

Kerin Poll Merino

success breeds success

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2011



“ I have NEVER had a single age group scan as well as the entire Kerin Poll flock did this year

- Tony Walsh, Tony Walsh Sheep and Cattle Pregnancy Scanning, Narromine

Thanks for your support!

The team at Kerin Poll would like to take this opportunity at the outset to send out a 'bloody big thank you for making our first year an absolute cracker!' We were rapt to have been so well rewarded for our efforts and breeding objectives, and are really appreciative of your support.

How things can change in 12 months!

Here we are in Spring, 2011, with wool prices at record highs not seen since the late 1980s, and mutton and lamb prices that continue to stagger us all.

There's been a lot of noise lately about what the modern Merino should look like but we drew this picture 20 years ago and have implemented the necessary changes in the two decades since.

The profit drivers that we needed post the Reserve Price Scheme crash, are still the profit drivers we need in our businesses today.

We offer for you a type of Merino that is resilient to both price booms and crashes.

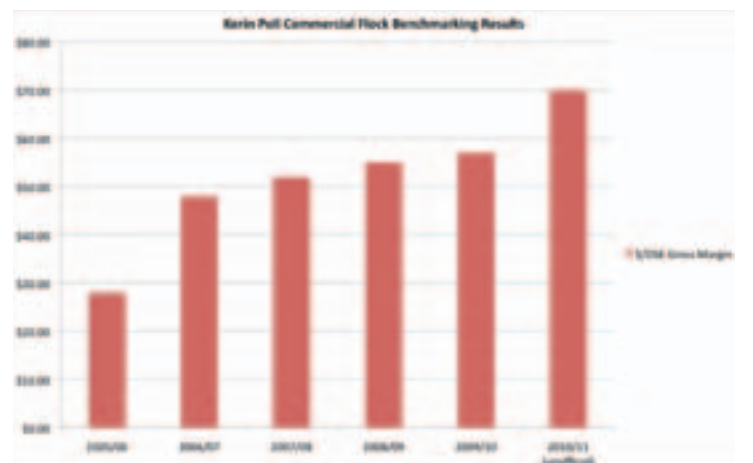
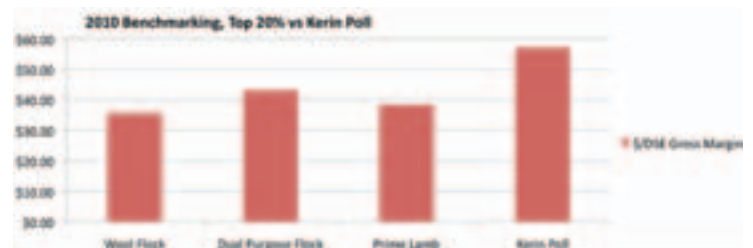
Kerin Poll Merinos have quickly become renowned for being low risk and highly profitable, allowing us to maximise returns from every possible income stream.

What Merino operation can boast this level of performance?

- The biggest profit driver is the number of lambs weaned – our rolling average is over 130%. Stud ewes 144%
- For 16 years, we've culled every ewe that hasn't raised a lamb, and we have zero tolerance for suint in our wools
- Low culling rate and predictability in breeding due to a consistent skin type on our sheep, unlike traditional thick Merino skins
- We sell our surplus ewes for a premium to restockers at 4.5 year old – well above the processor rates commonly attracted for cast-for-age ewes. This is only possible because of our high fertility, low culling rates, and having the genetics in our ewe lambs so they reach reproductive maturity at 7-8 months old
- No money or labour spent applying Klik or Vetrazin to get rid of maggots! It's been eight years since we applied these chemicals on our sheep
- Growth rates in our wether lambs that equal terminal-bred lambs

- Reduced labour requirement for management
- Kerin Poll places a large emphasis on the maternal aspect of the Merino to drive high lambing percentages. The more units you have to sell, the more money you can make.

Our primary focus has always been Merinos, and we have found no better enterprise to grow and expand our business in agriculture, through all seasons.



Stud and Commercial Ewe Shearing Results, July 2011

8 months growth since last shearing, during which time they raised a lamb

- The main line (80%) of the clip was 18.7 micron
- 7.8kg fleece weight annualised
- 74% yield
- 48N/kt
- Staple length 90mm
- For an annualised return of \$77 a head!!!



Wrinkle-free Polls a 'no-brainer' for Richard

Flystrike no longer an
issue at Brewarrina

There are certain challenges that come with operating a Merino breeding operation on 10,000 hectares of open saltbush plains around Brewarrina/Nyngan. After 12 years of considered breeding, Richard and Dixie Stendell, "Ben Avon", have completely changed the type of Merino they run, and the result has been a low-maintenance, wrinkle-free, highly fertile wool cutter.

