

# GLEN DEVON

## Poll Dorset Prime Lamb Sires



*Glen Devon rams*

### Welcome to our 2017 Newsletter

In sheep breeding we are constantly working towards increased predictability in the breeding potential from the sheep we produce, and we will touch on that in this newsletter. However, it seems all the high-tech equipment in the world, including satellites cannot really improve the predictability in weather outcomes. To say we have seen great variation over the last couple of years would be a huge understatement! Regardless, just like all of you we have to work with what we get and when we get it. Experience in working the same country certainly helps and our family's many decades based at our Two Wells property has given us a strong guide on what we need to do in any given situation.

Dorothea MacKellar's famous poem, "My Country", especially the lines in the 5th verse certainly ring true.

*"Core of my heart, my country!  
Land of the rainbow gold,  
For flood and fire and famine  
She pays us back threefold"*

We will touch on the difficulties and the pasture outcomes inside this newsletter, but this photo might give you an indication!

Rob, Helen, Lachlan & Mileah Hart



### Grain awards

We have been very strong supporters of the Royal Adelaide Show and the huge role it plays in displaying agricultural excellence, but especially in bringing some awareness to a large urban population who have very limited knowledge of agriculture and the issues we producers face daily.

In the last few years we have entered grain as well as Poll Dorsets as it is an important part of our total farm program. Please excuse us for expressing a bit of pride in saying we were delighted to win a couple of significant grain awards at the 2016 Adelaide Royal.

Our wins were highlighted by these awards below.

We won the champion feed Barley award which was great in itself, but we also gained the champion Canola from rainfall areas under 400mm. This entry then went on to be the overall champion oilseed entry!

What has this got to do with breeding rams for the prime lamb industry you might ask? Well not much, other than setting the standards we aspire to, whatever we are producing.



### Key Glen Devon Dates 2017

**Poll Dorset Judging Adelaide Royal Show** Saturday September 2nd - from 9am

**Elite RAS ram sale - 2 Glen Devon rams on offer** Sunday September 3rd - 2pm

**Glen Devon annual on-property ram sale** Monday September 18th - 1pm

**Inspection from 11am** Offering **100** rams including **10** specially selected stud rams

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2016 was a wet year!

We experienced a good 2015 overall, but the November ‘Pinery’ fire saw us lose 150ha of wheat on our Mallala block to put a disappointing mark on that record. Roll on to 2016 and the taps opened a little later than hoped but from there it hardly seemed to stop producing one of our wettest years on record.

The ground was very damp at our sale time last year for those who remember, but from there it just got wetter, culminating in flooding at the end of the month. The photo on the front page is of the girls in the water on the road leading to Glen Devon. This photo also shows the extent of water from the overflowing Light River. It is the largest flood Rob has experienced in his lifetime, with water literally at the back door.



Caltrop was brought to two paddocks by the flood, so another little problem then needed addressing! However, as the saying goes, “It’s an ill wind that does no good.” The water didn’t hang around for long and the beneficiary was our cropping results. Although harvest started 3 weeks late and was a long drawn out affair, with the header also getting bogged at one stage, it was worth waiting for the results. We doubled our normal average yield with the Canola, the Barley yielded up to 6.2 tonnes/hectare, while the Faba Beans yielded 4 tonnes/hectare: our best yields ever and the quality was high. We weren’t alone and the resultant big harvest across the country saw large supplies and prices down.



It was a big spring feed year as the first photo above shows with our hay conservation, while the other two are shots during our late but record harvest.

We had a further 75mm after Christmas which germinated every summer weed known to mankind we think, so the spraying budget had to be increased substantially.

Rams this year

We’ve set the scene with the large spring feed description, so the big beneficiary was our sheep. There is nothing quite like plentiful high quality paddock feed for growing lambs out to their genetic potential. Thus our 2016 drop Poll Dorset rams did extremely well through their earlier growth period.



We’d like to mention half a dozen in particular to highlight just what we are aiming to breed at Glen Devon.

Tag	Sire	Pwwt	Pfat	Pemd	C+	LMY	IMF	Yld	SF5
160119	HF130497	13.91	-0.32	2.16	195	3.00	-0.20	1.70	2.70
160125	HF130497	13.86	-0.33	2.11	195	2.95	-0.20	1.77	2.65
160143	D130103	14.09	-0.48	1.82	194	3.50	-0.60	1.59	6.01
160158	D130103	15.68	-0.67	1.36	198	3.80	-0.60	1.50	6.44
160028	GD130030	14.02	-0.81	1.74	194	2.80	-0.50	1.51	3.78
160045	UP100082	12.84	-1.00	1.62	189	3.40	-0.40	1.25	2.98

These show the high level of balanced figures we have been consistently aiming at and patiently achieving without sacrificing our outstanding phenotype; frame, maturity pattern, structural excellence, easy care shape, constitution and fertility for starters. It takes careful selection over generations to maintain these qualities and management advantages while seeking improvement in EBV traits such as those above. To have these objective EBVs available is fantastic to identify areas that need improvement, but it must be remembered they are extra advantageous information and selection tools, not replacements for good phenotype and management points. They assist when used properly but if used unwisely they can create as many issues as they solve.

