

MERINO WORLD

NEWSLETTER OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF MERINO BREEDERS

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President's Message

As my two terms as president come to an end, reflection on the past eight years makes me very conscious of the wonderful friendships that have been forged and the generous hospitality shown to me over those years. Special thanks are extended to the marvellous people who have conveyed me around their areas and made possible my visits to their homelands. When one is far away from one's usual comfort zone, it is good to be among friends.

The unique versatility of the Merino has seen it withstand unseasonal conditions in some countries, negative media reports and less than favourable returns to woolgrowers in others. There has been a decline in wool production in most countries and some producers have moved into other agricultural opportunities, particularly grain and meat products.

Sheepmeat in particular has benefited from an ever-increasing worldwide demand. The Merino is the most populace sheep breed in the world - in addition to growing wool, it is the basis of lamb and meat production. As the Merino has the ability reproduce in all environments and grow a superior fibre along with its desirable meat traits, economists are now predicting an increase in both demand and price for wool and sheepmeat in the foreseeable future.

Wool - a superb natural fibre that meets all modern thinking on "green and clean" is on the way to becoming the fibre of choice for environmentally conscious consumers. With superior temperature and moisture control it is a natural thermal insulator with the capacity to reduce the world's reliance on heating from fossil fuels.

One can see that my enthusiasm for this incomparable animal has not waned! The challenge ahead for all of us is to build up our flocks so that we can secure a sustained, profitable future.

With this in mind I encourage readers of *Merino World* to attend the 8th World Merino Conference in France to learn about the most modern agricultural and breeding sciences available which will open up a new world of knowledge to delegates. Meeting and discussing the Merino industry with people from all over the world is an opportunity that should not be missed. Lifelong friends and memories will result.

The optional tours are recommended as an extension of this learning experience in the European climate.

During my term, with the limited resources available, I have endeavoured to visit most member countries to



On his recent trip to South America, president of the World Federation of Merino Breeders, Glen Keamy is pictured with Pablo Serres, president of the Asociacion Argentina Criadores de Merino at the Argentine association's office in Buenos Aires.

stimulate interest and promote the forthcoming conference and our great Merino industry generally.

I believe these efforts have been successful, most notably with France and Russia rejoining the Federation and then having the Kingdom of Lesotho become a new member. I remain optimistic that Xinjiang Province in China will soon be a financial member and there is a strong possibility that Romania and Brazil will also join.

I wish to congratulate the Bergerie Nationale and its organising committee on the comprehensive program they have put together which has something for everyone.

The contribution made to several past conferences and the World Federation secretariat by Carol King must be acknowledged with thanks as her pleasant and efficient co-operation has made my job easier and the Federation more accessible.

Thanks also go to Carol-Ann Malouf for the regular annual production of our newsletter which is the major communication vehicle for all members.

I look forward to meeting in a few weeks time in Rambouillet, this most historic town that is synonymous with the history of Merino sheep, with the Merino flock now 220 years since its foundation.

**Glen Keamy
President WFMB
February 2010**

The World Federation of Merino Breeders

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Australia's 2009 Supreme Ram

For the second consecutive year the title of Australian Supreme Merino Ram has gone to the finalist from the State of New South Wales. In what was an outstanding year for the Dunedoo-based Langdene stud of the Cox family, Langdene 4073 had been on a winning run since securing the title of champion August-shorn fine wool ram at the 2009 Great Southern Supreme Merinos Show in Canberra. Then followed grand champion fine wool ram at the Sydney Royal Easter Show (NSW) and supreme Merino at the Australian Sheep and Wool Show, Bendigo (Victoria) in July.



It was little surprise then that the 6-tooth, 17-micron ram appealed to judges at the last Rabobank National Merino Sheep Show in Dubbo, NSW.

Sired by Nerstane 43 and a daughter of Langdene 3219, the 2-year-old weighed in at 144 kg and stood out for his very bulky, stylish wool and deep body.

The 17-micron champion has since cut 13½kg of 17-micron wool.

Other State finalists for the title of 2009 Rabobank Australian Supreme Ram were Angenup, Kojonup (WA); North Ashrose Poll, Gulgarnare (SA); Oakbank, St Arnaud (Vic); Mt Ascot, Mitchell (Qld); and Leenavale, Sorell (Tas).



