

FOUNDED 2002

# HERITAGE SHEEP AUSTRALIA

*"Saving the breeds that were the foundation of our sheep and wool industry"*



**NEWSLETTER NO 21**  
**December 2010**

## Wool and Sheep Roundup

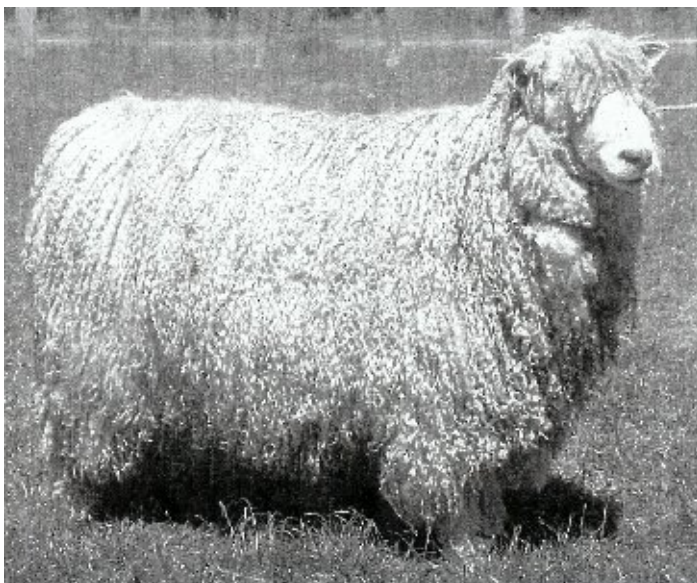
A Wool and Sheep Roundup is being held in honour of the visit of Lisa Westervelt, Massachusetts, USA, a breeder and marketer of English Leicester sheep and fibre.

It will be held at The Olde Barn, of the Heazlewood Family, 'Melton Park'; Whitmore, Tasmania, on Wednesday 29th December, 2010.

During the day Lisa will give a power point presentation and there will be displays and sales of crafts from 10am-3pm. Visitors will be able to view pens of English Leicester and Border Leicester sheep. There will, also be demonstrations of spinning, weaving, knitting, felting, and crocheting. Raw wool will be available for sale as well as items of craft from Tasmanian and USA producers.

This day is open to all people interested in the use of lustre wool.

For further information please contact Anne Heazlewood, 03-63973458 BH or [anne@heazlewoodseeds.com.au](mailto:anne@heazlewoodseeds.com.au)



*English Leicester Ram, Champion Launceston Show 2007*

## Royal Melbourne Show Display 2010



*Heritage Sheep Australia Display at the 2010 Melbourne Show.*

Our Heritage Sheep Australia Display for the 2010 Melbourne Show was a huge success with record crowds enjoying the extended show days into the second week of the school holidays.

This year the display was manned by Des Stevens, Elizabeth and Michael Chapman, Ian and Ray Christie, Edwina Carr and myself. I am not sure who enjoyed the display the most, Edwina who when not on feed duty spent the entire time holding the twin Cheviot lambs or the huge number of children and adults who laughed, squealed and shrieked as they looked at, touched, patted or were photographed with all these "unusual looking sheep".

I would like to thank the members who provided sheep for our display. Ray and Ian Christie the Lincolns, Colin Taylor the English Leicesters, Robert Waddell the Cheviots, Ian Ireland the Southdowns, Robert Grieve the Dorset Horns, Des and Marilyn Stevens the Ryelands, Geoff Johnson the Hampshire Downs and Colin and Margaret Chapman the Dorset Downs

If any member has any suggestions to develop the display please do not hesitate to phone or email as this display is still very much in the development stage.

## Chops and change

By Jacqueline Forster

Rare lamb breeds return to favour, writes Jacqueline Forster. Though Australia's economy no longer rides on the merino's back, our lamb industry is still dominated by the merino. Now more producers are championing rare and heritage sheep breeds for their superior eating quality and robust constitution.

Bathurst surgeon Ross Wilson is passionate about British breeds. His stud, Cotties Run near Bathurst, produces Black Suffolk and Southdown sheep for sale to a burgeoning boutique meat industry. "These days people want to know what they're eating," Wilson says. "We found there was a market for pure and specialty breeds."

The attractive Black Suffolk, with dark heads and legs, and the stumpy, woolly-faced Southdown (often called baby-doll) look like picture-book sheep. Wilson admits "they make great paddock decoration" but there's more to these flocks.

Southdowns were taken to England by the Romans and the breed is celebrated in Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management, the famed Victorian almanac of indispensable recipes, remedies and advice: "... the South-Down breed of sheep is highly valued for its delicate flavour ..."

"Selectively bred, over the centuries, the meat just got better and better," Wilson says. "Worldwide, the Black Suffolk is still number one terminal sire - the sire that produces the prime lamb."

Sustainable meat supplier Feather and Bone's Grant Hilliard, says: "There's a bit of a craze on Southdowns at the moment because the meat is very fine textured and sweet. Four years ago I couldn't find them anywhere."

