



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER – Dawson Bradford WAMMCO Chairman

I recently had the privilege of attending the **Australian Exporter of the Year Awards** held in Broadbeach Qld. WAMMCO had been nominated as a **finalist in the Agribusiness section** of the awards having previously won the Western Australian section of the same awards. Although we were unsuccessful, I believe we benefited tremendously from the exposure and experience. The winner of this section was Cassella Wines from NSW, who went on to become the overall Australian Exporter of the year. The fact that we got as far as we did against some strong competition is another indicator of how far your co-operative has come.

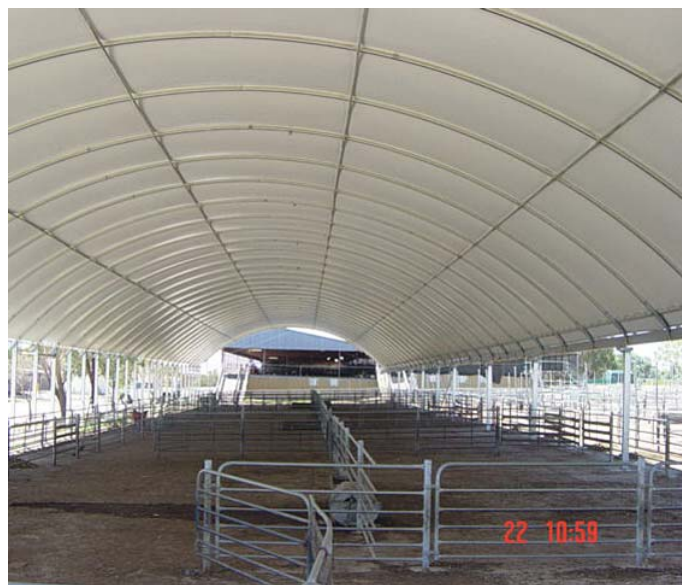
Although next season may seem a long time away I again remind members to consider the **marketing of their lambs**. We will be offering **members exclusive access to processing space** provided they book by 31 August 2005. Although our preferential contract does have a **non-delivery fee**, this is **not imposed** when circumstances beyond the control of the producer prevent delivery. This includes adverse seasonal conditions but does not extend to where a member simply seeks to obtain a better price elsewhere.

Our **VIAscan** unit is **operational at Katanning**, although we are still ironing out a few technical problems. It is hoped we will be able to start providing feedback to producers selling over the scales soon.

Other improvements taking place at Katanning include the **construction of a 1500 pallet cold store**, to remove the necessity of transferring frozen **product to Perth for storage**. It is expected to be commissioned before 30 June 2005. One of the problems the contractor has experienced

is attracting skilled tradesmen – something that is also a real hassle for us at the meatworks.

We have just finished the **construction of a dome shelter** to cover approx. 1/3rd of our outside sheep yards. This will help keep stock cool in summer and dry in winter when they are delivered. Our plan is to cover the remaining yards, hopefully before winter.



Application for shares in the co-operative are steadily increasing indicating forward thinking producers who are not members are realising the **benefits of membership**, both in regard to access to processing space and future rebates.

EDITORIAL – Rob Davidson WAMMCO Supply Alliance Coordinator

Welcome to 2005 and we wish all of our members the very best for the up and coming season.

In this issue of LambLine, Ian Ross (MLA) outlines the VIAscan technology, recently installed in the Katanning plant. After years of simply receiving carcase weight and fatness as your feedback, soon you will be able to know how much red meat your lamb's hindquarter produced!

I also encourage all members and especially those who entered the State Carcase Competition to attend the presentation day at Katanning on 18th February.

Take the time to check your contact details and please return via fax or post with any corrections.

Finally, with my time at WAMMCO expanding to 2.5 days / week, if I can assist any members with any nutritional, genetic, reproduction issues please contact me on 0429380195.

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Disclaimer

WAMMCO International makes no representation as to the accuracy of any information or advice contained in the LambLine newsletter and excludes all liability as a result by any person on such information or advice.



PRODUCER OF THE MONTH - *Ian Brown*

WAMMCO has introduced a new award for Cooperative members that deliver 100+ lambs per booking and have not entered the State Carcase Competition. The Producer of the Month is judged using the State Carcase Competition price grid where producers are rewarded for producing lambs as close to 26.1 – 27.0 kg fat score 2.

WAMMCO's December Producer of the Month winners are Ian Reynolds and his son-in-law Chris Syme of Greyhome Farming Co., Cunderdin. Their draft of 327 Poll Dorset x Merino lambs averaged 27 kg, returned \$93 a head on a WAMMCO contract and achieved a score of -0.24.

Like many producers, Ian and Chris abandoned lamb and wool production to go cropping in the 1980's, although Ian maintained his successful Greyhome Poll Dorset stud for some years into the total cropping era. A lift in the meat market and a refocus by WAMMCO to heavy, prime quality lamb production – as well as an increasing awareness that there were weed control and other legacies associated with total cropping, brought Greyhome back into lamb production. Ian has gradually increased his ewe numbers and will join 2,000 ewes to Poll Dorset rams this season.

