



Trust

**TRIGGER
VALE**

Est. 1952

Genetics

2020 Newsletter

Welcome... As I sit down to write our yearly newsletter I often find it as a moment in time to reflect on both our sheep industry and more broadly how we are tracking as a broader rural sector or even as an economy. No prizes in 2020 for guessing what event has dominated the landscape in all facets of our personal and professional lives - Covid 19.

Mandi and I hope that this challenging period in all our lives only has a short-term time frame. We all are fortunate to be involved with Agriculture and in most cases living a generally isolated lifestyle anyway. While we are seeing some volatility in our wool and lamb markets because Covid 19 I feel it is important that we remember that all the indicators suggest a very positive and profitable future for our sheep industry.

So, what does it mean for the Trigger Vale program of events as we get close to the peak ram selling season? In a nutshell "the show must go on". Regardless of Covid 19 restrictions, rules and protocols we are in the business of selling Poll Merino and White Suffolk rams and commercial breeders need to purchase rams so we need to facilitate that this can happen as smoothly as possible.

Our 43rd On-Property Sale will proceed as close to normal on Friday 4th September with 180 Poll Merino and 80 White Suffolk industry leading objectively measured rams to be penned. Some of the new initiatives in place to enhance the buyers experience and to counter some of the Covid 19 restrictions include, Auctions Plus will be active allowing buyers to bid remotely, a ram inspection day was held on Wed 19th August and our already extensive catalogue have had video footage on each ram included. We strongly believe that Trigger Vale clients are better positioned than most to purchase rams remotely if required, due to us doing the hard work for over 25 years with regards to collecting full pedigree's and extensive objective measurement. With a full range of very high accuracy Australian Sheep Breeding Values potential buyers can get a clear picture of the genetic merit of each ram and target their purchases to their own individual breeding objective. For example on all of the Merino rams penned there is a ASBV on micron, clean fleece weight, staple length, staple strength, CV, Number of lambs weaned, WEC, breech wrinkle, breech cover, eye muscle depth, fat depth, weaning, post weaning and yearling weight.

Even though we screen all rams to ensure they are structurally 100% sound and ready for a lifetime of work we understand that people still like to view the rams. In some cases like SA and WA clients where this looks to be virtually impossible, then hopefully

in the off chance that a problem does occur, our one year guarantee on rams is a good back up.

At this stage as the rules stand Victorian farmers as an essential service provider can get a permit to visit within 100 kms NSW. We are 86 kms by road from Corowa so our sale location fits these criteria.

Mandi and I have never been prouder of the 2020 sale team for both breeds and while it's been frustrating we haven't been able to show them off at events like Bendigo, South West Slopes and Sheepvention we are confident that the Poll rams reflect our breeding objective with regards to carcase, fertility, wool quality wrapped up in a genetic package that does not require mulesing. With regards to the White Suffolk's, Trigger Vale is particularly strong with having above industry growth rates in conjunction with below average birth weights and lambing ease. We have really focused on the phenotypic traits that have made the White Suffolk breed so successful over the past few years and we love the clean points and smooth front shoulders so evident in this year's sale team.

While our Auction Sale will run a little differently this year due to Covid protocols we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible. Inspection of rams will be possible after 8.30 am and we will still be providing a light luncheon prior to the sale commencing at 12.30. For clients who are unable to be present in person we will be interfacing the sale for the first time with Auctions Plus or if you prefer we will be able to have agents able to assist with bidding by phone.

Thankfully, with such a crazy year, in most cases at least the season is proving to be a lot more favorable and Mandi and I wish everyone great spring rains and a fantastic end to the year. Above all else we hope you and your families remain safe and healthy.



www.triggervalesheepstuds.com.au

Andrew Bouffler (02) 6920 7656

A Snapshot of Industry

I often think how difficult it must be for commercial sheep producers to sort through the huge amount of information, advertising, marketing and in many cases bullshit that is part of our industry landscape. With the combination of unprecedented seedstock operations all vying for record low national ewe numbers the use of social media and fancy marketing campaigns to drive sales is becoming common place. With the recent downturn in wool prices many Merino seedstock operations are refocusing their marketing around the dual-purpose attributes of their program. I have been a long-term advocate that every self-replacing Merino flock, by definition, are a dual-purpose Maternal enterprise. What does vary is the weighting in the stud breeders breeding objective with regards to wool, carcase and Maternal traits. For over 25 years Trigger Vale has had a clear vision to put quality Merino wools on the best carcase animal possible. The added benefit of this objective is that many of the traits you select for like early growth, muscle and fat due to natural genetic correlations tend to be more prevalent on polled, wrinkle free, easy-care fertile animals. A win win!!

