

# Managing Sheep on Auto Steer



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Lambex 2010

# Does RFID = Auto steer? On commercial sheep flocks

Lambs with RFID tags

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Auto Steer?



# Efficient Sheep Handling

*“Capacity to handle large numbers quickly”*

- Woolshed design
- Laneways
- Sheep handling cradles
- Covered sheep yards
- Pregnancy scanning
- Auto drafting
- **Electronic ear tags RFID**





# TAP Showcase Project

Evaluate benefits of RFID on commercial sheep flocks

- 4 Dual Purpose Merino Flocks
- 2 Self replacing prime lamb
- 1 stud breeder
- 3 lamb finishing units

Supported by Victorian DPI

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# Precision Sheep Management

## “PSM”

*Management of Sheep Individually  
instead of as a mob.*

- Planning
- Management
- Hardware

# Variation in measurements in a mob of sheep

	Wool \$	Weight kg
Best	\$52	60
Average	\$33	47
Worst	\$18	40

# Cost of RFID Equipment

<b>Enterprise</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Advanced</b>
Wool Flock	\$6000	\$22,700
Prime Lamb	\$4600	\$18,400

# Auto Drafter

500-700 sheep per hour



Quamby  
DOBIE  
A TAP Showcase property

Property Details

- *1100 hectares*
- *575 mm annual rainfall*
- *5000 merino ewes (60/40)*
- *300 ha's crop*
- *Lamb finishing unit*
- *Average stocking rate 12 dse/ha*

Quamby  
DOBIE  
Flock targets



**Wool**

Lower Micron

Maintain fleece weight

**Carcass**

Increase ewe efficiency  
(kg lamb/ewe body  
weight)

Quamby  
DOBIE

Fleece Testing at Shearing



Quamby  
DOBIE  
Fleece Test Results 2008

Red Tag Ewes	\$/hd
Top ewe	\$53.27
Average	\$33.83
Bottom	\$18.18
Average <b>Top 70%</b>	\$36.93
Gain in value from selected 70%	<b>\$3.10</b>

# Quamby DOBIE Marketing wool 2008

Class the clip in the shed according to micron

- \$0.60-2.50 per head gain
- Can pay for testing sheep



# Quamby DOBIE Pregnancy scanning



Quamby  
DOBIE  
ewe efficiency



# Quamby DOBIE

## Selecting efficient breeding ewes

<b>Condition Score</b>	<b>Supplementary feed</b>	<b>Scanning Percentage</b>
>3.0 'fats'	NO	133%
<3.0 'skinny's'	YES	160%

# Quamby DOBIE

## Selecting efficient breeding ewes

Condition Score	Supplementary feed	Scanning Percentage
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Quamby  
DOBIE  
lamb marking

## Merino Lambs

24 kg @ day 48 = 450  
grams/day



# Quamby DOBIE

## lamb finishing

### Management

- Body weight
- Weight gain
- Ration

### Efficiency in feeding



# Quamby DOBIE weighing pre slaughter

## Feedback

- Carcass details
- Lean Meat yield
- Sire performance

Walk over Weighing  
WOW



Marketing -



Build relationship on reliability

# Quamby DOBIE carcass feedback

Sires Tag	Weight (Kg)	Yield %	Price	Gain
Black	46.4	49.8%	\$121	+\$1
Blue	48.2	51.5%	\$127	+\$7
White	46.1	49.7%	\$120	\$0

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# “PSM Decision Support Tools”

Sheep CRC & NSW Dept I&I

- OFFM – On Farm Fibre Measurement
- Raceside Classer
- Simultaneous Assortment
- Ram Value Calculator
- Wether calculator
- Merino vs Terminal Calculator

# Quamby DOBIE Gains to our Business

- Increase value of breeding flock
- Feedback on management
- Develop a measurement culture/benchmark
- Reliability as a supplier of quality lambs
- Risk Management ability to select at any time

# Quamby DOBIE Next Steps

- Tag all lambs – at lamb marking
- Record measurements at:
  - Shearing – WOOL
  - Pregnancy scanning - FERTILITY
  - Post weaning to pre slaughter – CARCASS
- Integrate measurements with other operations

## Conclusion

- Early stage of development for commercial flocks
- RFID tags improves measurements
- Ideal for any flocks/studs using measurement
- Commercial Merino flocks greater benefits
- Small benefits add up
- Need to handle large numbers quickly
- More development to streamline processes

