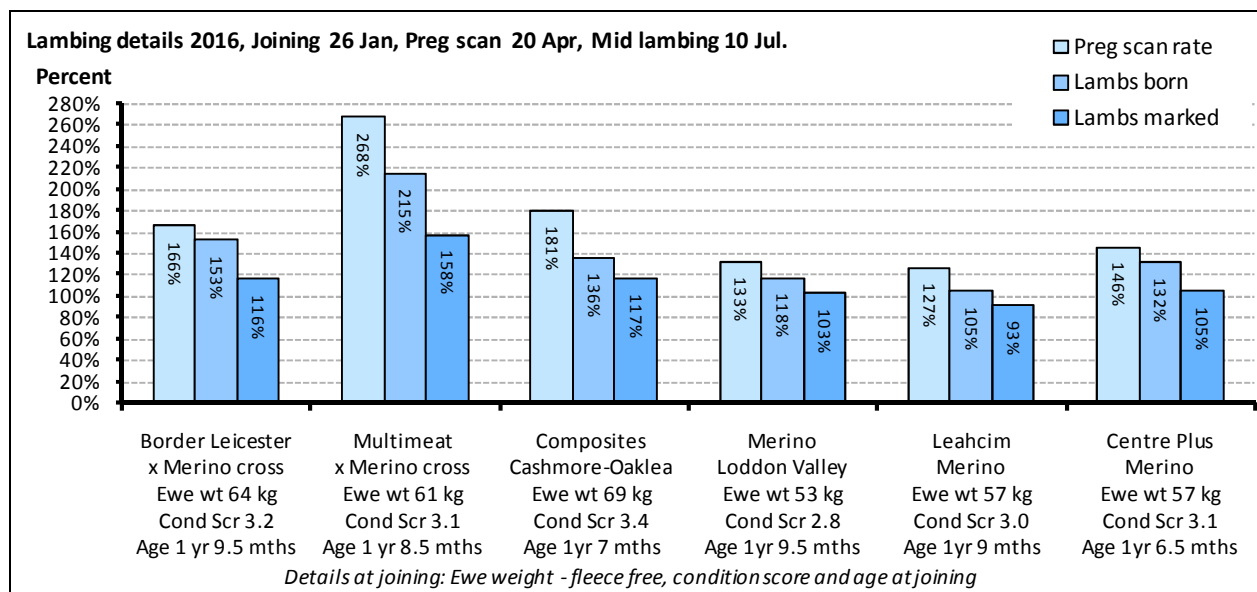




## November Newsletter 2017

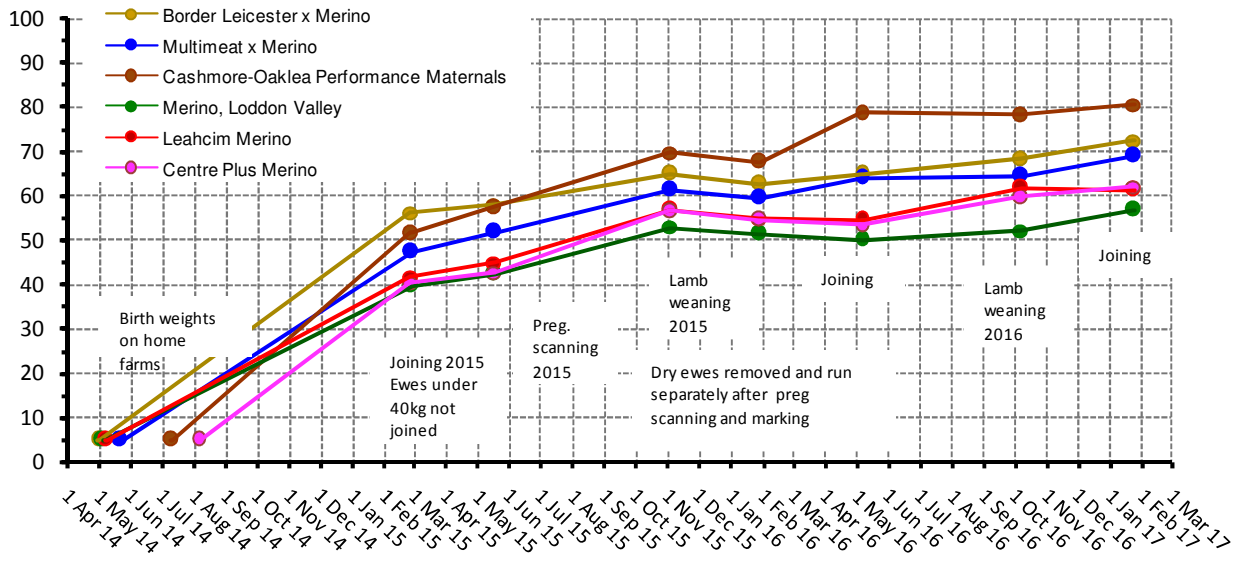
In south eastern Australia we have had a very good season. This presents a danger for your Multimeat ewes. Our advice is to try and keep your mature ewes ( 2.5 yrs and older) in less than condition score 3 at mating. This is to reduce the number of ewes conceiving 3 or more lambs. We strongly believe that you should confine these ewes and conserve the feed for them to use post mating. Younger ewes can not be held back as this will result in too many dry ewes. I am continually told that this can't be done. It can but, you just have to put them small enough area and leave them. They will still conceive and you will get a more manageable litter size distribution. This does not apply to ewe lambs and 1.5 year olds as they will have too many dries if you restrict them during mating. The other thing we have observed at Elmore is that the lambing rates are much lower than the scanning rates. So it appears that many of the foetuses conceived are lost prior to lambing.