I would really like to stress that the purpose of compiling Table 1 was to illustrate, using the impartial Sheep Genetics database, that Trigger Vale is one of the leading Merino studs in Australia for these carcase traits and when all three are combined with a mules free animal we are clearly Number 1. Table 1. Shows what percentage of each stud's entire drop of 2019 males are in the top 20% for each trait. The final column shows the number of the entire drop from each stud that are in the top 20% for all 4 traits combined. The studs in the table have been selected because they also have a high profile in industry as being leaders in these traits. It is important to highlight that my aim of compiling the table was to illustrate clearly that Trigger Vale leads industry due to its long-term vision in these areas not to be negative towards other studs. Therefore, I have listed them anonymously and I will never tell anyone who each stud is. If interested in doing further research in this area yourself all the information can be obtained in the SG search engine. Many of the studs listed have in fact purchased from Trigger Vale the genetics to improve their

genetic trends in these maternal carcase traits.

In summary Table below illustrates that if these traits are an important component of your own breeding objective, whether you are a traditional Merino breeder wishing to place more emphasize on carcase and fertility or a composite breeder wanting to improve wool value without compromising your carcase and fertility Trigger Vale has these traits as a fundamental part of our DNA. It will not matter if you purchase the dearest ram at auction or the last graded ram privately, they will be strong in these areas.

Finally, I think it is important to note that with the power of full pedigree generated ASBV's you can have your cake and eat it too. There has often been a perception that high carcase merit animals have lower Clean Fleece weight but a search of our Database highlights that 62% of the total Trigger Vale 2019 drop rams are above average for wool cut and 93% above average for Staple length.



| STUD | Top 20% YWT | Top 20 % YEMD | Top 20 %YFAT | Top 20% EBRW | All 4 combined Top 20 % |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| Trigger Vale | 91 | 87 | 96.2 | 96 | 77% |
| Stud A | 75 | 84 | 86 | 70 | 52% |
| Stud B | 92 | 95 | 96 | 35 | 31.6% |
| Stud C | 30 | 56 | 55 | 90 | 25% |
| Stud D | 52 | 44 | 61 | 94 | 21% |
| Stud E | 59 | 23 | 44 | 79 | 13.5% |
| Stud F | 51 | 23 | 13 | 12 | 5% |
| Stud G | 5 | 14 | 13 | 89 | 3% |
| Stud H | 12 | 16 | 24 | 13 | 1.6% |
| Stud I | 22 | 8 | 1.5 | 34 | 1% |
| Stud J | 73 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 0% |

Staff Changes



The newest addition to the Trigger Vale Team is Benjamin Palau. Ben grew up in a dairy family from the Southern Highlands near Sydney. Before Joining Trigger Vale Ben was studying Agricultural Science at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga. During his time at Uni Ben was involved in farm trials including seed destruction, sheep nutrition and stubble retention as well as being a contributor to the NSW weed survey. Ben a member of the winning team in the 2017 National Merino Challenge this is what led him to Trigger Vale and his interest in the sheep industry. Last year he was also invited to speak at the Bendigo Sheep Show regarding school leavers potential careers in Agriculture. Ben, his wife Alana and his 11-month-old daughter, Eden are extremely excited to be a part the Trigger Vale program.

Clients Comment: Tralee Rural

We are long term Trigger Vale Clients. Andrew and Mandi are a pleasure to deal with, and their obvious passion for their stock, and attention to detail, is second to none. We greatly appreciate the versatility offered by the one stop option of both their Maternal Merino and White Suffolks. It is fantastic to be able to go to their sale and pick up a ute full of quality rams, confident that we have everything we need to breed our own self- replacing dual- purpose Merino ewes, and put their rams over our surplus ewes in a terminal program. The excellent health status of the Trigger Vale program is highly attractive, as their Brucellosis and Johnes accreditation offers great peace of mind.

The ewe flock is the profit driver for any sheep breeding program. Year after year, Trigger Vale rams have shown continuous gains in the genetic traits that we are after like growth, fat and muscle, ensuring that each successive generation of our ewes will be more profitable than the last. The proof of the pudding is always in the eating, and we were wrapped to average \$213.50 for our first cross Merino White Suffolk sucker lambs last spring. Our sucker lambs are regularly at the top end of the market in Wagga, and due to the carcass dual purpose attributes of their mums, there is no discount from buyers compared to the more traditional 2nd X suckers.