Generally, people tend to be “plungers”. For example, if a 2.16 eye muscle depth (as on 160119) is good, there is a tendency to think a +4.32 would be twice as good. That indicates more muscle, which in turn would increase lean meat yield (LMY), both arguably worthy selection pursuits but there are some other outcomes that would occur due to correlations. Shorter bone length is very strongly correlated with increased muscling. Thus the progeny would be smaller (dumplier) and ultimately this will lead to wider shoulders, shorter necks, smaller pelvic area, increased lambing problems and lower lambing percentages. Also there is a negative correlation between lean meat yield and lamb eating quality. Intramuscular fat (IMF) and Shear Force (SF5) figures need to be used to improve eating quality, thus these and other carcase traits need to be taken into account simultaneously in a balanced selection program. Likewise a Carcase Plus index (C+) is a guide taking into consideration a combination of several EBV traits, but the question needs to be asked, “Is an animal with a 220C+ index better than one with 190?” If everything else that matters is similar, arguably the answer would be “Yes”, but that is rarely if ever the case. Thus we will be carefully using the EBV information and aiming to improve select desirable traits but not at the expense of other desirable attributes. We have undertaken more DNA and Genomics testing so that will give improved accuracies but we are progressing along the path cautiously. Worm Resistance, (FEC) is a desirable attribute, but at this stage there is little base with very few testing, thus figures are basically too theoretical in most cases to be of use beyond a guideline. Likewise a lot of emphasis is being put on birthweight EBVs by many in selections, but we ask for what sound reason? A small birthweight puts the lamb at more risk to the elements, just as an extremely heavy one leads to increased lambing difficulties. The EBV is highly speculative as most don’t weigh accurately at birth, plus it is of very low heritability as so many

environmental issues play a greater part in actual birthweight. In our 2017 lambing we only assisted one ewe at birth from just under 400 ewes! We are pretty happy with that. An observation between seasons is a 5% change in ewe bodyweight makes a big difference in ovulation and conception rates at mating.

Sires

We are very pleased with the sire group we have at our disposal and used to produce 2017 sale rams. **Derrynock 130103** and **150014** have improved our Lambplan figures in several key areas which is what they were selected for. We used the Australian record priced **Hillcroft Farms 130497** in an AI program and he has produced several top rams including the two listed earlier. The figures on our other reliable homebred sire, **GD130030** have just got better every year as more of his progeny have come through the system. New sires for our future with 2017 drop lambs on the ground include **Leenala 150007**. He is bred virtually the same as their 2016 sale topper at \$10,000 and produced an 85 to 90% conception rate. **Kentish Downs 150467** is an outcross sire for us and has blended well. He is very clean pointed and has top Lambplan figures. We have used one of GD130030’s sons, **GD150229** that has a very low SF5 rating of 1.97 and also used 160119 in our mating program for the 2017 lambing.

In the table below the 4 main sires of this year’s sale rams are listed first followed by the younger 2017 sires.

Sire	Pwwt	Pfat	Pemd	C+
Derrynock 130103	15.1	-0.9	1.5	198
Derrynock 150014	15.5	-1.1	1.7	201
Glen Devon 130030	15.3	-0.95	1.25	196
Glen Devon 140387	13.8	-0.98	1.8	194
Leenala 150007	15.7	-0.7	1.7	200
Kentish Downs 150467	16.0	-0.1	2.3	206
Glen Devon 150229	13.1	-0.5	2.2	192

We are confident you will find consistent quality right through this offering, from the first to last pens.

Client success

We sell you rams so that you can produce high quality and profitable prime lambs. It is always pleasing to hear or read about client successes. The following appeared in the Stock Journal on 6th April from the Ouyen 23rd March market report.

*In a yarding that included 8078 lambs, all weights and grades were \$5 to \$10 dearer. Stores sold from \$100 to \$126, trade types from \$118 to \$168, and export crossbred sucker lambs made from \$160 to \$218 (\$6 to \$6.50/kg). Neil Hamilton, Ouyen, topped the market with 83 at \$218, while Geoff Vine, Ouyen, made the second-highest return with 45 at \$213.*



Both Neil & Geoff have been Glen Devon clients for many years and regularly sell at the top of the Ouyen market.

SA Sheep Expo

The second Junior Sheep Expo was held at the Wayville Showgrounds in April and it was another resounding success. This live-in sheep industry event was set up and modelled on the highly successful SA Junior Heifer Expo and introduces our youth aged from 12 to 23 to a wide range of important industry subject matter. The overall senior winner scored a study scholarship to New Zealand, this year being Tess Runting from Victoria. However there were many other awards for participants in all age categories. Its success is built around the strength of the educational program presented, plus the keenness and willingness of the entrants to learn and grasp the opportunities presented. The selfless support from numerous sponsors and industry experts was also very important. Glen Devon was, and will continue to be a proud sponsor and supporter of this event. Our youth is our future!

The two photos show this year’s winner, Tess Runting from Victoria with her trophy and a Poll Dorset ewe, and all the participants and committee in the Adelaide Show Sheep Pavilion.



