

The Polwarth Round-up

May 2018

President's Piece

Vale Geoff Kemp

Sadly, after being unwell in recent times Geoff Kemp of Homeleigh Polwarth Stud passed away on 9th March 2018. A large group of family, friends, locals and Polwarth members gathered on 21st March to farewell Geoff in a service which celebrated his life.

The Homeleigh flock was founded in 1943 by Geoff's father Ted and registered as a stud in 1949. Both Ted and Geoff were president of the association; Ted from 1976-1978 and Geoff from 2012-2015. Both were awarded life membership; Ted in 1988 and Geoff in 2015.

Geoff was a keen supporter of the show circuit with many trips to Melbourne, Ballarat, Hamilton, Bendigo and Campbell Town in Tasmania. Homeleigh sheep were always extremely well presented, a craft Geoff learnt from his father Ted. In the years 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 Geoff and Michelle dominated the Bendigo show ring, winning Supreme Champion Polwarth. Their highest accolade came in 2013, when they won Supreme Long Wool Champion at the Australian Sheep and Wool Show (Bendigo) with Dodger, against the formidable opposition of the Border Leicesters and Corriedales. During this time they were dominant at all of the shows they attended. Michelle fondly remembers her daughter Kate spending hours and hours in the shed with Geoff preparing the show teams.

In the early 90's, Geoff sold two rams to South America. One had just won at the Melbourne Show. Geoff and Noel Littlejohn took advantage of the sale and followed the sheep over to their new home. However, selling rams locally was Geoff's bread and butter. He had a long list of clients who regularly bought rams over many years. Today, a number of Polwarth studs today have Homeleigh bloodlines in their flock.

In recent years, Geoff became a father figure for the Polwarth breed. He supported and was interested in breeders who were relatively new to Polwarths. Geoff played an integral part in supporting Catholic College Bendigo (now Catherine McAuley College) to establish their own Polwarth stud.

With Geoff's passing, Homeleigh Polwarth Stud will carry on through partners Andrew and Karen Williamson with Geoff's son Ross maintaining a strong interest.



Above: Geoff pictured with Dodger after winning the Supreme Longwool Champion in 2013 at the ASWS at Bendigo.

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Breaking News!

Polwarths — feature breed at the 2019 Australian Sheep & Wool Show

We are delighted to announce that the executive of the Australian Sheep and Wool Show (Bendigo) have supported our application to be a 'Feature Breed' at the 2019 show.

This is to coincide with the centenary year celebrations of the Polwarth Sheep Breeder's Association of Australia (1919-2019). The ASWS executive have also approved a ram sale to be held on the Sunday afternoon. A decision regarding the Ram Sale will be made at the General Meeting in July.

Challicum Polwarths

Inspect sheep prior to shearing!

Doug Hopkins from Challicum invites members to inspect his sheep prior to shearing in August. Please contact Doug on 03 5354 4238 for the opportunity to inspect and potentially purchase Polwarths from this stud

Polwarth youngsters in Expo

South Australian Sheep Expo

Sisters Nicole and Charlotte Walker of Riverview Polwarths travelled from Tasmania to participate in this year's South Australian Sheep Expo. They joined Kayla Starkey of Bel-Antha Polwarths for the three day live-in expo held from 18-20 April. Participants aged 12-23 years were divided into Junior, Intermediate and Senior sections. The program included hands-on sessions, demonstrations and presentations from leading industry experts.

The topics covered over the three days included:

- Wool- On Farm (Shearing, Wool Classing & Handling) and Off Farm (Processing, Marketing etc)
- Biosecurity & Animal Health
- Animal Assessment and Animal Handling (Young Judges)
- Commercial Ram Selection
- Nutrition
- Marketing
- Technology – Semen Quality and Assessment
- Genomics - Learning ASBV's
- Ram Select Workshops
- Farmers Challenge
- Sheep Handling
- Breed Societies and the different sheep breeds
- Industry, Education, Careers and Pathways

Participants were allocated a sheep to look after for three days and were assessed on this plus a number of other areas including sheep handling in the ring. Nicole (No. 24) competed in the Intermediate section and Charlotte (No. 12) and Kayla (No. 20) participated in the Senior sections. For the second year Kayla received 2nd Overall in the Senior section. Congratulations to Nicole, Charlotte and Kayla!



