



Ewes for the future

– lambs, wool & profit

The trial aims to determine the merits of alternative sheep breeds for prime lamb and wool production.

There are 210 ewes from 5 breeds. Each breed is represented by 42 ewes from 3 properties or 14 ewes per property.

The breeds are:

1. XB ewes, from 'SuperBorder' rams
2. Merinos, Peppin type from Loddon Valley studs
3. Centre Plus merinos
4. Dohne
5. SAMM

Key cooperating sponsors:



Product support sponsors:



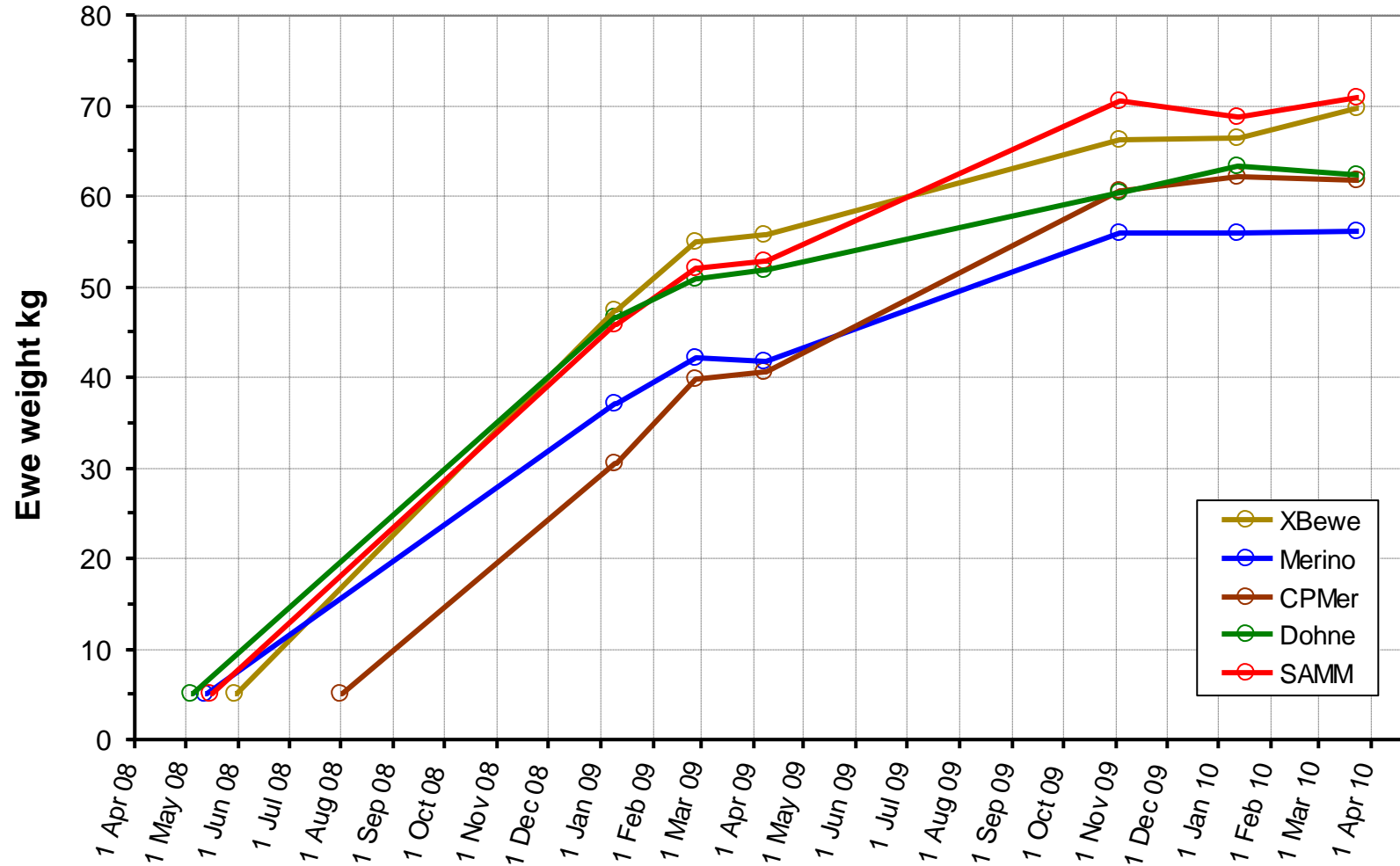
This report, 23 July 2010, covers the pregnancy scanning and lambing results from the first two years. Previous reports in November 2009 and April 2010 cover other measurements.

