

Free rams spark switch to SAMMS

BEING given three Prime SAMMs four years ago marked the beginning of a new relationship with the breed for Perenjori farmers Paul and Janice Spencer.

The couple farm 3500 hectares with a spilt of 75 per cent crop and 25pc sheep.

Prior to being given the three Prime SAMM rams, the Spencers ran a pure Merino operation but after seeing the results of one mating they knew they had to change direction.

"We used the three rams over 100 ewes and ended up with a 115pc lambing," Paul said.

"We sold the offspring from the mating and were very happy with the results we achieved.

"Compared to our Merinos they gave us another income given the wool market wasn't improving.

"It was basically a case of the Merinos not returning anything but the prime lambs were."

It was at this point the Spencers decided to take the plunge and began mating all their Merinos to Prime SAMMs.

This year they mated 650 ewes, comprising of 200 first cross Prime SAMM ewes and 450 Merino ewes, with the Merino ewes being gradually phased out.

Next year the Spencers intend to mate 450 first cross Prime SAMM ewes.

In an area where the average rainfall is 312mm the Spencers have always achieved good lambing percentages.

Paul said he had achieved 100pc in the Merinos using the rams at 4pc, but he found he can use the Prime SAMM rams at 3pc for a couple of cycles and achieve 100pc.

"Last year we averaged 109pc lambing, while this year when there was no feed at lambing we still managed 104pc," Paul said.

The change to Prime SAMMs was not that hard for the Spencers as they were not too far removed from the Merino in terms of wool quality and it was the breed's wool traits, combined with their meat value, which Paul liked.

"With the Prime SAMM you get the best of both worlds with meat and wool," Paul said.

"Their dual purpose aspect was certainly appealing to us."

The Spencers drop their lambs in mid April and last year sold their first draft in September at 50kg.

But the best part, Paul said, was they had sold all of their lambs before Christmas for a \$92 average.

When it came to the wool off their hoggets last year the Prime SAMM wool bought more than the Merino wool.

"Our first-cross hoggets averaged 21 microns and I am keen to maintain our wool quality, so I do go for the wool traits when I select our rams," Paul said.

When it comes to handling, Paul said the Prime SAMM was a different natured sheep and a lot quieter to handle.

"They are lot easier to handle and more docile. You can drive through the lambs in the middle of the paddock and they don't run away," Paul said.

"They have a different attitude."

Another aspect of the breed which Paul likes is its easy care traits and docile nature.

At this stage the Spencers are more than happy with their decision to make the change to Prime SAMMs and are aiming to breed up to a pure Prime SAMM flock.



WA Prime SAMM members

ARRA-DALE Perenjori
08 9971 5026
ARMCO Gingin
0417 957 583
BILLABONG York
08 9641 2215
BRYN-AWELON
Kellerberrin
08 9045 9025
BULBARLI Toodyay
0429 687 440
CAPOLINGA Kondinin
08 9889 1110
COONIGAN Wickiepin
08 9888 1140
CRYSTAL RIDGE
Kojonup
08 9833 1237
CULLAM Jerramungup
08 9835 1021
ENOKURRA HILLS
Mingenew
08 9972 6033
GRACEFIELD Katanning
08 9821 2818
GULNARE
Dumbleyung
08 9863 4116
HAMPSURE Esperance
0427 715 751
HONI MONI Cunderdin
08 9626 2092
MULLOORINA
Wongan Hills
08 9672 1007
MURRAY Beverley
08 9646 1336
QUINTARRA Esperance
0427 711 376
ROCKDALE Dumbleyung
08 9863 4182
ROMILLY HILLS Beverley
08 9647 1055
ROYSTON Jerramungup
08 9835 4036
SANDOWN Badgingarra
08 9315 4114
SHIRLEE DOWNS
Quairading
08 9645 0212
SPRINGDALE York
08 9641 1438
SUNNYSIDE Nyabing
08 9823 5022
THORNTON PARK
Brookton
08 9642 4038
TIARRI Lake Grace
08 9871 9040
URALLA Pingaring
08 9866 8053
WENDALLA Mogumber
08 9651 9072

Contact your nearest
Prime SAMM
breeder
to find out more
about the breed.