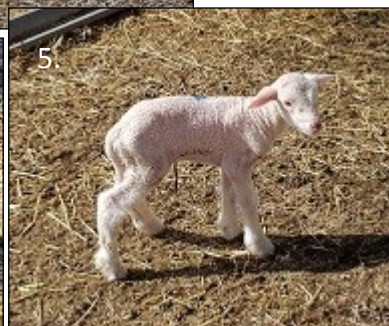
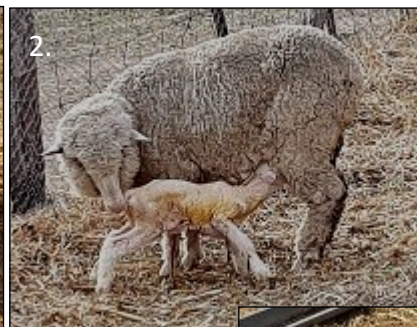
Polwarth Get-Together

What an enjoyable time we had when Polwarth members gathered in the Adelaide Hills on the weekend of the 21st and 22nd April. Four studs, all within 30 minutes of each other, hosted this year's get-together. We started at Mt Crawford (Kate and David Thorsteinsen and Sheila Gordon) in the morning and moved on to Bel-Antha (Lyll, Mary and Kayla Starkey) which included lunch. In the after-

noon we stopped by Narang (Peter Williams and Caroline Sanders) and finally called in at Woolyana Birdwood (Lauren Smith, Birdwood High School). At each of the studs, we looked at a selection of rams, ewes and hoggets and discussed breeding, bloodlines, wool, the season and endless other topics. That evening we enjoyed a delicious meal at the Mount Pleasant Hotel with time for more conversations. On Sunday morning, we met at Mt Crawford for an association General Meeting and light lunch. All too soon it was time to head home again. Special thanks to each of the studs, Mt Crawford, Bel-Antha, Narang and Woolyana Birdwood. Everyone put in a lot of time and effort to present their sheep and provide food and refreshments for the group—this was most appreciated!



A Narang lambing pictorial



1. Welcome to Narang little one
2. The first all important drink
3. Follow me
4. Let's rest for a bit
5. I'm starting to look pretty cute



Moorabbee Mutterings

A challenging six months for the Moorabbee flock. Spring "cut out" early and we commenced hand feeding some stock in November. The ewes went onto canola stubble late November/December with their hand feeding commencing in February. Hand feeding has been dominating life; home grown oaten hay (initially) and oats and too many bought in lucerne rolls for the last three months (thank goodness I retired late last year and now have the time to do it).

An A.I. program (in conjunction with Catherine McAuley College) was undertaken in late November utilising semen from Homeleigh sire EAK 82. The resultant progeny arrived late April and we're pleased with the results considering it was a "first ever" effort and the less than ideal conditions our ewes experienced throughout their pregnancy. The ewes that did not "take" to A.I. are lambing currently to the "follow up" sire with our remaining ewes due late May.



Bendigo received 18 ml of much needed rain in the first week of May. The highest rainfall event for the previous five months was 8 ml. a few days before Christmas. Further showers are forecast for this week (second week of May) so we're hopeful.

Haven't really given thought to exhibiting this year as yet. Hand feeding, lambing down and looking after the ewes and lambs is, and will continue to be the priority. My share farmer (and lucerne hay provider) will sow 180 acres of wheat on the canola stubble in coming weeks. This will result in too many sheep on too few paddocks. However, you can never have too many sheep so I guess that means I don't have enough paddocks.

Regards to all and hoping to see you at Bendigo in July.
Hilda & Peter (09.05.18)

Below: Following Geoff Kemp's service, President Greg Potter (right) presented Ross Kemp with Geoff's Life Membership badge at the Heathcote Golf Club. It was a touching moment for all present.



Right: The new display cabinet at Catherine McAuley College housing the perpetual trophies and Polwarth memorabilia.