"We've noticed a big change in our Merinos as a result of going this way," Richard says. "We've been breeding the wrinkle off them, getting a more open-faced sheep, and we've brought our micron down 2-3 micron in 12 years without losing any wool cut in that time. "It's just so encouraging to see our Merinos improving from year to year and to look back and think where we were 10 years ago and where we are now, it's incredible the difference in our sheep. "We use a lot less chemicals now because we don't have the wrinkle on the sheep, very little flystrike, the sheep are so easy to shear and the shearers love shearing them, and we can't get over the length of wool they now grow. Flystrike used to be one of our biggest problems and now it's barely a problem at all.

"We shear in May and our wool cut is around the 7kg mark for 20-micron wool in our 3000 breeding ewes, which I think is fine if they're having 110-115% lambs each year."

The Stendells were sold on Kerin Poll genetics after buying a flock of four-year-old ewes from Nigel in November, 2009. This was ahead of a wet summer contributing to a 30-inch rainfall year in an area with an average annual rainfall of just 16 inches.

"Not long after they landed here it started raining and we had a very wet summer. They went right through the wet summer with no



chemical and went right through to shearing in May with no chemical whatsoever, and did not have any flystrike in them. We thought our sheep were getting pretty good for resistance to flystrike but we got quite a bit of fly in ours because it was such a wet summer.

"We joined the ewes but didn't scan them because we knew they were good breeders, and we marked 141% of lambs from them. We were very impressed with that when our own were only going 110-115%. To go 141% unscanned, we thought was very good.

"I've had a fair bit to do with Merinos ever since I was a kid and I've had a lot to do with blowflies in sheep. Up until fairly recently I thought it was impossible to breed Merinos that didn't get flies whereas now I believe you can, and I've had it proven to me. You don't have to live with blowflies if you've got Merinos."

"To me that means a lot less work, less worry, less cost, and more profit for less work. There's nothing worse than bringing in a mob of sheep and seeing that 5% of them have got flies across the shoulders or tail. It just doesn't happen now and it makes life so much better to have Merinos."

The Stendells bought one of the two equal top-priced rams at last year's inaugural Kerin Poll on-property ram sale (rams bought at this sale pictured left), and has always bought the best genetics on offer. "The thing I like about the Kerin Poll rams is that they're not just bred for wool," Richard says. "They're bred for wool and carcase, which I think is a big thing nowadays. They've got great fertility, they're big and long with good muscle, and of course they have no wrinkle on them so they're easy-care.

"With the Poll rams we don't get any problems with flies, they don't get caught in fences, they're easy to shear, they don't seem to fight as much as horned rams and they seem to have very good temperaments. We just wouldn't go back to anything else now."

**I didn't think it was possible to
breed Merinos that didn't get flies
but I now believe you CAN!**



Risk – out of cropping and fully into Merinos

In 2006, we made the decision to gradually start moving away from cropping. This was simply because we had no control over the risks. At the time, we were cropping 730ha of wheat, canola and lupins. One of the reasons we previously thought we needed cropping in our business was because we didn't know how to manage grass like we do now, so our grass business carried pretty much the same level of risk as our grain business.

We found that once we got our heads around managing grass, the livestock operation had very little risk attached to it compared with cropping, in our 625mm-rainfall district. With cropping, we have no control over the season and so no way of guaranteeing that we'll get our input costs back, including diesel, seed, fertiliser, wages, interest, etc. With Merinos, you've always got something to sell regardless of seasonal conditions, with three income sources – wool, lambs, restocker sheep, and mutton.

After copping a complete caning in 2006 with both livestock and cropping – making for a breakeven year financially – we decided to start applying skills learned at the PrincipleFocus Business of Farming School, and then started to spend up on getting ourselves educated in grass management. We've spent a lot of time and money learning about how to do grass budgets, grazing charts, learning how to have faith in the trend line on grazing charts, and applying all to match stocking rate to carrying capacity.

The first enterprises we eliminated were canola and lupins, and they were replaced with Marombi grazing wheat. Now we're back to about 200ha of grazing crop annually, and have planted about 300ha to perennial pasture (phalaris, cocksfoot, fescue, lucerne) each year, with a focus on rejuvenating recently-purchased land. Our intention now is to move away from fodder cropping altogether because of our recurring poor Autumns, and instead sow that country down to pasture.

