



Profiling the Pingelly MLP site

Exciting insights are emerging from the Pingelly MLP project site, as the site heads into its last year of MLP data collection. After a successful October 2021 Field Day with the 2016 and 2017 drop MLP ewes on display as four- and five-year-olds, their results are providing insights into ewe and flock performance.

On 22 October, the 870 Pingelly MLP project ewes were on display at their host site, which is managed by Murdoch University and located at the University of Western Australia's Future Farm. The ewe's wool, carcase and reproduction results were reported for each sire progeny group

including the preliminary 2021 reproduction data. With five sets of classing and wool results for the 2016 drop and four for the 2017 drop, these ewes have just two more shearings and one more year of reproduction data to be collected within the MLP project.

The Pingelly site chairman, Brett Jones of Ejanding Merinos, provided an introduction to the sire groups and their results. Of special note were the sires' number of lambs weaned results when reported as within-site and within-drop flock breeding values (FBV).

These FBVs are based on results from the first two and three reproduction cycles (2017 and 2016 drops respectively) and, in the 2016 drop, display a 45% variation between the trait leading and lowest sire progeny groups. (The project selected sires to mirror the diversity in Merino sires.) To date, the sires at Pingelly are showing that despite a

known negative correlation, it is possible to select for ewes that are both productive for fleece weight and reproduction.

This variation translates through to the individual ewe productivity, and is being observed across all five MLP sites. For instance, there are two 2016 drop Pingelly ewes who have each weaned nine lambs across four joinings; in direct contrast, two other 2016 drop ewes have not yet weaned a lamb. The 2016 drop average is 4.7 lambs weaned per ewe across the four lambings.

Every producer knows that one or two ewes do not make a flock! However, once the full dataset for this drop and the remaining nine other MLP drops nationally are complete, an analysis using the full project data set will be undertaken to examine the implications of these top performers and their variation. This will provide answers and sharpen the current breeding and

“ He's been around, he's worked
in many a run-down shed.
And he ain't afraid of hard yakka....
but he loves shearing here.
It's safe. It's efficient.
And he's still grinnin' at the end of the day.
That's what matters. ”

(LEFT) Stud breeders **Allan Hobley** of Wiringa Park, **Gavin Norrish** of Angenup, **Craig Dewar** of Woodyarrup, **Brett & Sharon Jones** from Ejangding and **Michael Campbell** of Coromandel Poll gather at the Pingelly 2021 MLP field day.

selection tools, which will lead to enhanced lifetime productivity and profitability.

A snippet into this profitability was presented at Pingelly's field day with Dr Bronwyn Clarke, Pingelly's site manager from Murdoch University, giving an introduction to preliminary gross margin analysis. The Murdoch University work, undertaken by agricultural economist John Young, revealed a wide range in gross margins across the Pingelly MLP sires.

John's analysis was based on a production scenario of a 1,000 hectare farm of similar flock structure to the Pingelly MLP site, shearing first at 10 months (then annually) and selling surplus ewes plus all wethers after the first shearing and then older ewes sold at 5.5 years.

Each drop's raw data averages were used as the base, with flock breeding values for fleece weight, micron, liveweight and number of lambs weaned, used to calculate a gross margin for each sire group.

Based on 2021 prices, the outcome was a range in gross margin of \$204 per hectare difference between the top and bottom sire progeny groups and \$115 using 2017 prices. With more data to be collected and the full analysis still to be done, this work gives an early glimpse into what the MLP project is looking to provide for producers' bottom lines.

The MLP project has collected 85% of its data points, with the Pingelly site scheduled to finish alongside the MerinoLink site in late 2022. Balmoral's data collection will be completed in early 2022, with the Macquarie and New England sites running through to 2023 and 2024.

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MLP fast facts

The AWI-funded MLP project is a \$13 million (\$8 million from AWI plus \$5 million from project partners), 10-year venture between AWI, the Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association (AMSEA), nominating stud Merino breeders and site partners.

- **Balmoral, Vic**
Partner: Tuloona Pastoral
Committee: Balmoral Breeders Association
- **MerinoLink, Temora, NSW**
Partner: Moses & Son
Committee: MerinoLink Inc.
- **New England, NSW**
Partner: CSIRO
Committee: New England Merino Sire Evaluation Association
- **Pingelly, WA**
Partner: Murdoch University / UWA
Committee: Federation of Performance Sheep Breeders (WA Branch)
- **Macquarie, Trangie, NSW**
Partner: NSW DPI
Committee: Macquarie Sire Evaluation Association

The MLP project is tracking the lifetime performance of 5,700 ewes as they proceed through four to five joinings and annual shearings.

A full suite of assessments will be undertaken including visual trait scoring, classer gradings, objective assessments of a range of key traits and index evaluations.

A unique and extensive dataset will result and be used to enhance existing Merino breeding and selection strategies, for both ram sellers and buyers, to deliver greater lifetime productivity and woolgrower returns.

To stay up to date with the latest MLP findings, visit www.wool.com/MLP.
Subscribe to MLP updates via www.merinosuperiorsires.com.au/contact-us

2022 MLP FIELD DAYS

Balmoral: 17 February, followed by a general sire evaluation field day on 18 February.

Macquarie: 30 March

For more information visit www.wool.com/MLP



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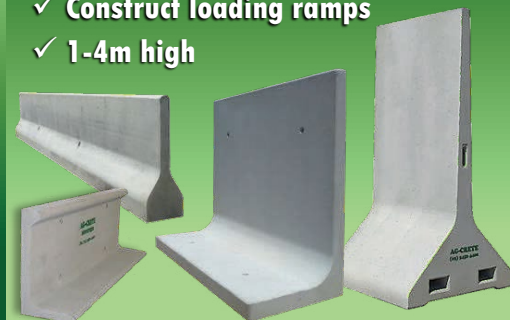
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