



## MULTIMEAT JULY 2015 NEWSLETTER

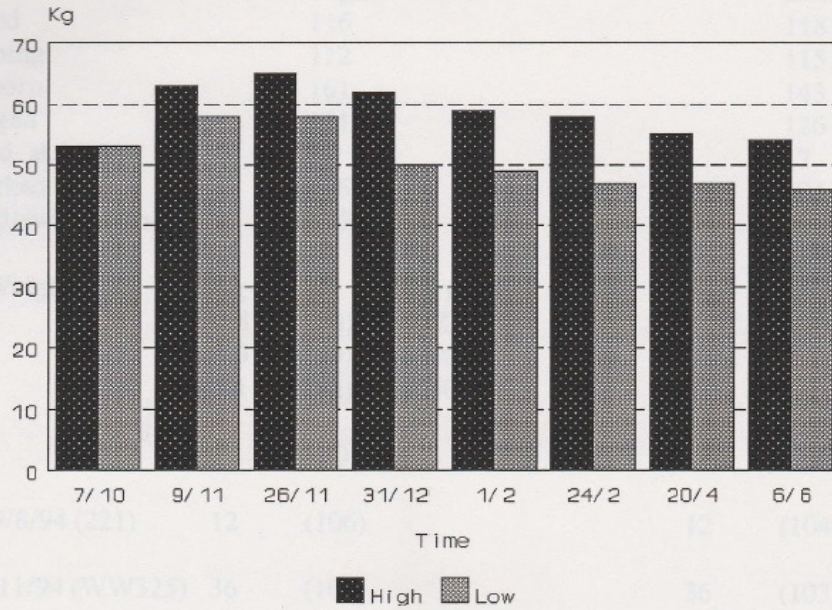
I have been conducting trials on the management of triplet bearing ewes this year. What I have had reinforced is the absolute necessity of **Controlling Mating Weight** to reduce the number of ewes having more than three lambs. Those ewes which have been well fed and have just triplets seem to be performing well but those with more create problems.

To control mating weight you have to be very tough on the ewes. Most times you will be mating on dry feed. You put a large mob together and graze the paddock out then put your mature Multimeat ewes in there until they have dropped to the weight you want. This might require stocking them at 15 or 20 ewes to the hectare. They will lose weight. This is called negative flushing. If they don't lose weight put more in there. In all of our trials Multimeats have had half the number of dry ewes found in flocks of normal ewes. They will get in lamb and have a much better litter size distribution. After mating, let them have the feed which has been saved. Our best performing clients are those who are controlling mating weight either intentionally or by the high stocking rates they are running. Mature Multimeat ewes should be less than condition score 3 at mating. The ewes in the trial results below were Multimeat merinos. Multimeat crossbreds or other crosses may not need to be this light. A condition score between 2.5- 3 and not gaining weight seems to be about right for mature ewes.

**You cannot apply this strategy to ewe lambs or 1.5 year olds which have to be gaining weight slowly during mating or they will have a large percentage of dries.**

The graphs below show some of the early work I did at Struan Research Centre.