These are early results from young ewes that were born over a four month period and reared in very different environments until January 2009. It is too early to draw any comparative conclusions about differences between groups. The Elmore Field Days sheep trials committee need to script read results before they are passed on to the media by participating groups. They are concerned that selected information may be used out of context without presenting the full situation and results. When breed groups use the results in their promotions it is expected the Elmore Field Days will be acknowledged.

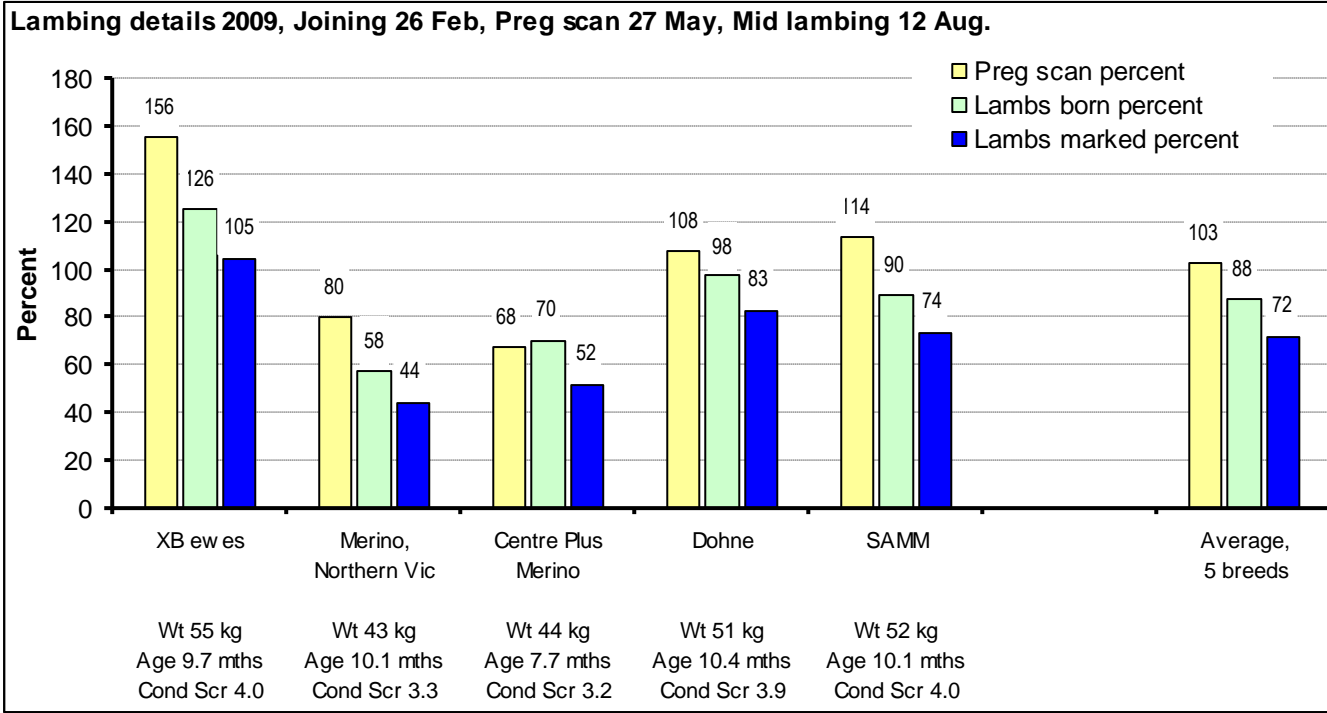
Elmore Field Days: Ewes for the future – lambs, wool & profit

Average weights at birth and weights on 8Jan09, 26Feb09, 8Apr09, 3Nov09, 12Jan10, 24Mar10