Nerstane 43's genetics were the talk of Dubbo with another of his progeny topping the sale at \$AU29,000 for the McLaren family of Nerstane, Woolbrook, NSW.

The ram, N59, tested at 18.9-micron, is a full embryo transfer brother to the Nerstane ram which sold to Uruguayan interests for the \$AU14,000 second top-price at the 2009 Armidale Housed Sale.

Top: Garry and Gordon Cox, Langdene, Dunedoo, NSW, and Patrick Lally (centre), Rabobank NSW State manager, with Langdene's 2009 Australian Supreme Merino Ram.

Bottom: Jock and Hamish McLaren, Nerstane, Woolbrook, NSW with their Dubbo sale-topper and Andrew Calvert, Launceston, Tasmania, who represented the syndicate of Tasmanian and Victorian buyers.

Wayne Jenkins photos

For news and information on
Australian Wool Innovation

www.wool.com.au

Review of Australian Merino Export Policy

Effective from January 1, the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has removed all restrictions on Australia's Merino export trade. This action is a result of a review undertaken by the department which culminated in the passage of Livestock Export (Merino) Repeal Order (No 1 of 2009).

The Australian government's export policy has been in place in various forms since 1929, but it has taken this action in the belief that the trade will operate more effectively as an industry self-regulation model and one that is independent of government regulation.

The Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders (AASMB) has undertaken to continue its role as the peak industry body that oversees the quality of Merinos for export. Its aim in a deregulated environment is to streamline the process to ensure quality as well as speed of delivery and payment.

The AASMB has prepared recommended guidelines on procedure for future export of Merino sheep and genetic material and these can be viewed on the "Export of Merinos" page of its website, www.merinos.com.au

Rams sold for Export from Australia 2009

Prices shown in Australian Dollars

Armidale 4 February	\$4000	2	
	\$3100	5	
	\$14,000	1	
	= 6		Uruguay
Adelaide 11 September	\$9000	1	
	\$6500	1	
	\$5000	1	
	= 3		Argentina
Total sold 2009		9	
+ semen donors		7	

Currency Conversion as at 5 February 2010

1.00	Australian Dollar (AUD) =
3.36	Argentine Peso (ARS)
1.64	Brazilian Real (BRL)
0.63	Euro (EUR)
4.17	French Franc (FRF)
173.12	Hungarian Forint (HUF)
6.64	Lesotho Loti (LSL)
1.26	New Zealand Dollar (NZD)
2.61	Romanian New Lei (RON)
26.42	Russian Rouble (RUB)
6.64	South African Rand (ZAR)
16.76	Uruguayan Peso (UYU)
0.88	US Dollar (USD)
5.98	Chinese Yuan Renminbi (CNY)

Optimism in Australian Wool Production Forecast

The long decline in Australian wool production appears to be steady according to the latest report from the Australian Wool Innovation Production Forecasting Committee. The committee's December 2009 report states that for the first time in nearly two years, consecutive wool production forecasts remain unchanged and there are signs in many states that sheep numbers are beginning to steady.

- Australian shorn wool production is forecast at 330mkg greasy in 2009/10, the same as the committee's July 2009 forecast. It is 32mkg greasy lower than the final estimate for the 2008/09 season.
- The final estimate for shorn wool production in 2008/09 is 362mkg greasy, a fall of 10 per cent compared with the 2007/08 season.
- Key statistics for 2009/10, including season-to-date AWTA wool tests, AWEX auction data and ABS wool receivals, point to a fall in production of around 30mkg greasy for the year, confirming the committee's July forecast.
- While seasonal conditions have been patchy around Australia, with some areas experiencing the best conditions in a decade and others still being very dry, the main issue is the number of sheep in Australia. There are signs in many states that sheep numbers are beginning to stabilise.
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics recently released its preliminary estimate of the number of sheep in Australia as at 1 July 2009, at 71.6 million head, down from 76.9 million head at 30 June 2008.
- However, the latest statistics from the ABS show that while sheep slaughterings in Australia are down 19% for the first four months of 2009/10 compared with the same period in 2008/09, lamb slaughterings are up by 6%. As well, the number of live sheep exported in the September 2009 quarter was down 27%. These figures suggest that the turn-off of adult sheep has slowed considerably.
- The Committee confirmed its July forecast that wool production in each state would fall in 2009/10 compared with 2008/09, except for Tasmania which is now expected to see a modest 3% rise in production due to better fleece weights, the result of good seasonal conditions and feed availability.
- The production of superfine wool will not drop by as much as previously expected. This is mainly due to poor seasonal conditions in the past six months in the two largest wool producing states of NSW and Western Australia.

