

Anderson Rams

Poll Merino

The important details first.

Ram Sale Wednesday 21st October, 1pm on farm and on Auctions Plus, 1pm

Inspection day Wednesday 7th October 10am-12pm

Approximately 150 rams on offer (2019 drop)

We will be classing up sale rams this coming week and will have the catalogue out soon after with more details on the sale rams and private selection flock rams.

Our stud flock is increasing with ET, AI, a high natural lambing percentage and lamb survival so we are easily able to increase the number of rams for sale at an even higher standard.

Transport for rams interstate is unaffected by the border restrictions that apply to people.



On the Farm

Last week we marked 112% lambs to ewes mated in the stud component and 108% in the overall flock. Lamb survival was as high as 95% in singles and 174% in twins.

This result amazes me given that the ewes were mated on the dregs of dams, and spent most of their pregnancy drinking puddles that were muddy, saline or thick with algae. It was a tough year after a run of dry years and the robustness and resilience of Anderson merinos, bred into them over decades, really shines when the going gets tough. They are as fertile and productive as if it was a normal season.

The young rams are looking great! It's been a challenging year for them too, born into a very dry year with tight feed and diminishing water supplies and this year has been exactly the same to date.

Comments like these I have heard repeatedly over the years:

"The rams came back from the ewes looking fit and round as if they hadn't worked at all. But we marked over 100% lambs!"

“Beautiful chunky lambs!”

“We mothered these beauties in the yards yesterday and I must say, they are crackers! They are plain, meaty and awfully energetic!”

I am often asked how we managed to breed such resilience and robustness to remain productive despite tough conditions. Well, about 55 years ago we started measuring fleece weights, fleece characteristics and body weights in both ewe and ram progeny. The flock was run at high stocking rates and we simply culled any ewes that did not maintain condition regardless of how much wool they cut. Eye muscle scanning became available in the early 2000's and ASBVs followed soon after, enabling us to select sheep with better eye muscle and fat a bit more scientifically. Worm resistance was bred into them at the same time which is a huge contributor to that great doing-ability, particularly in wetter areas.

Ewe Lamb Lambing

This year we mated ewe lambs for the first time, out of curiosity to see what was possible.

Under our current management system, weaners mostly maintain body weight from weaning in November over summer on dry feed, and then grow out in winter/spring on green grass. Anderson genetics have top ranking post weaning weight ASBVs so to achieve the growth rates they are capable of, the trial group went onto lick feeders in December. They were mated at 6.5-7.5 months of age which is a month earlier than recommended but this put their lambing in line with all other ewes.



They were not managed as well as they should have been however the best mob averaged 45kg at mating and achieved 57% lambs/ewes mated. The lambs look fantastic! Lamb survival was 95% and clearly their mothering ability and lactation is as good as the mature ewes despite the ewe lambs being only 12 months old at lambing. We have long scored lambing ewes for temperament and it is good to see that flow through into ewe lambs. In addition, their lambs have the most up-to-date genetics for fast early growth, fat and muscle which allows them to be reared without any maternal age penalty.

Given our July/August lambing time and a very short dry spring it was a costly exercise to mate ewe lambs, but great to know that our lambs reach puberty early and can successfully mother their lambs. It's an excellent tool for rapidly increasing the flock.

Proven Outstanding Sires

I am really rather proud of how all our rams have performed in Sire Evaluations across the country and in NZ.

ANDERSON 160729 excelled in just about everything at Merinolink at Boorowa! Trait leader for all the indexes!

