

WAMMCO Info

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WAMMCO International
A DIVISION OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MEAT MARKETING CORPORATION

Second win for Blythswood

BLYTHSWOOD lambs from the Ongerup property of Robert and the late David Hooper, have won the family's second WAMMCO Producer of the Month title in two years – for February 2008.

Blythswood also won the award in October 2006 with a return of \$79.42 per head for 151 Prime SAMM-Merino cross lambs weighing an average of 24.79 kg.

This year's title was for 378 Prime SAMM-Merino cross lambs with an average carcase weight of 23.86 kg for an average per head of \$83.90.

Robert Hooper said he and wife Kylee were carrying on the lamb enterprise with little change to the formula started by his father eight years ago when he purchased rams from the Gracefield stud of Rocco de Bellis at Katanning, to become one of the first commercial users of Prime SAMM rams in WA.

"We continue to achieve good results with Gracefield rams, and we are still mating in November-December and weaning about 1200 crossbred lambs onto lucerne paddocks," Robert said.

Mike Moore of Landmark Gnowangerup is responsible for negotiating supply arrangements for the Blythswood lambs to WAMMCO at Katanning.

A feedlot built on the property two years ago



Robert and Kylee Hooper were all smiles after receiving the February 2008 Producer of the Month award – the second time the Blythswood operation has been awarded the title in two years.

has yet to be used because the lucerne paddocks have sustained the annual crop of lambs.

About one third of the 5,000 Merino ewes on the Ongerup property are mated to Gracefield Prime SAMMs and the remainder to Merinos.

"We select the older ewes for mating to SAMMS for greater ease of lambing, and are lucky to have keen staff to assist with the lamb enterprise," Robert said.

About 800 hectares of lucerne is grown and grazed on a five year rotation as part of a 3,300 ha annual wheat, canola and barley cropping program.

"There are no plans to increase the cropping mix at this stage because we regard our sheep enterprise as valuable protection," he said.

He also continues to diversify with his Blythswood Transport business.

More fine-tuning at Rockdale

AN increase in buyer interest has prompted WAMMCO's 2006 State Carcase Competition winners Haydn and Mark Edwards to include selection for bare breech animals in the criteria for their Rockdale Prime SAMM stud at Dumbleyung.

However, their attention remains firmly fixed on breeding more quality meat on their lambs and they do not envisage any major changes in breeding direction at the stud.

With wives Peta and Renae, the Edwards' are again entrants in the 2007 WAMMCO State Carcase Competition with three lines of top lambs, and they expect the competition to be stiff.

"We understand from competition coordinator Rob Davidson that there has been a significant increase in entry numbers from last year, and that about 50 percent of the entries are from newcomers," Mark said.

□ Dumbleyung-based Rockdale Prime SAMM stud principal Haydn Edwards (left) displays an example of the bare breech trait the stud is selecting for as WAMMCO supply development manager Rob Davidson and son Mark Edwards look on.

"That is an excellent outcome and we are looking forward to comparing our lambs with a wider range of entries."

The family supply about 1500 lambs a year to WAMMCO, using the daily price schedules and recently topped up their shareholding in the cooperative to secure rebate and killing entitlements.

Like many producers, they are concerned at current prices for lamb in relation to rapidly rising costs of production and the attraction of soaring grain prices.

Mark said his pregnancy scanning service, which he started four years ago, was enjoying strong demand with producers seeking to maximise their breeding and management programs.

The Edwards family are urging lamb producers to hold on to their Prime SAMM cross ewes wherever possible not only to increase their returns, but also to make management easier.

"If producers kept their first or second cross ewe lambs for on-breeding, they would be surprised at the dramatic improvement they would see in their productivity, and how much easier their management becomes," Haydn said.

Haydn and Mark say management is as

important as genetics and technology in running a prime lamb enterprise.

"We use teaser rams and confine matings to 28 days," Haydn said.

"We preg scan our ewes and separate twin bearers from singles, and feed accordingly."

Shorter joining allows them to wean the lambs earlier, when the lambs are six to 10 weeks-old reducing the need to supplementary feed the ewes once the lambs are weaned.

"We are looking at taking this even further and perhaps doing some foetal aging and splitting the ewes into 10-day lambing periods," Mark said.

"Because this will help to fine tune nutritional requirements even more at this stage of the pregnancy it will mean even more efficient use of feed."

Haydn and Mark regularly weight their lambs to determine how they are performing, what feed rations they need to get up to weight, and when they are ready for processing.

"Everything becomes easier once you get a good system in place, and the producers with the skill and the systems will be the ones who stay in this industry," Haydn said.

"Let's hope that they are rewarded."

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Record entries set stage for March 27 awards

A RECORD 96 entries representing 18,361 of WA's top prime lambs, has heightened interest in WAMMCO's \$15,500 State Carcase Competition awards for 2007, to be announced at the Katanning Country Club on Thursday, March 27.

WAMMCO supply development manager Rob Davidson said the 2007 entries had easily surpassed the previous record of 79 entries totalling 16,000 lambs in 2005.

He said the top four placegetters in 2006 had re-entered along with many previous competition supporters, however about 50 percent of the entries were from first time entrants.

Every breed of prime lamb, including most of the new breeds and composites appearing throughout WA, were represented in the competition.

WAMMCO has invited MLA economist Tim McRae to discuss lamb industry trends along with livestock projections for Australia and WA.

Mr Davidson said sponsors joining WAMMCO for the 2007 competition were Elders, Primaries of WA, Moylan Grain Silos, Milne Feeds, Ballard Seeds, Superior Livestock Services and Farm Weekly.

This year's winner will receive \$4,000 cash, a \$2,000 cash prize for second place and \$1,000 for third with additional prizes of \$1,000 worth of good and services from Ballard Seeds, Milne Feeds and Superior Livestock Services for the first six placegetters.

All WAMMCO members are invited to the presentation which will start at 2pm on March 27.

All entrants in the competition will go into the draw for the door prize for a \$2,500 Moylan Silos sheep self-feeder.



□ WAMMCO supply development manager Rob Davidson (left) who is the WAMMCO State Carcase Competition coordinator checks in with Rockdale Prime SAMM stud principals Haydn and Mark Edwards, Dumbleyung, who are entering the competition again after their win in the 2006 contest.

Entrants in the competition have been invited to attend a special inspection of the cooperative's Katanning plant on the morning of the announcement.

Entrants wishing to attend are asked to reserve their place with a call to Rob Davidson at WAMMCO on 9262 0999.

Albany information day

WAMMCO will hold an information day for lamb producers in the Lower Great Southern at Dymesbury Lodge, Albany, starting at 5pm on Thursday, April 10.

Marketing manager Damien Giumelli, livestock manager Peter Krupa, supply development manager Rob Davidson and WAMMCO's southern livestock representative Brian Norsworthy will discuss industry trends and opportunities and answer questions from local producers.

Mr Davidson said the session was designed to assist many new lamb producers in the Albany region to develop their enterprises.

"There has been significant growth in the use of perennial pastures and lamb genetics in the Lower Great Southern and WAMMCO is keen to

assist where possible," he said.

□ Refreshments will be provided and interested producers are asked to RSVP to Rob Davidson at WAMMCO on 9262 0999.

Katanning welcome

WAMMCO's Katanning manager Tony Bessell has renewed an invitation to lamb producers to visit the plant.

"We are always happy to welcome producers to the plant to see their lambs processed and invite them to make an arrangement to visit us when they are booking their lambs," he said.

Mr Bessell said the new by-products plant was now operating successfully and other upgrades scheduled for Katanning included new cryovac and stunning equipment, and improvements to the truck turnaround area.

