

# Wairere



## Need better Sheep?



*The testing ground: Romney two tooth ewes at Wairere New Zealand in March.  
Mob stocking on second class hill country at a high stocking rate selects for tough, robust sheep.*

With around 1,500 Wairere rams sold in Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia since 2005, the Wairere advantages are becoming well known:

- Self replacing
- Growth rate equal to progeny of terminal sires
- Ewes keep better condition
- Minimal drenching
- Full hybrid vigour over Merino and Border Merino
- Better shape, sound black feet, black nose.

### Other comments about Wairere in Australia

- Can have good condition on an 18kg carcass, as well as heavy weight. Dean McKenna of Midfield Warrnambool, "I'm sick of getting 18kg lambs on a 24kg frame."
- Top mothering ability, some protection against foxes.
- "They grow like stink, so don't have to be lambed so early."
- "They keep their condition better in both winter cold and wet, and summer dry. My feeding out costs and workload are so much lower now."
- "I'm down to one drench and vaccination per year. Breeding your own replacements has a lot going for it."

**New Zealand's largest ram supplier now farms  
Wairere Romney ewes near Heywood, Victoria.**

**90% of New Zealand sheep are pure or part Romney**

# Waireres just do it

Wairere has been the biggest ram seller in New Zealand since 1987. Over the past fifteen years ram sales have averaged around 4,000 per year. Wairere Romneys are the big seller, but Wairere also breeds composite maternals and terminals, and an interbred Romney/Merino cross.



*Dougal "My lamb drafter phoned to compliment me on 1,234 lambs at 23.5kg, saying that he had seldom seen such a good line."*

**Dougal Laycock, South Australia** "The feet are a really strong attribute with these sheep. I used to get Dorset cross lambs limping. The wool strength is a negative, but then any wool stronger than 25 micron is being discounted this year. But other benefits outweigh the wool. It's really exciting to observe the mothering ability, so much better, even with the ewe lambs. I mated the first Wairere cross lambs back to Wairere Rams, and had no lambing problems and no deaths. The first age group of Wairere cross two toothers have scanned 167% this year. The 2,000 ewe lambs start lambing at the same time as the two toothers, July 11, with 76% pregnant and due to lamb at 12-14 months of age. In the first year (2015-16) I sold the Wairere cross wether lambs onto a lamb finisher who sold them at 27 to 29kg dressed and \$180 average. The wool skins were good."

**Mason Topp/Jason Hammond, Camperdown**  
Mason: "I bought 627 hectare Easthill Pastoral in a 650mm rainfall area five years ago. My farm in New Zealand is in a dry area too, but with a lot of steep hills. It was an easy decision to use Wairere Romneys here, because I know that I'm buying into fifty years of ruthless culling of passengers....poor structure, wet dry ewes, and ewe hoggets which don't get in lamb. The problem with buying in replacements is that you are often buying into sheep bred from the poorer performers of Merino flocks. And having paid big money for replacements, farmers tend to hang on to their non performers. Contrast that to breeding your own replacements: we've just scanned 800 ewe hoggets, and the 120 dry will be culled at \$7.20/kg plus skin."

I want sheep with good feet too. Romneys are bred to handle wet ground conditions, and handle our rotational grazing much better. We started here with Border Merino and Composite ewes, but we are moving steadily into Wairere Romneys. Last year's scan explains why: the Romneys did 168%, the Border Merinos 155, and the composites 148. Overall wastage was only 16% from scanning, which was noticeably

better in the Romney cross ewes.

New Zealand has the biggest self replacing prime lamb flock in the world. Performance recorded Romneys dominate the sheep scene in New Zealand, so using them here in Australia is a no brainer."

**Tim Gunn, northeastern Tasmania.** "I first bought Wairere Rams in 2008. I like the Wairere breeding philosophy, and I like the doing ability of the sheep, despite no drenching of mixed age ewes. After several years of experimentation I've taken to using around half Wairere and half Dohne Rams in my crossbred flock. I simply eyeball the ewes at the drafting gate, and put the Merino looking types to the Romney, and vice versa. I've succeeded at keeping micron reasonably fine, averaging around 26.

I want early maturing sheep which can be highly productive at 65kgs. The Wairere influence shows up in a more robust body type, plus improved lambing percentage and growth rate. The Wairere element adds some grunt to my sheep."

**Charlie Lillecrapp, Mt Gambier.** "The Wairere cross are so much tougher than the Border Merinos that I used to run. My Kiwi shearers told me to check out Wairere on the Internet. It was great advice. These sheep maintain condition through wet winters and dry summers, and are so much easier to farm, as well as making more money with extra lambs."

**Stephen Creese, northern Tasmania and Victoria.** "We introduced purebred Wairere Romneys from New Zealand into our commercial composite flocks with the aim of reducing overall body size, and to give us more of a consistent type. They have certainly done that for us."

**Shane Malcolm, Portland.** "My Wairere /First Cross four tooth ewes lambed 165% in 2016"



*190 16 month old Wairere Romney ewes were air freighted to Victoria in January 2015, and haven't been drenched since.*

**Rob Morrison, Minjah, Victoria.** "The Wairere sheep are built like a square brick. They can grow... we took some to 30kg this year, but normally target 23-24kg, with around 50% killed at weaning. We expect around 140 percent in our adult ewes, but it looks as though it will be better this year."