We have monitored our business over seven years through the PrincipleFocus benchmarking program (and more recently Holmes Sackett too), and it is now quite clear that our commercial Merino enterprise by far and away provides the highest return with the lowest risk. This allows us to service debt using livestock without worrying whether we're going to get a crop.

We've only realised in the past two years that **if you've only got one ball to juggle, you never drop it. In our experience, the more enterprises we juggled the poorer each performed.** As the result of education, we were encouraged to discover what we loved doing, what we did best, and what most suited our environment. For us, that was Merinos. But not just any Merinos.





Kerin Poll: Exposed

Friday, September 16
“Karuga Park” woolshed, Bournewood Road, Yeoval

Join us for our annual field day, where we will have this year’s sale rams, stud sires, and stud ewes on display.

Dr Jason Trompf:

Jason is a wool and lamb producer from Greta, Victoria, an Honorary Research Fellow with the Department of Agricultural Sciences at Latrobe University, and he is the current Chairman of BEST WOOL/ BEST LAMB, which delivers economic, environmental and social benefits to wool and sheep meat producers. He co-authored and developed the Lifetime Ewe Management System (LTEM).

Timetable:

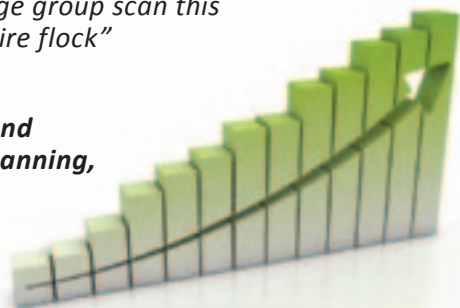
10.00am	Rams penned for inspection + morning tea supplied
10.30am	Welcome
10.45am	Dr Jason Trompf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The value in raising your flock fertility by just 10%
11.45am	Nigel Kerin, Principal, Kerin Poll Merino Stud <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How we manage a single enterprise to reduce risk, service debt and live well • Optimising return per hectare through managing grass and genetics • Where Kerin Poll is, where we’ll be in a decade, and why???
12.45pm	BBQ lunch supplied
Rams and ewes penned all day for inspection	

Kerin Poll BREAKS fertility record!



“In July, I scanned the Kerin Poll commercial and stud ewe flock, including maidens, for a 97.8% scanning. I have scanned 830,000 ewes across the NSW Central West over the past four years, of all sheep breeds and ages. I have never had a single age group scan this well let alone an entire flock”

- **Tony Walsh,**
Tony Walsh Sheep and
Cattle Pregnancy Scanning,
Narromine



A balanced portfolio is the key to a sustainable flock and industry

By Dr Jason Trompf

There are two conversations regularly held and heard around the traps. One is the pub talk about lambing percentages and the results achieved, where seldom the true figures are discussed. That is, lambs marked to ewes joined. Instead the figures quoted are inflated - with dry ewes removed or the best mob mentioned. The other conversation is about dry sheep equivalents people are running per hectare (DSE/ha). Pushed too far, this can also stand for “dead sheep equivalents/ha”. The more complete conversation on both fronts is to discuss the number of ewes run/ha or DSE/ha, combined with annual ewe mortality rates and weaning percentage. For example, to engage in a discussion about DSE/ha, without recognising ewe mortality rates and weaning percentage, could advocate very high stocking rates without recognising the possible 8-10% ewe mortality and 65% marking rates. Historically, systems like the one just described have been some of the highest profit businesses, when more than 80% of the income was derived from wool. Today, most Merino enterprises have two significant streams of income - wool, and sheep/lamb sales. In order to optimise the returns from both and therefore overall farm income, a more balance approached to managing one’s flock is required. This balance is also necessary to have a sustainable sheep industry.

The national sheep flock has declined substantially in the past 20 years (Fig. 1) to levels that threaten the future growth of the sheep industry and limit the lamb and sheep meat market opportunities.

National flock changes in past 20 years

- from over 170 million sheep to less than 70 million sheep
- from over 75 million ewes to less than 40 million breeding ewes
- increased lamb slaughter rates to over 20 million lambs per annum

Since 1990, national lamb marking rates have not improved (Table 1) and as a result in the past 12 months the sheep industry has not been able to sustain the turnoff rates of sheep and lambs that it has for the previous 20 years. This continuity of supply has been critical in enabling the industry to build both domestic and export markets, which is now being threatened. To continue to deliver this baseline turn-off of sheep, lambs and live exports and bring the sheep population to a plateau, marking rates need to increase by 12%. Improving reproduction rates means turn-off rates can be sustained (capitalising on the higher prices) and flock rebuilding can occur simultaneously.

