

HERITAGE SHEEP AUSTRALIA

"Saving the breeds that were the foundation of our sheep and wool industry"



NEWSLETTER NO 15
June 2009

The Ryeland

By Ivan Heazelwood

When he visited Britain in 1748, the Swedish naturalist Kalm was impressed with the hardiness of British sheep. In contrast to the Continent they spent most of their time outside. The native sheep of Herefordshire and adjoining counties were amongst the toughest. Later known as the Ryeland, because of their region, they were said to produce the best wool in Britain from the worst feed. In 1779 it was worth 30 pence per pound compared with 18 pence for the next best. At that time there were 500,000 of these sheep in Hereford alone.

Around 1800 the Ryeland was found to be the most successful of all British breeds to cross with the Merions which George III had introduced. From then on, however, the inevitable spread of Leicester and Southdown genes, combined with improved pastures, changed the Ryeland to become a good meat sheep. Actually some farmers, including George III, attempted to preserve the fine wool characteristics of the breed, (he kept a flock on bracken and heath lands adjacent to Windsor Park) but without success.



R.C. Allwright with his Champion Ryeland Ram October 18th 1934

By the 1850's it had completely lost its place as a wool producer. Its four pound clip was worth only 13 pence, whereas the Lincolns 10 or 12 pound fleece bought an equal price per pound. At the turn of the century other Downs breeds claimed favour, but by 1909 when the first Flock book was published there was a resurgence of interest.

It is doubtful if there were any Ryelands in Australia prior to 1919 when the New South Wales Department of Agriculture imported 10 ewes and a ram from the English flocks of Herbert Halford and Bray. In the same year J.A. Helling, South Australia, sourced 2 ewes and a ram from England. Between 1922 and 1935 hundreds of Ryelands were imported from New Zealand.

In the 1930's the "Woodburn" stud of the Hon T.H. Payne of Kilmore, Victoria which was founded on both English and New Zealand blood, emerged as the leading supplier of rams to other Australian studs. The "Burnwood" stud of J. McIntosh succeeded to that role by 1950.



Launceston Courier 7th October 1931, Master Ian McIntosh a young Victorian visitor with a Ryeland Lamb exhibited by T.H. Payne, "Woodburn"stud, Kilmore Victoria.



Royal Melbourne Show Heritage Feature 2006, Champion Heritage Group, Ryeland exhibited by M & D Stevens "Hallylulya" stud, Myamyn, Victoria.

The number of flocks peaked at over 200 in the 1960's and today we have 16 registered flocks in Australia. The oldest being the "Quamby" stud, established in 1928.

The "Burnwood" Stud established in 1933 by J. McIntosh is operated today by Robert Mitchell along side his "Ronobri" stud. Marylyn and Des Stevens founded their Hallylulya" stud in 1956 and today is the largest Ryeland flock in Australia with approximately 200 ewes



Marilyn Stevens, "Hallylulya" stud, Myamyn, Victoria with her Champion Ryeland Ram.

Heritage Sheep Australia members that bred Ryelands

Marlyn & Des Stevens
 Hallylulya Ryeland Stud
 Founded 1956
 Phone 03 5578 2311

Dorset Downs in the Hazelnut Grove



In 1995 we bought our weaner ewes down to the Macedon area to escape the drought conditions in central Victoria, little did we expect that in 2009 we would still be experiencing those conditions.

When we finally had some grass at Wedderburn we took the ewes home in the autumn of 1996, but gave four ewes to our kind friends who had let us use their paddocks. They had become very fond of the sheep and decided to buy four more and over the years have purchased three rams.

They are beautifully cared for and we get a lot of pleasure watching out for them, sometimes thinking they look better than our show team. The ewe lambs join the flock and the wether lambs are used for meat.

It would be lovely if the flock was registered – perhaps one day, but at least they are a good advertisement for the breed.

By Margaret Chapman, Woodhall Dorset Down Stud, New Gisborne, Victoria



From ...

**James Herriots
Country Calender 1984**



MARKS TO IDENTIFY LAMBS A lamb must bear the registered mark of its farm so that it can be identified and reclaimed if it wanders. This lamb is being marked on the ear – a more permanent mark than a wool-mark or a horn-brand.

“Wither it is in the Yorkshire hills or the broad Australian acres it is important that all our heritage sheep are identified from birth - with low numbers in many of the breeds being able to establish and manage our genetic future becomes vital” *Ethel Stephenson*

Heritage meal relished by today's diners

Heritage breed lamb and pork were featured in the main course of a delicious meal at Pakenham's "The Grayn" restaurant as part of the West Gippsland Slow Food Festival, during the last week of May and early June.

