

Orrie Cowie

Orrie Cowie Merinos and Poll Merinos are renowned as large framed, heavy cutting sheep carrying waxy, well nourished, white, bright, stylish and soft handling wools; sheep that perform in all environs. Looking at last year's buyers' list verifies this with long term, repeat buyers from WA, Victoria and all regions of SA. Many of these buyers are using Orrie Cowie rams to successfully breed rams for sale.

For stud principals Dennis and Heather Dalla, there is no better recommendation than the success of their genetics in such wide ranging climatic conditions.

"Breeding for Profit" has been a motto at Orrie Cowie since inception back in 1937. It can be a throwaway line for some, but Orrie Cowie has always had a clear and strong focus on this, ensuring they are constantly evolving to produce more productive and efficient sheep that increase the profitability of their clients' flocks.

The Dallas have placed increased emphasis on plainer bodies, higher growth and improved carcass traits in the last two decades, but not at the expense of wool cut and nourishment. Selection for lower microns and staple length, and against drier wools has led to them now producing an average of 9kg of 20 micron wool over their entire ewe flock. This means more profit.

Visual assessment and experience is supported by actual measurement of fibre diameter, standard deviation, co-efficient of variation, comfort factor, body wrinkle score, wool quality index, bodyweight (growth), fat, eye muscle depth, and scrotal circumference, thus eliminating guesswork and speeding up flock improvement.

Orrie Cowie displayed at Burra in March and Bendigo in July, with a cross section of all their successful family lines and received many very favourable comments. They also made a very significant investment in the advancement of their future generations at Bendigo with the purchase of a top Poll Merino from Coddington Poll Merinos for \$28,000, with Heather and son John doing the bidding. Graham Coddington said the ram's pedigree was exceptional and was the first poll by RP0900114 sold at auction.

It was earmarked early in the day by agents as the potential top lot for its pedigree and wool – with 16.5 microns, 2.6 standard deviation, 15.8 coefficient of variation and 99.7 per cent comfort factor. "He has magnificent wool that is crimping, soft, white, long stapled and has excellent tests. He is also excellent on his feet and stands really square; a well set-up ram," John Dalla said.

The price tag is the highest Orrie Cowie has paid for a ram, but Mr Dalla still described the purchase as a "bargain".

"He will be used as an impact ram and we will be trying to breed big lines of well structured, good testing, soft woolled rams for the commercial market," he said.

The ram will make the journey to Dubbo, to be displayed at the Rabobank National Merino Sheep Show & Ram Sale in August, before starting an embryo program. It fits very neatly into the Orrie Cowie philosophy of "The right wool with the right genetics on the right body".

In their Poll families, the rams that are performing really well are: 'Flinders' (Nepowie 16) - progeny are outstanding quick early growers and also mature into very big sheep (The top priced ram from

last year's sale was OC Nepowie 520 at \$10,000 to the Reade family at Curramulka. With wool measurements of 22 Mic, 3.2 SD, 14.5 CV, 99% CF; a bodyweight of 147 kg at 23 months and built like a Mack truck with a massive rump the Reades say his first lambs are outstanding); 'Earle' (Exceller) - progeny have some magnificent wools and are still big sheep; 'Regal' (M66) - producing some absolute pearlers; & 'Prince' (Napoleon) - breeding as good as he looked which was always impressive.

Their Merino (horned) families of special interest are: 'Exceller' - is still pumping out rich, white & crimped wools; & 'Aris' (Radnor-Banavie) - young rams showing some excellent early growth and big plain bodies. Dennis & Heather Dalla said the demand for semen from these top performing sires has been very pleasing and they invite further semen enquiries.

Orrie Cowie's 2013 annual sale will be on Wednesday 14th August at 1pm on-property at Warooka. The Dalla family invites you to inspect their sheep on-property the afternoon before, or on sale day from 9am.

Further details on semen and sale sheep are available on their website: (www.orriecowie.com.au).



John Dalla holds the Coddington Poll ram Orrie Cowie purchased at the Bendigo Sheep & wool show for the sale's top price of \$28,000.