Table 1. Trends in average marking rates since 1990

Enterprise sector	Average marking rate (1990-1999)	Average marking rate (2000-2009)
Prime lamb specialists	84	85
Sheep specialists	73	71
Mixed sheep enterprise	75	74
Sheep industry total	77	77



The solution: LTEM delivers on average a 15% increase in marking rates

The Lifetime Ewe Management (LTEM) program has addressed this industry challenge by improving producers' understanding of the impacts of ewe nutrition on the performance of the ewe and her progeny. LTEM has developed producers' skills and confidence to manage their ewes to achieve condition score targets that optimise stocking rates, increase lamb survival, improve animal welfare and generate greater whole-farm profitability (Table 2). The gross value of these productivity gains has been about \$50/ha or \$50,000/farm.

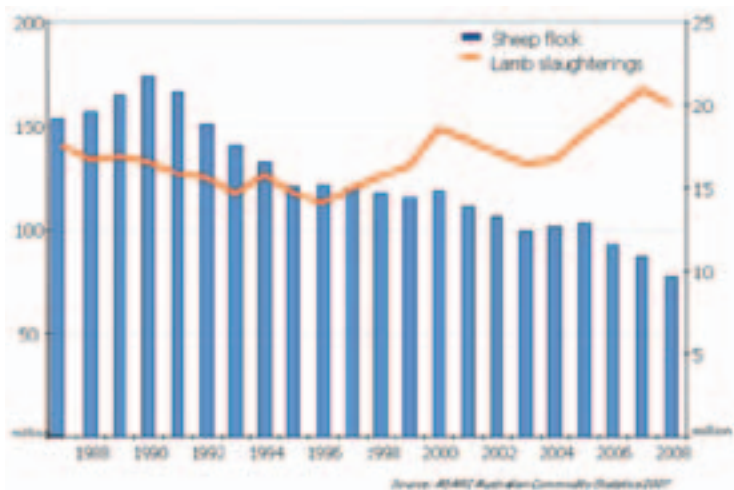


Figure 1. National flock trends

Table 2. Changes in productivity among LTEM participants

	Pre LTEM	Post LTEM
Farm size (ha)	1295	1316
Stocking rate (dse/ha)	11.4	13.0
Lambing % (Crossbred)	111	125
Lambing % (Merino to Merino)	75	83
Lambing % (Merino to other)	84	94
Ewe mortality per annum (%)	4.9	2.8

Key changes in management practice

LTEM is structured to maximise knowledge retention and practice change. The program has had profound impacts on the management practices undertaken by participants (Table 3).

Table 3. Trends in management practice among LTEM participants

Management practice	% of producers	
	Pre- LTEM	Post- LTEM
Condition scoring ewes	4	94
Assess pastures-quality/quantity	26	91
Pregnancy scan for multiples	18	71
Joining length of 5 weeks or less	28	70
Manage ewes to condition score targets at key times	9	98

Whole-farm profit analysis of LTEM

An independent financial analysis of LTEM found the benefits for producers from participating in LTEM arise from two avenues (source: John Young, Farming Systems Analysis, Western Australia):

1. Increases in efficiency due to improved understanding of the pasture-animal system
2. Adoption of targets for the condition score profile of the ewe flock over the reproduction cycle

The first avenue for achieving benefits is primarily from improving pasture utilisation and stocking rate. The changes that producers make to their systems result from:

1. the knowledge gained about animal requirements and pasture growth
2. the monitoring of 'feed on offer' and animal performance on their farm
3. discussion with other producers about how to use this information in their farm system

The other avenue for achieving benefits relates to having the correct targets for reproducing ewes at key times. This can increase profit even for producers who are already operating at optimal stocking rates. The benefit of managing ewes to the optimum condition score profile can be up to \$5-7/ewe for Merino enterprises and \$10-12/ewe for prime lamb enterprises.

Changing the condition score profile of the ewes affects profit through its impact on flock productivity and through the cost of providing feed. Improving the ewes' condition score profile will result in:

1. decreased ewe mortality
2. increased lamb birth weights and hence lamb survival
3. the progeny cutting more wool, that is finer.



KERIN POLL 154



By Kerin Poll 327. This ram was a freak from birth right through to weaning for early growth rate. His balance for carcass, wool and early growth rate would make him the pick. Pictured at 10 months old. Body weight at 29 July was 92kg.

