

Partnership pays off for sheep-breeding groups

Banding together has proved a bonus for two groups of Australian sheep producers.

The members of Superwhites and Meat Elite Australia have found that by working together they can produce better results quicker.

Meat Elite Australia is a collection of about 19 Poll Dorset breeders from throughout Australia, while Superwhites is made up of a similar number of White Suffolk breeders.

President of Meat Elite Australia, Dale Price from 'Majardah Poll Dorsets' Glencoe, South Australia, said the group gathered to share genetics and speed up flock progress.

"We're working collaboratively to improve the quality of our sheep by an objective measure," Mr Price said.

"By working together we find our genetic gain is a lot quicker.

"Our new members have found they make massive jumps when they first join.

"We have access to genetics that as an individual breeder we might find difficult."

Chair of Superwhites, Troy Fischer of 'Ashmore' Wasleys, South Australia, agreed that by banding together producers could improve the genetics of their flocks.

"Our group represents 3000 White Suffolk rams sold each year," Mr Fischer said.

"We identify the best genetics and make sure they perform in common conditions.

"By sharing resources we're spreading the risks across 18



□ Ian Gillett of 'Wunna Murra Poll Dorsets' Jerilderie, Victoria, Meat Elite Australia president Dale Price of 'Majardah' Glencoe, SA and Angus Kelly of 'Marocara' Wongarbron.

breeders instead of individuals taking it all on."

Each group works with their breeders to test their flocks and record the results, with members collecting information such as birth and weaning weights.

"We're (Superwhites) the leading terminal sire breeders in Australia in measurement," Mr Fischer said.

"We've found that we've shortened the length of time to produce lambs by as much as a month," Mr Price said.

"In times of changing seasons this will be a big plus.

"We're working with the

Sheep CRC (Collaborative Research Centre) to improve feed efficiency."

The two groups share common ideals and meet up once a year for an annual conference with talks from industry leaders.

This year they met in central west NSW, touring farms near Dubbo, Parkes and Cowra.

Mr Price said by working together they had access to specialists in the field that individual breeders might not be able to obtain.

"It's important for the lamb industry to continue to move forward to meet the demands of our consumers," he said.



□ Dubbo district livestock officer (sheep and wool) Edward Joshua and George Spring of 'Ardoe' Katandra, Victoria.



□ ABOVE: George Carter of 'Linton' Walcha and Richard Hawken of 'Thurlstone' Cookamidgera via Parkes.

□ LEFT: Rodney Watt of 'Felix Rams' Cowra, Phil Clothier of 'Woolumbool' Lucin Park, South Australia and Damon Coats of 'Ilfracombe' Donald, Victoria.

Cowra Turf at the Central West Garden Expo

Cabonne on show at expo

Cabonne will be on show as part of the Outdoor and Garden Expo.

Cabonne council is showcasing a diverse range of products made in the shire to promote and recognise the outstanding

number of producers and manufacturers within Cabonne Country. Wineries, olive growers, artists and producers are on show as well as displays of the shire's unique history and tourist information.

An estimated 3000 to 4000 visitors are expected to attend the expo at Borenore, with ABC's *Gardening Australia* personalities Angus Stewart and Meredith Kirton guest speakers.

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