



*The Genetic Advantage*



NEWSLETTER August 2019

## Taking Care of Your Ram Team

I compare the ram team to the harvester, a necessary item with a considerable investment and a lot riding on its performance. Both items are stored for ten and a half months of the year and only work for six weeks, often forgotten until the crop turns or the marked calendar reminds us that joining is not far away.

To ensure your harvester performs it is always serviced before harvest; your ram team is similar.

I have listed a few points that should be considered before purchase and prior to joining.

I would like to acknowledge Allan Casey for providing the detail which I have condensed into the points below.

### Purchasing your rams

- Rams that have been bred and selected for soundness will require less management. Make sure your ram breeder is focused on soundness as well as selection for production.
- Ensure rams being purchased have been recently checked by a veterinarian for sound reproduction, sound conformation and are showing no sign of disease.
- Know the ram and its flocks health status and management history from your ram breeder: vaccination, drench, fly and lice treatment, OJD status, foot rot status, brucellosis status supplementary feeding (now and over their lifetime) and feet trimming.
- Transport rams after purchasing in a secure and safe crate/trailer.
- Unload your new rams away from older rams to avoid risk of injury from fighting. This is particularly important if you are within the 12 weeks prior to mating.
- Know the worm status of your breeders rams.

If you need to quarantine drench your new rams use a suitable drench or combination of drenches to 'clean out' resistant worms. Once drenched keep your rams in the yards for a couple of days with sufficient feed and water to avoid contaminating your pastures.

### Caring for your rams ten-and-a-half months of the year

- Maintain rams in a condition score of 3 all year round except when leading up to mating. Over fat rams are more prone to breakdown due to excessive weight on limbs and are less mobile around the paddock. Keep rams fit.
- Shearing rams 10 to 12 weeks prior to mating is recommended. Shearing within 8 weeks of mating can reduce semen quality during mating, particularly in hot weather, as the fleece protects the ram against high temperatures.
- Shear rams twice a year.
- At mating, if rams have not been shorn in the last 12 weeks, ring rams around the pizzle or remove the belly wool completely, especially if the belly wool is burry. Also, wig and crutch if necessary.

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**11th ON PROPERTY RAM SALE**  
**Thursday, 12th September 2019**  
**Sale commences @ 1pm**  
**72 Flock Rams**

from front page...

- Ensure rams are drenched (with an effective drench) at strategic times.
- Maintain immunity via an annual booster of 6 in 1 vaccination. If you move rams onto or change feed, vaccinate 10 days prior to moving.
- Keep ram's feet trimmed if necessary to reduce the risk of lameness or foot abscess.
- Routine fly strike management is a must to reduce infertility and deaths.
- Avoid handling of rams in such a way they are getting toward 'tonguing' particularly in the 10 weeks before mating as this can reduced fertility during mating. Don't move rams any distance in the heat of the day if it can be avoided.
- Rams need to be fit for mating. While you need to avoid stress, particularly in the 10 weeks before mating, ensure the rams are getting good regular exercise.
- Keep rams well away from ewes before being mated in the autumn and summer. Close contact at this time can result in a 'ram effect' that reduces ewe cycling during mating.

#### Pre and Post Joining

- Carry out a pre-mating physical examination 12 to 14 weeks prior to mating to ensure there are no problems with feet, teeth, prepuce and penis, testicles and scrotum. If you are unsure



*Some of New Armatree's  
2019 sale team ready for work.*

of how to carry out this examination find out if there is Ramping up Repro day running close by.

