

# GLEN DEVON

## Poll Dorset Prime Lamb Sires



2015 sale rams (at 7 months)

### Welcome

Without getting too carried away, it is a good time to be involved in the sheep industry. Lamb prices are at high levels, matching the quality being consistently produced in this country nowadays. Prime lamb production is long past being the poor cousin of the wool industry and with hooks' prices well above this time last year it augers well for the future.

Along with the increase in wool prices, the economic incentive to enter, or re-enter sheep production is real and sustained. Enterprise comparison would rank sheep industry returns comparable to cropping. We are

not suggesting people drop cropping and go into sheep. With investments in grain production that is never going to happen, but hopefully more will get the message to diversify and include sheep production in conjunction with cropping. We need more breeding ewes being produced to enable more lambs to be produced.

From our perspective, the sheep industry is good; the lamb industry is good; Poll Dorsets are good and we'd like to think that we have got good ones!

Rob, Helen, Lachlan & Mileah Hart

### Key Glen Devon Dates 2015

**Saturday September 5th - from 9am**

**Poll Dorset Judging Adelaide Royal Show**

**Sunday September 6th - 2:00pm**

**Elite RAS ram sale - 2 Glen Devon rams on offer**

**Monday September 21st**

**Glen Devon annual on-property ram sale - 1pm**

**Inspection from 11am Auction at 1pm**

**Offering 100 rams including 10 specially selected stud rams**

Enquiries welcome:

Robert & Helen Hart (08) 8520 2054 Mobile: 0417 881 899

Lachlan & Mileah Hart (08) 8520 3209 Mobile: 0417 832 964

## Climatic Conditions

The 2015 climate began similar to 2014 when we had substantial rains in January/February which gave the sheep (and the weeds!) a flying start. This year has seen a cold and dry winter. Rains in early August have crops and pastures looking good again. With a half decent spring we should come out of the season in good shape. We trust spring is kind to all of you.

## Congratulations Mark

Those who have watched Adelaide Poll Dorset judging in the last couple of decades will have noted Mark Hill as chief steward. In the Queen's Birthday Honours he was awarded an OAM for outstanding service to agricultural organisations and local community service. We offer our congratulations to Mark for this well-deserved award. Mark is pictured here when he purchased one of our stud rams in 2013 for his Gilbertside stud at Tarlee.



## Family News

Two years ago we included some family news. Feedback was positive so here is another little update.

Eliza is a 'big girl' now, starting school already. Where did those five years go?!

In a changing of the guard, Lachlan is now the full time manager of the total Glen Devon property. He also completed his two year term as President of the Adelaide region of the Australian Poll Dorset Association. Highlights included the branch being in charge of the breed's Lambex presentation, plus the major feature breed showing at Adelaide Royal last year as part of the breed's 60 year celebrations.



*Eliza - Ready for school!*



*Lachlan at the opening of the feature showing with Jim Martin, welcoming exhibitors and spectators and with sponsors Rabobank*

## Cropping News

Cropping is an important part of our overall property plan. We have increased our plantings this year by 285 hectares. This is not a vote of no-confidence in our Poll Dorsets though. The area in question is at Mallala and was an opportunity to expand our business. Being further away, from a general management and animal health biosecurity viewpoint it is unsustainable for our sheep program. Hence we are cropping the total area. At last year's Adelaide Show, as an aside we won third place with our canola grain (pictured below left). With an entry fee of just \$6 compared to \$22 for a sheep, and the only requirement being delivery of the entry sample, it was certainly much easier than sheep requirements. Perhaps we should show more grain and fewer sheep! Seriously, along those lines this year will be our last year of showing ewes, simply because rams are by far our greatest promotion priority. Show success with ewes is always handy, but it is rams our clients primarily come to purchase.



*Our 2014 Adelaide winning pair of ewes is pictured above right*



## Investments for our Future

Last year we bit the bullet. We have had success with a couple of Derrynock rams; ones we did not initially intend to purchase, but our preferred choice went beyond our budget at the time.

On the back of the breeding success of those two rams we went back last year with an increased budget to invest in a new top sire.