MICRON	SD	CV	CF
17.1	2.2	12.9	99.9
YWT	YFAT	YEMD	7% DP
+7.3	-0.4	-0.7	122

KERIN POLL 308



A twin lamb by Leahcim 4. A low microning, waterproof wool on a big meat sheep. Pictured at 10 months old. Body weight at 29 July was 85kg.

MICRON	SD	CV	CF
17.8	2.7	15.2	99.8
YWT	YFAT	YEMD	7% DP
+7.2	-0.4	-0.2	127

KERIN POLL 391



By Leahcim 4. This is a ram with a deep, bold crimping wool, and he's nice and square in the back end. Pictured at 10 months old. Body weight at 29 July was 79kg.

MICRON	SD	CV	CF
18.7	3.1	16.6	100.0
YWT	YFAT	YEMD	7% DP
+5.7	-0.6	-1.2	115



STUD SIRE

MICRON	SD	CV
18.8	3.0	16.0
YWT	YFAT	YEMD
+5.3	-0.2	-0.8
CF	7% DP	
99.9	137	

STUD SIRE 1039

This 2009-drop ram boasts a fantastic frame and carries a pelt of 18.8-micron wool. He weighed 100kg at just 13 months old. He is sired by Roseville Park 2536, and has faultless structure and mobility. We sold him for \$10,000 at our inaugural on-property ram sale in 2010, and he was bought by Chad and Louise Taylor, Mumblebone Merino Stud, Wellington.



KERIN POLL 393



By Leahcim 4. He's got beautiful, lustrous, white wool with a well-defined crimp, on a great meat sheep. Pictured at 10 months old. Body weight at 29 July was 85kg.

MICRON	SD	CV	CF
19.5	3.5	17.1	99.9
YWT	YFAT	YEMD	7% DP
+7.6	+0.1	+0.6	132

KERIN POLL 412



By Leahcim 4. A great balance of super white wool and carcass. Pictured at 10 months old. Body weight at 29 July was 86kg.

MICRON	SD	CV	CF
17.1	2.5	14.6	99.7
YWT	YFAT	YEMD	7% DP
+6.2	+0.1	-0.3	121

KERIN POLL 458



By Kerin Poll 343. He's the heaviest ram in the drop, weighing 98kg at 10 months old. A great balance between frame and wool.

MICRON	SD	CV	CF
20.2	2.6	12.3	99.6
YWT	YFAT	YEMD	7% DP
+7.7	0	-0.6	143

STUD SIRE 937

This 2009-drop sire features a fantastic meaty loin and produces lovely white 18.1-micron wools. He is by Leahcim 319, and these meat characteristics shone through early. Body weight 115kg. He has faultless structure and mobility.

MICRON	SD	CV	CF
18.1	3.2	17.7	99.95
YWT	YFAT	YEMD	7% DP
+5.9	-0.4	-0.6	139



STUD SIRE

MICRON	SD	CV
16.4	2.4	14.6
YWT	YFAT	YEMD
+5.1	-1.0	-1.5
CF	7% DP	
99.85	135	

STUD SIRE 120

This 2007-drop ram's main purpose in life is for breeding sheep to suit high summer rainfall environments. His wool is perfectly white and suint-free in all weather conditions. He has 16.4-micron wool at four years old, on a 122kg body. He's a very long-bodied and sound ram with fantastic length of loin and butt shape. His first drop of offspring will feature in this year's Kerin Poll ram sale, and he has bred better than all other sires we've used - including outside sires!

The effect of fertility on our bottom line

Income per 1000 ewes

Kerin Agriculture - 130% Lambing	90% Lambing	75% Lambing Australian Industry Average
130% lambing average 4.5 year old ewe sale @ \$170/hd Income = \$170,000	90% lambing average 6.5 year old ewe sale @ \$100/hd Income = \$100,000	75% lambing average 6.5 year old ewe sale @ \$100/hd Income = \$100,000
lambing 130% = 1300 lambs Sell all male lambs – 650/hd @ \$125 Income = \$81,250	lambing 90% = 900 lambs Sell all male lambs- 450/hd @ \$125 Income = \$56,250	lambing 75% = 750 lambs Sell all male lambs- 375/hd @ \$125 Income = \$46,875
Wool income from lambs 1300 X 3.5kg X 750c/kg Income = \$34,125	Wool income from lambs 900 X 3.5kg X 750c/kg Income = \$23,625	Wool income from lambs 750 X 3.5kg X 750c/kg Income = \$19,687
Income from cull ewe hoggets Culling rate-20% X 650/hd = 130hd @ \$140 Income = \$18,200	Income from cull ewe hoggets Culling rate – 20% X 450hd = 90/hd @ \$140 Income = \$12,600	Income from cull ewe hoggets Culling rate - 20% X 375hd = 75/hd @ \$140 Income = \$10,500
Ewe Sale = \$170,000 Male lamb sale = \$81,250 Wool income = \$34,125 Cull ewe sale = \$18,200 Total \$303,575 Income per ewe \$303	Ewe Sale = \$100,000 Male lamb sale = \$56,250 Wool income = \$23,625 Cull ewe sale = \$12,600 Total \$192,475 Income per ewe \$192	Ewe sales = \$100,000 Male lamb sale = \$46,875 Wool income = \$19,687 Cull ewe sales = \$10,500 Total \$177,062 Income per ewe \$177
Total Income = \$303,575	Total Income = \$192,475 \$111,100 = 36% less income than column 1	Total Income = \$177,062 \$126,512 = 42% less income than column 1