"I am still surprised that many farmers questioned the returns from lamb production because of the extra work involved."

"What other industry can offer the money-in-the-bank levels available from lamb at the moment?" states Ian.

Ian stated he was particularly pleased to see WAMMCO become a producer cooperative and shift its focus onto prime lamb marketing. He described WAMMCO's lamb supply contracts as brilliant and highlighted LAMBPLAN as the other key to WA's lamb production success as it had enabled farmers to select the leaner, heavier breeding animals.

Past winners of the Producer of the month award:

September – Chris Squires, Shirlee Downs, Quairading. Chris's line of 106 Poll Dorset x Merino lambs weighed 24.0kg, returned \$96.98 and achieved a score of -0.381.

October - Tom, Donna and Gerard Lynch, Hyden. Their line of 185 Poll Dorset x Merino lambs weighed 23.7 kg, returned \$87.50 per head under a WAMMCO supply contract and achieved a score of -0.457.

November – George Pearce, Merrivale Trust, Kojonup. His line of 163 lambs weighed 25.1kg, returned \$91.98 and achieved a score of -0.290.



Ian Reynolds, Cunderdin

Carcase Competition Awards Day

WAMMCO members are invited to attend the presentation day of the 2004 State Carcase Competition.

Date: Friday 18th February

Time: 2pm

Venue: Katanning Country Club

RSVP: Rob Davidson (0429 380 195)

Mr Sam Sprunger, Marketing Manager, GVFI Switzerland, **will discuss how WAMMCO lamb is distributed into Switzerland as well as future requirements for lamb sales into Europe. Accompanying Sam is Mr Paul Farhni, who is the Purchasing and Sales Manager for major Swiss processing company Bell Group.**

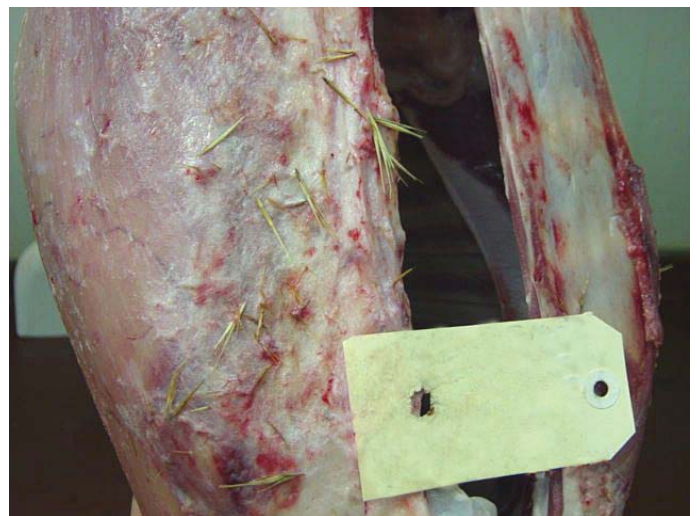
Mr Ian Ross, MLA **will discuss the relationship between estimated breeding values and lean meat yield.**

GRASS SEEDS - Peter Krupa

Producers are once again reminded of the importance of keeping their stock free of grass seeds. Over the past few months, we have witnessed the highest number of grass seed affected lambs at Katanning for some time. Carcasses infested with grass seeds plagues our industry straining an otherwise healthy relationship between producers, agents and processors.

As grass seeds can be managed on-farm, WAMMCO will be discounting seed affected carcasses by 50% of the schedule price .

LambLine volume 1 issue 1 has more on grass seeds.



Shear or sell lambs before seeds harden.

Keep sale sheep in the cleanest paddock available.

Don't allow grasses to mature in holding areas around yards.



CO-OP COMMENT – *Des Griffiths & Damien Giumelli*

“Are they my lambs?” Many producers have been asking this question in recent months, with dressing percentages below average (as low as 38%, average dressing percentage for crossbred lambs is 44%) due to difficult seasonal conditions.

“In most cases we have investigated it has been traced back to the quality of the feed” CEO Des Griffiths said, “although the increase in prime lamb production has brought a number of new producers into the industry and in a few cases it has

been a lack of knowledge”. Members wanting more information can contact Rob Davidson 0429 380 195.

WAMMCO is gearing up for a busy sales period in February with sea freight shipments heading for Europe and the USA for Easter. Main demand continues to be for chilled legs, racks and shortloins. Other products like shoulders, shanks, necks and offcuts are heading to the Middle East and markets in Africa and China. It is worth mentioning though that our capacity for value-added leg production continues to be hampered by limited staff numbers at Katanning.

SIAL TRADE FAIR – *Damien Giumelli, Marketing Manager*

In October 2004, WAMMCO attended the Sial Trade Fair in Paris. The Fair gave us a good opportunity to meet with customers from around the world, all at the one venue. Aside from regular visitors from Europe were customers from USA, Mauritius, West Africa and South East Asia.