**Ewe weights, fleece free, from birth on farms of origin and after arrival at Elmore**

**Ewe weight  
kg**

The lines indicate the average weight of each group over time. A birth weight of 5kg was assumed for all teams. The average birth date was determined after discussions with the breeder of each team.



Genotype	B/Leicester x Merino cross	Multimeat x Merino cross	Cashmore-Oaklea Performance Maternals	Merino LoddonValley	Leahcim Merino	CentrePlus Merino
Greasy Fleece Weight, incl pieces & bellies 2017	5.98	4.91	4.33	6.56	6.16	6.37
Fleece wool yield, (adjusted)	75.6	71	68.9	73.5	73.1	70.5
Clean Fleece Weight, flc+pcs+bls 2017	4.42	3.43	2.9	4.67	4.37	4.36
Micron 2017	29.21	26.91	35.42	19.74	20.14	18.25
Fleece wool, Clean price 2017, aver Oct16 to Sept17, (to be adjusted after bale core tests)	645	906	372	1581	1512	1868
Total fleece value 2017 shearing	\$28.07	\$30.77	\$10.65	\$72.39	\$64.85	\$80.91
Shearing 2017 Wool combing score	100%	100%	94%	100%	92%	100%
Shearing 2017 OHS score	100%	100%	82%	100%	100%	100%
Ewe Weight, Fleece Free at weaning pre shearing 27Sept2017	80.6	77	92	65.8	70.5	74.5
Ewe CS at weaning pre shearing 27Sept2017	4.5	4.1	4.5	3.7	3.9	3.8

The tables above give the lambing percentages and the wool values for the breeds in the Elmore trial. The question then arises as to why any producer would use a normal composite self replacing ewe system. They cut \$20 less wool than a merino crossbred and have no more lambs. If they are then only mated back to a composite ram rather than a terminal then they are likely to lose 2-3 kgs of carcass weight so are likely to lose a further \$15 of lamb value. The argument is made that you don't have to buy replacements in this system. You don't but their value is such that you could sell them and buy merino crossbreds which return around \$30 more per ewe. It's not surprising that the largest interest in the Multimeat is coming from those using composite ewes.

The live weight graph shows that fewer of them can be run than any of the other genotypes.

We have known for a long time that breeding a terminal ram to a merino ewe is a very profitable operation. To compete with this system the crossbred or composite ewe has to wean around 50% more lambs and this is what Multimeat crosses can do. Many producers have bred to non merino ewes and therefore only end up with similar wool values to straight composites.