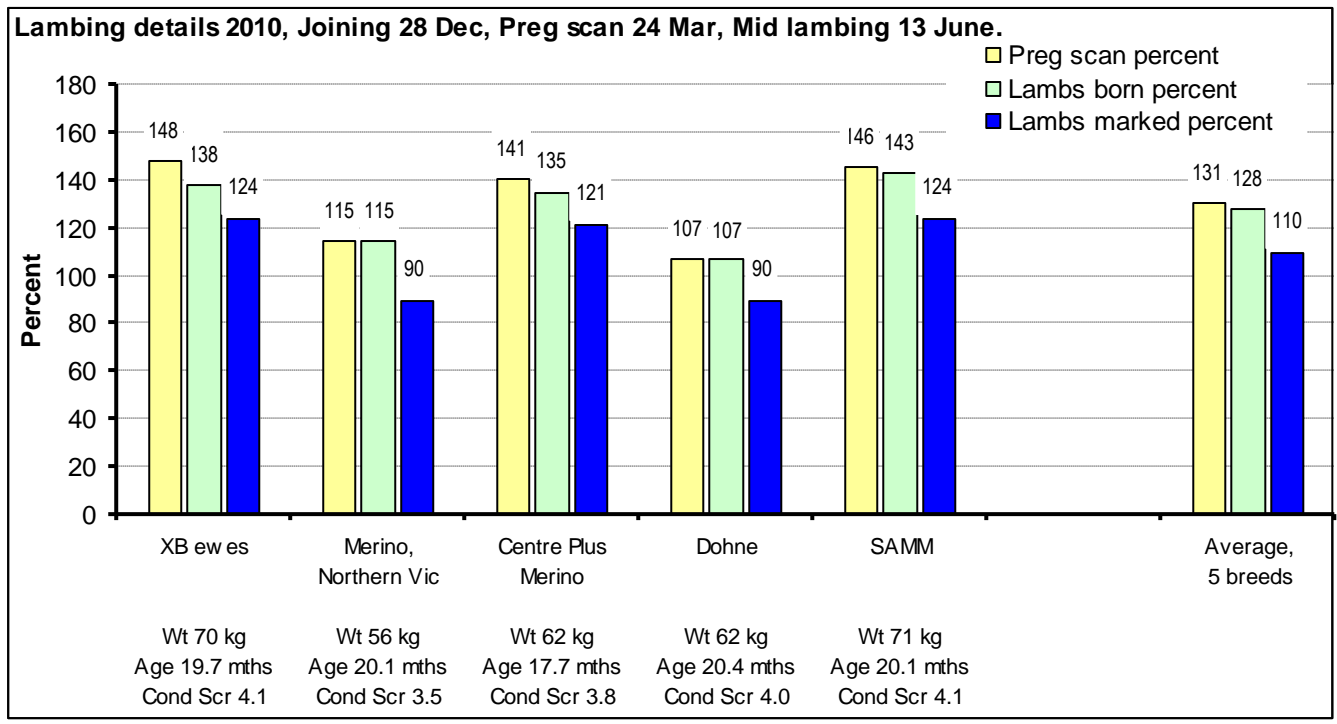
Note: The sloping line indicates the average weight gain of each group over time. An assumed birth weight of 5kg was assumed for all teams. The average birth date was determined after discussions with the breeder of each team.



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Cause of lamb death summary for the 2009 and 2010 lambings. DPI vets at Bendigo were involved in post mortem examination of dead lambs.

Cause of death	Number of lambs 2009	Percentage 2009	Number of lambs 2010	Percentage 2010
Dystocia	10	32%	18	49%
Mis-mothered and starvation includes stronger twins	9	29%	9	24%
Still born, but not dystocia	8	26%	1	3%
Small and weak, includes premature and very weak twins	2	6%	2	5%
Predation (fox or dog)	2	6%	3	8%
Exposure	0		1	3%
Unknown	0		3	8%
Total	31	100%	37	100%

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Pregnancy scanning results over first two joinings 27May2009 & 24Mar2010

