

# Australian Suffolk Association Newsletter- WINTER 2022

## Suffolk Breed Type and Standard

I was lucky enough to attend the Bendigo Sheep and Wool show this July and saw a number of breed standard and structural faults across a number of breeds and with all the shows starting back up around the country, I thought it would be a good idea to write up the breed type and standard as written in the Australian Suffolk Centenary Book.

**Wool** - Moderately short and dense, soft and springy to handle, free from dark fibres and brown or black wool at points.

**Skin** - Soft and pink - some skins will darken with changeable conditions but a true pink skin stays so under almost all conditions.

**Condition** - When in good condition all sheep should handle firm, not flabby.

**Stance** - They should stand 'square' with feet well apart and walk uprightly without throwing feet sideways unduly.

**Head** - Black and smooth with good width, full between the ears and free of brown wool, nose slightly Roman.

**Mouth** - Teeth should meet upper gum squarely - not in front of gum (overshot) or behind upper gum (undershot or pig jawed).

**Eyes** - Bright and full, hazel in colour.

**Ears** - Black, smooth and of good length, carried slightly drooped, or if alerted slightly cocked - not permanently up (cock eared).

**Neck** - Moderate length, well set in shoulders in rams stronger with a good crest. No dip in front of shoulder (U-necked).

**Back** - Long and straight through from shoulder to rump without a distinct rise in the back (roach back) or depression (swampy back).

**Loin** - Long, wide and well fleshed.

**Rump** - Wide with broad tail, well set up, not sloping rump with a low tail setting (goose rump).

**Hindquarter and Twist** - To be wide and deep showing plenty of meat in the hindquarters. Covered to the hocks with wool, clean and black below hocks.

**Hind Legs** - To be wide apart. Not to be turned in at hock (hocky) or sloping forward (bow legged). Pasterns short and strong - not long and sloping (down on pasterns).

**Hooves** - Black and strong.

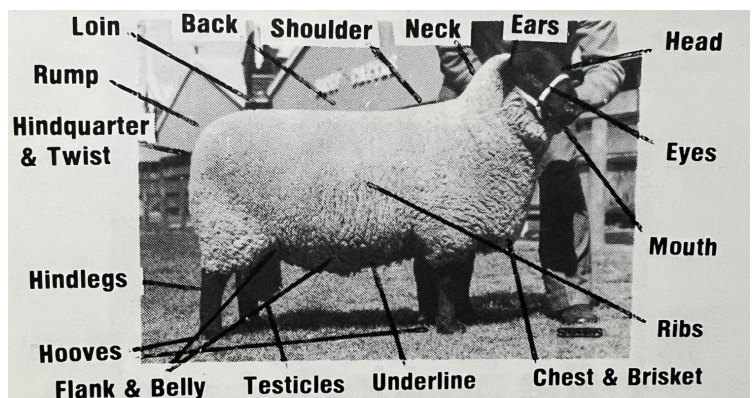
**Flank and Belly** - To be well covered with wool.

**Testicles** - Large and even in size, not carried too low.

**Underline** - To be reasonably straight, particularly from brisket to centre of belly.

**Chest and Brisket** - To be deep and wide (heart room).

**Ribs** - Long and well sprung



- The Feedback podcast from Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) features stories, news, information and interviews. This includes everything from red meat producers to policy makers and celebrity chefs to scientists.

- The podcast – which also contains a snapshot of news from MLA – is for anyone who has a keen interest in the red meat and livestock industry.

## THE FEEDBACK PODCAST

PRESENTED BY



## Weaner Management- Provided by Adrian Veitch B.V.Sc

In a large number of sheep flocks in WA the weaner flock is a very neglected group which deserves far more care and can result in substantial economic gain.

### Age of Weaning

- 1) Lambs have full rumen function at 8 weeks
  - 2) Wean between 12 and 16 weeks because
    - a) At 12 weeks the ewe has passed peak milk production and the level is on the decline. In an effort to keep production high the ewe uses her own body reserves therefore losing body weight at a very rapid rate. Normal summer conditions result in the ewe having trouble making up this lost body weight before the next joining.
    - b) The lamb increases competition for food and by 18 weeks is eating as nearly as much as a dry ewe. The weaner will suffer from this competition on poorer pastures.
    - c) By 12 weeks of age, milk provides only 5-10% of the lambs total nutritional requirements.
- So I recommend weaning at 12 to 16 weeks and wean on to high quality pasture.