Like the growers, he laments the quality of generic lamb.

"Previously in Australia, lamb was not differentiated by breed; only by where or how it was grown. You ate the dual purpose merino because it was more convenient to get wool off them as well," Hilliard says.

Moorland Biodynamic Lamb's Vince Heffernan says merino meat is "generally coarse and ropy and has fat in all the wrong places."

Heffernan runs Texel sheep on his 1100-hectare Demeter-certified biodynamic farm near Dalton, 100 kilometres north of Canberra, applying organic and biodynamic principles to balance ecosystems and improve soil structure.

Relatively uncommon in Australia, Texel originated on islands off the Netherlands coast and are favoured for their superior eating traits. "The meat has superb fine texture and while lean, the fat that it has is sweet and rich, which helps retain moisture when cooked," Heffernan says. "The Australian meat industry is built around a model for supplying lamb to the dominant supermarkets. Nowhere is taste a

consideration; rather, how many loin chops fit neatly on to a tray. Our approach is polar opposite to this.

"Biodynamic farming requires animals that are strong and don't need to be propped up with chemicals. Texels have a solid immune system and thrive under paddock conditions." In seasonal terms, spring lamb supposedly represents the meat at its prime but Heffernan says the term is a misnomer. "Lamb available now is born out of season, in autumn, and fed on cereal crops until August. Ewes [except merinos] naturally ovulate from autumn on, so August-September lambing is the normal cycle. The spring-born lambs will not be ready to eat until December."

With lamb prices predicted to exceed beef, due to a national sheep shortage and adverse climatic conditions, it makes sense to shop for quality. Meat and Livestock Australia's Sylvia Athas says: "Retail lamb price increases have continued to outstrip price increases for other meats." On average, lamb cost \$14 a kilogram in 2009-10, up 5 per cent on the previous year. At the moment, as more new-season spring lambs come on to the market, saleyard prices have eased but prices are expected to remain higher than last year.

"It used to be that growers got less for the Southdown at market because it was out of fashion," Feather and Bone's Hilliard says. "Now the lamb market is through the roof so there's probably not a huge difference in the price [between specialist breeds and the usual merino-cross lamb]."

"It's a matter of finding the product," he says. "We've just taken delivery of 10 Southdowns and eight milk-fed Black Suffolks."

See [cottiesrun.com.au](http://cottiesrun.com.au) and [moorlandslamb.com.au](http://moorlandslamb.com.au).

Moorlands is also sold at Cleavers Butchers, Neutral Bay; Eveleigh Farmers Markets; St Ives Farmers Markets and can be ordered online with pick up points in Canberra and Sydney, whole lamb \$210, half \$115.



*Bar none ... flavour is the key to lamb. Photo: Mozaic Restaurant Gastronomique Heritage Sheep Australia members Ross and Jeannette Webster at their property at Bathurst, NSW.*

COURTESY: FAIRFAX MEDIA

## 2010 Heritage Sheep Feature Show Clunes Agricultural Show

Heritage Sheep were on full display at the Clunes Show on Saturday, November 20th 2010. To mark the 150th Show the Agricultural Society featured our heritage sheep. A huge crowd enjoyed the magnificent heritage theme of the show in glorious sunshine.

The Supreme Champion Heritage Sheep of the Show went to the Lincoln ram exhibited by Stuart Richardson of the Richardson Brothers Grasmere Stud, Newlyn, Victoria the trophy was donated by Ian Bucknall, President of Heritage Sheep Australia.

Members Helen Raven and Jess Sturgess travelled down from Henty, NSW Jess taking out the Supreme Champion Heritage Fleece of the Show with her Lincoln fleece winning a cash prize of \$50 donated by Ostlers Hills English Leicester Stud of Ethel Stephenson. Not to be out down by her daughter Helen won the Champion Heritage Short Wool Sheep of Show sponsored by Heritage Sheep Australia with her Hampshire Down Ewe a feat she achieved at our last Clunes feature Show some years ago.



Clunes Show 2010, Supreme Champion Heritage Sheep of the Show, Lincoln ram exhibited by Stuart Richardson of the Richardson Brothers Grasmere Stud, Newlyn, Vic photographed with longwool judge Russell Duncombe, Freshwater Creek Vic.



Clunes Show 2010 Heritage breed fleeces

Over a dozen fleeces were entered in the Heritage Fleece section with the Champion Short Wool Fleece being won by the Warwick Fisher's Dorset Down fleece from New Gisborne, Victoria. This fleece was kindly donated to the Bendigo Sheep and Wool Show craft ladies to showcase our heritage breeds at next years show.

The Clunes Agricultural Society built a new larger shed (to cater for the growing number of sheep entries) since our last feature which was very welcome considering the warm weather on the day.

