



AUSTRALIAN TEXEL STUD BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

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JULY 2013 NEWSLETTER

Late Roger Mason

ATSBA joint-patron Roger Mason has passed away after a long illness.

This was very sad news as without Roger Mason and other dedicated breeders, Texels would not have made it to Australia in 1993.

Roger's first involvement with the Texels was in August 1989 and he subsequently was chairman of the Australian Texel Corporation (ATC) for the four years it was active.

The ATC had been formed to facilitate the delivery of Texels to Australia from New Zealand.

Roger was a foundation member of the ATSBA with flock number 24 and the "Darebin Park" prefix, and was a successful businessman in Melbourne.

Mr Mason generously assigned the current Texel trademark logo to the Association several years ago.

Our deepest sympathy to his wife Leonie and family.

Australian Stockyard Co.

The ATSBA welcomes on board our new sponsor, Australian Stockyard Co, 1/16 Wiltshire Lane, Ballarat, Vic 3356.

Phone: (03) 5335 9811 & Andrew Stock on 0429 969 371

Or 26 Braidwood Rd, Goulburn, NSW 2580 Phone: (02) 4822 2113 & 0428 483 501

The Company has donated \$1600 towards the new Texel vests.

Australian Stockyard Co produces sheep and cattle yards, equine products, feeding equipment and sheds.



Check out their website at: www.australianstockyards.com.au.

Hillsdale Rural

The exhibitor of the supreme champion Texel at the forthcoming Australian Sheep and Wool Show, Bendigo on

July 20 in addition to winning the Tattykeel Perpetual Trophy will also receive the Hillsdale Rural Prize.

Michael and Toni Conole have donated an air fencing clip gun, together with 10,000 clips valued at \$500.

Texel Ram and Ewe of the Year

Westside Meats and WFI have signed on again to sponsor the 2013 Texel Ram and Ewe of the Year.

The competition is open to Victorian and South Australian exhibitors, and will be conducted over the following shows:

- ASBA Bendigo
- Hamilton Sheepvention
- Horsham A & P Show
- Royal Geelong Show

New Contact Details

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Sydney Royal Show

Texels were the feature breed at the 2013 Sydney Royal Easter Show.

Major awards were:

Grand champion ram

Cranbrook (PJ & K Balcombe)

Reserve grand champion ram

Cranbrook

Grand champion ewe

Cranbrook

Reserve grand champion ewe

Monkittee (Braidwood Central School)

Supreme Texel

Cranbrook

Peter Taylor group and champion group

Monkittee

Objective Measurement Class

Cranbrook

Most successful exhibitor

Cranbrook

Illabo Show

Texel results in the prime lamb competition conducted at the Illabo Show, NSW in October 2012 were:

Hoof

Maple Brown Investment Trust exhibited Texel cross Merino lambs and finished second in Class 2, pen of 10, 42.1-48 kg. They were first in Class 3, pen of 10, over 48 kg.

Hook

Maple Brown Investment Trust were third in Class 1, 35-42 kg and second in Class 2, 42.1-48 kg.

Canberra Royal Show

Roberts Hillsdale Pastoral Co, Cootamundra, NSW exhibited the champion and reserve champion rams at the 2013 Royal Canberra Show in February.

Braidwood Central School exhibited the champion and reserve champion ewes, and breeders group.

Wagin Woolorama 2013

Class 19 – Ram under 1 year, showing milk teeth

Jimjan, 1.

Class 20 – Ram over year 1

Mirovi, 1.

Class 21 – Pair of rams under 1 year, showing milk teeth

Mirovi, 1.

Class 22 – Ram under 1 year, showing milk teeth, judged objectively and subjectively

Mirovi, 1.

Class 23 – Ewe under 1 year, showing milk teeth

Jimjan, 1.

Class 24 – Ewe over 1 year

Jimjan, 1.

Class 25 – Pair of ewes under 1 year, showing milk teeth

Mirovi, 1.

Class 26 – Group 1 ram and 2 ewes, milk teeth

Jimjan, 1.

Class 27 – Progeny group of 3 sheep

Jimjan, 1.

Champion ram

Jimjan

Shows

Berwick Show

The judge of the Texel section at the 2013 Berwick Show, Vic on February 23 was Ian Kyle, Bairnsdale, Vic.

Results were:

Supreme Texel

Elisabeth Murdoch College

Interbreed group

M Grooby, 2nd from 12 groups

Interbreed pair

C Kelly & C Shine, 1st from 9 pairs

Champion ram

M Grooby, Romack stud

Reserve champion ram

C Kelly & C Shine, Doublecee stud

Champion ewe

Elisabeth Murdoch College

Reserve champion ewe

C Kelly & C Shine

Young ram

Doublecee, 1.

Ram lamb

Romach, 1 and 2; Elisabeth Murdoch College, 3.