The remaining 1st X lambs and Poll wether lambs are grown out to export weights and sold Jan- March. This year the 1st X averaged \$300.25 and the Poll Merino's averaged \$274.00. When you add the \$27 wool from the lamb shearing, they are a very profitable unit. We regularly top the Wagga market for Merino lambs, and it's not unusual to get a \$40- \$60 premium over non- Trigger Vale blood Merino lambs at the same sale.

An added bonus this year was that due to the big plain frame nature of our ewes, we averaged \$214 for our CFA surplus ewes.



Barry, Rusty, Sophie & Nicole Smith



Crystal Ball Gazing

During the past year I have spent a lot of time contemplating where to next for the Trigger Vale Breeding programs. 15 years ago, post my Nuffield Scholarship I had a clear vision of what I thought the Modern Merino of the future would look like and set our breeding objectives to target that. I had picture in my mind that a more efficient, balanced, maternally focused Merino ewe that was easy care, polled and mules free was going to be required. The core change to the levers being used to create this animal was to select animals using objectively measured data with a heavier weighting on traits like early growth, fat, muscle and wrinkle free. I thought it was important to set targets to aim towards and while no one really knew what the right balance of these fitness traits actually might be particularly when combining them with the more traditional production traits like wool cut, micron and staple length I came up with the following.

| YWT | YFAT | YEMD | EBWR | YCFW | YSL |
|-----|------|------|------|-------|-----|
| 10 | 1 | 2 | -1 | 15-20 | 20 |

The average ASBV's for the Trigger Vale entire 2019 have come very close to hitting these targets which we are extremely proud of, particularly as many of these traits were not even being measured or selected for in most of the broader Merino industry. So, did we get the target right?

I honestly believe now that Trigger Vale and many clients have paddocks full of ewes with a genetic balance of traits approaching this broad target that the answer is yes. While the actual balance of all these traits will vary depending on the environment the sheep are in and the individual breeders own breeding objective and preferences, I believe this basket of traits is a great base to build a flock that not only has high production (kgs of wool, lambs and surplus breeders leaving out the front gate) but it achieves that production off a lower cost base while satisfying our consumers health and welfare concerns. A win/win/win

So, I guess the next question to be asked would be what are Trigger Vale's new set of ASBV targets or breeding objective? While we have a very clear vision going forward and a new balanced list of individual breeding values its not in our own best interests to voice them publicly as we operate in a very competitive industry. Broadly speaking the weighting of growth has shifted significantly towards Post Weaning. With many breeders now joining ewe lambs, higher growth rates up to that 7-month period is important to get the ewe lambs to a weight that brings on puberty. The bonus is even quicker turn off rates for their brothers. With regards to the other traits we have not seen any indication that we have passed a point were a steady and balanced improvement in all these traits will not continue to bring benefit in commercial Merino operations.

The exciting thing for us and in turn our clients is we seem to be on an exponential rate of genetic improvement and with rams like the two 2019 Stud Reserves 190034 & 190039 as part of our arsenal going forward it certainly won't take another 15 years to hit these revised targets.



| | PWT | YWT | YEMD | YFAT | YCFW | YFD | YDCV | YSL | NLW | YSC | EBWR | EBCOV | DP+ |
|--------|-----|-----|------|------|------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|------|-------|-----|
| 190034 | 7.7 | 9.7 | 3.3 | 2.3 | 17.5 | 0.4 | -1.7 | 14.1 | 4% | 3.3 | -1 | -0.2 | 167 |

| | PWT | YWT | YEMD | YFAT | YCFW | YFD | YDCV | YSL | NLW | YSC | EBWR | EBCOV | DP+ |
|--------|-----|-----|------|------|------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|------|-------|-----|
| 190039 | 9 | 9.7 | 2.6 | 1.8 | 26.6 | 0.9 | -1.3 | 16.2 | 8% | 3.8 | -0.5 | -0.5 | 187 |



2020 Viewpoint – mulesing

Is there one single word in our industry that still polarises and cause friction between stakeholders more than “mulesing”? – I don't think so.

I get so frustrated that in 2020 it feels as if we have made little progress as an industry towards finding a solution to what is no doubt the biggest threat to our industry from both a customer and producer perspective.



