



## SA Merino Sire Evaluation Trial 2022 Drop Nomination

Nominations are open for the 2022 drop South Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Trial. AI of selected sires will occur in mid-December 2021.

The trial is part of the Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association (AMSEA) and is supported by Merino SA. AMSEA trials provide the opportunity for objective comparisons to be made between rams from different studs by evaluating their progeny for sheep type, structure, wool production and carcass traits. The progeny all run together in the same environmental conditions with all male progeny marked. The trial is important for South Australia's Merino industry given no other public Sire Evaluation trials occur in SA. Sire results will be reported in the Merino Super Sire publication as well as at site field days, newsletters and media.

**Trial breeding objective:** rams will be capable of producing progeny with 18-21 micron fleece at 12 months with at least 4kg of wool from 8 months growth from an easy-care plain bodied sheep. In addition, progeny should be capable of achieving 22-25kg carcass weight at 10 -12 months of age. Ewe progeny will be capable of high natural conception rates when first mated at 18 months.

**Host property and ewe base:** For the second consecutive year, the Eckert family at 'Mentara Park' Malinong, are generously hosting the trial for the 2022 drop. Their site receives an average 425mm rainfall in a winter dominant pattern. The Mentara Park ewe is purposely bred to be highly fertile, free-skinned and twice-yearly shearing capable. They have a mature weight of 70-75kg and produce approximately 20micron wool at 65-70% yield depending on the season.

### Trial structure

The trial will be evaluating 15 rams, including 2-3 link sires. 60 ewes will be joined to each sire via AI in mid-December 2021. Sire pedigree will be established through DNA testing. Traits evaluated include:

- Visually assessed traits – as per AMSEA protocols and include: classer's grade, wool quality, pigmentation, conformation
- Fleece: greasy fleece weight, clean fleece weight, yield, fibre diameter, coefficient of variation of fibre diameter, fibre diameter curvature, staple length and staple strength
- Body weight: weaning, yearling and at second wool assessment (20 months)
- Body composition traits: eye muscle depth, fat depth
- Worm Egg Count (if conditions permit)

It is expected there will be a Yearling Assessment (full classing, midside and shearing) at 11 months in April 2023. A further Adult Assessment (full classing, midside with no SS/SL, and shearing) at 20 months in January 2024 is anticipated, pending seasonal conditions.

**Sire entry costs:** The sire entry cost is \$3500+GST. A rebate of \$400 + GST will be reimbursed for the provision of 2 days labour (\$200 + GST per day up to a maximum of two days). **63 doses of frozen semen** are also required to be donated to the site; details for supply using pellets is provided below. Charges will apply for the return of semen cannisters if applicable.

**Sire selection process:** Sire nominations will be evaluated by the SA AMSEA site management committee comprising the site Chairman, site host, industry service providers and ram breeders. Sires are requested from a registered Poll Merino flock. There is a preference for young rams, however all nominations received from a registered Merino or Poll Merino stud will be considered.

**Site labour requirements:** The site has significant labour requirements associated with AI and subsequent performance recording. It is expected ram breeders whose sires are included in the trial will endeavour to provide at least 2 days of labour or representative at the site per year. Opportunity exists to co-ordinate travel to the site.

### **University of Sydney project ‘*In vitro* predictors of ram fertility’**

In 2021-22 the University of Sydney will be undertaking research using *in vitro* testing of the fertility of frozen thawed semen as done for the AI process. This project will involve assessment of post-thaw semen for fertility traits combined with site fertility results – these will be used to develop a statistical model to calculate predicted fertility.

The project intends to be able to accurately predict a male’s fertility via *in vitro* semen testing, plus propose minimum industry standards for *in vitro* testing to reduce AI semen-induced reproductive losses – important results for breeders!

All AMSEA sites are involved in the project via the provision of the sire semen along with each site’s joining and pregnancy scanning results, this means entrants are asked to donate an additional 5 straws of semen in 2021 and 2022. Project results will not identify individual sires.

### **Nominating a sire**

If selected, you will be required to

- **Provide 63 frozen doses** of semen from your sire to Brecon Breeders. This includes 1 straw for DNA testing and 5 straws for the University of Sydney project
- Note, if semen is to be provided as pellets the supply requirement will be **23 pellets**: 19 for AI, 1 for DNA testing and 3 for the University of Sydney project
- Complete the Entrant Agreement and the AMSEA Sire Entry Form
- Pay the site entry fee – invoiced by Merino SA

### **Further information**

Anna Cameron	0403 747 332
Roger Fiebig, Site Chairman	0407 568 786
Michelle Cousins, Cousins Merino Services	0407 607 899
Bill Walker, Classings Merino Sheep Classing	0428 973 804
Merino SA	08 8212 4157

# SA Merino Sire Evaluation Trial 2022 Drop Nomination

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Able to provide 2 days labour (or provide a representative) at the Site: YES NO

Please list sires in order of priority for entry:

<b>SIRE 1</b>	Stud/Flock Name: _____
	Sire Identification: _____
	Sire 16 Digit ID: _____
	Is frozen semen available?      YES                      NO
	Where is semen held? _____

<b>SIRE 2</b>	Stud/Flock Name: _____
	Sire Identification: _____
	Sire 16 Digit ID: _____
	Is frozen semen available?      YES                      NO
	Where is semen held? _____

Please return completed nomination to the SA Merino Sire Evaluation Site Coordinator:  
Anna Cameron  
PO Box 682, Angaston SA 5353  
Email: [acameron@yalumba.com](mailto:acameron@yalumba.com)

**Sire nominations close 5:00pm October 29th 2021**