



## **Australian National Field Days (ANFD) / Schute Bell 2018 – 2021 Merino Wether Comparison Trial**

### **RULES & CONDITIONS**

#### **1.0 Objectives of the Australian National Field Days/Schute Bell Merino Wether Comparison 2018 - 2021**

- 1.1** To demonstrate under equivalent commercial conditions, the relative productivity of flocks of merino sheep flocks for economically important characteristics. These include fleece weight, fibre diameter, and wool value and assessed meat value.
- 1.2** To provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information amongst producers and others involved in the merino industry.
- 1.3** To assist participant breeders to assess their progress towards their breeding objective(s) by giving a 'benchmark' comparison with others in the industry by having links to other wether comparisons
- 1.4** To provide a comparison within bloodlines of the economics and management issues of shearing at 9 and 12 months.
- 1.5** Detailed records will be kept of the varied management practices required for both 9 months and 12 months shearings. These will be costed accordingly.
- 1.6** The Australian National Field Days / Schute Bell Merino Wether Comparison will be controlled by the Orange Field Days Co-operative Ltd, Australian National Field Days representatives and such persons as are necessarily co-opted by The Australian National Field Days.
- 1.7** All decisions of the Australian National Field Days shall be final and binding.
- 1.8** The Australian National Field Days / Schute Bell Merino Wether Comparison will be carried out over a 3 year period or such other period as the committee shall decide.

- 1.9** The Australian National Field Days is open to any strain or bloodline of merino wether bred by the entrant.
- 1.10** All teams both 12 month and 9 month shearing will be depastured and managed under identical conditions at all times, by Australian National Field Days.
- 1.11** Ownership of the wethers entered into the comparison becomes the property of the Wether Trial host. At commencement of the trial remuneration will be processed as per arrangement – (2.2).

## **Entry**

- 1.12** Nominations to participate in the 2018 -2021 Australian National Field Days / Schute Bell Merino Wether Comparison Trial will be accepted from self replacing sheep operations.
- 1.13** The ANFD Merino Wether Comparison Trial will be conducted at the Australian National Field Days site at Borenore NSW. Australian National Field staff & committee will continue to assist in the coordination of all activities with the assistance of NSW DPI research and Local Land Services
- 1.14** The ANFD Merino Wether Comparison will accommodate a maximum of 720 wethers each team to comprise (24) wethers. Any commercial self replacing merino strain of sheep including, Horn, Poll, SRS, and Dohne Merino may be nominated to participate in the Comparison.
- 1.15** Team size will be 24 wethers which will be split at random into 9 month and 12 month shearings.
- 1.16** The entrant must have bred all sheep nominated, with the wethers carrying the entrants registered **ear mark** and **NLIS tag**.
- 1.17** A random draft of 30 milk teeth wethers, from his/her wether drop to be carried out by Schute Bell staff or ANFD Committee. From this draft the owner or nominee can select the 24 wethers for the trial.
- 1.17.1** After the selection the team of 24 milk tooth wethers will immediately be ear-tagged, under the guidance of the Australian National Field Days representatives and/or Schute Bell staff.

- 1.18** The Entrant will liaise with Australian National Field Days staff or a coordinator in their region for the delivery of his/her team of 24 wethers to the trial site.
- 1.19** *Teams may be delivered from end of July 2018 but all teams must be delivered by 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018 to the trial site at Borenore for a full animal health induction protocol assessment.*
- 1.20** If any form of footrot is present in a flock, this flock is ineligible to participate. A Vendor Declaration and Sheep Health Statement must be supplied to support the footrot free status of an entrants flock.
- 1.21** Wethers are expected to arrive with a **minimum of two (2) months wool** to allow for even up shearing. Even up shearing will be undertaken during the 2018 Australian National Field Days (Thursday 25<sup>th</sup>, Friday 26<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October).
- 1.22** Wether Comparison wethers may be mulesed, clipped or non mulesed.
- 1.23** Flocks that have previously tested positive to Ovine Johnes Disease must show a strong history of Gudair Vaccinations. If OJD positive flocks are entered, the wether Comparison wethers must be vaccinated with Gudair by 16 weeks of age. **A Sheep Health Statement must be supplied** to support the OJD status. All other teams that have not been vaccinated as lambs will be vaccinated with the Gudair vaccine AT SELECTION.
- 1.24** Three documents supporting the disease free status of the flock must be thoroughly completed and FAXED or EMAILED to the ANFD office by the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2018 **BEFORE** wethers leave property of origin:
1. **The Management and Health Assessment Form** (attached).
  2. Completed **Animal Health Statement** to support OJD and footrot free status of the flock (attached).
  3. **National Vendor Declaration/Waybill** (Sheep & Lambs) (NVD) to support the Footrot and OJD status of the flock.

***PLEASE NOTE: Failure to submit forms to committee prior to wethers arriving will result in wethers not being granted entry to the site.***

## **2.0 Management**

- 2.1** The Wether Trial will commence in October 2018 following the even up shearing of all teams. The Trial will conclude with the third measurement shearing of 12 month shearing and a fourth measurement shearing of 9 months shearing in October 2021.
- 2.2** At entry to the Wether Comparison site all sheep become the property of Orange Field Days Co-operative Ltd. Wether Comparison entrants will be remunerated at the commencement of the trial by the following calculation:  
  
Each wether lambs weight will be recorded on delivery. Orange Field Days Co-operative Ltd will pay 70% of the Market Value – *(determined on weighing at delivery by an accredited stock buyer)* at the commencement of the trial.
- 2.3** After all animals have arrived, a full animal health induction will occur. This will include treatment for drench resistant worms and dipping to occur after even up shearing.
- 2.4** Orange Field Days Co-operative Ltd will meet all costs involved in Husbandry, Management, Testing and Reporting after induction.
- 2.5** As in previous merino trials, the Wool Comparison wethers will be run as they would be in a commercial wool growing operation.
- 2.6** All Wool Comparison teams will be de-pastured together and managed under identical conditions.

## **3.0 MEASUREMENT – Wool Comparison**

- 3.1** Prior to each shearing a mid-side sample of fleece will be taken from each sheep and tested for fibre diameter, CV, staple length, staple strength and washing yield.
- 3.2** Wethers will be body weighed and scored for fleece rot for management purposes.
- 3.3** At shearing, all wool from each sheep will be weighed and commercial values will be calculated a 12 month average price.
- 3.4** Commercial wool values will take into account each fleece's fibre diameter, staple length; staple strength, yield and wool type (AWEX ID) as determined by independent AWEX-ID accredited wool valuer(s).

- 3.5** The total number of sheep in each team, plus the proportional oddments values will determine the team total value of wool production.
- 3.6** The value of the carcass will be estimated at the conclusion of the trial (after the final shearing) using average body weight multiplied by expected dressing percentage multiplied by the current mutton price. Carcass traits including fat depth, eye muscle depth, condition score and growth rates may also be included in the summary of data. Body weight gain weighing will be conducted 9 months after first shearing to record a growth rate percentage per team.
- 3.7** Using the carcass values determined in 3.5, team average results will be calculated in the final year, by dividing the sum of the individual carcass values by the number of wethers present, in the team.

#### **4.0 Results**

- 4.1** Results of the Australian National Field Days / Schute Bell Merino Wether Comparison Trial will remain the property of Orange Field Days Co-operative Ltd. and will be presented to the participants after the completion of each shearing. The Wool Comparison. Results will be used by The NSW DPI Merino Bloodline Comparison. Orange Field Days Co-operative reserves the right to use the results from the merino Comparison in presentations and other publications.