

NEW SIRE: WILLANDRA DESMOND

This year we invested in a new outside sire; Willandra Desmond. Having seen three sets of progeny at various locations through the year, we felt that, despite being a "northerner", Desmond can complement our program. He appears able to throw wools of sufficient quality to cope with the high rainfall environment we cater to, and brings the additional qualities of a very good cut, the poll gene, and exceptional eye muscle depth. His progeny are now on the ground and early results, particularly for growth rate, are very encouraging.



SELLING REVIEW & FIRST ANNUAL ON PROPERTY SALE

Key points

1. First annual on-property ram sale to be held Wednesday 19 October
2. Rams auctioned by the helmsman system
3. Reserve prices will correspond to previous private sale prices
4. Any client wishing to view rams prior to sale day is welcome to do so by appointment

In the year past we conducted a small “selling review”, regarding our sales of rams. To date, our policy has been to offer clients private selection from a portion of rams available at a fixed price. This gave clients certainty regarding what a team of Connewarran rams will cost, and roughly equal chance of securing the “best” rams. The negative, as some have pointed out, is that they would prefer to see the full range of rams on offer.

So, we called a range of clients and confidantes to seek feedback and look at ways to improve our selling system. The following is a summary of what we learned:

1. Most people felt it was better to see all rams on offer than a proportion of them
2. Most people were comfortable with moving to some form of auction system as it's how they bought rams elsewhere before they came to Connewarran
3. Some people did value the fixed price system, others were perfectly comfortable with trading the chance of a small increase in prices for the opportunity to secure any ram they wanted
4. Some people were uncomfortable with the pressure of sale day and rams being fixed in pens. They like to be able to view rams at their leisure and move them around in a race to help them select a team

5. Some people were also worried that the one-on-one discussion and advice that came with private selection might not be available on sale day

As a result of this feedback we have elected to move to a helmsman auction system for ram sales in 2016. We think that helmsman allows clients to:

1. View all sheep on offer and compete equally for them
2. Build a team at commercially viable prices. Unlike open cry, all sheep are available until the close of the sale. People can thus bid on alternative lots if their first choice exceeds their budget
3. Meet price expectations. Whilst some rams are likely to sell at a premium to their previous fixed prices, we aim to provide sufficient supply to ensure that prices remain around the mark of previous years

For those who do not enjoy making selection decisions on sale day, we welcome you to come and view the sale team at your leisure prior to sale day. We will also endeavour to have the full team available to offer advice to those who'd like it on, or in the lead up to, sale day.

SIRE EVALUATION

Our commitment to independent assessment of the merit of Connewarran genetics continues. We currently have two sires entered in trials; Connewarran 297 at Balmoral and Dookie, and Connewarran 1002 at Dookie. 297 now has two sets of progeny on the ground. His Balmoral result was creditable, ranking third on the FP+ index and performing very well on wool quality characteristics. However, we had expected more. Feedback from the Dookie site is that his progeny shored well and have come out of the wool well, so we'll wait and see. 1002 progeny will be on the ground later in the year.