Kerin Poll fertility explained

As an industry we have not even begun to explore the potential for fertility in our flocks. There are a number of management practices which we have adopted and probably as many again that we feel we will adopt in the future to see just where we can take our fertility.

We began scanning, as well as 'wetting and drying' our ewes 18 years ago, selling all females that fail to fall pregnant or rear a lamb. Eighteen years ago, our lambing percentages fluctuated from 98 to 102% annually.

By adopting scanning and 'wet and drying' - and most importantly selecting for plain-bodied sheep free of pin and body wrinkles - we have been able to lift this to a rolling annual average of 130%.

Where to from here?

It would be easy to settle with what we have achieved but we started scanning for multiples two years ago, and identified those ewes carrying twins. Interestingly, at scanning this year we ran 52 ewes carrying twins into the race. 48 out of the 52 had carried twins at their last scanning in 2010. This demonstrates the repeatability of the twin-bearing genetics in our Merinos.

Our intention, in recording twin-bearing ewes, is that in a dry season – when we proactively destock – we now have the distinctive advantage of being able to sell single-bearing ewes first. This, we hope, will push our fertility in our ewe base to another level. We intend to match this selection pressure on the male side, by only retaining sires that are born a twin and have highly positive ASBVs for number of lambs weaned, fat cover, and eye muscle. We will take more time at our Kerin Poll: *Exposed* field day on September 16 to thoroughly explain what we have learnt about ASBVs since we adopted them.

Kerin Poll lamb weight gain trial

This year we had the opportunity to conduct a weight gain trial of lambs bred out of our commercial Kerin Poll ewes. These ewes were joined to three different sheep breeds: Kerin Poll flock rams, quality White Dorper rams, and quality Border Leicester rams. The lambs have been running together since weaning in December, 2010, and the trial has been conducted on improved pastured in a rotational grazing system with no grain fed. We started the trial on June 2 this year with a random 50 lambs of each cross weighed. We repeated this process on June 18 and July 26. The results are tabled below.

	2/6/11	18/6/11	26/7/11	Total Weight Gain	Avg Daily Gain (54 days)
Border Leicester/ Merino Lambs	39kg	43kg	51kg	12kg	222 gm/day
White Dorper/ Merino Lambs	39kg	42.5kg	50.5kg	11.5kg	213 gm/day
Kerin Poll Merino Lambs	37kg	41.5kg	51.5kg	14.5kg	268.5 gm/day

At Kerin Poll, we embrace measurement and benchmarking. We feel that without this, it is very difficult to know what gains you are making. The results in the above table are largely due to visually selecting for many years to improve the depth of muscle in the hindquarter of our sheep, along with increasing their length of loin and cannon bone. We feel that with the use of ASBVs in the future, we can further improve the carcass qualities and early-growth potential from our sheep. Again, our interpretation of ASBVs will be explained in more depth at the Kerin Poll: Exposed field day on September 16.

How did your sheep fair after the record wet summer?

We heard countless stories of high mortality in sheep flocks over summer, and in some cases that was despite Klik being used twice in two months! The last line of defence sheep producers have is Klik yet it appeared to struggle during this wet summer.

For the heavy, suinty, more traditional Merino skins, not even Klik struggled to save them from death. We certainly don't want the survival of our sheep in wet years to rely on the application of expensive chemicals, and thankfully we don't.

Our wool classer, Trish Bateman, from Blue Shearing Services, has been classing our wool for the past three years and says she has, "...never experienced any fleece rot or canary yellow in their wool." See her testimonial in this newsletter.



Milk tooth ewe, twins at foot. Cut 5.4kg of 18.2 micron wool with just 7 months growth. Staple length 125mm.

