

# New tools to evaluate shedding sheep on way

By **HAMISH CHANDLER**, Sheep Genetics Australia Lambplan project officer

It is undeniable that the cleanskin breeds are currently the fastest growing breed group in the country with strong sales being reported in both the commercial and seedstock sectors.

This growth is being driven by the bullish prime lamb market and what has been a lacklustre wool market.

Cleanskin rams must be selected on their own merits because there is more variation within breeds than between breeds. It is especially important when breeds are going through an expansion phase as the high demand means that lower quality animals are kept for breeding.

In response to this, SGA has four initiatives aimed at improving the adoption of LAMBPLAN as a genetic evaluation tool among cleanskin breeders including:

- A try-before-you-buy program that allows stud breeders to participate in the LAMBPLAN analysis free of charge.
- Development of the Self Replacing Carcase \$ index that combines breeding values for growth, carcase and fertility into a single figure.
- Establishment of a Dorper Information Nucleus Flock to collect data from Dorper content animals for research and development work.
- A research project to collect the

## Key points

- Self Replacing Carcase \$ index available
- Dorper nucleus flock established in WA
- New shedding breeding value in development

information required to calculate a Shedding Breeding Value for cleanskin animals.

The try-before-you-buy program was launched late year and allows breeders to submit data into the LAMBPLAN analysis without the need to pay the normal subscription and per animal fees. Once the flock's data has been analysed, SGA staff will go through the results with the breeder. If the breeder wishes to continue as a full LAMBPLAN member they can move onto the normal fee schedule, alternatively their data can be removed from file if they do not wish to continue participating.

The SRC\$ index offers a balanced approach to breeding cleanskin animals. As growth rate and fertility are the two traits that have the biggest impact on the profitability of a self-replacing prime lamb flock, these two traits have a large emphasis in this index. In addition to increasing growth and fertility the index also aims to limit any gains in birth-weight, improve eye muscle depth and improve worm resistance.

The Dorper Information Nucleus Flock has been established in

Western Australia and is currently evaluating the progeny of 10 Dorper sires for the full range of growth, carcase and survival traits. This flock is also using a couple of sires of other breeds that have been used at other Sheep CRC Information Nucleus Flock sites. This will provide the links that are needed to have the information collected at this site analysed alongside animals of other breeds run at the other sites.

SGA is developing a system of scoring the wool shedding characteristics of cleanskin breeds as part of a research project to allow the development of a shedding breeding value. This will allow producers to accelerate progress towards breeding shedding sheep in cross-breeding and grading-up programs, and will also allow producers running pure-bred animals to more easily modify the degree of shedding in animals to match their environment.

Shedding is influenced by a number of factors such as time of year and level of nutrition as well as the genes that the animal carries. These factors can make it difficult to assess how well an animal will shed in a different environment or under different management conditions. Having a shedding breeding value would mean that an animal's performance in different environments was more predictable.

- Details: Sheep Genetics Australia on 02 6773 2948.

## InShort

**Cleanskin workshop:** The first cost-of-production workshop for producers of cleanskin and fleece-shedding sheep will be held with the Cleanskin Sheep Symposium on Wednesday, February 9, at Adelaide Showground. Participants at the Managing Your Profit Drivers workshop will learn the CoP for their own sheepmeat enterprise; what CoP is and how it can be a useful indicator of possible opportunities to improve farm performance and profitability; how to calculate CoP using the Meat & Livestock Australia calculator; how to identify opportunities for improvements on-farm; and how to use the CoP calculator to plan for improvements. The workshop involves: Day 1 - Introduction to CoP, how it is calculated, its benefit and value, some case studies and where to get the data at home. After the workshop,

participants collect their own data and send to Holmes Sackett for calculation, analysis and benchmarking. Day 2 - overview of the CoP (report) and specific, tailored advice for each farm. (Details of day 2 are to be arranged on day 1). The workshop will cost participants \$110 a property, including GST, and is supported by Making More from Sheep, a joint initiative of Australian Wool Innovation and MLA and local seedstock producers, Genelink Meatmasters, KD White Dorper and Composites, and Byarlea Wiltshire Horn and Poll Wiltshire, which are each showing their support for industry development by offering a \$500 ram/livestock private-selection purchase voucher for workshop participants. It will be drawn at the symposium the following day.

