

SA MERINO SIRE EVALUATION TRIAL NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2022

DIARY DATES

January 2023

Mid-side sampling 2021 Drop
Visual Classing 2021 Drop

February 2023

Yarding/Viewing 2021 Drop
Shearing 2021 Drop
Post Shearing Visual Classing
2021 Drop

April 2023 TBC

Mid-side sampling 2022 Drop
Visual Classing 2022 Drop

Late April/Early May 2023

Field Day 2022 Drop
Shearing 2022 Drop
Post Shearing Visual Classing
2022 Drop

MENTARA PARK SITE UPDATE – 2021 DROP

On June 3rd 2022, Mentara Park hosted a very successful Field Day where progeny were displayed in individual sire groups. The weather was kind, attendance plentiful and there was solid interest in guest speakers presenting on the day. Well done to the Eckert family and the Mentara Park team.

The SA 2021 Drop Yearling Assessment Site Report is available on the Merino Superior Sires website: www.merinosuperiorsires.com.au



2021-Drop crutching. Photo courtesy of David Eckert, 25th October 2022

After some delays due to wet weather, shearing occurred on 13th June 2022 with greasy fleece weight being collected and post shearing visual traits shoulder/back and body wrinkle assessed. On 23rd June 2022, the wether component of the 2021 drop were sold. At this time, a selected portion of the wether component were assessed for their Meat Eating Quality traits, data from which is currently being collated into a final report due for release soon.

The Winter and Spring season has been exceptional for Mentara Park. Aside from a slightly dry July, although still good conditions, rain fell weekly at the host site. The 2021 Drop have been grazing ample feed of lucerne veldt based pasture grass and have been very self-sufficient. The ewe cohort was crutched on 25th October 2022 to get them through to adult shearing in early 2023. At this time a hogget weight was also collected.



2021-Drop Hogget weighing. Photo courtesy of David Eckert, 26th October 2022

Prior to shearing in late January/early February, adult mid-side samples and visual classing data will be collected as well as post shearing visual classing data and greasy fleece weight at shearing. The Eckert Family have kindly offered to yard the adult progeny in individual sire groups for viewing before they are shorn. Further details on the date of inspection will be provided later. Note this is purely an offer to view the progeny in the yards before they are shorn. Adult shearing and final off-shears adult weight of the ewes will mark the completion of the 2021 drop trial.

MENTARA PARK SITE UPDATE – 2022 DROP

There was solid interest in the site from both SA and interstate ram breeders again for the 2022 drop. The trial accepted 16 sires, which include two high impact sires as allocated by AMSEA. CIDR’s were inserted on 1st December 2021, CIDR’s removed and PMSG injected on 13th & 14th December, with AI occurring on 15th & 16th December 2021.

2022 Drop Sires:

Baderloo Poll 200106
Flairdale Poll 190028
Forest Springs Poll 200102
Kelvale Poll Merinos 200114
Kiandra Poll 200065
Loelmo Poll Merino 170602
Malleetech Poll 200119
Miramoonna 140012

Mulloorie Poll 160059 “Elliott”
O’Brien Poll 201166
Pepper Well Poll 200145
Roemahkita Poll 200058 “Hully”
The Yanko Poll 190310
Wallaloo Park Poll 172223
Westwood Poll 200215
Willandra Poll 170018



*Left: Singles on a cold morning, 30th May 2022. Right: Lamb marking crew 22nd June 2022.
Photos courtesy of David Eckert.*

Pregnancy scanning by Cousins Merinos Services occurred on 21st February 2022 resulting in a 64% conception rate. Interestingly, 65% of the pregnant ewes were scanned as carrying multiple foetuses. Lambs were born 11th-19th May 2022. Lamb marking occurred on 21st & 22nd June 2022, giving a total of 825 lambs. Sire pedigree has been established by DNA testing, and we are waiting on some final DNA resamples collected recently before being able to share early data results. Following lamb marking, lambing mobs were boxed together to create one mob of singles, two mobs of twins and multiples. Lambs were weaned on 16 August 2022 with a weaning weight collected. Even up shearing of the lambs occurred on 17 October 2022 after many attempts were delayed due to rain.

In the lead up to lambing, ewes grazed barley and wheat stubbles as well as being fed supplementary silage, with grain introduced in the lead up to lambing. To avoid disturbance, ewes were not supplementary fed during the lambing period. Following the lambing period and lamb marking, the ewes and lambs grazed lucerne veldt based grass pastures and once the season broke, were supplementary fed a hay/grain ration through to two weeks post weaning.

The 2022 drop progeny were drenched late October 2022 and returned to grazing on ample lucerne veldt grass based pasture.



2022 Drop lambs at weaning. Photo courtesy of David Eckert, 17th August 2022.

SA MERINO SIRE EVALUATION TRIAL 2023 – NO HOST SITE

Despite continued effort, unfortunately we have been unable to find a host site for the 2023 drop. Whilst this is disappointing in terms of continuity of the SA Merino Sire Evaluation Trial, we will still be seeing data collected from the 2021 and 2022 drops at Mentara Park through to early 2024. We are also in preliminary discussions with a potential host site for the 2024 drop, and if fruitful, SA Merino Sire Evaluation will look to kick off again for a late 2023 AI.

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FOR ALL ENQUIRIES

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SA MERINO SIRE EVALUATION SITE COMMITTEE

Chairman	Roger Fiebig	Breeder Representative	Hansi Graetz
2017/2018 Site Owner	Keynes Family	Breeder Representative	Matt Ridgway
2019/2020 Site Owner	McPiggery/Duane Simon	Breeder Representative	Stephen Kellock
2021/2022 Site Owner	Mentara Park/Eckert Family	Finance & Administration	Rachel Titley
Data Manager	Michelle Cousins	Site Coordinator	Anna Cameron
Classer/AMSEA Site Rep	Bill Walker		

SPONSORS, CONTRIBUTORS AND VOLUNTEERS

As a non-profit site, our sponsors provide a very important contribution, and we would like to acknowledge their generous support of the SA Merino Sire Evaluation Trial. We would also like to thank those individuals, and/or businesses who have volunteered their time in helping the site run as smoothly as possible throughout the year, whether that be in the form of providing labour, or helping with specific tasks as required by the AMSEA protocols. It is important to acknowledge Mentara Park, who importantly offered to be the host site for 2021 & 2022 drops for the SA Merino Sire Evaluation Trial, as well as volunteering their own time in planning and labour.



New Supporters of the SA Merino Sire Evaluation Trial are always welcome. Please contact Anna Cameron via 0403 747 332, acameron@yalumba.com to discuss.