I started buying Wairere Romneys five years ago, and am now using only Wairere sires over the maternal multiplier flock. I'm toying with the idea of breeding further to Wairere, so that I don't have to buy in each year. There's no problem keeping condition on these Wairere cross ewes.

I've always viewed the price of a ram an investment in the big picture. I always like to buy at the top end."



## All gone at weaning.

**Geoff Meyer/Jeremy King, Bessiebelle**

"We've been running 2,600 Border/Merino ewes, purchased at Naracoorte in November. The move to Wairere rams and a self-replacing flock has been prompted by several issues: the annual outlay of around \$150,000 for replacement ewe lambs, and the importing of feet and animal health problems. The new closed flock policy with the Wairere cross will require less drenching, have better mothering ability, and have largely black feet", says Jeremy, "judging by feedback from long term Wairere clients".

Achieving a high percentage of lambs POM is a target for both Australian and New Zealand farmers, but achieving 98 percent of calves POM at ten to eleven months old is most unusual.

At Garvie Downs, a 660 hectare farm at Bessiebelle, the 120 cows are mated to Limousin bulls for a late February drop.

In 2017 the calves were all slaughtered around Christmas at ten months old, weighing 278Kg average, with two mismothered calves left behind.

**Richie Belleville, Macarthur.** "I bought thirty Wairere rams in 2008, and put them over my Merino flock, including the stud ewes. I've been really happy with that decision. The Merino feet used to be a big problem. The Romneys have solved that. I have reached 100 percent with the Merinos, but the F2 Romneys do 140. The F2 ewes clip 26-27 micron, and the woolskins sell well."

**Ewan Price, Heywood.** Ewan runs 4,500 ewes and hoggets on 560 hectares, a stocking rate of under nine per hectare. But a lambing percentage of 145 and average carcase weight 22Kg, and a 90 percent contribution of the hoggets, delivers 310Kg carcase weight and wool per hectare. "I've been using Wairere rams since 2006."



*Wairere/Border Merino ewe hoggets at 13-14 months old, in September, with 150% of lambs. These hoggets have gone on to lamb 150-175% as adult ewes.*

## The self replacing wave

**The Grant family near Coleraine, 625mm rainfall, lambing June/July, Craig Grant:**

"We used to have Merinos, then ran half the flock as Border/Merinos. We started joining Wairere Romney rams over first cross ewes ten years ago. The Merino ewes have gone and the first cross ewes will be phased out over the next year. The second cross Romney ewes are more robust and hardy than the first cross and require less drenching.

We lamb mid June/early July, and the whole flock averages around 135%. Rough weather at lambing is less stressful due to the lambs being far more resilient and the ewe's superior mothering ability, culminating in better lamb survival rates.

Average carcase weight has been around 25-26kg in recent years. All lambs are marketed over the hooks as a mix of both terminal sired and maternal sired wether lambs with no discounts and top value skin returns. Our maternal

wether lambs are of a lot higher standard than our previous first cross and have real carcase shape with a lot higher percentage being turned off as suckers at a greater \$ value.

We have really benefitted from the hardiness of the Romney cross. They maintain an extra condition score through the tough winter period and have eliminated almost all foot problems due to their black feet.

The Romney rams have excellent longevity, have great libido and don't seem to suffer the lameness issues so often encountered in heavy breed rams.

Moving forward we continue to assess our options and considering the benefits we see in breeding these types of sheep a move to a straight maternal flock is certainly not out of the question. At the moment we are keen to keep a stake in the mid micron wool and wool skin markets, so are still experimenting with a mix.

These Wairere cross sheep are a pleasure to own and we are very impressed with the results so far."

# Proven Predictable Profitable



# Your opportunity



Eleven month old Wairere ram hoggets, July 2017.



Eleven month old ewe hoggets scanned with twins.



Eleven month old Wairere ram hoggets, in July.

## Prediction: The prime lamb system will steadily move towards self-replacing flocks dominated by New Zealand maternal genetics.

- In New Zealand the majority of farmers who used composite rams have reverted to using the mainstay Romney breed to restore constitution, uniformity and longevity.
- Romneys have been the dominant dual purpose breed in New Zealand for over a hundred years.

The Wairere Romney, performance recorded in commercial conditions on second class hill country since 1967, has the constitution, sound feet, and productivity to complement the Border Merino or Merino, or form part of a new stabilised Australian prime lamb composite.

## Wairere Ram Booking Form 2018–19

Wairere Romney two tooths, available October  
Please circle price bracket.

\$2,000 \$1,600 \$1,300 \$1,000

Number required: \_\_\_\_\_

Wairere Romney ram lambs, available from mid January.  
Please circle price bracket.

\$1,850 \$1,500 \$1,200 \$900

Number required: \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact details

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Scan or email back your order to [admin@wairereramsaust.com](mailto:admin@wairereramsaust.com)

Visit us at 6865 Woolsthorpe-Heywood Rd, Heywood, VIC, 3304.



### Pierre Syben Sales Manager

Over forty years experience in the stock and station industry in New Zealand and Australia.  
0473 446 016



### Ross Macklin Farm Manager

Ross is a Kiwi who has farmed in Australia since 2004, managing farms in W.A. and Victoria, and gold mines in W.A. in the 1980s. His career in New Zealand included running a sheep stud.



### Ewan Price Stud Manager

Ewan has had a white Suffolk and Dorset stud for 25 years, using top ranked Lambplan rams. Ewan has rams for sale, POA.  
0417 527 589