Early weaning in poor seasons is recommended because when the feed is scarce the ewes milk supply decreases and lambs must compete with ewes for the pasture. This weaning can be as early as 8 weeks. In drought situation lambs weighing less than 10kgs at 8 weeks of age, weaning is likely to be beneficial. High protein is essential for early weaning. Early weaning is a disadvantage when lambs and ewes are on good pasture.

### Why Weaners Are A Special Group.

Weaners have low levels of tissue reserves of fat. Those weighing less than 20kgs may have less than 1kg of fat and are in poor condition to withstand long periods of weight loss, having to eat enough to maintain bodyweight across summer. Added to this is the fact weaners have high requirements because they are still growing. (No excess energy to store as fat while on good pasture.)

### Management of Weaners-

I recommend the following after weaning

- 1) Wean on to the best available pasture - legumes, clover, Lucerne. Supplement on to a good hand feed diet with at least 12-15% protein in a digestible foodstuff.
- 2) Aim to get weaners to a target weight of 30kgs (merinos) before pasture declines in quality and quantity.
- 3) Drenching/Vaccination - Selenium/Cobalt - if required

### Weighing of Weaners

Weighing is avoided in many operations because it is said to be too time consuming. It is my opinion that this is a lazy attitude as large economic gains and savings can be achieved by weighing. In all weaner flocks there is a tail or light-weight group which are either "poor doers", shy feeders or sickly animals. This group cannot compete effectively and therefore usually in the under 20kgs liveweight class. Unless these animals are cared for effectively they will either die or be permanently stunted. Weighing - split weaners into three groups.

- 1) Ewe Weaners - Need to be fed to a higher weight gain rate to achieve a weight which will be satisfactory for their first joining, Puberty and ovulation rate is correlated to body weight. It has been stated to me "You will only get 50-60% lambing in maiden ewes". If fed well and cared for I have seen 93% in maiden ewe lambs.
- 2) Wethers/Rams - feed for maintenance
- 3) Tail - Less than 20kgs liveweight - feed grain supplements to supply sufficient levels for survival and to get them out of the life threatening weight. The recommendation is lupins.

Avoid large mobs because it makes it difficult to detect poor doers. 4-5% of older sheep can be included to act as educators of grazing practices for the weaners.

### Weaner Nutrition

- a) Effects of early post natal restrictions can cause long term decrease in production. Severe restrictions can cause permanent decreases in production. Feed lactating ewes well to increase lamb growth and survival.
- b) Restrictions of nutrition in lambs from 2 months until weaning has no long term effect unless particularly severe.
- c) It has been shown that under nutrition post weaning has been found to effect body weight but catch up growth occurs with no future production differences. Beware they don't die if underfed



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## **Mating Ewe Weaners**

The age of puberty of sheep is correlated with their weight as is the ovulation rate. Well grown British Breed hoggets can breed at 7-9 months of age and later production is not impaired by early mating. Aim to mate at 18 months if you feed them well the lambing percentage will be good. Drenching of Weaners is recommended

Correct Drench

Because of the fine balance between nutritional requirements and available feed, small burdens of parasites can become very costly to the weaners health. Approach to the control of

worms is very important because of

- a) High cost of drench
- b) Labour intensive
- c) Ever increasing resistance of worms to drench

My way of drenching is centered on having egg counts done on fecal samples from weaners before drenching. By setting up small trails to test the effectiveness of each type of drench before whole flock is treated. These trials and egg counts can be done by consulting your local veterinarian.

## **Pasture Management**

After drenching, weaners should be moved to a pasture which has not had sheep on it for a period of time. Excellent pastures are;

- a) Stubbles
- b) Pastures that have been rested for a month through the hot summer periods and up to 3 months through winter.