I feel its beyond debate now that our customers mainly through the feedback from an ever-increasing number of large brands that it is no longer a practice that is acceptable for our consumers. We are the last country in the world where you can legally mule a lamb. While acknowledging that we have made considerable gains with the uptake of pain relief when it comes to the act of mulesing our customers simply require wool from mules free animals. The reality is wool buyers are seeing the Australian market as simply too hard with the different options available on the Vendor Declaration. They simply want to know if the wool is off an animal that has been mulesed or not – end of story. The current options of ceased mulesing, freeze branded, mulesed with pain relief etc. only muddies the water so they are taking their orders to a ceased mulesing country where there is no confusion and full transparency in the supply chain. This situation impacts on the segment of producers that have ceased mulesing like Trigger Vale and many of our clients because while there is an increasing premium for non mulesed wool its coming off a market that is discounted compared to the rest of the world.

I have a concern that the recovery of our wool market post Covid 19 could be significantly compromised by the ongoing market uncertainly created by the continuing practise of mulesing.

The ongoing mulesing situation is a major treat at the producer/ Farm level because I have no doubt that as each day that goes by, we are a day closer to the practise being banned. In 2020 we have seen once again legislation before the NSW parliament calling for an end to the practise. While it looks unlikely to gain enough support to pass it has been more widely debated and better presented as a legitimate piece of legislation than ever before.

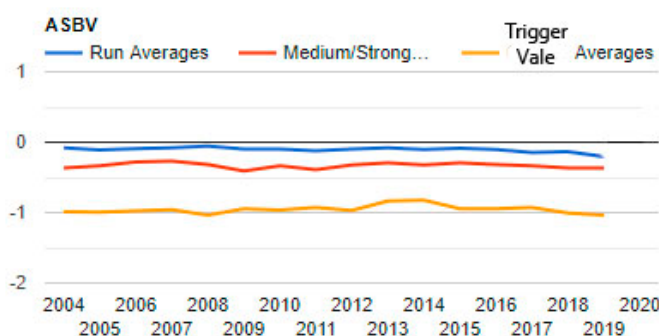
I regularly hear in conversation with Merino breeders, classers and advisors that if mulesing were to be banned then they would quiet simply walk away from the industry. This seems to be a majority view for the superfine/fine and the large pastoral producers. I agree that it would be particularly difficult for the pastoral station breeders because of the logistics and difficulties associated with applying alternative tools like chemical application. However, I also believe using this very same argument that they should be leading the charge to find other solutions particularly genetically.

We have had over 20 years of this being in the spotlight for Merino Breeders so the question needs to asked what are you doing as individual classers, advisors and breeders to prepare for the inevitable day that the practise is banned. Unfortunately, in most cases the answer is not much. The reality is in my view that we do have a solution to this problem, and it involves the manipulation of the genetics to ensure the wrinkle around the breech is bred out of our Merino's. Trigger Vale has had a significant weighting on Early Breech Wrinkle (EBWR) for over 15 years and have not mulesed for 10 years. In the early days I acknowledge there was some trade off with wool cut but ibn recent years with a more diverse genetic gene pool to select from we have certainly reversed this trend and have more than made up for some initial loses. Due to the unbelievable success of this approach we are less reliant on Chemical application to control fly than back when we were mulesing.

Graph below illustrates why Trigger Vale is a industry leading source of Merino genetics that can help breeders deal with this issue. Remember every great journey always starts with the first initial step.



BREACH WRINKLE



White Suffolk News

Most years when I sit down to write this newsletter it worries me that clients might think our White Suffolks take a back seat to the Poll Merino's in our breeding programs. That could not be further from the truth as we strive to provide clients with the best profit driving genetics with a true White Suffolk phenotype. As touched on in the welcome in the last 3 years we have had a real focus in our breeding program of making sure we are presenting White Suffolk rams to clients with well above average genetic merit along with the physical attributes that made the White Suffolk Australia's Number one Terminal Sire Breed. That being very clean points with no wool on the head and legs and most importantly for lambing ease and hence survival - smooth front shoulders.

The other area which we are keeping a close eye on and giving some weighting in our breeding program is Meat Eating Quality (MEQ). Traits like Shear Force (tenderness) and Intra-muscle fat (juiciness) have been touted by MLA as the holy grail for lamb going forward. The problem is that after several years, numerous different technologies and millions of dollars they still have not come up with a way to measure these traits at a speed that a production line moves in an abattoir. There was a recent article based around an interview with the General manager at Southern Meats Goulburn in which he stated that he thought they were getting very close to overcoming this problem and that it would mean that payment for lamb would be reinvented

around a grid based on meat yield and MEQ . We have always had a great success rate of picking future trends within our sheep industry and we are very comfortable that we have the genetic base within our white Suffolks and Merino's that clients will be receiving a bonus for MEQ if payment is based on it.