Further information: www.wool.com.au/forecasts

8th World Merino Conference

Rambouillet, France - 2010



Early Bird Registration

Fast approaching, 28 February 2010 is the last date on which the reduced World Merino Conference registration rate will be available (550 euros).

This is also the closing date for requests for grants (see « General informations » on the conference website) and the last date on which Posters can be submitted to the Scientific Committee (see « posters » on the website).

If you are intending to visit the conference and have not already done so, we suggest that you register right now and, unless you reside in Australia or New Zealand, that you use the direct registration form on the conference website (go to « Registrations »). On this page you can also make bookings for pre and post Conference tours, hotel reservations, extra visits, the Paris evenings, etc.

The organising committee of the Bergerie Nationale assure us - "first arrived, first served"!

www.merinoscope2010.fr

For Australian and New Zealand delegates all enquiries and bookings regarding any travel or conference component, detailed itinerary, costs and bookings, contact Quadrant Australia by emailing

Barbara le Masle at
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or phone + 61 2 6772 9066

8th World Merino Conference Programme Brochure

The 32-page colour brochure that has been despatched worldwide to more than forty sheep producing countries and breeder associations can be downloaded from the conference website (www.merinoscope2010.fr). Copies can also be obtained by mail by emailing your details to merinoscope2010@gmail.com



Australian War Cemetery in the Somme Region

WMC Diary

Saturday 24 April - Saturday 1 May

Optional PRE-CONFERENCE TOUR (south-east France-Spain-Portugal)

Sat/Sun 1 & 2 May

Annual Wool Arts Festival. An annual international event bringing together artists and designers who use wool in their work - fashion design, jewellery, weaving, furniture, objets d'art etc.

Monday 3 May

Merinoscope, Bergerie Nationale

Tuesday 4 May

8th World Merino Conference Day 1

General Assembly of the World Federation of Merino Breeders

Gala Dinner

Wednesday 5 May

8th World Merino Conference Day 2

Thursday 6 May

Choice of a half day tour of Chartres or a half day technical visit in the Beauce Region and Chartres, returning to the Bergerie Nationale for the WOOLMARK special event.

Friday 7 May - Friday 14 May

Optional POST-CONFERENCE TOUR (eastern France-Germany-Rumania)

For accompanying persons (and participants) a variety of half day and full day tours are available and these can also be found in the Conference Programme.

They include a day in Paris (discovering Paris as a "Village") and/or a day discovering the great monuments; a half-day at Chartres; a half-day at Rambouillet.

Optional evening entertainments include a dinner show at the Moulin Rouge and a dinner cruise on the Seine River.



Est à Laine Merinos (Merinos of Eastern France).

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR - BERGERIE NATIONALE

For the director of the Bergerie Nationale it is a great honour to welcome the 8th World Merino Conference and it is also a signal honour for this site, home to such a long history associated with the Merino sheep breed.

Our flock has now been here for 220 years and its worldwide renown has contributed to both the image of the Bergerie Nationale and to the town of Rambouillet.

So today, when sustainable agriculture has become paramount in our minds, it is time to pay homage to an animal which represents so many historical, environmental, social and economic values.

The scientific stature of your work will demonstrate that sheep are not animals of the past. They remain the bearers of all those qualities that make their breeders a model for the future of our rural areas.

In the year 2010, this congress should mark the start of a new momentum in sheep raising, a sector that sometimes encounters difficulties. Let's talk about sheep, put them in the spotlight, and give sheep-breeding a progressive image that brings together all the strengths of our profession.

This is what our 8th World Merino Conference is all about, to honour the influence of the Merino breed around the world.

I wish all the attendees at the Conference a pleasant and fruitful stay and feel sure they will remember it as a historic moment.