Succulent loin racks from Marg. Kingman's English Leicester 2008 drop lambs were served with heritage breed pork, pine nut and rocket sausages, venison rissoles, and accompanying vegetables, as a combined mixed grill. Good old fashioned bread and butter pudding with raspberries was enjoyed as desert. All the food was beautifully cooked by the very professional kitchen staff.

Marg. gave a short address to the diners, telling them the historic and heritage significance of the English Leicester breed and took questions from the floor. Heritage Sheep Australia brochures were available to take home.

Functions such as this are invaluable in getting across the message of 'pure breed flavour' and preservation of old breeds' genetics.

Strong Wool Breeders Fair

The 22nd Sheep and Wool Fair was held at the Benalla Showgrounds on the 3rd May 2009. This annual event promotes seven breeds with wool quality 30 microns and stronger. Three of these breeds are Heritage, Lincoln, English Leicester and Cheviot. The Heritage Sheep Australia green rugby jumpers were conspicuous with members there to help on the day.

Lincolns were exhibited by John and Alice Beattie, Beattie Farms also taking out the Supreme Champion Fleece.

Three exhibitors competed with English Leicesters, G & J Burgin, B & R Forster and E Stephenson who took out the Breeders Group, Best Woolled and Best Headed Sheep of Show.

Jan Duff, Spring Grove stud exhibited in the Cheviot section.

Grand Champion Sheep of Show was won by a Romney Ram exhibited by Gail Watson of Corowa, who has taken over the Paulatum stud, founded in 1960 by the late Roy Hull. We wish Gail every success in breeding and showing.



John and Alice Beattie's grand children with their Supreme Champion Fleece.

Guild Insurance

Guild Insurance sponsor Heritage Sheep Australia. We are grateful for their continued support and encourage members to think of them when renewing your insurance. They are very pleased to quote on any of your Insurance requirements.

Call Jim McConnell on 03 9373 2500

Australian Sheep and Wool Show
July 15th –17th 2009

A **Heritage Sheep Australia General Meeting** will be held on **17th July 2009, Sunday at 12 noon** in the Committee Room, **Prince of Wales Showgrounds, Bendigo**. All Heritage Sheep Australia members as welcome and encouraged to come.

Heritage Sheep Feature at the Royal Geelong Show 2009.

Heritage Sheep Australia is currently working with the Royal Geelong Agricultural Society organising a Heritage Sheep Feature.

Geelong is the largest Victorian Show out side of Melbourne and a very good opportunity to showcase our special heritage breeds.

The Heritage Sheep Feature will be on Saturday 17th October 2009.

Individual breed classes and special interbred classes with good sponsorship should encourage breeders to exhibit their sheep.

If any members have any ideas or sponsorship leads please contact me.

Catalogues will be sent out at a later date to members however Jodie Friesch is the Sheep Coordinator and can be contacted on 03 52661198.

Third Place out of four million!

by Denise Humphries

Heritage Sheep Australia now has a website that will hopefully grow in content as members become more involved. At present there is a profile of each of our 9 breeds with photos provided by Jacque which I believe are the ones from the British Breeds brochure, and text by Ivan Heazlewood. I have also added the current status of each breed in Australia taken from the 2008 Flock Book e.g number of flocks and ewes joined.

Each newsletter is also online, plus any relevant events that I get to know about.

However, the World Wide Web is a huge place it is estimated that there are over 200 MILLION websites. There are search facilities that help you find that ONE site

you are looking for amongst 200 million. For each of those sites there may be anywhere from 10 to 100 pages, perhaps more.

If you search for heritage sheep on Google it will bring up over FOUR MILLION pages – and Heritage Sheep Australia is listed **THIRD**.

Google is not static, it has its secret algorithms for prioritising listings and I have managed to meet some of the ones I know about to get us into such a good spot but it does not mean that we remain there without a bit of work.

You can play your part by linking to heritagesheep.org.au from your website if you have one, or asking your breed society to do so.

If you don't use it you lose it is certainly one of Googles philosophies!

www.heritagesheep.org.au

Heritage Sheep Australia now has a website

If you would like your contact details included on the site for your breed(s) please fill in the form below and return by post to: Jacque Carr, 11 Mona Place, South Yarra, 3141

Please Note: It is not necessary for you to have an internet connection for us to publish your details on the website. For security we will not publish your street address.

Name.....

Prefix.....

Breed(s).....

State.....

Phone.....

Fax.....

Email.....

Website.....

I agree to the details as supplied above being published on the www.heritagesheep.org.au Website

Signed.....

Date.....