- Sound supplementary feeding of rams 10 weeks prior to mating can provide a marked improvement in semen quality and volume. For rams over 80 kg feed 0.5 kg of lupins per day. In addition, provide pasture or supplementary feed at a level suitable for a dry sheep at the ram's weight.
- Each ram should be in condition score 3.5 to 4 during the 8 weeks prior to mating. If mating rams after a long period with no green feed at all, it may be necessary to supplement with vitamin A at 8 weeks prior to mating and just before mating.
- Sound and well-prepared rams can be safely mated at 1.5%. High ambient temperatures require an increase in the ram percentage. The optimum mating period is for 2 cycles (five weeks).
- If possible, do not mate old rams and young rams together because of possible domination of older rams. If possible mate older rams with maiden ewes and maiden rams with older ewes.
- After mating, put rams in a good paddock to recover. If rams are below 3 score supplementary feeding may be necessary. Maintain rams in score 3 condition. Once rams reach 3 score condition they are ready to be mated in 10 weeks.

#### New Armatree Branding Banner

Remember when selling progeny exclusively sired by New Armatree rams, use this branding banner.

It can be used as a sticker on pens at saleyards or as a slide on Auctionsplus.

Contact us if you require the stickers or the slide and we can provide it for you.



## NEWS FLASH!

Check out our new updated website:  
[www.newarmatree.com.au](http://www.newarmatree.com.au)

*"We take a lot of care to ensure the data we collect is best practice, thus generating reliable breeding values for the most informed decisions for ourselves and our clients."*

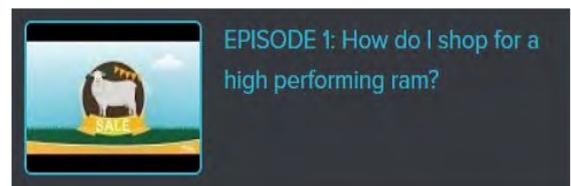
## New Genetics Hub Demystifies Breeding Values

Commercial sheep producers now have new tools to help them start using breeding values in their ram buying decisions, following the launch of new genetics resources by MLA.

To view the tools go to [www.genetics.mla.com.au](http://www.genetics.mla.com.au). This site provides a one stop shop of tools and resources, aimed at demystifying genetics and breeding values. Producers have access to:

- 'Pick the performer' advertisements demonstrating the value of investing in quality breeding values;
- Videos of commercial producers demonstrating how breeding values have helped increase profit in their flocks; and
- How-to animated tutorials outlining the basics of breeding values, setting a breeding objective and picking a high-performing sire.

It's a great tool for the experienced and the inexperienced user of sheep breeding values!



## Setting the Bar for Fat and Muscle

These two graphs represent where the New Armatree flock is placed in regard to Fat and Eye Muscle Depth (EMD) when compared to other Border Leicester flocks that are on Lambplan. We are in an enviable position in regard to both traits.

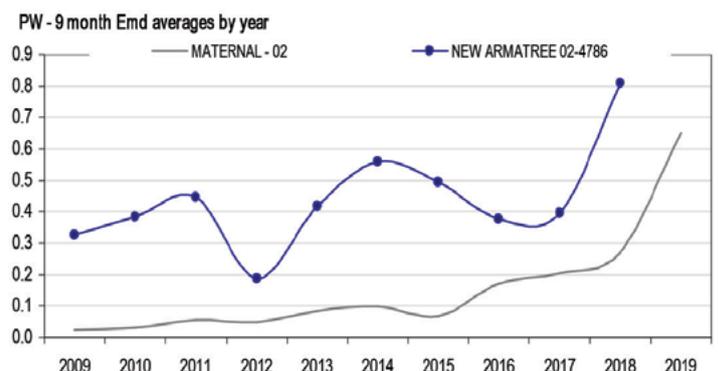
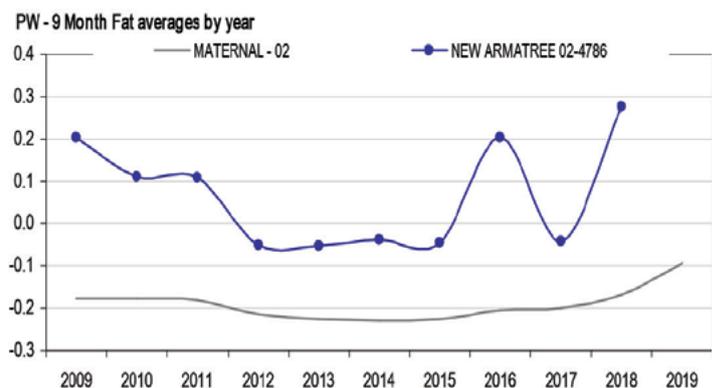
### So what is in it for you?