As a collective of some of the most progressive White Suffolk breeders in Australia the Superwhite young sire breeding program have weighted MEQ traits as very important criteria when it comes to selecting the yearly young sire team. With well over 80 young rams nominated for possible selection from 20 studs it highlights the strength of the Trigger Vale breeding program to have one of 10 rams selected for the 2020 team. See figures below for Trigger vale 191194.

The bonus of having a ram selected is it brings enormous benefit back to Trigger Vale through genetic linkage. 191124 will be used and benchmarked in 5 of the Superwhite members flocks. These will be geographically spread over most Australian states which means he will be objectively measured in very different environments and under different management. Effectively via Sheep Genetics and the linkage between flocks created by this program because he will be also be used extensively in the Trigger Vale flock we will be able to compare with a high degree of accuracy our progeny with all of the other members bring a much higher accuracy level to the Trigger Vale ASBV's.

| | BWT | WWT | PWT | PEMD | PFAT | SHF | IMF | TCP | LEQ |
|---------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Trigger Vale 191124 | 0.32 | 10.9 | 16.7 | 3.8 | -0.4 | -2.2 | -0.12 | 165.6 | 168.2 |

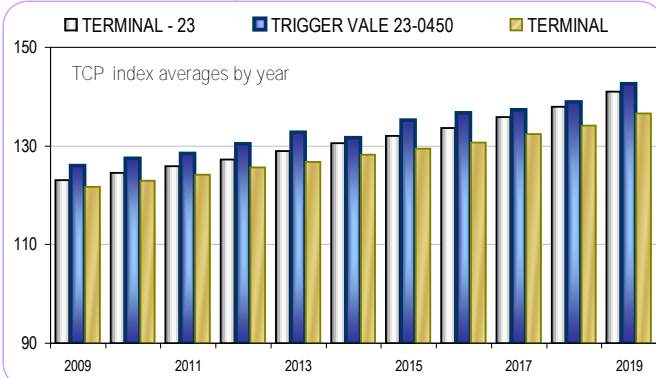
| | | | |
|----------|---------|--------|--------|
| Lambplan | Top 20% | Top10% | Top 5% |
|----------|---------|--------|--------|



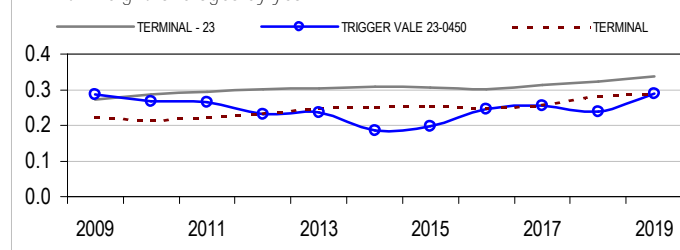
WS rams in new containment area

Trigger Vale White Suffolk Genetic Trends:

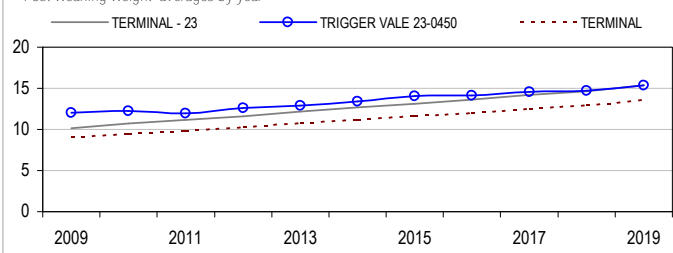
Analysis : **TERMINAL - 23**



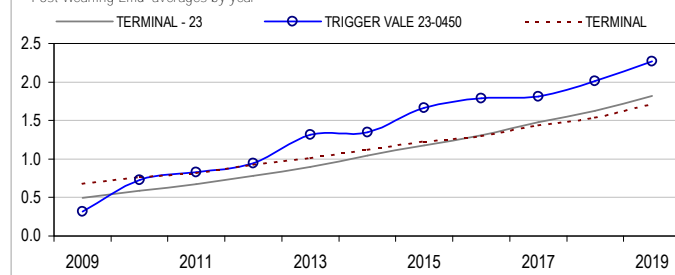
Birth Weight averages by year



Post Weaning Weight averages by year



Post Weaning Emd averages by year



ON A LIGHTER NOTE . . .

