



## WAMMCO SELECT TIPPED TO BRING NEW GAINS

WAMMCO chairman Dawson Bradford hopes premium incentives now available via WAMMCO Select, will encourage producers to further increase the productivity of their lamb enterprises.

"There are indications that further known increases of up to 10 per cent above current productivity levels may be achievable, and WAMMCO believes WAMMCO Select will encourage producers to invest the venture capital needed to allow the benefits to become self generating. Continued gains are essential, or our overheads will eventually beat both producers and processors."

Dawson said it was only a decade ago that a representative from one of the big

food chains forecast to a group of disbelieving lamb breeders in the east, that they would be needing a 30kg lamb.

"At that point we were producing 16-17kg lambs."

He said video imaging technology was developed by MLA and partners in the 1990's and he recognised its potential after to first seeing it in operation during trips to Victoria and New Zealand. At the time, the Alliance cooperative in New Zealand was adapting the new technology to local production - as WAMMCO had done with WAMMCO Select over the past three years, - before installing VIAScan units in all nine of its processing plants.



☐ Data being computer recorded from the VIAScan unit and scales on each individual carcass.

## STRONG START FOR WAMMCO SELECT

WAMMCO Select has not just created a new rewards system for producers of top performing lambs in WA, it is already setting vital new production benchmarks.

Some producers are already receiving benefits of around \$5 per head on more than 50 per cent of the lambs they submit, while currently, 12 per cent of all lambs processed at Katanning are qualifying for the bonus payment.

WAMMCO Select started in mid January,

making WA and Victoria the only two Australian states where payments for lamb could be sold using video-imaging technology.

The system was publicly launched at Katanning early in February, by Murdoch University's Professor Dave Pethick, who was instrumental through MLA in securing the VIAScan technology and working with WAMMCO staff to adapt it to WA conditions.

WAMMCO Chairman Dawson Bradford

said it was just under a decade ago that the cooperative had changed its policy from seasonal, high volume processing, to year round, high value lamb production.

"The response from producers has been a remarkable upgrade in prime lamb genetics, nutrition and management, that enabled WAMMCO to develop and enter valuable supply partnerships in the US and other countries," he said.

"Being able to provide valuable feedback to producers on their high yielding lambs, adds a valuable new breeding tool for them, as well as enabling the cooperative to increase the amount of high value lamb product it can offer to its global customers."

WAMMCO Select offers WAMMCO producer members a bonus with no downside risk.

It applies to carcasses in the 18.1 to 22 kg range, and above 22 kg, where lean meat yields are greater than 33.5 per cent and 32.6 per cent respectively. Yields are measured for the loin and the leg, the two most valuable cuts exported to the US and similar markets.

Producers seeking further details should contact WAMMCO supply development manager Rob Davidson on 0429 380 195

☐ RIGHT: Keeping an eye on the results as the lamb carcasses pass through the VIAScan unit are WAMMCO supply development manager Rob Davidson (left) and plant manager Anthony Bessell, Prof David Pethick, Murdoch University and Cunderdin lamb producer Perry Jasper.

## FIRST WAMMCO SELECT BONUS FOR PINGARING WINNERS

A BONUS payment of \$292.25 from WAMMCO Select boosted the winning returns for WAMMCO's Producers of the Month for January, 2009, the Jensen family of "Uralla" Pingaring.

Previous Producers of the Month for April 2005, the family won the January 2009 award with a line of 124 first cross Merino-Prime SMM lambs averaging 23.4 kg over the scales to return \$101.37 per head.

WAMMCO's Producer of the Month is now determined under a new set of criteria, based on the highest percentage of WAMMCO Select lambs in a consignment of more than 100 crossbred lambs. A further criteria is that the consignment must be heavier than 22 kg hot carcass weight.

The winning 'Uralla' draft included 60 lambs - or 48.4 per cent of the 124 lambs - that qualified for a WAMMCO Select premium and these carcasses attracted an average premium of \$4.87. The cooperative began paying WAMMCO Select bonuses on January 12, just two days before the winning draft was processed.

Top individual lambs in the consignment were valued at \$4.40 per kg on the day to return up to \$119.68 per head.

Craig Jensen said 230mm of rain since October last year had germinated barley

stubble paddocks, enabling lambs to be turned off in peak condition without the cost of handfeeding or feedlotting.

Craig and sister Rachael run the prime lamb enterprise on "Uralla" with father Peter and mother Isla. Brother Rob runs an Angus-based commercial cattle feedlot.

The family continued to use Prime SMM stud rams from their own stud over Nepowie blood ewes, but recently purchased a neighbouring property and bought an extra 1000 mated ewes in a move to increase future prime lamb production.

Craig said the lamb enterprise had been a vital cashflow contributor during 2008/09.

"Until September last year, we had bumper crops, but severe frost cut the yields by well over half."

The family regards the introduction of WAMMCO Select as a positive step by the cooperative and will move not only to steadily expand prime lamb production, but also to target the new premiums.

Craig said low skin prices had resulted in



☐ Peter (left) and Craig Jensen

the 124 lambs in the consignment being shorn about three weeks before delivery to Katanning, with the wool proceeds more than covering shearing costs.

He said the family had continued to accumulate WAMMCO shares, but was currently not using forward contracts because daily schedule prices were attractive and they were able to book their lambs for processing without difficulty.

## FEBRUARY 26 DEADLINE

PRODUCERS now have less than a week to nominate lambs for WAMMCO's \$15,000 State Prime Lamb Carcass Competition, which closes on Thursday, February 26.

Convenor Rob Davidson said entries were already well ahead of last year and the quality and statewide spread of entries was exceptional. He said the winners would be announced at a presentation to be held at Katanning towards the end of March.

"The quality of entries has been consistently high and the margins between top placegetters will be incredibly tight," Rob said.

"We have been impressed by the number of large, high scoring lines of lambs submitted and by the wide representation of breeds,

"WAMMCO is also encouraged by the number of entrants who indicated via our survey that they would be expanding their prime lamb operations, or maintaining a status quo."

Rob said the \$15,000 competition was Australia's richest, made possible with the support of sponsors Elders, Primaries, Ballard Seeds, Milne Agrigroup, Superior Livestock Services, Farm Weekly and Bayer Animal Health Products who had joined the competition as supporters this year.

Producers are reminded that entries must consist of a minimum of 100 crossbred lambs. Rob Davidson's contact number for last minute details, is 0429 380 195.

## APRIL 14 START FOR WAMMCO'S NEW CEO

NEW Zealander Coll MacRury will take over from long-serving WAMMCO chief executive officer, Des Griffiths on April 14.

Mr MacRury is one of New Zealand's most accomplished meat processing administrators, having managed plants for major NZ processors AFFCO NZ Ltd, and Universal Beef Packers Ltd.

WAMMCO chairman Dawson Bradford said Mr MacRury had been at the 'cutting edge' of the meat processing technology that was driving the meat industry. His experience ranged from commissioning or re-commissioning state-of-the-art meat processing plants, to striking strategic marketing alliances with global customers.

The chairman said retiring CEO, Des Griffiths was one of the meat industry's most respected leaders and had been instrumental in developing WAMMCO over the past decade, as one of Australia's most innovative and progressive lamb processing and marketing organisations.