Alain Sopena

Director - Bergerie Nationale de Rambouillet



Alain Sopena, director of the Bergerie Nationale de Rambouillet is pictured, seated on the right, in his "Napoleon" office with Jacques Giroux, Interbev Ovins (Sheep); Yves Chabert, secretary general of the 8th WMC; and Bernard Martin, honorary president of the FNO and Interbev Ovins, during the signing of one of the conference agreements.

Pierre Del Porto photo



Sure to be a popular destination while visiting Rambouillet (below), the nearby Palace of Versailles.



Sheep Breeding in Romania

Not only is a visit to Romania one of the highlights of the tour following the World Merino Conference, but also the Sheepbreeders' Association of Dobrogea (SAD) has been in contact with the secretariat of the WFMB and we look forward to meeting their delegates at the coming conference.

Dobrogea is a region in the south east of Romania located between the Danube River and the Balkan Sea with ideal country for sheep breeding. The rich vegetation and alternative fodder resources give a special quality to meat and dairy products and allow the breeding of a large number of sheep.

The SAD is a professional non-profit organisation representing the interests of 1500 sheep breeders from Constanza and Tulcea counties through 42 local associations.

The association's members run approximately half a million Merinos of Palas, Spaca, Carabase and Metisi, producing over 500,000 lambs annually for both domestic and other European markets. Sheep are bred for fattening and slaughter as well as for their wool and dairy products.

Benefits of membership of SAD for breeders include technical assistance, educational courses, participation in fairs and exhibitions, open days at the research institutes and meetings with representatives of local and national authorities. The association negotiates prices for members and also represents them in legislative issues relating to sheep breeding.

Overnight stays in Romania will be in Constanza and Bucarest with the days packed with tours of regional farms and research institutes as well as sightseeing.

Russia joins World Federation

The World Federation of Merino Breeders welcomes Russia as a member though that country's National Association of Sheep Breeders (NASB).

This non-commercial organisation was established in April 2008 and membership is currently 200, consisting of the largest and main sheep breeding enterprises in Russia as well as academic institutions and procuring and processing businesses.



The chairman of the board of directors and president of the association is Amerkhanov Kharon Adievich (pictured left) and the director-general is Egorov Mikhail Vasilievich.

The association's aim is the coordination and protection of the rights of

members, assistance in the organisation of selection-breeding, a scientific and technical information base and also methodical work directed to increasing the qualifications of the skilled worker.

Principal activities are:

- Presentation and protection of rights of members of the association to Government at all levels. Direction on legislative and financial support;
- Coordination of selected and breeding work in their sphere;
- Assistance in the attraction of investments, realisation of field marketing, search for partners and a sale market for members of the association;
- Information sharing with members of the association about the condition of the market, breeding and commodity output;
- Rendering of organised assistance to members of the association by assistance in preparing and increasing the qualification of skilled workers;
- Organising and holding exhibitions, seminars and conferences;
- Assistance in holding the research-practice, contemplation, generalisation and dissemination of main scientific achievements, best practices in the sheep-breeding sphere.

The traditional feast of Russian sheep breeders is celebrated at two annual exhibitions of breeding sheep in



Director-general of Russian's National Association of Sheep Breeders, Mikhail Egorov and president of the Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders, Tom Ashby, pictured in August last year at the National Sheep Show in Dubbo, NSW, Australia.

the Federal districts of South (at Ipatovo in the Stavropol region) and Siberia (at Chita). Approximately 100 enterprises take part in these exhibitions along with regional government agencies and specialists from the country's ministries of agriculture and all sheep breeding regions. International guests also participate.



Above and facing page: Images from recent seminars conducted by Russia's National Association of Sheep Breeders.

As well, conferences and round-table discussions are held at these exhibitions and development and improvements in breeding sheep and goats in the Russian Federation are among topics covered. The experience of the world's wool and mutton producers as well as selection, technology and marketing issues are all considered.

These activities are widely publicised through the media as well as on the association's website, www.rnsso.ru and in the association's newsletter, *Messenger of National Association of Sheep Breeders*.

As part of a Cooperative Agreement between the NASB and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Russian

Left: Some of the displays at the 11th Russian Agricultural Exhibition, "Golden Autumn", held in Moscow in October 2009.