

Shirlee Downs

PRIME SAMM
Quairading, WA



Annual Prime SAMM Sale
25 Pure Prime SAMM Rams
incorporating
14th Annual Production
Poll Dorset Sale
Monday, September 17
at 1.00pm

Grand champion and
reserve champion ewe exhibits –
2007 Wagin Woolorama



Quairading Ram Sale
Tuesday, September 11

Showing:
Perth Royal Show
September 29 to October 7, 2007

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SAMMs prosper in Victoria

PRODUCER PROFILE (Vic)

PRODUCING fine wool has always been on the agenda for John and Cheryl MacPherson, but they saw no harm in capitalising on the lucrative lamb market.

The MacPherson's property, Atholton, is located between Geelong and Ballarat.

John started out farming there in 1980, although he was farming for four years prior.

They now own 348ha and lease about another 348ha, over which they run their sheep and cropping enterprise.

Cheryl works full time in Geelong and John concentrates on the main focus of his venture, which is growing fine wool.

This year, they shored 4000 head, including lambs and the 200 Prime SAMM F1 ewes measured in at 20.5 micron, with the lambs at 19 micron.

Four years ago when the wool market was not going so well, John and Cheryl made the decision to diversify into Prime SAMMs.

This decision was made easier by the fact that John's uncle, Ron MacPherson, owned Rosemere Prime SAMM stud in NSW — allowing him access and breed knowledge to established genetics.

"My Uncle told me that they had good quick growth rates and I must admit they are very fertile sheep," he said.

"The new lambs grow extremely quickly and after a few weeks they noticeably tower over their Merino equivalent.

"They have strong constitutions and as lambs are very easy to manage."

John said although the bulk of their enterprise was still Merinos, this year they have joined 400 Merino ewes to Prime SAMM sires — more than they ever had before.

The F1 Prime SAMMs will then have a Poll

Dorset put over them.

So far, John said the Prime SAMM breed had worked out very well for him.

"With mating the Prime SAMMs over the Merino ewes we've found that we get good twinning and joining percentage," he said.

"Last year's F1 Prime SAMM maiden ewes were joined with a Poll Dorset ram.

"These ewes were pregnancy tested but because of the small number they were not tested for twins.

"Surprisingly though, we had quite a few twins pop up."

John generally culls any dry sheep, although the maidens are usually given another mating.

However, he said he has not had to cull many of his F1 ewes as they were very efficient in the fertility department.

They recently scanned a mob of 400 ewes which had been run with four Prime SAMM rams and from that mob only 18-20 scanned dry.

"I like the growth rate of the Prime SAMMs, we have had some F1 Prime SAMM wethers as high as 62kg at 10 months old when weighed in June," he said.

"I'd say the average would be in the mid to high forties, but they've been on pellets.

"We did the same thing last year and averaged 52pc yield off pellets."

John said introducing Prime SAMMs into his enterprise had definitely increased the profitability.

"You're selling a few lambs for good money and they're not here for a terribly long time," he said.

"When we get back into better seasons we'll probably do a lot better — I don't like feeding them on pellets but even with the higher grain prices it has been worth it."

Like many producers across Australia, John has experienced a few tough seasons, but has found that the Prime SAMMs stood up very well.