Celebrate

A young monk arrives at the monastery. He is assigned to helping the other monks in copying the old laws of the church by hand. He notices, however, that all of the monks are copying from copies, not from the original manuscript. So, the new monk goes to the head monk to question this, pointing out that if someone made even a small error in the first copy, it would never be picked up! In fact, that error would be continued in all of the subsequent copies.

The head monk, says, "You make a good point, my son."

He goes down into the dark caves underneath the monastery where the original manuscripts are held in a locked vault. Hours go by and nobody sees the head monk. The young monk gets worried and goes down to look for him. He sees him banging his head against the wall and wailing.

"We missed the R! We missed the R! We missed the R!"

"Father!" cries the young monk. "What's wrong?"

The head monk with tears in his eyes replies, "**The word is celebrate!**"

A man, shocked by how his buddy is dressed, asks him, "How long have you been wearing that bra?"

The friend replies, "Ever since my wife found it in the glove compartment."



Always complaining

Every ten years, the monks in the monastery are allowed to break their vow of silence to speak two words. Ten years go by and it's one monk's first chance. He thinks for a second before saying, "Food bad."

Ten years later, he says, "Bed hard."

It's the big day, a decade later. He gives the head monk a long stare and says, "I quit."

"I'm not surprised," the head monk says.

"You've been complaining ever since you got here"

.....

In surgery for a heart attack, a middle-aged woman has a vision of God by her bedside. "Will I die?" she asks.

God says, "No. You have 30 more years to live."

With 30 years to look forward to, she decides to make the best of it. So, since she's already in the hospital, she gets breast implants, liposuction, a tummy tuck, hair transplants, and collagen injections in her lips. She looks great!

The day she's discharged, she exits the hospital with a swagger, crosses the street, and is struck immediately by an ambulance and killed.

Up in heaven, she sees God. "You said I had 30 more years to live," she complains.

"That's true," says God.

"So what happened?"

God shrugs.

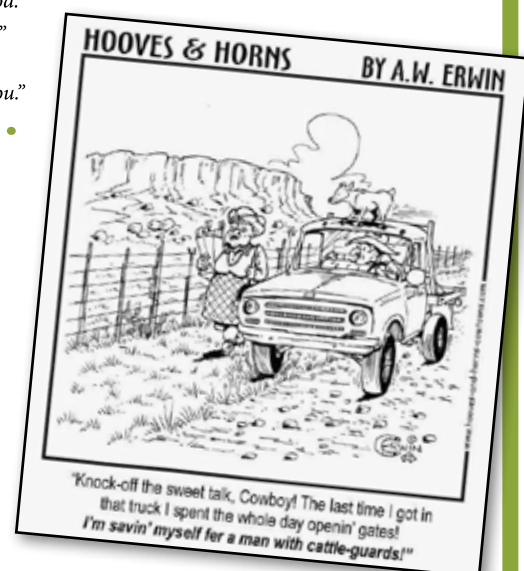
"I didn't recognize you."

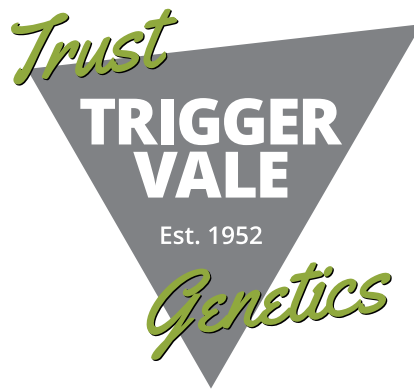
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How does a monkey toast his sandwiches???

Under a Gorilla!

Thanks Sophie





Trigger Vale

Poll Merino & White Suffolks

43rd Annual On-Property Auction

At "Valera" Lockhart on Friday 4th September 2020
Inspections 9.00am onwards, Poll Sale commencing at 12.30pm
Covid Protocols in place see website for Details



180 Poll Merino Rams
6 Stud White Suffolk Rams
74 Specially Selected White Suffolk Rams

Vendors: Andrew & Mandi Bouffler 0427 207 656

Sheep Genetic Advisor: Mark Ferguson

Nextgen Agri 64 21 496 656

Stud Classer: Michael Elmes 0429 847 552

Selling Agents: Tim McMeekin: Elders Ltd Wagga 0427 830 003

Matt Hawker: H. Francis & Co Wagga 0418 861 320

3% rebate to outside agents introducing clients on day of Sale

Luncheon Available

Catalogue online two weeks before the Sale

MN1
Gudiar Vacc
Brucellosis
Accredited



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