## **Conclusion**

Weaner nutrition is designed to keep levels of slow growth or maintenance during supplementary feeding. Fast growth will occur in green feed. Beware that supplementary feeding may have to continue even though a green pick appears. Don't stop feeding until this green pick is well established. Weaner management is a very important part of running a flock, due to their finely balanced existence. Proper nutrition and management result in.

- a) Higher survival rates
- b) Good maiden ewe lambing percentages
- c) Good growth rates
- d) Good wool or meat production

All the above will result in increased profits

## **Upcoming mixed vendor stud sale dates-**

- WA Elite White Suffolk and Suffolk sale- sale date 29th and 30th of August 2022
- Bendigo Elite sale- Sale date 29th of August
- Adelaide Royal Show- Sale date 5th of September 2022
- Perth Royal Show- Sale date 30th of September
- NSW '10/10' Suffolk Genetic sale- Sale date 10th of October



## **2023 ASA Suffolk calendar-**

As some of you may be aware, we are looking at making an annual ASA Suffolk calendar with 2023 being the trial run for this. Studs and businesses can buy/sponsor a month at the value of \$100 a page, the calendars themselves will be free for members.

Any studs or business wanting to advertise in the calendar or wanting to put their sale dates on the calendar, please contact Kira by the end of September for more info at [australiansuffolkassociation@gmail.com](mailto:australiansuffolkassociation@gmail.com)

## MLA's latest sheep industry projections

Sheep industry projections highlight a bright outlook for Australia's sheepmeat industry. Above-average rainfall, along with the flow-on production effects and the continuation of historically high prices, is supporting producer confidence. Robust export demand in both established and emerging markets is another shining light.

**Supply and production 2022-** MLA is forecasting that the national flock will reach 76m head, its highest level in almost a decade. Continued above-average rainfall patterns have supported higher lambing percentages, driving this growth and a larger breeding ewe cohort. This has driven increased production on-farm, meaning lamb slaughter has been revised higher by 2% compared to February to reach 22m head this year. With improved genetic and on-farm management, carcase weights will remain at historic highs and drive record lamb production this year to 549,000 tonnes – a revision upwards of 1% from the February release. Mutton slaughter has been revised upwards by 2% on February projections to 6.12m head this year and is expected to rise next year by 24% to reach 7.58m.

**Exports-** Already in 2022, Australian sheepmeat exports for lamb and mutton are higher by 5% and 7% respectively, compared to 2021. China remains Australia's number one export market for sheepmeat, accounting for 35% of total volumes this year. The growth of emerging markets such as Papua New Guinea Malaysia and Singapore show the global diversity of Australia's sheepmeat exports. The US takes its place as Australia's second largest exporting country, with lamb exports growing 13% in the year to May, compared to 2021. MLA is forecasting lamb exports to reach record levels in 2022 at 308,000 tonnes. The historically high carcase weights and an uptick in slaughter volume flowing through to higher overall production are delivering this. Mutton exports are expected to remain firm on 2021 levels before rising by 24% compared with 2020 levels next year.

**Prices-** Looking at the domestic lamb price forecast, five industry analysts (excluding MLA) are forecasting the National Trade Lamb Indicator will reach 785c/kg cwt by the end of 2022. This would signal a marginal lift on where the indicator currently operates about a 7% or 61c decline from where the indicator finished in 2021 at 846c/kg cwt.

## 'Our Heritage' in Print



*A pen of three Suffolk rams. Signed and dated E.F. Holt 1887. Inscribed 'The First Prize of £10 Smithfield Club 1887. Class 55. No. 412' Exhibitor 'The Marquis of Bristol, Ickworth Park, Bury St Edmunds. Breeder. Exhibitor. Age 22 mths-wks'. 'Reserve number for the £15 Silver Cup as second best pen Hampshire or Wiltshire or Suffolk sheep. No. 412'.*

### Joke of the day-

What do you get from a dwarf cow?

....

...

...

...

...

... Condensed milk!

## Trials underway for new technologies to measure carcass traits- Sourced from MLA



Above: Example of E+V Grading Camera data capture.

The MLA Objective Measurement (OM) Program has partnered with a number of technology providers to aid in the development, commercialisation and AUS-MEAT accreditation of a number of technologies to measure beef and lamb carcass traits.