Strong competition between Ryeland breeders Denise Humphries of the Peartree Stud, Cambrian Hill, Vic and Marilyn and Des Stevens of the Hallylulya Stud who made the long journey from Myamyn in Western District kept our Ryeland judge on his toes. Champion Ryeland Ram and Ewe being awarded to Marilyn and Des Stevens.



Supreme Champion Heritage Fleece of the Show exhibited by Jess Sturgess, Allray Lincoln Stud, Henty, NSW.

Three Dorset Down breeders, the Chapman family, Woodhall stud, New Gisborne, Ellen Reed, Bouldhill Stud, Euroa and Elspeth Murray, Creek stud, Clunes gave judge Ralph Speirs plenty to think about. A special mention must go to the Chapman family, with Margaret and Colin at a Wedding in Euroa, Colin's brother brought the sheep to Clunes, daughters Elizabeth and Julia, drove from Melbourne and held the sheep, then son Michael arrived to take over and deliver the sheep home! Thankyou, Margaret, Colin and family for going to such lengths to support our Heritage feature show.

Southdown breeders Ian Ireland, Romale Stud, Bunding, Vic and Greame Dehnert, Ferndale Stud, Ballan, Vic where smiling with friendly rivalry during the Southdown judging with the major awards being shared between them.

Robert and Helen Grieve of the Hillend Stud, Millbrook, Vic. took out all the major Dorset Horn awards and provided strong competition in the Champion Heritage Shortwool class.



*Clunes Heritage Feature Show 2010, Dorset Down lineup.*



*Clunes Heritage Feature Show 2010, Southdown line up*

Heritage Sheep Australia would like to thank the Clunes & District Agricultural Society for the support of Heritage Sheep Australia with this feature show.



*Clunes Heritage Feature Show 2010  
 Champion Ryeland Ram exhibited by Des and Marilyn Stevens, Hallylulya Stud, Myamyn, Vic.*

### Annual Membership Fees

Annual membership fees are now due for 2010-2011  
 Please complete the membership form  
 then mail or email along with your membership fees. If using  
 direct debit please notify me of your payment.



Clunes Heritage Feature Show 2010, fleece display.



Clunes Heritage Feature Show 2010, Champion Lincoln ram lineup with judge Russell Duncombe, Freshwater Creek, Vic



Clunes Heritage Feature Show 2010, Jan Duff, Spring Grove stud, Heathcote, Vic exhibiting her Cheviots with helpers Helen Raven and Denise Humphries.



Clunes Heritage Feature Show 2010, Champion and Reserve Lincoln Ewes exhibited by Jess Sturgess, Allray Lincoln Stud, Henty, NSW.

### Guild Insurance

Guild Insurance sponsor Heritage Sheep Australia. We are grateful for their continued support and encourage members to think of them when renewing your insurance. They are very pleased to quote on any of your Insurance requirements.

**Call Rod Crook on 03 9373 2500**

### March 2011 Newsletter No 22

Thankyou to all those members who have contributed to this issue. The next deadline is **1st March 2011**. I would be delighted for any contributions from members, either email or post.  
 Email: **Jacque @ mcarchitect.com.au**  
 Mail: 11 Mona Place, South Yarra 3141



*Heritage Sheep Australia Display at the 2010 Melbourne Show.*

**English Leicester Association** has a new website  
[www.englishleicester.org.au](http://www.englishleicester.org.au)



*Cheviot Flock, Longford 12.10 1911*

**Wanted home for Cheviots**

**Paul Jameson is looking for a good home for his Thurn Cheviot Stud. Founded 2009**  
**Phone 03 5424 8434**  
**Email: [therun@westnet.com.au](mailto:therun@westnet.com.au)**

**English Leicester on the Plate**

The "Hospitality" magazine September 2010 featured a headline "Matt Merrick's stuffed saddle of English Leicester Lamb"

Matt is the chief chef at Melbourne's Terminus Hotel and is interested in promoting the consumption of rare breeds of sheep and when he can sauce them make them the "S tar of the Show" – a feature on the menu when it is "spring lamb" tender sweet meat from the fresh shoots of grass full of flavor.

Farmers Markets offers Chefs the opportunity to source Heritage Meat and then come up with creative ways of using all the cuts from the belly to the rare racks.

Matt met with English Leicester Heritage Lamb at the Slow Food Farmers Market in Melbourne where the "Ostlers Hill" and "Kaehlou" studs have been selling grass fed pure breed lamb for more than four years.

Customers have become regulars and look to report back and discuss recipes and want to know all about your flock, sharing in lambing stories and other farm events. We often hear "have never tasted Lamb like this" and can then explain it could be the particular flavor of purebred meat which is not usually available through the Butcher shops and Supermarkets.

Oslers Hills and Kaehlou English Leicesters are guests of the "Gypsy Pig" Heritage Pig Stall and can be found at the Slow food Farmers Market, Abbotsford and the Gasworks Market, South Melbourne.

*Ethel Stephenson*



*Ethel Stephenson*