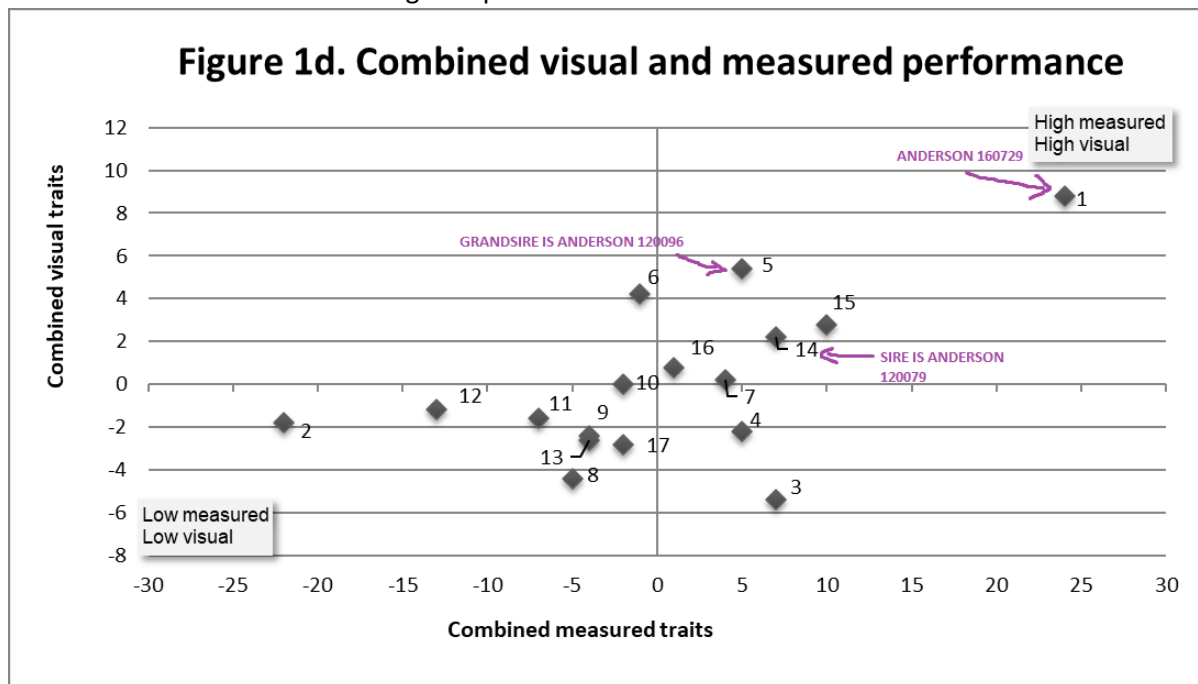
Table 2. AMSEA Index Values and Classer's Grade

The index values reported are based on measured traits Flock Breeding Value (FBV) performance with varying emphasis on fleece weight, fibre diameter, body weight, staple strength and worm egg count. See 'Index Options' (page 14) for more information on the indexes presented in the table below.

The highest performing sires for each trait (trait leaders) are highlighted by shading. Each sire is listed for Classer's Visual Grade and the same four indexes are reported at all site evaluations.

Ram code	Breeders flock, Ram number	Sire DNA Horn/ Poll	No of Progeny	AMSEA Indexes values				Classer's Grade	
				Dual Purpose	Merino Production	Fibre Production	Wool Production	Tops % (dev)	Culls % (dev)
				Plus	Plus	Plus	Plus	P ^A	P
1	Anderson Poll, 160729	PH	30	129	125	116	124	29	-15
2	Bogo, 170018	PP	36	76	78	85	78	-5	4
3	Brooklyn, 170112	PH	35	103	112	109	107	-5	22
4	Bundilla Poll, 150009	PP	44	123	100	97	105	-6	5
5	Curlew, 170116	PH	37	114	100	89	105	8	-19
6	DT Kenilworth, H17314	PH	41	88	100	106	99	7	-14
7	GRASS, 161406	PH	48	114	107	107	104	-4	-5
8	Grassy Creek Poll, 160253	PP	40	101	92	95	95	-5	17
9	Greendale, 170002	PH	50	82	97	101	96	-3	9
10	Grogansworth, 170402	PH	41	101	97	94	98	-2	-2
11	Kambah Poll, 626033	PP	41	98	90	88	93	-11	-3
12*	Langdene, 140700	HH	33	78	84	88	87	-2	4
13	One Oak Poll, R15050	PH	49	79	93	96	96	-8	5
14*	Petali Poll, 150697	PP	49	112	113	116	107	-3	-14
15	Pooginook Poll, 161153	PH	39	112	105	102	110	12	-2
16	Wattle Dale, 170632	PH	36	101	100	99	101	5	1
17*	Yarrowonga, 170193	HH	37	89	105	111	98	-7	7
Average performance			40	100	100	100	100	16	27

