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SA MERINO SIRE EVALUATION TRIAL NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2024

MENTARA PARK 2021 & 2022 DROPS

After just over 3 years of being the host site for the SA Merino Sire Evaluation Trial, Mentara Park have now finished up as host, with the final data recording of the 2022 drop occurring in April 2024. Seasons were kind throughout the length of the trials for the 2021 and 2022 drops with plentiful rainfall at the right times. This combined with a lucerne veldt pasture for the progeny ensured adequate feed was available all year with very little supplementary feeding required. Mentara Park must be commended on their professionalism as a business, presentation of site, and their desire to provide a successful trial site. Well done and a huge thank you to the Eckert family and the Mentara Park team.

The SA 2022 Drop Yearling and Adult Assessment Site Report is available on the Merino Superior Sires website:
www.merinosuperiorsires.com.au



2022-Drop Field Day 23rd June 2023. Photo courtesy of Anna Cameron

TURRETFIELD RESEARCH CENTRE – 2024 DROP

We are pleased to welcome Turretfield Research Centre, Rosedale as the 2024 and 2025 drop SA Merino Sire Evaluation Trial Site. Run under the auspices of SARDI and PIRSA, the site receives an average 425mm rainfall in a Winter dominant pattern. The Turretfield Research Centre ewe is purposely bred from Leahcim and Mernowie bloodlines to be highly fertile, plainer bodied, and they are a good expression of South Australian Merinos. They have a mature weight of 75-85kg and produce approximately 19 micron wool at 60% yield depending on the season. The ewes for the 2024 drop are a mix of 3-4 year olds.

There was solid interest in the site from both SA and interstate ram breeders for the 2024 drop. The trial accepted 11 sires; later reduced to 10, which included one high impact sire as allocated by AMSEA. A second link was established naturally through sire entrants. AI occurred on 30th November and 1st December 2023.

2024 Drop Sires:

Gelton Poll 190140	Pepper Well Poll 222047
Glenville Poll 220386	Pyramid Poll 220220
Gunallo Poll 220067	Richmond 170013
Kelvale Poll Merinos 221415	Trefusis Merino & Poll Merino 210106
Malleetech Poll 222357	Wirringa Park Poll 220450



Conducting lambing rounds. Photos courtesy of Turretfield Research Centre.

Pregnancy scanning by Cousins Merinos Services occurred on 29th January 2024 resulting in a 64% conception rate. Ewes were separated into several lambing groups: singles 3 mobs of 55 ewes; twins 5 mobs of 33 ewes; triplets 1 mob of 38 ewes. Lambs were born 24th April to 6th May 2024, and thanks to the tireless work of the Turretfield Research Centre staff, lambing rounds were conducted daily allowing the collection of data (when there was no negative impact on bonding) including birth date, rear type, sex, birth weight and lamb mortality.

Lamb marking occurred on 21st May 2024, giving a total of 442 lambs. Lambing groups were returned to their paddocks post lamb marking until weaning, when the progeny were boxed together to form one mob. Sire pedigree was established by DNA testing. Lambs were weaned on 23rd July 2024 with a weaning weight collected; the average weaning weight was 19.6kg at 12 weeks of age. The progeny will be crutched in October 2024.



2024 Drop lambs at lamb marking. Photo courtesy of Turretfield Research Centre

In the lead up to lambing, ewes grazed natural pastures and were supplementary fed 30% peas and 70% barley at 250g/head/day. This amount per head per day was increased the closer it came to lambing. In addition, ewes were given oaten hay as required. This supplementary feeding has continued through to present, including through weaning, as the region copes with a very late late-June break, a cold early Winter, warm late Winter/early Autumn combined with well below average rainfall and very slow pasture growth as a result.

Analysis on the early data for the SA 2024 Drop Yearling and Adult Assessment Trial is currently occurring, and results will be disseminated as soon as they become available.

TURRETFIELD RESEARCH CENTRE – 2025 DROP

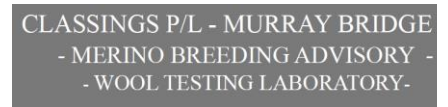
Nominations are now open for the SA Merino Sire Evaluation Trial 2025 Drop. The closing date to receive applications is 5pm Friday 11th October 2024.

SA MERINO SIRE EVALUATION SITE COMMITTEE

Chairman	Stephen Kellock	Service Provider	Michelle Cousins
2017/2018 Site Owner	Keynes Family	AMSEA Site Rep/Classer	Bill Walker
2019/2020 Site Owner	McPiggery/Duane Simon	Breeder Representative	Hansi Graetz
2021/2022 Site Owner	Mentara Park/Eckert Family	Breeder Representative	Matt Ridgway
2024/2025 Host Site	Turretfield Research Centre: Gary Grigson, Alice Weaver, Alyce Maree	Site Coordinator	Anna Cameron

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 Turretfield Research Centre, who importantly are the host site for 2024 & 2025 drops for the SA Merino Sire Evaluation Trial.



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