

96/W07



## Producer Research Support

### Crossbred ewes may flourish in WA

Beacon Prime Lamb Producer Group



### The project

Prime lamb producers in the higher rainfall areas of WA have expressed interest for twinning ewes. What might slow the adoption rate is limited interest from lower rainfall woolgrowers to mate their Merinos to twinning sires to produce crossbred ewes.

The work of the Beacon Group and the results produced are known to most WA sheep producers.

### Objectives

1. Evaluate Finn x Merino and Border Leicester/Booroola x Merino crossbred sheep for sheepmeat production;
2. Develop management systems utilising legume crops and stubbles for sheepmeat production;
3. Extend results to as wide an audience as possible and encourage implementation of efficient sheep production systems; and
4. Production boost from Finn and Booroola Leicester-cross ewes in WA.

### What was done

The performance of the progeny of Finn and Booroola Leicester rams joined to Merino ewes was compared from birth to 30 months of age. Production of lambs and wool was measured. Table 1 shows the results.

**Table 1.**

Number of lambs marked from 100 Finn-Merino 100 Border Leicester-Merino		
Age of Lambs	Finn-Merino	Finn-Merino
12 months	81	86
24 months	157	138
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>224</b>
Wool cut from lambs (kg)		
Age of Lambs	Finn-Merino	Finn-Merino
7 months	275	275
19 months	430 (25 micron)	450 (28 micron)
30 months	475 (24 micron)	480 (28 micron)

The increased use of twinning breeds over Merino ewes could be expected in the next few years matings in Western Australia as a result of this Producer Research Support project.

### Key points

- Prime lamb producers in the higher rainfall areas of WA have shown interest for twinning ewes.
- Texel Booroola Leicester-Merino lambs were 2 kg heavier than lambs from Finn-Merinos when the first raft was sold. They also had 20% more fat score 4 carcasses.

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## Producer Research Support

MLA Producer Research Support offers support funding of up to \$15,000 over three years for groups of producers keen to be active in on-farm research and demonstration trials.

These activities include:

- Producer Initiated Research and Development
- More Beef from Pastures demonstration trials
- Prime Time Wean More Lambs demonstration trials
- Sustainable and productive grazing grants.

Contact Gerald Martin  
Producer Research Support Coordinator.

Tel 08 8556 2900 or  
[producersupport@mla.com.au](mailto:producersupport@mla.com.au)

## MLA also recommends

### EDGENetwork

EDGENetwork offers practical field-based workshops to improve productivity and profitability for the long-term.

Workshops cover breeding, nutrition, grazing management, marketing and selling.

Call MLA on 1800 993 343 or  
[www.edgenetwork.com.au](http://www.edgenetwork.com.au)

## Meat & Livestock Australia

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July 2006 / PIRD OUTCOMES

## What happened?

The Texel Booroola Leicester-Merino lambs were 2 kg heavier when the first draft was sold. They also had 20% more fat score 4 carcasses.

The financial returns from meat and wool over the 30 months was remarkably similar at \$11,000 and \$10,800 for the Finn and Booroola Leicester respectively.

The ewes of both breeds were large framed, easy to manage and had low mortality.

Of the six active group members five are using Finn or Booroola Leicester rams.

The trial ewes have been bought by a group member and will lamb again in July-August.

## Discussion

The trial results were displayed at the Merredin Research Station Field Day (low rainfall area), Avondale Station and Jerramungup Scientific Day (high rainfall areas).

Radio interviews were broadcast over the two major regional rural services.

Articles were published in:

- Ovine Observer — a newsletter of the Sheep Meat Group of Western Australia;
- Countryman — a rural weekly with the largest readership in Western Australia; and
- Agribusiness Decisions — a widely read periodical produced by consultants.

The findings of the first project have led in part to significant changes in the time of lambing and the use of lupin stubbles for weaners.

The findings of the second project are well known within the sheep industry and some increased utilisation of the twinning breeds could be expected at the following years.