

Logo

Remember when selling progeny exclusively sired by New Armatree Rams, use the logo pictured below. This logo can be used on pens at saleyards or as a slide on Auctionsplus. Contact us if you require the stickers or the slide.



GET IN TOUCH

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

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New Armatree Ram Team 2019

Early in January we selected the ram team for February joining 2019. This year we are once again undertaking an AI program. The AI ram was bred in SA at the Hanrooka Stud. This sire brings to the mix excellent growth with a Post Weaning Weight of 11.6 as well as a complete outcross.

We purchased a news sire Two Dot Stud for \$9000 in October 2018. This sire is well balanced across a number of traits and carries a moderate frame size. We are looking forward to the lambs that will be born in August.

An exciting young sire (2018 drop) that we have bred is a trait leader across many key areas as well as structurally correct. This young ram is in the top 10% for weaning weight (Wwt), Post Weaning Weight (Pwwt) Number of lambs Weaned (NLW) and currently with a BLX index of 141, which puts him in the top 2% for the breed. One of the exciting things about this sire is that he has three generations of New Armatree sires and dams in his pedigree which shows that our homebred sires are performing very well for us both phenotypically but also in terms of producing progeny that are meeting our key breeding objectives.

The 10 rams in our team carry many traits that place them in the top 10% of the breed. The traits represented across the team are the key traits that are used to calculate the BLX.



New stud sire purchased from Two Dot Station, Victoria.



The Genetic Advantage



NEWSLETTER January 2019

Welcome to our January 2019 newsletter

The aim of our newsletters is to keep you up to date with what we have been busy doing between the September sales. We are endeavouring to produce two newsletters a year, the next being August 2019.

The 2019 sale rams have progressed well since weaning. The end of the first week in January we completed Early Post Weaning Weights (EPWT) on both the ram and ewe lambs and they are currently hitting all the right targets.

We are proud to be at the forefront of genetic research and adoption within the Border Leicester breed.

New Reproduction Breeding Values on horizon

Since 2015 New Armatree has been identified by Sheep Genetics (who are responsible for the national genetic evaluation that deliver ASBVs) as being a flock that has very good data quality generally and specifically for reproduction. As a result, New Armatree was asked to be part of a project to collect more reproduction data as well as genotype ewes to create what is known as a reference population.

In November last year Craig attended a workshop in Melbourne hosted by Sheep Genetics to discuss the outcomes of this project. As of April this year there will be Research Breeding Values (RBVs) available for the component traits of reproduction. Currently, the primary ASBV for reproduction is Number of lambs weaned or NLW. This trait actually combines several aspects of reproduction. The new reproduction breeding values will actually allow selection on the component traits of reproduction, which are:

- Conception - the ability of the ewe to get in lamb
- Litter Size - how many lambs are born
- Ewe Rearing Ability - the ability of a ewe to raise all the lambs in the litter

Keeping in mind these are the traits that a ram's

daughter will express (i.e. the first cross ewe), it provides the opportunity for the industry as well as individual breeders to focus on the traits that they are wanting to improve.

At the workshop, New Armatree received preliminary results for these traits. We were very pleased to see where we sat as a flock compared with other Border Leicester flocks and all maternal breeds as a whole. The particular stand out here was ewe rearing ability where the New Armatree average was well above that of the average of the maternal breed. Additional traits such as Maternal Behaviour Score, which is how far the ewe travels from the lamb when it is being tagged shortly after birth, will now also have a breeding value that can be used in selection.

At New Armatree we are very excited to see these new breeding values come into play in the industry and believe that they will be valuable for use in our selection decisions to ensure we are breeding rams that can produce daughters that perform well for all three of the component traits of reproduction.

If you wish to discuss what these might mean for your upcoming ram buying decisions in 2019, please do not hesitate to get in contact.



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

Using Young Sires

What drives genetic gain? What makes our ASBVs and Indexes get better and better every year? One of the factors is a shorter generation interval. Our younger animals are generally genetically more superior than their sires and grandsires. Therefore, the sooner we can use them the sooner we can reap the rewards of their superior genetics.

At New Armatree every year we aim to identify the top 1 or 2 young ram lambs to use when they are 7 months of age so their lambs hit the ground just as they are coming up to 12 months of age, hence shortening this generation interval. This is of particular benefit when they are the direct progeny of an AI program and we are hoping to re-circulate the best of these genetics in the flock as soon as possible.

