

Riverina Merino Sires Prove to be the Best.

The Riverina Merino line-up of outstanding sires again took their rightful place in the winner's circle in the newly released 2001 drop Second Shearing test results from the Riverina Falkiner Research Station's Central Test Sire Evaluation program.

The stringently controlled tests conducted on site at the Field Station at Conargo prove that the Riverina Merino studs are committed to continual and ongoing improvement and progressive genetic gain. Progeny of the sires in the program are evaluated at 10 months, (10 month wool growth), 16 months (6 month wool growth) and finally at 28 months of age (12 month wool growth) as their final and full adult assessment.

The Riverina Stud Merino breeders are an industry group of 31 dedicated studs (see full contact list on the back page of this newsletter) who have proven their commitment to progressive performance. Several of the group have put their sires against a long time medium wool National Link Sire. Riverina studs dominating the results include Wanganella, The Yanko, One Oak No 2, One Oak Poll, Poll Boonoke and Mungadal.

In addition to testing against a National Link Sire, the tests provide a comparison amongst sires entered at other test sites, including the Macquarie, Monaro, Yardstick (WA), Struan (SA) and Turretfield (SA) sites. The carefully regulated tests cover the

expected performance of progeny of each sire, the fleece weights measured as percentage in greasy and clean, average fibre diameter, body weight percentage and more. The tests also measure fleece rot scores and overall yield. Additionally, classers grade all progeny into streams based on their visual assessment of all traits. Test results show conformation and wool quality, as well as overall classification of progeny with Tops and Flock Plus grades meaning tops in the field.

Riverina Merino's stud member Wanganella is leading the Second Shearing assessments showing the greatest fleece weights, a marked lowering of micron, and the percentage of progeny classed as Tops amongst the highest in the test group. Other Riverina Studs are performing strongly with Mungadal, One Oak No 2, One Oak Poll and Poll Boonoke achieving an average or above fleece weight result while their average micron ranges from 5-12% below that of the one time link sire.

Wool producers who want to benefit from the Riverina Merino's power in terms of genetic improvement as demonstrated by the 2001 drop First and Second stage results can see the fibre, frame and fertility winning trifecta traits at this year's Riverina Stud Merino Field Day to be held at Shear Outback, The Australian Shearers' Hall of Fame, on September 12.

Are you under 23 and know a SCUR from a SCRAG and a BRITCH from a BRISKET?

You could be the 2003 WESFARMERS LANDMARK PENNEFATHER JUNIOR JUDGE and be on your way to New Zealand!

Who were the Pennefathers?

In the middle of the nineteenth century four men created the profession of sheep classing. They were Thomas and Jonathon Shaw, John Ryrie Graham and JC Darke. These men became legends in their own time and held enormous authority regarding anything to do with wool, sheep, breeding and the pastoral industry in general.

Hugh Claude Pennefather (known as 'HCP') was the natural successor to the Shaws. He was appointed sheepclasser for all the Australian Estates properties in 1893. By the 1920's he was handling almost 300,000 sheep and selecting 12,000 rams a year, which required him to travel over 64,000 kilometres by way of a light buggy and ponies!

HCP's influence within the industry was considerable and he passed on his work to two of his sons who continued the name and reputation within the industry. The breaking up the great pastoral companies and dispersal of their immense flocks in the 1970's has changed the industry's structure so as to ensure that no sheepclasser of modern times has been, nor ever will be, in a position to influence the quality of Australia's sheep as did the Shaws, JC Darke and the Pennefather family.

If you're under 23, you could win industry accolades and big prizes by entering the Wesfarmers Landmark Pennefather Trophy for the Best Junior Judge at the 2003 Riverina Stud Merino Field Day, September 12. First Prize is an exciting and educational three week tour of leading New Zealand Merino Studs.

For more information, contact Wendy Spencer, on (02) 6959 1180 or email: wendy@riverinamerino.com.au and check out www.riverinamerino.com.au

A Winning Trifecta. Fibre. Frame. Fertility.