Older ewe

Elisabeth Murdoch College, 1.

Young ewe

Doublecee, 1 and 3; Elisabeth Murdoch College, 2.

Ewe lamb

Doublecee, 1 and 3; Romack, 2.

Royal Melbourne Fine Food Awards

Texel breeders Mark and Helen Chambers, Lyndale Park, Marong, Vic performed extremely well in the 2012 Royal Melbourne Show Fine Food Awards.

They came away with a gold medal for the branded lamb section and were named champions in the small producers section. The Chambers submitted a rack of loin for the tasting.

Mark and Helen are gearing up to take their entries down to Melbourne in early July for the 2013 awards.

This year they are entering the lamb section (which requires 2 x 8 pt frenched racks) and the lamb sausage both traditional and gourmet sections.

Helen reported that for the sausage section they are teaming up with Kane Arnold of Arnold Family Butchers, Boort, Vic. An initial taste test proved mighty tasty.

Pictured: Helen and Mark Chambers, gold medal winners, at the 2012 Royal Melbourne Fine Food Awards.



A Short History of Texels in Australia

(Edited report from Maria Wood)

Does anybody remember the UK prime lamb industry of the 1950's and 60's when lamb was sold only on deadweight? Imagine introducing Texels into such a market with no specification for conformation, with no Europ. Texels were introduced into Australia in 1993 and continue to struggle for acceptance in a market still using only deadweight and basic fatscoring to value carcasses.

Texels arrived in Australia to great acclaim after four years of quarantine in New Zealand and a further three in Australia. They were the first importation of any new meat breed since the pioneers brought in the Suffolk, Dorset Horn and Border Leicester. The Australian Texels originated in Denmark and Finland and were selected for their scrapie free status. The combination of the smaller heavy Danish Texels and the bigger framed Finnish Texels has resulted in a Texel well suited to Australian conditions which require an animal to be free moving, able to adapt to lengthy hot seasons and lamb without assistance.

Since their arrival Texels have dominated prime lamb competitions in every state. Whether based on carcase yield or lean meat yield, Texels have repeatedly swept the competitions. Unfortunately the parameters used in carcase competitions, such as lean meat yield and conformation, are not commercial specifications at abattoirs and saleyards. Prejudice developed quickly against a carcase type so different to existing breeds. Producers and agents were unfamiliar with a lamb which developed so much width and gigot without running to fat and as a result many lambs were sent for processing unfinished.

Texels were used extensively in composite breeding after their introduction, as they were in the UK. UK producers quickly realised that more Texel meant greater profitability. With very few parameters for profitability measurement in Australia the composites made little impact here as they were bred to resemble the existing breeds but sold as 'Texel cross'. Their lack of performance was then blamed on the Texel infusion. Slow growth is a frequent criticism of Texels in Australia but is contradicted by the

many successes of Texel sired progeny in spring prime lamb competitions. Commercial producers Australia wide who have consigned their prime lamb in separate breed groups through the abattoir have for years reported substantially greater return from their Texel sired lambs due to the increased carcase yield. As Australia has no Central Progeny Testing, commercial feedback takes on a greater relevance. Australian Texels developed from the same genetic base as the New Zealand Texel where the breed has dominated their Central Progeny Test Profitability Index (Growth & Yield) for many years.

Two major supermarket chains control most of the Australian market. High St butchers have consistently retained around 28% of retail meat sales, but they rely on a personal relationship with their wholesaler to ensure supply of desirable product. Any specifications to connect producer and retailer are seen as undesirable as it interferes with the other sectors' ability to manipulate throughput and quality to create margins.

Texel breeders in every state have at some time or other established numerous successful direct marketing alliances with Texel branded product in an effort to bypass the lack of market specifications and industry prejudice. The result at a retail level has been gratifying as the consumer response is overwhelming. Retail butchers consistently identify a 15%-20% increase in profitability with Texel carcasses. However, the alliances often have difficulty finding enough Texel sired lamb to guarantee year round continuity of supply on a scale to compete profitably with conventional marketing. A branded product involves greater cost to the producer with specifications, code of practice requirements and smaller drafts of lambs. These costs are difficult to recover. The burden of co-ordination falls on the producer who has to act as livestock agent, wholesaler and marketer of the lamb, as well as supplying credit.

Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) created Lambplan as a performance recording system to provide Estimated Breeding Values (EBV) for growth, eye muscle depth, and fat as key traits. All major meat breeds in Australia are assumed to have identical genetic makeup and are analysed together. The system receives widespread

publicity. Texel producers have been concerned for many years by an anomaly in the Texel Lambplan index which accumulates exaggerated EBVs for those Texels mated extensively into other breeds. They attribute this anomaly to the inability of Lambplan to identify the presence of the myostatin gene, which creates a significant genetic difference between breeds. Sheep used within the Texel breed where the myostatin gene count remains static at two in each generation cannot generate the same increases to their EBVs as Texels crossed into other breeds to introduce one copy of the myostatin gene where none existed previously. Some years ago a Texel ram became number 1 in the Texel elite sires list despite never having been mated to a Texel. The ram quickly disappeared when used in Texel flocks. Most Texel breeders have now reached the conclusion that Lambplan cannot be used for breeding decisions, not only because of its inability to identify the inheritance pattern of myostatin, but also because of Lambplan's emphasis on the growth index without adequate muscle. Animals rating well in the Lambplan index are seen, even by some processors, as long, lean and lanky and difficult to finish. What could have been a tool to demonstrate breeding values of Texels is now seen by most as having little merit.

The sheep industry in Australia has undergone huge changes in recent years. In 1993, when Texels were introduced, the Australian flock numbered 120 million, this has since decreased to around 67 million and shows little sign of recovering to any great extent. Merino to Merino matings for the wool industry make up about 60% of the sheep flock with the remainder divided between prime lamb sire/Merino ewe matings and prime lamb sire/Merino cross ewe matings. The Merino prime lamb dams are for the most part culls or older ewes cast for age from wool flocks. The crossbred ewes are mainly Border Leicester/Merino. At the same carcass weight, but with great differences in lean meat yields, prime lamb progeny of Merino and crossbred ewes have the same carcass value.

The decline in sheep numbers is the result of a combination of intermittent drought over many years in almost every part of Australia, and the great decline in wool prices. High grain prices have attracted many producers away from sheep to recoup the losses of the drought years. The

decline in wool value has subsequently increased the relative value of the prime lamb industry but has brought about further changes in the flock structure. Many producers seeking to lower labour requirements and reduce costs have opted for the African breeds of shedding and dual purpose sheep. In broadacre farming prime lamb is seen as secondary to wool and grain, and this is unlikely to change until prime lamb production is given the equivalent of the comprehensive descriptions available to the wool and grain industries to extract a premium from the market.

The Australian Texel Stud Breeders Association is now a core of what could be called 'The True Believers' with 60 flocks. Most of the current membership has been with the association since Texels were introduced and they continue to invest in their breeding. Year after year they showcase Texels at the various state and national shows and dominate most of the carcass competitions. In 2004 new Texel genetics arrived in Australia from Scotland and these animals have now had an impact in Australia and New Zealand. Their pedigree carries all the most influential bloodlines of the British Texel flock to 1995 and they have integrated well to breed the type of Texel suited to Australian conditions. The sire was Kirtle Banker, the bloodlines include Annan Won o Won, Woodmarsh AllGold, Annan Ygorra, Netherkeir Blaze, Glenside Youre A Winner and numerous others still appearing in the pedigrees of today's UK champions.

2013 marks 20 years since Texels arrived in Australia and we have been allocated feature breed status at many major shows.

We believe we have a great deal to celebrate as Texels have been instrumental in demonstrating the value of improved yield and conformation in spite of the difficulty in gaining acceptance for these qualities.

Meat and Livestock Australia has identified the consumer's inconsistent and unsatisfactory eating experience as the greatest hurdle to increasing lamb consumption.

Texels have proved themselves in every instance as being able to deliver desirable product. The challenge now is to improve our connection with consumers.

OFFICIAL SPONSORS AND ALLIANCES

AUSTRALIAN STOCKYARD CO.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JULY 2013	
Friday, 19th	<i>Annual General Meeting at the National Hotel, Bendigo, Vic at 6 pm.</i>
Saturday, 20th	<i>Judging day Australian Sheep and Wool Show, Bendigo, Vic – Texels are the Feature Breed.</i>
Saturday, 20th	<i>20th Anniversary Celebration Dinner, The Boardwalk Restaurant, Cnr Lake Weerona and Nolan Street, Bendigo, Vic at 7 pm.</i>
Sunday, 21st	<i>Council Meeting, the National Hotel, Bendigo, Vic at 8 am.</i> <i>Junior judging at 8:30 am and interbreed judging at 11 am, Australian Sheep and Wool Show, Bendigo.</i>
Sunday, 28th	<i>Ballarat Sheep Show – Texels are the feature breed.</i>
AUGUST 2013	
Monday, 5th	<i>Main judging day at Hamilton Sheepvention, Vic.</i>
SEPTEMBER 2013	
Saturday, 7th	<i>Texel judging at the Royal Adelaide Show from 9:00 am. Texels share Feature Breed status.</i>
OCTOBER 2013	
Friday, 18th	<i>Main judging day, Royal Geelong Show, Vic.</i>

Members wishing to download this July 2013 newsletter should visit the Texel website at www.texel.org.au.

We encourage all members to send photos, editorial and show results to secretary@texel.org.au. Our publication is only as good as the material we receive, and we greatly appreciate the submission of new content.



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