Vale: Steve DiGiorgio & Toby Lynch

It is with much sadness that on May 22nd we learnt that Stefano (Steve) DiGiorgio passed away. To us Steve was not just a valuable client, but also a great and highly respected friend. His hard work and determination, dedication to breeding quality livestock, enthusiasm for life and love for his family were standout features of this great self-made man! It is a sad loss and our thoughts are extended to Rita and everyone in the family. Toby Lynch from Underbool passed away mid July. While he only rarely attended our actual ram sale in person, he has been a very long term and highly valued client of over 25 years who we also consider a friend, who had pride in the quality lambs he consistently produced. Our condolences to Judy and all of Toby’s family. We feel honoured to have met and known these great rural men and have them consider our stock worthy to enter their breeding programs!



Sale Report

The following is an abbreviated report on our successful 2016 on-property ram sale that appeared in the press.

Outstanding quality at Glen Devon

Those who attended the Hart family’s Glen Devon Poll Dorset ram sale at Two Wells were greeted with a line-up of rams as good as you could hope to see anywhere.



They displayed outstanding growth and muscling and were described by Landmark auctioneer Gordon Wood as having, "shape, growth, length, massive loins and hindquarters and they are wonderfully presented."

There were 27 registered buyers who came from many regions over three states. They competed strongly in the first half of the 100 ram offering, but as orders filled competition dropped off and real value kicked in. This was certainly not a portrayal of the quality that extended right through the draft. Overall 93 rams cleared at auction to a \$2000 top and averaged \$1116, just one dollar away from last year's average.

The sale opened with the offering of 10 specially selected rams. They were in high demand, but by commercial buyers rather than stud breeders.

Just one, GD 15398Tw attracted stud buyer bidding, going for \$2000 to Haydn Lines, Keith for his newly formed 'Benealla' Poll Dorset stud venture. Breed type and balance for both phenotype and genotype were standout features, backed up with good all round Lambplan figures.



Glen Devon co-principal, Lachlan Hart holds the ram purchased for the sale's top price of \$2000 by Haydn Lines, Keith for his new Poll Dorset stud venture. Also pictured is Landmark auctioneer, Gordon Wood.

The other nine of these stud rams sold from \$1500 to \$1800; the ten averaging \$1730.

Three long term Glen Devon supporters shared the \$1800 equal top price for rams going to commercial use.

Steve DiGiorgio, Lucindale and buying through PPH & S's Robin Steen was one of them, for a Derrynock 130103 son, the sire purchased in 2014 for \$14,000. Steve DiGiorgio purchased 12 rams to also be the biggest individual volume buyer, averaging \$1233.



Pictured behind the 12 rams S & R DiGiorgio, Lucindale purchased at a \$1233 average are Landmark auctioneer Gordon Wood; Glen Devon co-principals Lachlan and Rob Hart, Two Wells; purchaser Steve DiGiorgio; and his buying agent Robin Steen, PPH&S, Naracoorte.

Glen Devon has attracted good demand from the Victorian Mallee region for many years. Nineteen rams went that way with BR & C Ouyen agent Rory Singleton picking up 15 for nine different clients, while Neil Hamilton, Landmark Ouyen purchased three for two clients including the \$1700 highest priced one to go to that region.



Glen Devon co-principal, Lachlan Hart is pictured with Victorian Mallee purchasers Neil Hamilton, Landmark Ouyen (3 rams), and Rory Singleton, BR&C Ouyen (15 rams).

NSW buying support was also good with K & A Grazing, Crookwell and buying through AWN leading the way by purchasing six to \$1300 and at an average of \$883.



The Collins family, K & A Grazing, Crookwell headed the NSW buying support at the Glen Devon Poll Dorset ram sale. Family members, Heather & Steven Collins are with Glen Devon's Rob Hart.

Trevor Mudge and Lloyd Mudge, both buying through Landmark Balaklava were strong bidders and were the other two buyers of rams at \$1800. Trevor purchased three at a \$1667 average, while Lloyd purchased five at a \$1600 average.

Joining them in competition at the pointy end of the catalogue was Jim Downer, Mt Beevor through Elders Strathalbyn. He purchased seven top rams from \$1200 to \$1700 and at a \$1557 average. Joe and Michael Trimboli purchased on behalf of Mimited, Orroroo and purchased nine rams at an \$1144 average.

Adam Jamieson, Adalis Pastoral, Snowtown with eight rams at an \$888 average and the Nutt family, Orroroo with six at a \$1300 average rounded out the more prominent buyers.

Agents: Landmark Balaklava



Glen Devon co-principal, Rob Hart is pictured with prominent buyers at the family's ram sale; Jim Downer, Mt Beevor P/L, Strathalbyn (7 rams to \$1700); Ben Mudge, Benelle Farming, Balaklava (5 to \$1000); Lloyd Mudge, Pt Wakefield (5 to \$1800); Trevor Mudge, Pt Wakefield (3 to \$1800); & Adam & Leanne Jamieson, Adalis Pastoral, Snowtown (8 to \$1300).