Why being 'sustainable' isn't good enough for Kerin Poll

The word 'sustainable' is bantered around these days, left, right and centre. But think about it. This is the definition of 'sustainable': to be maintained at a certain rate or level.

At Kerin Poll, we don't want to just 'maintain' ourselves and our stud. Our focus is on regenerative agriculture – always bettering ourselves and our sheep, adapting to change, and producing a balanced and profitable animal. We go to work each day with a mentality of abundance, and strive to instill this in others around us.



A young Kerin Poll sire displaying all the attributes of where we see the future of the sheep industry.

What are people saying?



Plain-bodied Merinos attract shearers

"A high proportion of shearers travel widely for work to maintain and increase their income, or to gain experience and improve their skills. These shearers are always looking for consistent runs of good shearing, free-combing sheep, and they avoid areas of tough, slow-shearing sheep. Due to past experience or word of mouth, shearers are unlikely to return or even consider going to areas that are of little benefit to them, as generally good shearing sheep pay the same as tough slow shearing sheep. Contractors are acutely aware of the shearing quality of the sheep in their runs and the continuity of work to attract and retain shearers and shed hands who will return every year.

Kerin Polls are a good example of the modern type of Merino that tick the boxes for attracting and holding good quality shearers and shed staff. Kerin Polls are plain-bodied with smooth, supple skins, making them easier shearing sheep. Due to the nature of the sheep and the ease of shearing, shearers are able to improve their tallies - up to as many as 10 sheep a run - therefore increasing their incomes (by approx. \$100 a day) and enhancing their skills. It is not only the shearers that gain from the plain-bodied sheep. Shedhands and woolclassers also benefit as the fleeces are easier and faster to handle on the wool table, due to less fribs, skin pieces and skirting. Kerin Poll sheep cut the same fleece weight as heavy-skinned sheep, producing bright, soft handling white wool with no fleece rot - regardless of how wet the year is. This was particularly noticeable after the recent exceptionally wet summer season.

With many job options available to young people, they need every encouragement to enter and stay in the shearing industry. This type of sheep and good working conditions make Nigel and Kate Kerin's a sought-after shed." - **Ralph Blue, Principal, Blue Shearing Services**



Wool remains white, despite the wet

"I have been classing Nigel and Kate Kerin's wool for the past three years and I have never experienced any fleece rot or canary yellow in their wool. Over that time they have had some of their wettest seasons. I came across large amounts of green, fly- and water-damaged wool in many of the sheds that I classed in across Central West NSW over the past 12 months.

"The Kerin Poll clip always exhibits high tensile strength, it is very bright and white, and is very soft to touch, with good style. This year, the average staple length with eight months growth was 90mm,"

- **Trish Bateman, Kerin Poll Wool Classer, Blue Shearing Services**



Big wool cuts at Tilpa shearing

"Without doubt Nigel Kerin is one of the most progressive and enthusiastic Merino producers in the country today. During a time when Merino growers were turning their back on the wool industry, Nigel has grown and prospered because of his commitment, willingness to embrace change, and enthusiasm to the Merino breed. I have been purchasing rams bred by the Kerins for 10 years and have benefited from their influence.

"Their sheep are well-structured, plain-bodied with soft white 20-micron wool. Fertility and mothering ability is an area they have concentrated on and ram clients will benefit from this emphasis. This year we have had good summer and autumn rain and subsequent floods. None of our grown sheep have had any chemical for fly protection for the past three seasons and this year it was no different. At a time when the sheep and wool industry is at its best in years, it is vital to maximise your breeding direction and continue to improve for the future.

"My annual shearing at Tilpa was in July and my ewe hoggets cut upwards of 6kg with next to no colour in the wool - and they looked a picture off the board. In a year of high rainfall and long grass, the

benefit of having big, plain-bodied ewes was evident in the wool bin and

in the count-out yards. A bought mob of ewes with big fronts produced a lot more seedy, coloured wool, and the shearers went back 15 a run. These ewes cut the same amount of wool as the big, plain-bodied Kerin ewes. It wasn't until I saw the two mobs shorn - one after the other - that I realised the full benefits of the genetic improvement in my own flock.

The increases in the wool market recently are not a 'flash in the pan'. They have been underpinned by an increase in demand, particularly from China and Italy, as well as low production. The recent great returns look like staying for the longer term. There hasn't been a time in the past 20 years when the market spiked and everyone got a bite at it. This time the fundamentals are completely different and growers can plan with more confidence for wool returns.