- Details: [www.cleanskinsheep.com.au](http://www.cleanskinsheep.com.au) or 08 8210 5230.

See us at the Cleanskin Sheep Symposium  
February 10 & 11, Adelaide Showground

## Wiltshire Horn Sheep

the ORIGINAL meat sheep

Terminal Sires      Composite Flocks  
Maternal Lines      Meat Production



Stable Genetics • Well Muscled • Fertile & Hardy  
• Large Frame • Wool Shedding - No Mulesing,  
Crutching or Shearing



Australian Wiltshire Horn  
Sheepbreeders Association

Pure Wiltshire...Nothing Added!

Visit our web site for more information.

[www.wiltshirehorn.asn.au](http://www.wiltshirehorn.asn.au)



Stud and Commercial Sheep Available

Brad and Tanya Edson

P: 08 8756 5067

E: [edson6@bigpond.com](mailto:edson6@bigpond.com)

## Produce Heavy Prime Lamb without the costs of wool

Wiltipolls completely shed their fleece annually

- No need to shear, crutch or mules
- Resistant to fly and lice, no chemical treatment needed
- Thrive in both wet & dry conditions
- Easy on fences
- Grass seed resistant
- Both Flock and Registered ewes and rams available from October/November 2011

Kars Pastoral Company



[www.wiltipoll.com.au](http://www.wiltipoll.com.au)

For further information please contact

Annie Hughes:

Martindale, PO Box 620 Strathalbyn SA 5255

Ph (08) 8536 2890 Fax (08) 8536 2891

Email: [wiltipoll@bigpond.com](mailto:wiltipoll@bigpond.com)

1280139S/27/1/11



The  
Australian Wiltipoll

Come and see our sheep at the  
2011 Cleanskin Symposium

**MURANA**  
White Dorper & Wiltipoll Stud  
Quality Stud and Composite Rams now available  
Finniss SA  
Mob: 0417 861 256  
[muranapastoral.com.au](http://muranapastoral.com.au)  
Brucellosis accredited  
OJD status: MN 1  
1280105S/27/1/11

**NONNING WHITE DORPERS**  
Stud and Commercial on property sale  
Kilmory Naracoorte SE  
Friday 23rd September 2011  
Angus McTaggart: 08 8648 1814  
Callum Sommerville: 0438 110 281  
1280130S/27/1/11

**K.D. WHITE DORPERS & COMPOSITES**  
@ BORDERTOWN  
Proud sponsor of Cleanskin COP Workshop  
DISPLAYING EWES & RAMS  
SELLING 3 EWES AT AUCTION  
Kym Staude 0412 070 971  
[www.kdsheepstuds.com.au](http://www.kdsheepstuds.com.au)  
1280142S/27/1/11

**BYARLEA**  
Wiltshire Horn & Poll Wiltshire Sheep  
The Ultimate Wool Shedding Prime Lamb Breed  
Byarlea Wiltshire Horn Sheep Stud is the largest in Australia running over 2000 stud and commercial ewes.  
Byarlea's commercial flock produces top Quality prime lambs. There is no shearing, no crutching, no mulesing and no fly problems.  
SEE US AT THE CLEANSKIN SYMPOSIUM  
Contact Brian and Jill Wilson  
Phone/Fax 08 8636 6219 Mobile: 0427 366 219  
Email: [bjwilson@westnet.com.au](mailto:bjwilson@westnet.com.au)  
[www.wiltshirehornsheepstud.com](http://www.wiltshirehornsheepstud.com) [www.pollwiltshire.com.au](http://www.pollwiltshire.com.au)  
1280106S/27/1/11

**DORPER SHEEP SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA INC.**  
For information on Dorpers and White Dorpers please see us at Wayville on the 10/11th Feb 2011, visit the Dorper Sheep Society of Australia at:  
[www.dorper.com.au](http://www.dorper.com.au)  
Or call Central Region or Federal representatives:  
Hugh Bygott – 08 8389 3432  
Rochelle Tipple – 0402 083534  
Our Federal Secretariat:  
Alice Schmidt-  
Dorper Sheep Society of Australia Inc.  
ABRI, University of New England  
ARMIDALE NSW 2351 AUSTRALIA  
P: (02) 6773 3805  
E: [dorpereo@abri.une.edu.au](mailto:dorpereo@abri.une.edu.au)  
1280131S/27/1/11