In exciting news, the MEQ Probe was accredited for measuring intramuscular fat (IMF%) in November 2021. This was a world-first development in eating quality for the Australian lamb industry, with IMF% a key eating quality trait measurement required for the soon to be commercialised sheepmeat MSA cuts-based model.

Alongside this, MSA's expert graders have been supporting the training and accreditation of the beef devices, which are the standard for beef carcass assessment. These include technologies to measure beef traits such as AUS-MEAT and MSA marbling, meat and fat colour and eye muscle area.

At present, there are 25 processing sites across Australia that are testing and using OM technologies in partnership with MLA to drive adoption.

Objective Measurement technologies already conditionally approved for use include the:

- E + V Cold Carcass Beef Grading Camera (for AUS-MEAT and MSA marbling, meat colour and fat colour)
- Q-FOM Beef Camera (for AUS-MEAT and

MSA marbling, fat colour and eye muscle area)

- Masterbeef App and Camera Device (for MSA marbling)
- MIJ-30 (for AUS-MEAT marbling)
- MEQ Probe Auroch v1.0 (for MSA marbling)
- MEQ Probe (Sheepmeat) (for IMF%)



Above: Ausmeat accredited grader using E+V Grading Camera.

Additional technologies are at varying stages of development and include a number of phone-based grading devices for beef, as well as further technologies to measure IMF% in lamb. These devices are using a range of methods including near-infrared, microwave (including fat measures), nuclear magnetic resonance, optical coherence tomography and DEXA.

Once these technologies are commercialised and approved for use, further value will be created for the supply chain through greater efficiencies and grading consistency as well as extended measures of existing and new traits.

Further updates on the progress on these projects will be shared as work continues.



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## Lambplan Analysis Dates

JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
<b>LAMBPLAN/KIDPLAN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friday 1</li> <li>Friday 15</li> </ul> <b>MERINOSELECT/DOHNE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thursday 7</li> <li>Thursday 21</li> </ul>	<b>LAMBPLAN/KIDPLAN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monday 1</li> <li>Monday 15</li> </ul> <b>MERINOSELECT/DOHNE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friday 5</li> <li>Friday 19</li> </ul>	<b>LAMBPLAN/KIDPLAN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thursday 1</li> <li>Thursday 15</li> <li>Friday 30</li> </ul> <b>MERINOSELECT/DOHNE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wednesday 7</li> <li>Wednesday 21</li> </ul>
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<b>LAMBPLAN/KIDPLAN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friday 14</li> </ul> <b>MERINOSELECT/DOHNE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friday 7</li> <li>Friday 21</li> </ul>	<b>LAMBPLAN/KIDPLAN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuesday 1</li> <li>Tuesday 15</li> </ul> <b>MERINOSELECT/DOHNE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monday 7</li> <li>Monday 21</li> </ul>	<b>LAMBPLAN/KIDPLAN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thursday 1</li> <li>Thursday 15</li> </ul> <b>MERINOSELECT/DOHNE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wednesday 7</li> </ul>
JANUARY 2023	FEBRUARY 2023	MARCH 2023
<b>LAMBPLAN/KIDPLAN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friday 13 Jan</li> </ul> <b>MERINOSELECT/DOHNE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friday 6 Jan</li> <li>Friday 20 Jan</li> </ul>	<b>LAMBPLAN/KIDPLAN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wednesday 1 Feb</li> <li>Wednesday 15 Feb</li> </ul> <b>MERINOSELECT/DOHNE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuesday 7 Feb</li> <li>Tuesday 21 Feb</li> </ul>	<b>LAMBPLAN/KIDPLAN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wednesday 1 Mar</li> <li>Wednesday 15 Mar</li> <li>Friday 31 Mar</li> </ul> <b>MERINOSELECT/DOHNE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuesday 7 Mar</li> <li>Tuesday 21 Mar</li> </ul>

Did you know that Suffolks are now being accepted for individual genomics testing. There are a number of service providers that analyse the genomic information and report it back to sheep genetics for analysis including, Neogen, GenomNZ, XytoVet, Wetherbys Scientific and Intertek.

Contact sheep genetics if you require more information for how genomics can work for your stud and what animals to choose for testing.