RIDGWAY ADVANCE - BREEDING the MODERN MERINO

David & Karen Ridgway, principals of the Ridgway Advance Merino and Poll Merino studs, are among those who have tremendous faith in the Merino industry – and with their vision and passion they are confident the future has bright prospects.

DAVID AND KAREN RIDGWAY, principals of the Ridgway Advance Merino and Poll Merino Studs with some of their young 2008 sale rams.

Properly-planned breeding programs, mostly involving the use of artificial insemination, form the cornerstone of the rapidly-growing popularity of the Ridgway family's Ridgway Advance stud.

David and Karen Ridgway are based in the Senior area 32 kilometres north of Bordertown in South Australia's South East. They have other holdings 15km north of Bordertown, at Joanna, south east of Naracoorte and at Lameroo in the Southern Mallee.

The Ridgway Advance Stud over the last decade has established a distinctive and uniform genotype. The philosophy of stud principals, David & Karen Ridgway has been to combine frame, constitution and elite wool fibre, while not compromising carcass attributes or wool cut.

The Ridgway Advance Modern Merino is bred to have plain, supple and highly productive skins, which results in a thriving robust animal with great carcass attributes producing elite soft wool.

These wrinkle free, plain bodied sheep have very good fertility and mothering capabilities ensuring low maintenance in all climatic conditions.

The favourable plain breech traits of the Modern Merino has allowed for mulesing to be phased out altogether. Another advantage is the ease of shearing. The well aligned cylindrical fibre enables the hand piece to comb through the fleece easily.

Establishing a genotype over 10 years

David and Karen Ridgway have always aimed to produce sheep with a loose pliable skin with long-stapled white wools. They have been careful not to sacrifice wool cuts and to retain the large South Australian frame.

The mulesing debate has given this type of sheep a strong push in recent years and for the first time this year the Ridgway's dispensed with the mulesing shears.

Of the 1700 ewes in the Ridgway Advance flock, 1500 are mated by AI with proven outside sires and top home-bred rams targeted to produce uniform lines of sheep.

"We are moving forward by introducing genotypes, still with our basic ideals well-and-truly in mind – and in the process we are creating our own genotype," David said.

"Visitors to our ram sale on August 13 will be able to see for themselves that there is very little difference from Lot 1 to Lot 130."

Basically, Ridgway Advance is trying to simplify Merino breeding within the flock and for its clients.

The stud aims to supply big-framed, plain-bodied, fertile rams with strong constitutions and bone, carrying long-stapled, free-growing, white wools in the 17-20-micron range with low standard deviation.

"We have never lost sight of the fact that today's Merinos have to possess dual-purpose characteristics and that the meat side of the equation is of paramount importance in combating some of the claims being made by other breeds," David said.

"We haven't chased fads, just gone down the path we firmly believe is the right one for our clients and the sheep industry as a whole."

Leading figures have this to say …

BILL WALKER, ***Merino classer & consultant, Classings Ltd.***

With every inspection of Advance rams and ewes it is now obvious what sets this stud apart from any rival.

It is the silky, free, soft pliable skins which are capable of producing unparalleled staple length and density providing maximum production. This in combination with large, plain bodies ensures a carcass that is plain breeched to tackle today's, often confusing mulesing issues.

Following previous successes, this year's sale team is recognised by the increased depth of the top end animals. These new era rams, bred with little waste, make it easy to fill up on property, Classings Classic and now Hamilton Ram Sale pens with exciting animals to influence stud and commercial flocks nationwide.

By reducing the spread of genetic influence over the last few years and now centring on a genuine frame/fibre genotype, it's hard not to recommend this stud's aggressive-approach and eagerness to produce the ideal animal for an ever demanding, intelligent client.

SA sheep consultant **– BRIAN JEFFERIES**

David and Karen Ridgway have focused their breeding programs on producing large, plain-bodied rams with balance that are covered with the elite SRS-type wools. The stud's rams are true dual-purpose animals, well adapted to both dry and higher rainfall areas. These sheep, of good conformation, free of wrinkles, do not require mulesing. It is true to say that the Ridgway Advance stud has advanced as rapidly as any other stud of which I am aware. Its meteoric rise has been largely due to the studmaster's vision in pursuing sheep which have all the attributes of the Modern Merino.

Landmark stud stock manager, SA./auctioneer **– MALCOLM SCROOP**

Ridgway Advance stud has enjoyed tremendous success, formed a strong clientele, and the principles conduct a spectacular on-property ram auction. The 2008 sale in August highlights another exciting year with the sale rams looking as good as ever and more of them to satisfy the growing demand, from all areas of Australia.

A big point in the stud's favour is its strong push towards balance, constitution, strong bone and sound feet. I have been involved as auctioneer and sole selling agent at this auction since its inception and can strongly recommend the stud's rams to sheep producers. If you are looking for a direction, great backup and good people to deal with, then Ridgway Advance is your stud.

Ridgway Advance 2008 Calendar

- **July 18-20:** Australian Sheepbreeders Association Show, Bendigo, Victoria
- **July 22:** South-East Merino Field Days displaying at Keith showgrounds
- **July 25:** Mallee Field Day, displaying at Karoonda oval
- **August 4 & 5:** Hamilton, Vic., Sheepvention, offering a pen of five rams
- **August 13:** Ridgway Advance On-Property ram auction, offering 160 rams – 1.00 pm (SA time), 10.30 inspection auctioneer- Malcolm Scroop/Landmark
- **October 3:** Classings Classic ram sale, Murray Bridge

Enquires & Inspections Welcome – **David & Karen Ridgway**
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A SELECTION of the 2008 Ridgway Advance sale rams on the Senior property, Bordertown, SA.

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RIDGWAY ADVANCE
BREEDING THE MODERN MERINO

'THE GENETIC LINE of MERINOS'
ANSWERING ALL TODAY'S MANAGEMENT DEMANDS
Auction WEDNESDAY
13th August 2008
Bordertown - 160 Rams

David & Karen Ridgway
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