



Monaro Farming Systems

Merino Genetic Comparison Trial - 2015 to 2018

RULES AND CONDITIONS

1. A wether trial sub-committee comprising of Monaro Farming Systems Board Members, MFS Project Officer and NSW DPI representatives will oversee the trial, under the chairmanship of the trial convenor (Mick Schofield, “Caringo”).
2. The Trial will be run over a three-year period. i.e. over three shearings, the first in 2015 and the final in 2018.
3. All teams shall be depastured and managed under identical conditions at all times.
4. The annual and progressive results of the trial shall be made public each year at the conclusion of each shearing.
5. Public field days focusing on issues relative to wool production may be held in association with the trial. It is anticipated this will be an annual event, coinciding with shearing.
6. Proceeds resulting from the sale of wool from this trial will become the property of the trial convenor.
7. Ownership of the wethers passes to the trial convenor and Monaro Farming Systems, upon delivery to the host property. Following completion of the trial the ownership of the wethers is transferred to Monaro Farming Systems with **70% of the sale proceeds of the wethers allocated to the trial convenor.**
8. Trial convenor must hold the wethers for a **minimum of 6 weeks** following the final shearing prior to slaughter. Wethers to be killed as one lot for OJD surveillance testing of individual carcasses. MFS to arrange this testing with the abattoir and cover associated costs.
9. Any costs associated with managing the wethers, after the consideration of any sponsorship or donation of product will be born by the convenor. This includes **standard fleece testing costs** (not length and strength), animal husbandry costs and supplementary feed costs if required.

10. The trial will be open to all commercial merino sheep producers.
11. Studs may enter the trial provided the wethers entered are bred in the entrant's commercial flock. The data entry will recognise the entrants as "studs".
12. The MFS Wether Trial Sub Committee has the right to accept or reject any entry in this trial.
13. The trial will be run under the guidance of the Phil Graham (Technical Specialist Livestock Systems, Agriculture NSW) and Matt Lieschke (Livestock Officer, South East Local Land Services).
14. Each team entered in this trial shall comprise **fifteen (15)** randomly selected merino wethers born in 2014.
15. **Two** representatives from the wether trial sub-committee will carry out the random selection drafting. Wethers will be tagged immediately following drafting, identifying the team of 15 sheep and 5 spares (Allflex ear tags to be provided by MFS).
16. The random selection shall be carried out as follows:
 - The number of wethers presented for drafting will be recorded by the sub-committee.
 - At least 80% of the entrant's 2014-drop wethers must be presented, i.e., each entrant has the option to class out up to 20% of the drop.
 - From this minimum of 80%, twenty five head are randomly drafted from which the entrant may select five (5) head to remove from the team. This leaves twenty (20) in the team which includes five (5) spares, to be used if sheep from an entrant's team die prior to delivery to the host property.
 - In the case of 100% of the entrant's wethers being presented, thirty (30) head will be randomly drafted and ten (10) head removed by the entrant to leave twenty (20) head, of which five are spares in the case of deaths prior to delivery.
17. Each team of 15 is to be delivered to the host property – "Caringo", Bobundara Road on the day prior to shearing (likely delivery date 15th April 2015, to be confirmed). Wethers must be tagged with their property PIC. Wethers weighed on arrival.
18. Induction animal husbandry costs to be covered by MFS including hay for quarantine period (MFS to arrange). Chemical treatments to include a quarantine drench (24hr quarantine), off-shears lice treatment and zinc based foot-bath.

19. **All sheep will be shorn on or about 15th April 2015 for even-up shearing, and the net proceeds (after costs taken out) will be the property of Monaro Farming Systems. Trial sheep to be shorn first by convenor shearing team.**
20. Wethers are expected to arrive at host property with a **minimum of three months wool growth** to allow for the even up shearing ie shorn **no later than 31st Dec 2014** (in conjunction with effective backline lice control).
21. Each team will be inspected (for notifiable diseases) at the host property prior to acceptance of entry nomination. Both a signed National Vendor Declaration and an Animal Health Statement declaring freedom from footrot is to be provided by each entrant.
22. All animals need to be pre-vaccinated with Gudair vaccine. Ideally, if not done as lambs, vaccination as soon as possible is strongly requested to ensure optimum effectiveness of the vaccine and reduced risk of disease transfer to host property.
23. Annual results will be based on the individual average wool production performance of each animal in the team. In the event of any team being reduced to twelve or less sheep, averages are calculated over twelve sheep.
24. Overall results calculated after the final shearing in 2018 will be based on the average wool production and carcase value of each animal in the team. In the event of any team being reduced to twelve or less sheep, averages are calculated over twelve sheep.
25. The following measurement data will be collected to determine annual and overall results
 - a) Fibre Diameter and associated measurements.
 - b) Greasy Fleece Weight
 - c) Yield
 - d) Bodyweight
 - e) Condition Score / Fat Score
 - f) Other traits may be measured at the discretion of the organising committee
26. Results of the Merino Wether Comparison will remain the property of Monaro Farming Systems Inc. and will be presented to the participants after each shearing. Results will be circulated to stakeholders and the wider community at the discretion of the MFS wether trial sub-committee.

27. Wool preparation and valuation procedure in line with NSW DPI guidelines will be as follows:

- Fleeces are weighed and classed into bin lines by qualified wool classer
- Skirting is minimal and undertaken by same personnel for all teams
- Skirtings for each team are pooled and yield and fibre diameter are based on the yield and fibre diameter of the fleece wool.
- Belly wool is treated in the same manner as skirtings
- Wool valuations will be based on the average values for the previous 12 months.
- Locks are insignificant and are not valued.

28. All decisions of the Wether Trial sub-Committee shall be binding.