and blitzed the field in the classing of tops and culls.



https://merinosuperiorsires.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2019-Drop-Boorowa_ML-Sire-Evaluation_PW-WEC_01-07-2020_updated-003_sml.pdf for the full report.



Anderson 160729. From what I have heard he is making a mark in the Central Progeny test in NZ too.

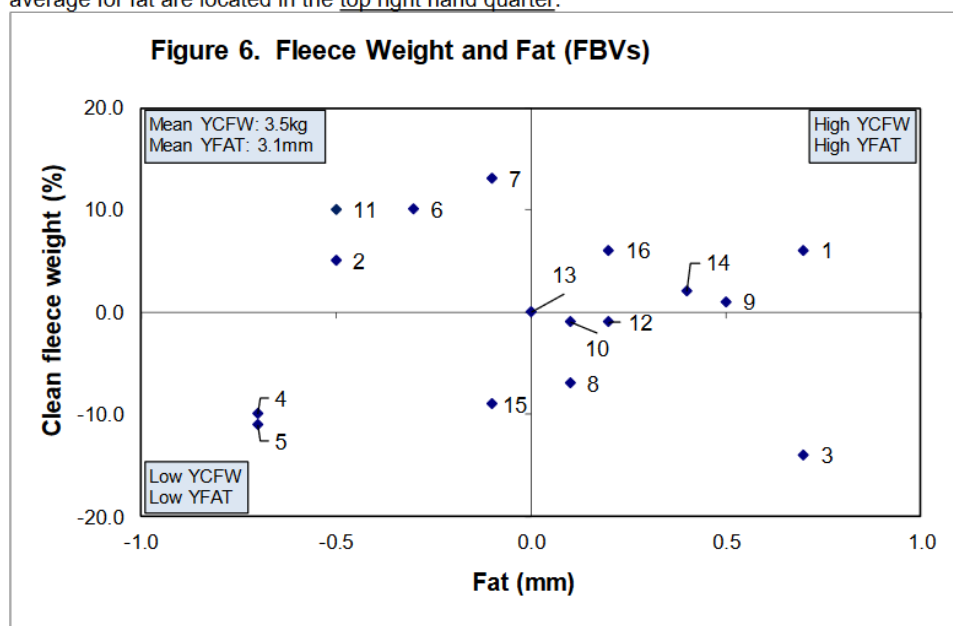
ANDERSON 160390 has likewise done exceptionally well in the South Australian Sire Evaluation at Lameroo proving that a ram can have it all- top carcass traits, body weights, clean fleece weight as well as being a trait leader for absence of body wrinkle and low % of culls.

Prominent sheep classifier Bill Walker's analysis of the Sire Evaluation results noted: "the Anderson 160390 progeny result was outstanding when CFW, EMD & FAT and that important balance was taken into account...check out these honky numbers: YWT 11.9, YEMD 3.1, YFAT 1.6, YCFW 25, EBWR -0.9, MP+ 155 yet DP+ 199 due excellent carcass trait measurement. ANDERSON 160390 is No. 1 on the graph below.

Summary Graphs

Figure 6. Fleece Weight and Fat (FBVs)

The graph describes performance for clean fleece weight (CFW) on the side axis and fat depth (FAT) on the bottom axis. Sires that are above average for clean fleece weight and above average for fat are located in the top right hand quarter.



https://merinosuperiorsires.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/SA-2019-Drop-Yearling-Assessment-Sire-Evaluation-Site-Report-FINAL_sml-1.pdf for the full report



ANDERSON 160390 exhibits the huge body depth associated with Anderson Rams.