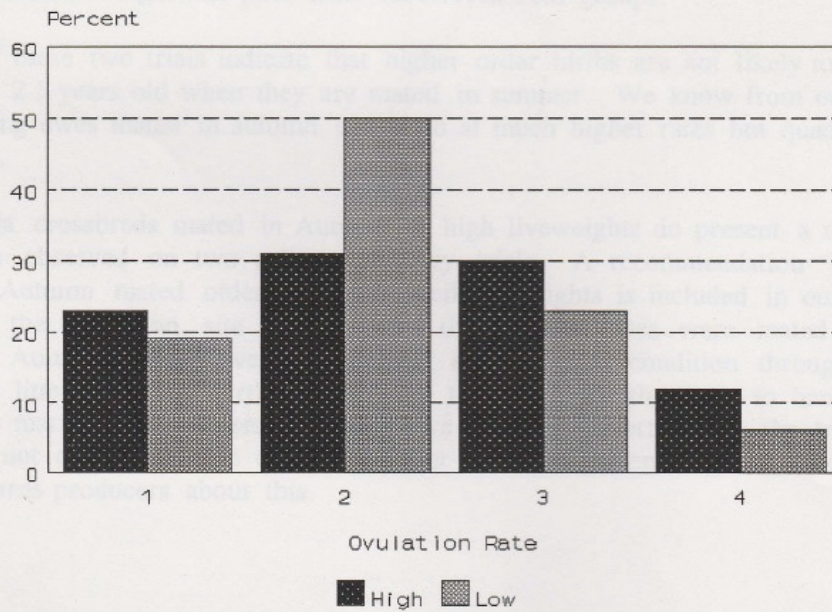
### Ewe Liveweights 1993/94



In contrast to the previous years experiment the differences in nutrition were maintained during mating.

### Graph of Ovulation Rates

Percentage of Ewes at Each Ovulation Rate  
1993/94



The overall ovulation rate of the two groups were:

**High**  
2.43

**Low**  
2.15

What they show is the effect of nutrition on the litter size distribution of Multimeat ewes.

Below are the scanning results from the property of Simon Teate at Frances just north of Naracoorte. Simon managed the Border Merino cross ewes according to Lifetime Ewe principles in that they were mated at condition score 3. The Multimeats were restricted to achieve condition scores 2.5-3. The normal crossbreds marked 116% from 133% scanned. The Multimeats marked 165%. These are outstanding results and confirm what we have been saying about the prime lamb industry. That is that the problem with the industry is that the genotypes we have available just don't produce enough lambs to give a profitable return. You can increase production by extra feeding or lowering stocking rates but you do so with a loss in profitability. An incorrect diagnosis of the underlying problems with the system has resulted in the wrong solution. Of course correct nutrition of multiple bearing ewes in late pregnancy is vitally important.

#### Multimeat Cross Terminal Rams

Dries %	Singles %	Twins + %	
2	13	85	183%

#### Border Merino Cross Terminal

Dries %	Singles %	Twins +%	
6	55	39	133%

Each year we have a modest increase in the number of rams we lease out and I question myself about why the uptake has not been more rapid. Then I drive around the district and see the wonderful early drop lambs alongside the beautiful fat ewes and have my long held views confirmed. It looks so good why would anyone change. Our client's ewes are not fat, the lambs will not be sold in September and they may have to feed more in late pregnancy. The potential loss of income on many properties is however staggering. Our research on properties across southern Australia and the gross margin booklets of the Dept. puts the difference of in gross margin at around \$15 per ewe. In the case of a producer running 3000 Multimeat ewes he will have at least another \$45,000 dollars to pay wages and overheads. Another concern about using Multimeats is the risk of having too many unfinished lambs. It is true that with increases in lambing percentage there will be fewer lambs sold directly off of their mothers because multiple lambs do not grow as fast as single reared lambs. In the current lamb market however there is little difference in the price per kilogram between finished and store lambs. The increase in profitability from Multimeat genetics comes from the increase in the kilograms per hectare produced. It is sometimes difficult to accept that systems which look so good are not very profitable. Unless thorough financial analysis is undertaken incorrect decisions will be made. Increases in income are easy to quantify, the effects of changing time of lambing and understocking more difficult to unravel.

Everyone loves Lifetime Ewe Management Courses (LTEM). The opportunity to get together and discuss things is always enjoyable and there are many good things covered. Just remember that all of the research was conducted with spring lambing merino ewes and that the research with crossbred ewes has just commenced. Increases in production will be achieved by increased feeding but the increase in cost is not always covered by the increase in income.

Given that you already have improved pastures there are some critical factors which determine profitability in prime lamb production systems. They are in order of importance in my opinion, choosing the correct time of lambing for your farm and choosing the correct stocking rate to go with it. These are the major determinants of profitability. How much you have to feed and when you have to feed it will be determined by the first two choices. Things like the genotype you use and whether you scan or not are secondary to these. Choosing the correct stocking rate is difficult but critical. On one property I visited my immediate response was not that they needed Multimeats but first they needed another 1000 ewes. A half a dse per hectare can have a large effect on profitability.

We would be very happy to see you at Sheepvention in the Sheep Technology tent to discuss these and other issues.

If you would like to try some Multimeat ewes, Allan Howe has 120 ewe lambs available and you can call him on 0353923246.

Colin and Phil