Due to climatic fluctuations and the effect these can have on conception rates, we decided an investment in a top physical sire was a better choice. Thus we attended the Derrynock sale and purchased Derrynock 130103, their top ram to suit our program and type. Unfortunately a



few others thought a bit of him too so he cost us \$14,000 which was the top price.

At the time his figures were 0.56 (Bwt) 13.9(Pwwt) -0.5(Pfat) and 2.4(Pemd).

With more performance information on relatives in the system his figures have adjusted to 0.5 (Bwt) 14.6 (Pwt) -1.1 (Pfat) and 1.4 (Pemd).

We put him over all our ewe hoggets as an outcross. His doing ability is exceptional as he looks just the same after mating as when he went in. He has a very good top line,



length and muscling, plus a top sire's head. While his figure adjustments have moved to advantage on a few points and the wrong way on muscling, he is an exceptional sire. Look out for his progeny next year!

*Derrynock 130103 (left)*

## The Here and Now - our Sale Rams

Stud breeding is a game of patience. We adjust our programs in line with commercial market signals, but simply put, you can't make rapid and radical changes. Figures are a selection tool and part of life in the industry now. Generally to get something you have to give something. If you select just for high growth you will ultimately get bigger later maturing sheep. If you select for high muscling that is correlated with shorter bone length so you will ultimately get smaller sheep and less growth. More muscle quickly increases lean meat yield but less overall carcass weight, leaner sheep and lower intramuscular fat percentage. The latter is vital to taste and moisture in cooking for the consumer. Thus any adjustments need to be made more slowly and carefully to ensure that we don't sacrifice the benefits we already have in seeking improvements elsewhere.

Having said that, our muscling figures are improving all the time but in line with our total sheep focus. We have a page in our sale catalogue explaining the important figures and how to interpret them better for your advantage.

Our 2015 sale rams were scanned before the last harvest. We are very pleased with their performance levels and balance of good figures. We'd have to say their ram data at scanning was exceptional and the best we have ever had. Their actual group average scanning figures last October when 5-7 months old were: weight 75kg (up to 91kg), fat 5.5mm and eye muscle depth 40mm (up to 49mm). If you liked what you've purchased at Glen Devon previously, we think you'll really like this lot!

Keep an eye out for these four in particular. GD 140140 is probably the best of our show team while GD 140038, GD 140328 and GD 140387 are the others, the latter being a top young sire prospect.

## Sires Represented

There are 10 sires represented in the 2015 sale rams, but four of these have been the most influential.

Glen Devon 120215 is an exceptionally thickset and highly commercial ram. He was only used by chance when his sire (GD100016) was injured, but he has proven

to be a very successful addition to our sire group. For early turnoff of lambs, look at his progeny.

Valma 110420, Leenala 100161 and Ulandi Park 100082 are the other three that have had a big influence on this drop of rams.

The average ASBV figures of these four rams is:

Birth weight (0.43), Weaning weight (9.4), Post weaning weight (14.1), Pfat (-0.3) and Peye muscle depth (1.8).

Their average Carcase Plus index is 192.8. These are wonderfully balanced elite performance figures and are absolutely ideal for maximising profitability in clients' commercial prime lamb enterprises.

## The Importance of Structure

We have outlined the value of performance, but never overlook structure. At last year's sale Kevin Collins, supported by sons Steven and Ryan purchased strongly through AWN Crookwell, selecting 10 rams. A key component in their decision to keep coming back to Two Wells is not just their performance, but also their soundness. Feet are particularly important to them as they have harsher hill country and rams purchased elsewhere before they discovered Glen Devon rams had many breakdowns.

"Structure has always been important to us. There is an old adage, 'If in doubt, put it out' which is very relevant. Don't buy suspect rams as they can cost you big time."

Besides the cost of lower lambing percentages, (a 20% drop in lambing percentage can reduce profitability by 50%) in the year they break down, the longevity of rams is a big cost consideration.

