

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

Winona Merino and Kelpie Stud

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Breeders of World Class Fine Wool Merinos and Kelpies

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Mudgee Ram Sales - Feb 11th 2002

Winona has three rams that are going to be offered for sale at the impending **Mudgee Merino Ram Show and Sale**. This show and sale will be held at the Mudgee showground over February 10 & 11, 2002.

These particular rams are from the Royal Snowy family and are probably amongst the better rams ever offered for sale at Mudgee. They are two year old and will attract considerable attention from prospective buyers.

Official wool tests from the Australian Wool testing Authority (Nov 15, 2001) shows that their micron diameter are 16.6, 16.8 and 17.2 respectively with appropriate CV and Comfort factor figures.

These are the best as well as the finest micron rams Winona has ever prepared for the Mudgee sales. They are available for inspection prior to the sale at Winona.

Micron Testing by OFDA 2000

This year the big decision was made to micron test stud and flock sheep prior to shearing. It was very much a "toe in the water" exercise. Minor testing was performed last year and as a result of the success of that venture, major testing was carried out.

Much to our pleasure we were able to develop lines of wool accurately classed by micron. Despite a fall in the price of fine wool, considerable extra profit was made and totally justified the cost of the testing. Lines of 17 and 18 micron wool were created that would have previously been classed as 19 micron.

Not only does the extra rewards of the finer wools contribute to profitability, we are now able to monitor the performance of rams and individual sheep as we continue to develop our heavy cutting, large frame fine wool families.

able Dutch kelpies

Enormously pleased with the first Winona Kelpie that has gone to them in Holland, the Goense family have placed an order for a second pup. The current dog is proving invaluable working sheep around the dykes that abound in their area.

This family runs a successful blackfaced Suffolk stud and have found the importation of kelpies made sound business sense. The true value of any working kelpie is often understated or not realised. These two kelpies may not be sleeping in the traditional Australian "burnt out stump kennel" but their role is not that much different to the typical working dog here in Australia. Experts place the ongoing value of a good working dog as the same as a year's wages for a man.



Dutch speaking Australian Winona kelpie hard at work in Holland.

Dog Training Clinic

November 17 was our most recent dog training clinic. Over 25 owner/handlers attended in good weather (for a change) and all the dogs improved over the day. The aim of these days is to assist in the training of working dogs and to correct problems.

It was a successful day and another training day is planned for Autumn 2002.

Rams for Sale

We had outstanding sales last season and as a result there are only a limited number of two year old rams for sale. These are reserved rams (the best of the drop) and are available now.

The average micron diameter is around 17 and these rams are the Winona large framed, heavy cutting type of sheep that the owner principal, Colin Seis, has always bred towards. These rams when introduced to broader micron flocks will produce lambs that are finer in the wool without losing either size or wool weight.

In addition to the limited number of two year old rams, Winona also has a large selection of one year old rams that are now ready and available for sale. These hogget rams exhibit all the qualities of the older rams with many from the exclusive Royal Snowy families.

The price range for the hogget rams starts at \$550 (gst inclusive). There are older rams, but remember, these are the very pick of the drop and they are priced accordingly.

Typical Winona Style Sheep



SRS™ Wool, What is it ?

Much comment has been made in the popular press about SRS type of wool and sheep but few people have an understanding of exactly what it is.

At Winona we interpret of the SRS styles as a continuation of the development started by Dr Jim Watts in 1987. We at Winona employed Dr watts in 1992 as a consultant to improve the Winona sheep and wool and the results have been outstanding in a relatively short time.

Many of the flocks in Australia were heading towards poor wool quality sheep by breeding big sheep to supply a boat trade mutton industry as well as being wool producers. Some stud breeders realised that a change in direction was necessary.

Broadly speaking, SRS types of sheep and wool is a breeding direction that allows wool growers to breed sheep that are big and heavy cutting yet still have very fine micron wools. Traditional methods used to reduce micron are by breeding super fine rams with broader ewes. This will ultimately result in a finer wool but will give a smaller sized animal, a loss of wool weight and variation in sheep and wool type.

The SRS style of sheep produce a wool that is exceptionally soft, long stapled, lustrous with a very defined broad crimp. It is, in fact, a 17+ micron wool resembling a more conventional 20+ micron wool. This is while maintaining sheep size. Before the advent of micron testing nobody had an accurate idea of fibre fineness except for handling softness.

Astute old stud breeders were aware, selecting and maintaining lines that showed these qualities. Even during times when broader wools were in demand. With a more scientific approach, the sheep and wools that were recognised by the early studmasters have now been taken to a higher level using SRS selection principles.

Winona actually had a head start into the SRS styles by already having a line of Royal Snowy merinos that were developed by Sir Walter Merriman during the 1930's. These were commonly regarded as being medium wool sheep although the handling and style qualities of the wool was an indication of something very different.

Whilst having micron value of 16 -19, these SRS style sheep are not the traditional super fine type of the merino. They are big framed animals that commonly cut (at Winona) 9kgs of wool. They are generally plain bodied, however they have extremely long stapled with silky soft crimped wool.

The breeding direction at Winona for the last decade has been quietly pursuing these SRS ideals and the general quality of all the stock has changed significantly during this time. Body frame has increased, wool cut has been maintained and the micron has been reduced by almost three units. This is consistent across the entire flock, not just individual animals.

Now that the development work has been done and rams are available, the wool grower who is being bludgeoned by reduced prices for broader wools now has a choice that does not cost them either size or wool weight. Winona is now selling these sheep into a diverse range of rainfall areas with good results being reported.

All the Winona rams that are being offered for auction at the Mudgee ram sales during February 2002 are of the SRS type as are most of the sheep and rams that are being sold by private sale from Winona.

As a service, Colin Seis is happy to discuss this breeding direction and its outcomes with any interested parties. Colin is also willing to offer a classing and breeding service that could help to minimise the wool growers anguish whilst reducing their flocks overall micron.