	2009 breeding season as ewe lambs, only lambs over 37 kg were joined. Ewes joined 26 Feb2009. Average age at mid joining for all groups is 9.7 months							2010 breeding season. Ewes joined 28Dec2009. Average age of all groups at joining is 20 months						
Team	Ewe lamb age at mid joining, for 2009 joining. (joined shortly after arriving at field day site) Age in months	Average weight of joined lambs during joining (lambs too light to join not included in this average) kg	Number of lambs not joined (37 kg or less)	Pregnancy scanning result for joined lambs only. Number of foetus per ewe joined	Ewes scanned as dry, (percentage of ewes joined)	Ewes scanned as carrying singles, (percentage of ewes joined)	Ewes scanned as carrying twins or triplets, (percentage of ewes joined)	Ewe age at mid joining, for 2010 lambing Age in months	Average weight of ewes at joining on 12Jan2010	Condition score at pregnancy scanning on 24Mar2010	Pregnancy scan results 24Mar2010 Number of foetus per ewe joined	Ewes scanned as dry, (percentage of ewes joined)	Ewes scanned as carrying singles, (percentage of ewes joined)	Ewes scanned as carrying twins or triplets, (percentage of ewes joined)
XB ewe	9.7	55.3	0	1.56	2.4%	39.0%	58.5%	19.7	69.8	4.1	1.48	4.8%	42.9%	52.4%
Merino	10.1	42.9	6	0.80	25.7%	62.9%	8.6%	20.1	56.1	3.5	1.15	9.8%	65.9%	24.4%
CentrePlus	7.7	44.1	19	0.68	47.6%	42.9%	14.3%	17.7	61.8	3.8	1.41	4.9%	48.8%	46.3%
Dohne	10.4	51.4	0	1.08	15.4%	61.5%	23.1%	20.4	62.3	4.0	1.07	12.2%	68.3%	19.5%
SAMM	10.1	52.4	0	1.14	16.7%	52.8%	30.6%	20.1	70.8	4.1	1.46	0.0%	56.1%	43.9%
Overall	9.6	49.2	25	1.03	18.6%	52.3%	29.1%	19.6	64.2	3.9	1.31	6.3%	56.3%	37.4%

Notes:

- Ewe lambs weighing 37 kg or less were not joined for the 2009 lambing.
- The 2009 pregnancy scanning result was related to the age of the lambs and their average weight, this is a reflection of their management before they were delivered to the Elmore Field Days. The lambs' early life on their home farm would be expected to have a lesser effect in future years.

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Lambing results for the first two lambings in July-August 2009 and June-July 2010

	2009 breeding season as ewe lambs, only lambs over 37 kg were joined. Ewes joined 26 Feb2009. Average age at lambing for all groups is 1 year 3 months						2010 breeding season. Ewes joined 28Dec2009. Average age of all groups at lambing is 2 years 1 month					
Team	Ewe lamb age at mid joining, for 2009 joining. (joined shortly after arriving at field day site) Age in months	Average weight of joined lambs during joining (lambs too light to join not included in this average) kg	Number of lambs not joined (37 kg or less)	Pregnancy scanning result for joined lambs only. Number of foetus per ewe joined	Lambs born percentage (lambs per ewe joined and present at start of lambing)	Lambs marked percentage (lambs per ewe joined and present at start of lambing)	Ewe age at mid joining, for 2010 lambing Age in months	Average weight of ewes at joining on 12Jan2010	Condition score at pregnancy scanning on 24Mar2010	Pregnancy scan results 24Mar2010 Number of foetus per ewe joined	Lambs born percentage (lambs per ewe joined and present at start of lambing)	Lambs marked percentage (lambs per ewe joined and present at start of lambing)
XB ewe e	9.7	55.3	0	156%	126%	105%	19.6	69.8	4.1	148%	138%	124%
Merino	10.1	42.9	6	80%	58%	44%	20.1	56.1	3.5	115%	115%	90%
CentrePlus	7.7	44.1	19	68%	70%	52%	17.4	61.8	3.8	141%	135%	121%
Dohne	10.4	51.4	0	108%	98%	83%	20.3	62.3	4.0	107%	107%	90%
SAMM	10.1	52.4	0	114%	90%	74%	20.0	70.8	4.1	146%	143%	124%
Overall	9.6	49.2	25	103%	88%	72%	19.5	64.2	3.9	131%	128%	110%

Notes:

- Ewe lambs weighing 37 kg or less were not joined for the 2009 lambing.
- The 2009 pregnancy scanning result was related to the age of the lambs and their average weight, this is a reflection of their management before they were delivered to the Elmore Field Days. The lambs' early life on their home farm would be expected to have a lesser effect in future years.
- Lambs born are the total of lambs marked plus the dead lamb pickup for each mob. Lambing ewes were inspected twice daily during lambing.
- In 2009 the number of lambs born (168) was below the number of lamb foetuses scanned (196). This may be for several reasons including (i) the scanning result over-estimated the number of lambs, (ii) some lamb foetuses were absorbed by their mothers, no abortions were apparent at flock inspections and supplementary feedings, or (iii) some lambs were taken by predators and not counted as being born, this is unlikely as the lambing ewes were inspected twice daily in their small lambing paddocks. In 2010 the association between number of foetuses scanned and lambs born was much closer.

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