For one year's service a ram might sire 50 lambs. Many can sire more, some sire less. If the ram cost you \$1000, that is \$20 cost/lamb if you only get one year's service from it. However if he repeats that performance over multiple years it brings your investments per lamb down dramatically. For a two year service (\$10), three years (\$6.67) and four years (\$5). Pretty simple math but so important for increasing profitability.

## Client Successes

Last year we featured a story on long term Ouyen client Neil Hamilton (pictured below). Neil does a magnificent job

with his lamb production and regularly features in the top sales at the



Ouyen Livestock Exchange Markets. In the May 7th sale this year he topped the sale with 56 superb heavyweight lambs at \$193/head, making the pages of the Mallee Ag News on May 14th. This was 'catch up' news as he also topped the sale the week before!

However Neil is not the only one of our many Victorian clients who has had great results with progeny from our Glen Devon rams. Les Stone from Torrita has been buying rams from Glen Devon for about 20 years and says they are consistently good. "I've never had a disappointment in all that time. They are reliably good, stay with the mob and do the job."

Les and his son are primarily croppers but still run 800 Merino breeding ewes (bought in Lines blood). They complement their croppig program and with more legumes grown these days they really perform on those

stubbles and give extra income. They lamb in mid April to mid May, targeting the local sucker market in the 22-25kg carcass weight range and carry through 100-200 onto the stubbles to heavier weights. The Mallee Ag News of February 5th reported that Les (pictured right) sold 64 lambs at \$179.60/head in the January 29th sale, the first sale of the 2015 selling season at Ouyen. This picture from Mallee Ag shows a smiling Les with the lambs he sold.

There were many other clients scattered throughout the top sales quoted as well. Congratulations to all concerned. It is one thing to produce the ram genetics that give the right growth and carcass capabilities, but it is the management and husbandry skills of these producers who bring it to fruition.



## 2014 Sale

\$2300 top price was bid by Chris Skeer, buying through Chay and Merritt, Millicent for Glen Devon 130095, an April 2013 drop son of Valma 110420 that stood fourth in the pairs class at the 2014 Adelaide Royal Feature Breed showing.

Key volume buyers (pictured left) in the Glen Devon sale were Steven, Ryan and Kevin Collins, Crookwell, NSW (30 rams to \$1100). They are pictured with Glen Devon's Lachlan Hart (left)



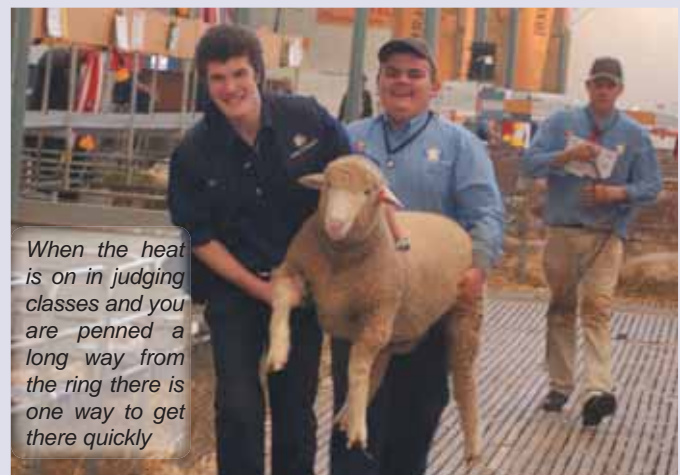
Local area clients (above) at the Glen Devon sale did not miss out on the quality on offer. Pictured above left are Samuel Tiller, Balaklava (one ram), Lloyd Mudge, Pt Wakefield (six rams), Ben Mudge, Pt Wakefield (four rams) and Ben Pym, Avon (three rams).

Pictured left are long term supporters of Glen Devon rams, Jim Downer and son Dougal, Mt Beevor, through Elders Strathalbyn. They purchased four of the best to \$1400 and at a \$1275 average.



## 2014 Adelaide Show

Brenton Lush and Lachlan are pictured left with Glen Devon 130050 which sold for \$4000 to the Lush family, Corriedale Hills stud, Inman Valley.



When the heat is on in judging classes and you are penned a long way from the ring there is one way to get there quickly