Not mulesed- not an issue

This is our second year of not mulesing any lambs (the third year for not mulesing in the stud) and I'm pleased to report that it has not been a problem at all. Lambs get Clik once at marking and have not required any further fly treatments once past weaning. The main management change for us has been crutching 6 weeks earlier which is working well.

We have been breeding for plain bodied easy-care sheep with low worms and low dags and culling for fly strike and fleece faults for decades so mulesing has become unnecessary.

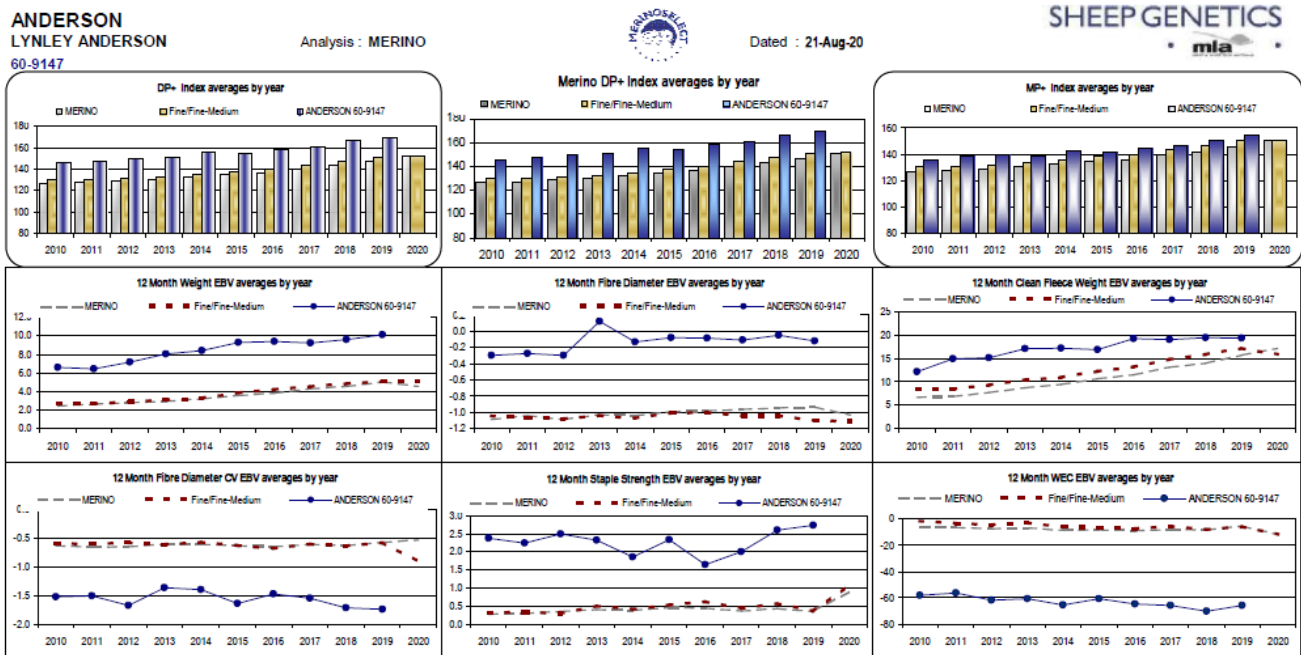
If anyone is considering ceasing mulesing and wants to chat about it, I'm happy to talk it over and share what we have learned along the way.



One year old ewes in September with a noticeable absence of dags.

Genetic graph

Our genetic graphs show we are still 'Leading the Breeding'.



Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss our breeding direction or your ram requirements. Or if you just want to talk all things sheep!

Cheers,

Lynley

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