One of the risks associated with this is that these top 1 or 2 ram lambs haven't been recorded for all the traits that the rest of the cohort has. This means that their ASBVs are not as accurate as they normally are if they are being selected as 1.5 year olds. The way we mitigate this risk is by using a genomic test on the top 20% of ram lambs every year. This genomic test enhances the animals breeding values and accuracy meaning we can have more confidence in the ASBVs of the young sires we select. The Top 20% of ram lambs that are genotyped every year are of course first screened to ensure that they meet all of our structural and type requirements.

How do they go you may ask? They're only still lambs! After more than 8 years of experience in joining ram lambs at New Armatree, we can say that they have the same conception rates as the older rams. The only thing that we do differently with them is put them with some old Merino ewes for some 'experience' before going to be single sire mated with the stud ewes.

What does all this mean for you as the ram buyer? It means you are reaping the rewards of better genetics in your ram purchases earlier!

Multiply this over joining ram lambs for 8 years and we have genetics in our flock 4 years ahead of where we otherwise would have been!



2018 drop ram lamb to be joined late February 2019.

The Modern Border Leicester

Many breeds have changed over time, both physically and genetically. This includes the Border Leicester breed.

The stud breeder focusing on producing the Modern Border Leicester has perhaps made the biggest change. Not all stud breeders are moving in this direction. Some remain focused on producing the traditional sheep.

At New Armatree we place a lot of emphasis on breeding the Modern Border Leicester. We concentrate on the profit drivers within the first cross production system.

As a stud breeder we have the challenge of focusing on the maternal traits for the first cross ewe as well as the carcass traits for the wether lamb.

When turning off the wether portion, the profit drivers that cannot be measured by the eye or the show ring include growth and carcass traits including fat, eye muscle and meat eating quality.

The first cross ewes that are produced from the modern border Leicester carry the productive traits such as Maternal Weaning weight (MWWT) and Number of Lambs Weaned (NLW). These traits are captured through measurement and not the eye or the show ring.

What is the difference between Traditional and the Modern Border Leicester?

The modern Border Leicester has changed considerably in regard to physical appearance and genetic attributes when compared to the traditionally bred animal. Traditionally the Border Leicester has been the larger of the breeds used in cross breeding to produce the first cross ewe and wether lamb. Large in stature, some use the description that they should be 'looking

over the fence at you' - long in the body with a good length of leg to carry the animal. Selecting for these traits has resulted in the breed being recognised for being large and when crossed, results in lambs that tend to be leggy and difficult to finish in a prime lamb business. The first cross ewe has gained the reputation of being a large animal, difficult to shear with a high feed requirement.

Fast forward to the modern Border Leicester and you have an animal that has had its adult body weight monitored and capped with a medium length of leg and a carcass which is deep, well covered and carrying good meat eating quality traits.

The overall stature of the animal may not result in them 'looking over the fence' but will deliver where it counts. In the first cross ewe, the modern Border Leicester ram will produce a structurally correct, medium framed animal that is highly fertile at an early age and is capable of weaning in excess of 150% lambs. This type of ewe will be easier to manage and to shear. Easier to manage in that she will carry fat as well as muscle, resulting in a ewe that will turn off a large percentage of lambs and importantly be able to get back into lamb. Furthermore the modern Border Leicester comes with a suite of Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) that

allow ram buyers to target the traits that are important to their breeding program. These ASBVs are what we at New Armatree are selecting on in our ram breeding operation to ensure that our ram buyers have the opportunity to purchase a modern Border Leicester that can do the above.

The New Armatree Border Leicester ewe will have more than 40 individual traits measured and recorded over her lifetime to ensure she is producing the most productive modern Border Leicester possible.

"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."

Overview of what your modern Border Leicester Ram will produce:

Good muscle and fat coverage, resulting in easy to manage daughters, and wether lambs that reach market specifications earlier

Wethers with good meat eating quality

Highly reproductive daughters capable of weaning >150% lambs

Progeny with high growth rates, meaning:
- ewe lambs reach joinable weights earlier
- wether lambs reach target weights are quicker off the farm

Medium framed daughters with a capped adult body weight for easier handling and less associated feed costs

