



NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2021

## Manager's Report

What a fabulous year 2020 was to be in the Merino industry. All the hard work you did throughout the previous three years is really paying off now. It was great to see all our longstanding clients as well as new clients in our selling period.

2021 has started well at GRASS. Our natural joining was a great success. **Our maidens joined at 148% and our adults joined at 158%.** This should provide us with lots of lovely lambs for the next year. Our general shearing was also very positive. Our adult ewes cut 7.42kg of beautiful wool which was amazing given the 2020 lambing result.

And now for our annual reminder that Condition Score is so important when it comes to conception and litter size. There was a significant difference between 3.5 score and 4.5 score. Interestingly not as significant a difference as in 2020.



Below are the Stud scanning results by condition score.

Condition Score	Scanning %
3.5	124%
3.7	142%
4.0	151%
4.2	149%
4.5	161%

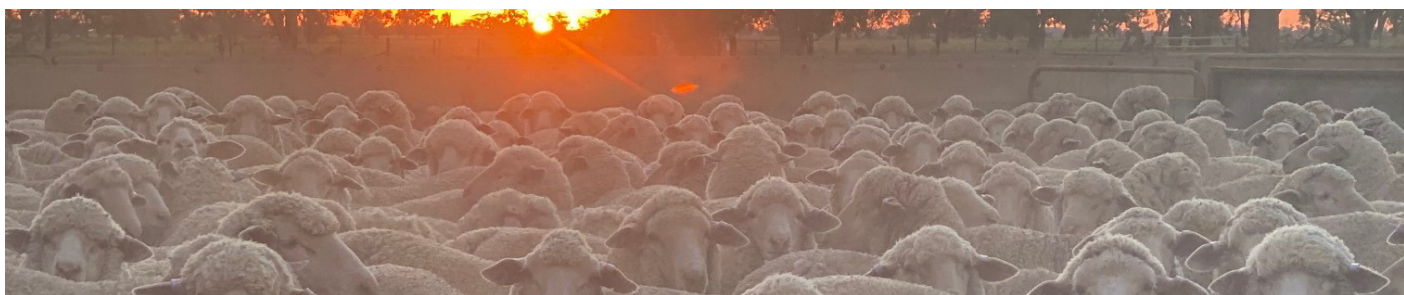
## Increasing CFW and Decreasing EBWR

In the 2020 Newsletter we reported on our new GRASS breech wrinkle index. The progress we are making is a little early to measure progress but...

Recently we heard someone use the bench mark of **+30 for Clean Fleece Weight and -0.8 for breech wrinkle** for a highly remarkable sheep. So we decided to measure the GRASS flock against this benchmark. A search of the new MerinoSelect database website which has 1.2 million sheep showed the following. There were 435 sheep in the database that matched the benchmark of +30 for YCFW and -0.8 for EBWR. Of the 435 sheep **55 were from GRASS** more than any other stud in Australia and NZ.

Indeed **GRASS now has a Sire that is +43 for CFW and an EBWR of -1.12.**

It's great to have an outstanding sheep that meets those high standards of fleece weight and breech wrinkle, even better to have 55. This is a great base to build our future progress on.



# NEW SHEEP GENETICS TRAITS FOR REPRODUCTION

Ever since our beginning GRASS Merinos has always had a focus on a dual purpose animal.

We have selected for Fertility ever since the days of ensuring a maiden ewe must have reared a lamb to stay on the stud. However environmental influences have always made this selection problematic. As with most sheep performance, the season has a big bearing on weaning percentage.

The ability to place selection pressure on Fertility has come a long way in recent years. When thinking about our index and selections, we currently use the ASBV Number of Lambs Weaned (NLW) to select for reproduction. NLW Estimates the genetic difference between animals for the number of lambs weaned at each lambing opportunity. It takes into account the animal in questions performance as well as all of it's relatives.

As we all know there are several stages in the reproduction cycle such as joining, pregnancy scanning, lambing and weaning. NLW does not allow us to select which stage of the cycle we are improving.

As you may have heard Sheep Genetics have been working for several years now to separate the NLW breeding value into three new breeding values.

- **Conception (CON)** being the ability of a ewe to get in lamb in comparison to all the ewes in the same joining event
- **Litter size (LS)** being the number of the foetuses a ewe has in comparison to all the ewes that got in lamb
- **Ewe rearing ability (ERA)** being the ability of the ewe to rear the lambs that she gives birth to

These new Breeding Values will allow GRASS and the industry as a whole to look at each stage of the breeding cycle. It will allow GRASS and other breeders to really focus on the area which they want to improve.

