

SAMMs offer

TOP MATERNAL TRAITS

By PAULA THOMPSON

PASTORALIST Stephen McKeough started using Prime SAMMs more than a decade ago and has been so impressed by their performance he has stuck with them.

Mr McKeough farms in the Dawson/Cavenagh area, east of Orroroo and north of Peterborough.

While he predominantly runs a Merino self-replacing flock based on Collandra North bloodlines, SAMM rams are used to breed replacement ewes with good hybrid vigour.

"I started using SAMMs 15 years ago as a trial," he said.

"I used to be all purely Merino but the mulesing issue was the catalyst for looking into other breeds. I still wanted to stay in wool but was looking at reducing the skin."

Mr McKeough's flock is about 25 per cent SAMM.

He has been using rams from Peter and Kristen Fielding's Sunnybrae stud at Peterborough since it was established, starting with private selection and then buying at their on-property auction.

"The main reason I've stuck with them is because they have great emphasis on wool quality," he said.

"There really hasn't been any loss in wool cut since moving to SAMMs."

Mr McKeough has also been a long-time client of Collandra North Merinos at Tumby Bay.

"They're just good quality rams," he said.

"They're well-framed rams with well-nourished wool."

Mr McKeough said low birthweights followed by good weight gains were a feature of SAMM lambs.

"What I've noticed is, when they're born they're tiny, so it's easy lambing, but once they hit the ground, they explode," he said.

This year, his first draft was sent off at 16 to 17 weeks old as sucker lambs.

"In the last few years, with meat prices so good, the added carcase of the SAMMs has been a real bonus," he said.

"The wool cut is just as good with SAMMs, so you've got those dual-purpose qualities."

"Lambing percentages are consistently 20pc better in the ewes with SAMM in them."

Mr McKeough said the mothering ability of SAMMs also stood out.



STRONG PERFORMERS: Stephen McKeough, Dawson, has been using Prime SAMMs for more than a decade and says they are strong performers, offering good weight gains and mothering attributes.

"SAMMs are noticeably better mothers," he said. "SAMM lambs also don't seem to stray as far from their mothers."

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— STEPHEN MCKEOUGH

Mr McKeough generally sells his wether lambs through the Jamestown saleyards.

"I've recently started selling wether lambs off-property to feedlotters," he said.

"There's good demand from feedlotters due to that bit of SAMM in them."

Young ewes have been sold at the Yelta, Vic, saleyards in the past few years, if they are not sold on-property.

"Yelta opens the ewes up to a broader expanse of buyers from Vic and NSW," he said.

Mr McKeough does a cull of young ewes in autumn.

"That way anything that looks a bit bare in the wool is drafted off and sold at Dublin as a fat lamb," he said.

While the lambs are generally just paddock-run, Mr McKeough recently started supplementary feeding with pellets to finish them off.

"It gives a bit of backgrounding for the feedlotters," he said.

"It's a good selling point, that they're already used to feeders."

In the past two years, he has been using Beachport Liquid Minerals products to help his flock best utilise the feed available to them.

He has also been using Eweguard for the past 10 years.

"I use it at shearing time, because it's easy to administer and it's definitely making a difference to them," he said.