- **Don Macdonald, Don Macdonald & Co Woolbrokers, Dubbo**



Kerin Poll rams 'perfect' for improving frame, wool, skin

"My brother Brett, parents, Peter and Margaret, and I run a number of grazing properties, with the core of the business being Merino breeding and wool production. After purchasing a new property and flock, we wanted to improve the flock and went to Kerin Poll to achieve our goals. The Kerin Poll rams showed structural soundness, great growth for age, evenness as a group, with bright long wools and evenness of wool type. I feel these rams are perfect for the "Mount Top" flock to improve frame, brighten wool type, and free up the skins," - **Murray Wykes, "Mount Top", Eucareena**



'The sky is the limit' for Kerin Poll Merinos

"My first introduction to Nigel was through further education, which - for those of you that don't know him - makes him strive for excellence and to learn something new every day. Throughout that time a different understanding of sheep breeding came to the fore. Micron, fleece weights, etc, were all part of it but Nigel's stance on Merino ewe fertility struck a real chord. When I saw for myself his Merino ewe lambs having lambs without compromise for growth, the seed was sown. A look over the Kerins' stud ewes and I was sold. A big question in my mind was: 'can I bring a massive western sheep back into the high rainfall country?'

We bought our first ram from Nigel three years ago. Having had two lambings before Kerin Poll's first sale, I have the pleasure of saying that they have held their white wool colour, and the style has actually become better, which is a real win. The real visual difference was in the size of the offspring.

The physical presence and growth of the lambs by the ram bought in 2008 is outstanding. This led us to Kerin Poll's first ram sale in 2010 where we bought three rams that averaged over 100kg, for a \$3500 average. With the sheep market performing as it has been, we believe the sky is the limit for the new Merino sheep the Kerins are breeding. Thanks for everything Nigel."

- **Norm McCormack, Crookwell**



Kerin Poll delivers the whole package

We purchased rams at the inaugural Kerin Poll On-Property Ram Sale and are extremely happy with the resulting offspring. We only buy Poll Merinos, for their ease of management, and safety for the operators and the rams themselves. So, we want true polls - without horns or scurs.

As wool producers we are always looking to increase our wool cut but this must be in conjunction with a low maintenance body. The plain-bodied Kerin Poll rams produce this frames as well as high fertility in our ewes, to increase lambing percentages. The large frame and long bodies will ensure surplus sheep returns are maximised.

Knowing Nigel and his management style gives us confidence that the breeding will produce consistency in the next generation, and not throw back to shortcuts or a blowout in micron.

- **Tony Gilmour, "Happy Valley", Gilgandra**



STOP PRESS!
Don Macdonald and
Co sold our entire 2011
breeding ewe wool clip
on August 10 for **\$2141 a
bale!!**



Have a good laugh!

There once was a farmer who was raising three daughters on his own. He was very concerned about their well-being and always did his best to watch out for them. As they entered their late teens, the girls dated, and on this particular evening all three of his girls were going out on a date.

This was the first time this had occurred. As was his custom, he would greet the young suitor at the door holding his shotgun, not to menace or threaten but merely to ensure that the young man knew who was boss. The doorbell rang and the first of the boys arrived. Father answered the door

and the lad said, "Hi, my name's Joe. I'm here for Flo. We're going to the show, is she ready to go?" The father looked him over and sent the kids on their way.

The next lad arrived and said, "My name's Eddie. I'm here for Betty. We're gonna get some spaghetti. Is she ready?" Father felt this one was okay too, so off the two kids went.

The final young man arrived and the farmer opened the door. The boy started off, "Hi, my name's Chuck..." And the farmer shot him.

Kerin Poll

Merino

success breeds success

Important Dates for your Calendar

13 AUGUST

Bathurst Ram Expo

24, 25 AUGUST

Dubbo National Show and Sale

1 SEPTEMBER

South West Slopes Field Day, Young

2 SEPTEMBER

Mid State Merino Field Day,
Peak Hill Showground

16 SEPTEMBER

Kerin Poll: *Exposed*. On-property field day

10 OCTOBER

2nd annual Kerin Poll on-property ram sale
150 selected rams on offer



PLUS Join our
Facebook Community today

Stay updated.
Visit our
CALENDAR
online



On Farm, Online

Have you visited the Kerin Poll website lately?

Our website has been up and running for a year now and contains a wealth of information about what we do, our sheep, management, photos of this year's sale rams, and more.

We also send out an e-newsletter with up-to-date information about what we're up to. If you're not already signed up, head to the website to do so. **Visit www.kerinpoll.com.au today!**

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