**At GRASS we see Ewe Rearing Ability as a really important area to focus on.** Whether you are a commercial producer who is happy with one strong lamb per ewe or you are really pushing for multiple births Ewe Rearing Ability is still the most important factor of fertility. At the end of the day, if the lamb is not alive at 12 weeks of age all your hard work and that of the ewe will be a waste of time.

These three breeding values are currently Research Breeding Values but will soon become ASBVs. Hopefully they will be adopted into the next round of Merino index changes. If you have any questions on these new breeding values please do not hesitate to contact us.



**More Wool**

**More Lambs**

**More Profit**

# GRASS DOMINATES THE MACQUARIE MERINO LIFETIME PRODUCTIVITY (MLP) PROJECT

At GRASS we are always keen to compare ourselves to the wider Merino industry. We are also keen to be a part of Industry leading research. In 2016 we entered one of our sires into the first drop of the Macquarie Merino Lifetime Productivity Project (MLP). AWI and the Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association (AMSEA) have teamed up with five sire evaluation sites, site hosts and nominating stud breeders to deliver the Merino Lifetime Productivity Project. The project will receive \$8 million dollars in funding from AWI over ten years from 2015, along with \$5 million in support from project partners.

AMSEA have been doing a wonderful job for many years running the Central Test Sire Evaluations all over Australia. The most exciting part of the MLP compared to the current Sire Evaluations that there are Sires from the more traditional Studs in the trials as well as the fact that the full suite of Fertility traits are being measured. This is something that the Central Tests find difficult to do.

The Sire that GRASS entered into the 2017 drop MLP performed exceptionally well. The progeny of GRASS P47, as we know him, were compared to those of leading sires across the industry for all the performance traits. Now the results have been reported in the latest Macquaire MLP report. The report showed P47 being a trait leader in the trial for Greasy Fleece Weight, Staple Strength, Eye Muscle Depth, and Weaning weight. P47 was also approved by the classer having one of the highest number of Tops and one of the least Culls.

The most impressive part of P47's performance was the fertility. He was the clear trait leader for NLW as well as one of the trait leaders for each of the new Fertility RBVs, conception, litter size and ewe rearing ability.

Finally P47 was a leader for each of the four Industry Indexes, performing especially well in the Dual Purpose Plus index with a score of 167%.

## 2017 Drop

### Within-Site and Within-Drop MERINOSELECT Indexes

Breeders flock, Sire number	Dual Purpose Plus	Merino Production Plus	Fibre Production Plus	Wool Production Plus
Centre Plus Poll, 707115	96	79	79	81
Collinsville Poll, 130545 (Apollo)	125	117	107	116
Darriwell, 130941 (Budgha)	110	112	113	110
GRASS, 122190 (P47)	167	138	121	127
GullenGamble Poll, 120018	91	97	101	105
Hazeldean, 134636	135	138	138	124
Kerin Poll, 151911	146	144	131	135
Moojepin, 120652	130	76	74	76
Mumblebone, 151367	20	29	45	47
Roseville Park, 132933	64	98	107	92
Trigger Vale Poll, 140477	83	80	74	91
Wanganella, 130816	87	104	101	109
West Plains Poll, 110004 (Mercenary)	87	92	103	87
Wilgunya, 121224	60	85	90	85
Willandra Poll, 140030 (Des)	99	111	115	113

Please note, these indexes now include NLW within the calculation which differs to previous MLP reports. These Indexes were calculated using both the F1 ewe and F1 wether progeny of the sires.

The full report can be accessed at the Merino Superior Sires website [merinosuperiorsires.com.au](http://merinosuperiorsires.com.au)

More Wool

Less Wrinkle





## 2021 GRASS MERINO Ram Sale

The 2021 GRASS Ram sale will once again be done by appointment. 2020 was once again a complete sellout so make sure you book in early for 2021.

The days for you to come to Select and Collect your rams are:

## Thursday 7 & Friday 8 October

---

### Premium Selection

GRASS Merinos offers a premium selection service. Once a buyer has selected the grade from which they wish to purchase GRASS will select a number of rams within that grade based on the buyers breeding objective. The buyer can then chose from within that selected group. This ensures that the buyer gets to view and choose from rams that meet their particular breeding objective.

There will be a 20% premium for this service.

---

JB and Alison Tancred  
GRASS Merinos  
Sunnyside  
Armatree  
NSW 2827

M 0427 470 708  
E [themaze@activ8.net.au](mailto:themaze@activ8.net.au)  
@jbtancred grassmerinos  
 [grassmerinos](https://www.instagram.com/grassmerinos)

[www.grassmerino.com.au](http://www.grassmerino.com.au)