In the Multimeat nucleus we are putting a lot of effort in increasing their wool value. Our ET programs are from the highest wool value donors. Users of Multimeat rams can also do a lot to improve their wool values.

I will put forward what I think are the best options.

Consider a prime lamb flock of 1000 ewes which are kept for 6 years. Each year you will need about 200 replacements. This means that you need to use 400 of your ewe flock to breed these replacements. This 400 could be merinos mated to Multimeats. So each year you would breed 600 ewes to terminals and 400 to Multimeats and need to buy 70 merinos to sustain the merino flock. Your wether lambs would be slower growing and worth less but the ewe portion are very valuable. In this flock all the ewes would be heterozygous.

There are those who say I never want another merino on the place. In this case the option is use a high wool value ram such as a meat merino to 400 of the Multimeat ewes to produce the 200 replacement ewes. The replacements would then be Multimeat merino with a 25-26 micron fleece rather than the 31-32 micron of the straight Multimeat. So 600 would still be mated to Terminals and 400 to the meat merino. We hope that we will be able to get our Multimeats down to 27 u and therefore the flock micron could be about 26-27 u. All of the ewes in this flock would carry the gene and  $\frac{1}{4}$  would be homozygous. The merino used would have to be 20 u or less to achieve a 26-27 u crossbred.

	North Sydney	South Melbourne	West Fremantle
<b>Ind.</b>	1657▲ +1	1511▲ +1	1614▼ -7
<b>16.5</b>	2409 +46	2348 <sub>n</sub> +45	
<b>17</b>	2338 +37	2284 <sub>n</sub> +4	
<b>17.5</b>	2274 +13	2248 +17	
<b>18</b>	2161 +5	2144 +5	2103 <sub>n</sub> +20
<b>18.5</b>	2018 +4	2021 +14	1995 <sub>n</sub> +8
<b>19</b>	1885 -1	1888 +24	1888 +2
<b>19.5</b>	1769 -18	1779 +6	1774 -7
<b>20</b>	1657 -24	1645 -22	1638 -25
<b>21</b>	1553 -36	1550 -32	1534 -28
<b>22</b>	1476 <sub>n</sub>	1481 -21	1481 <sub>n</sub> -27
<b>23</b>		1437 <sub>n</sub> -37	
<b>24</b>		1345 <sub>n</sub>	
<b>25</b>		1175 <sub>n</sub> -9	
<b>26</b>	1043 -10	1049 <sub>n</sub> -15	
<b>28</b>	726 -27	741 -30	
<b>30</b>	521 -5	514 -4	
<b>32</b>		401 <sub>n</sub> -2	
<b>MC</b>	1206 +18	1209 <sub>n</sub> +37	1203 <sub>n</sub> +24

If we can achieve this we can just about double the wool value. Our ultimate goal is to have a crossbred ewe weaning 160% with 25 u wool and this is achievable.

If you are just interested in pure lamb production and not concerned about wool then your best option is to take your 200 replacements from your terminal cross lambs. This in time will increase ewe size but not extremely as the ewe flock will always be half Multimeat. In this flock all the ewes will carry the gene and ¼ of the ewes will be homozygous.

I know a number of you are using another composite ram in the mix. I don't think this a good idea . It certainly will not help wool value and most composite maternal have a lot of terminal in them so you may as well take your replacements from your own terminal cross lambs which are half maternal

Reading the press it seems that all our problems will be fixed by using electronic identification (Eid) . Eid will be of little benefit to the commercial lamb producer. The reason for this is that the top performing ewes in a lamb flock are those that rear twins. The heritability and repeatability of twinning is very low. This means that the top performing ewes this year are not likely to be in subsequent years in non Multimeat flocks. This coupled with the fact that the only way growth can be selected for meaningfully is taking birth dates which means that later lambing ewes will be unfairly selected against. The commercial producer needs to choose a stud breeder who is supplying rams which produce high lambing percentage daughters , good wool value and are of moderate size.

If you want to do away with shearing crutching etc then we will soon have multiple bearing shedding ewes for you.

If you would just like to buy Multimeat merinos please contact me and we will arrange for them to be bred for you if there is enough interest.

Happy to discuss these ideas with you at anytime.

Colin