Fat increases the ability of breeding ewes (the 1st cross ewe) to maintain weight and condition in 'tough' times. Correlated to an increase in fat depth is the intramuscular fat, or marbling, which improves along with meat eating quality.

To top it off, fat is related to an improvement in reproductive rate.

The main reason to select for improved muscling is to improve the value of the carcase through increasing the amount of lean meat it contains.

But there are other benefits. Generally speaking as muscle depth goes up dressing percentage increases, lean meat from the forequarter shifts to the loin and, as an additional bonus, fat is related to an improvement for reproductive rates.

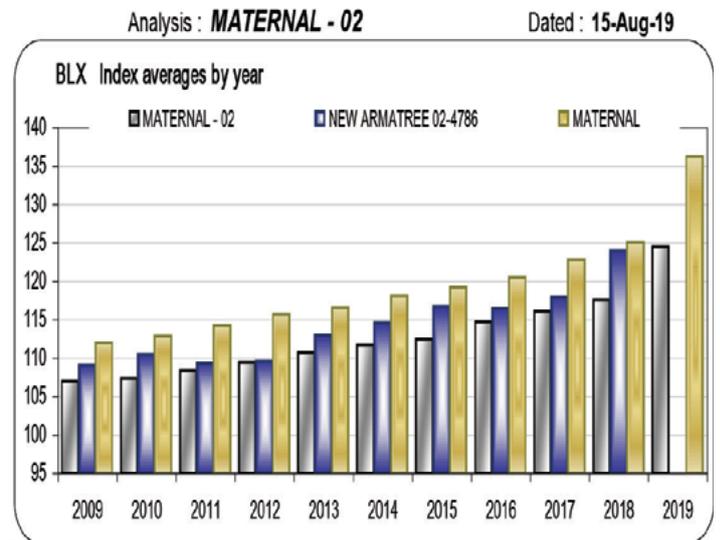


## Genetic Trends

When New Armatree Border Leicesters submit raw data and receive back genetic reports on individual animals, these reports are also presented with a report that shows our genetic trends. Genetic trend graphs show progress in genetic improvement of our flock over time.

The trend graphs show the average BLX Index value, or ASBV for a particular trait within the flock year by year, and allows genetic gain to be clearly seen. This graph has three columns Maternal -02 (all measured Border Leicester flocks), New Armatree 02-4786 and Maternal (all Maternal Breeds).

We have made steady continuous gain since we commenced measurement back in 2008. The last two years we have made significant genetic gain with the average of the New Armatree flock presently sitting at 124.1 for BLX, which is 6.4 points above breed average.



## We are off to Chile!

We wish!

No, Craig and I are not off to Chile but two of our sire's semen is presently being used in Chile. Greg McCann through Central West Genetics (CWG) sourced various breeds and put together a package for a research centre in Chile.

Very similar to the Sire evaluation that occurs here in Australia, the sires of all different breeds will be compared on performance and that information provided back to sheep producers in Chile.

Pictured is Greg bleeding one of the sires at New Armatree prior to going into CWG for collection. The rams have to pass a stringent health standard prior to export of their semen.



## SuperBorders Conference

Craig attended the 2019 conference held at Moama in June where SuperBorders celebrated 21 years since establishment.

Sheep Genetics staff were major contributors at the conference which focussed heavily on Data Quality and Integrity.

At New Armatree we are looking forward to the introduction of a Data Quality Index which will help identify those studs with better and more reliable data.

The AGM was also held with Craig being re-elected to the committee.

### GET IN TOUCH

*Feel free to contact us to discuss any of the items raised in the newsletters:*

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