This year there was strong interest from the UK and France particularly for chilled lamb legs. Record prices were achieved which were helped by a short supply out of New Zealand due to a late start to the season. Reportedly, New Zealand has fallen short of filling its 2004 EU sheepmeat quota.



MAURITIUS MARKETING VISIT – *Albert Baker, Marketing Executive*

Marketing Executive, Albert Baker recently visited Mauritius to participate in the annual week-long **Australian Food Promotion run by WAMMCO International’s Mauritius distributor Proen Company**, held at the luxurious Maritim Hotels beachside La Maree Restaurant. For seven evenings with the assistance of Chef Brad Ford from the Bluewater Grill Perth, in-house chefs presented tantalizing dishes using product mainly sourced from Western Australia.

In conjunction with the Australian Food Promotion two competitions were held, one being a chef team’s competition and the other a butcher competition. Seventeen teams of 3 young chefs were presented with a box of ingredients and were given ¾ of an hour to present a three-course menu and then a further 3½ hours to prepare the menu for judging. The judging panel consisted of Brad Ford (Bluewater Grill), Albert Baker (WAMMCO) and representatives from Austral Pacific, Harvey Beef, Mondo Butchers and MLA and after many hours of tasting and deliberation decided on the winners.

In the Butcher Competition, **Vince Garreffa from Mondo Butchers demonstrated how to prepare a WAMMCO Lamb Square Cut Shoulder** and then twelve butchers set about the task required. Five of the butchers advised they

had never seen a shoulder prepared in the way required but the eventual winner came from one of these five competitors.

The Australian High Commissioner Mr. Ian McConville attended the awards night and although the winners were extremely happy with their magnificent prizes, all competitors stated that all had won because of the educational experience.



Albert Baker (WAMMCO), Libby McConville, Mr. Ian McConville (Australian High Commissioner), Vanessa Benson-Cassard (Austrade), David Jones (MLA).



VIASCAN – Ian Ross, MLA Coordinator Supply Chain Management Program - Sheep

Processors in all livestock species are searching for more accurate and time efficient measures to determine carcass value. VIAscan® enables a reliable appraisal of carcass suitability and has the ability to provide producers with information that can be used to accelerate gains at all points of the supply chain.

What is VIAscan®?

Developed in Australia by MLA, VIAscan® is owned and marketed by Sastek. VIAscan® is at the forefront of carcass assessment technology and producer feedback systems. VIAscan® is able to provide accurate estimates of carcass yield, essential information regarding carcass performance and will assure that producers are more equitably paid for meeting customer requirements.

How does the VIAscan® Sheep Carcass System work?

The VIAscan® Sheep Carcass System is a fully automated system, which is located at a fixed station on the slaughter floor.

Each system consists of:

- a colour video camera capturing carcasses images at line speed
- a computer that receives, stores and processes these images

A series of linear measurements and reflected light components are processed to determine the proportional dimensions, fat density and fat distribution of each image. These elements are then analysed and computed to determine a VIAscan® predicted Lean Meat Yield (LMY). These computations are based on a series of cutting trials that included a wide representation of breeds, crosses and gender.

VIAscan Terminology

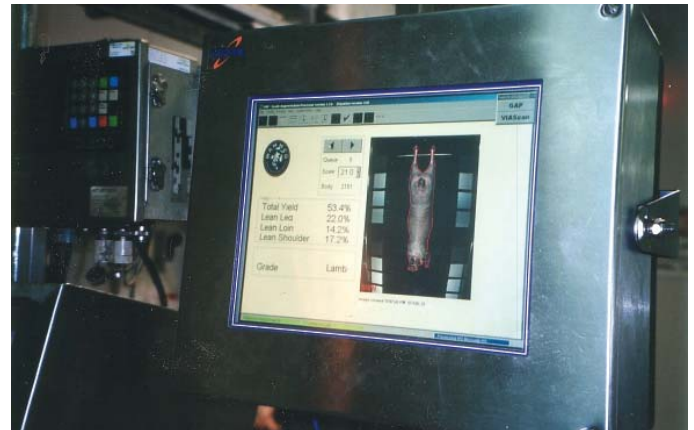
Lean Meat Yield (kg) is the weight of lean meat recovered after the separation of all muscle tissue including 85CL trim (trim which when chemically analysed, is at least 85% lean), using commercial techniques, from the fat and bone components of a carcass.

Lean Meat Yield (%) is Lean Meat Yield (kg) expressed as a percentage of the hot standard carcass weight.



What about Saleable Meat Yield?

Saleable Meat Yield is not used in VIAscan® predictions because it is subject to variability.



WAMMCO CONTACTS

Perth

Phone 9262 0999

Fax 9355 0961

Email info@wammco.com.au

Website www.wammco.com.au

Katanning / Booking Officer (Fiona Clay)

Phone 9821 2000 Fax 9821 2731

Livestock Manager (Peter Krupa)

Mobile 0427 810 613

Livestock Buyers

Wayne Radford Mobile 0429 944 733

Brian Norsworthy Mobile 0427 955 694

Supply Alliance Coordinator (Rob Davidson)

Mobile 0429 380 195