

ELLA MATTA

WHITE SUFFOLKS, MATERNALS & POLL MERINOS



WELCOME TO OUR 2024 NEWSLETTER

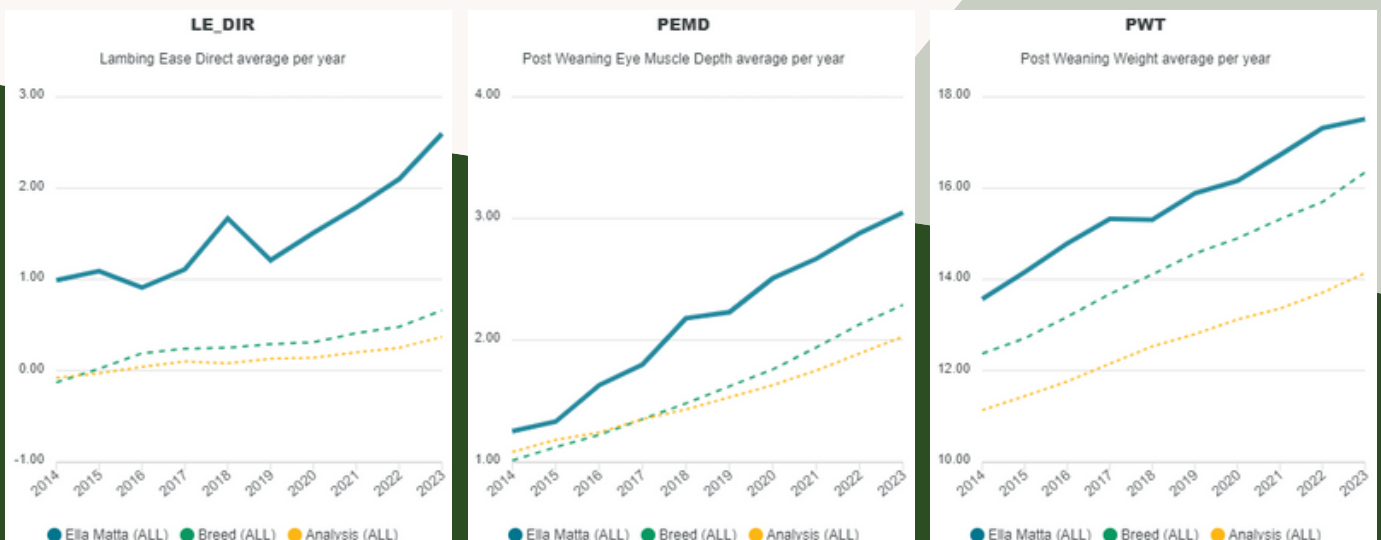
We are very excited about the selected sale rams across all 3 breeds. The following pages should give you a look into what we have been up to recently at Ella Matta and what some of our breeding objectives are. We hope you enjoy the read.

White Suffolk- Lamb and ewe survival during lambing

In recent years Sheep Genetics have refined their lambing ease breeding value (LE_DIR) to include not only birth weight (BWT) but gestation length and a birthing score on any lambing issues. We record all three of these in our sheep. This provides a broader picture than just birth weight alone.

For birth weight, most of our rams fall within the 0.0 to 0.35 mark. This is our target range as once birth weights get over 0.4 lambing difficulties become increasingly more likely. While going too low with birthweight may become an issue with breeds such as Merinos, this is definitely not the case for terminal sheep, 0.0 was the average birthweight back in the 1990s when Lambplan began. The aim is to keep birthweights close to this mark while pushing ahead at full pace with growth (PWT) and muscle (PEMD); a hard thing to do with such strong correlations, but we are proud to continue to achieve this.

The graphs below show our White Suffolk gains in both Lambing Ease and Growth and Muscle.

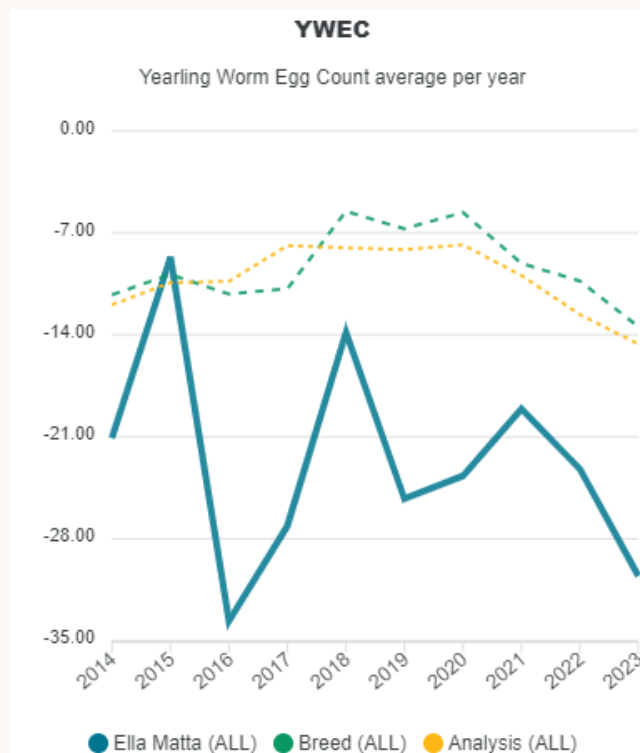




Worm resistance (way less drenching)

In the past we remember having to drench all the time, this was a lot of work, and the cost in drench can add up. For the last two decades we have been taking individual faecal samples on all of our stud ram lambs. This has allowed us to select heavily on worm resistance (WEC) across our 3 breeds. The results of this in our commercial flock have been obvious. For example, in our merino weaners, years ago we used to drench them regularly, but now we drench at weaning and have consistently recorded very low mob-based faecal tests throughout summer and well into late autumn without a single drench. Summer is the key time in which drench resistance is created, with limited amounts of new drench coming out maintaining low levels of drench resistance is very important.

The graph below shows our recent gains in WEC in our merinos (we clearly used a couple of wrong AI sires in 2015 and 2018, but have still trended solidly in the right direction overall).



Ella Matta Poll Merino WEC trendline compared to other Merino studs

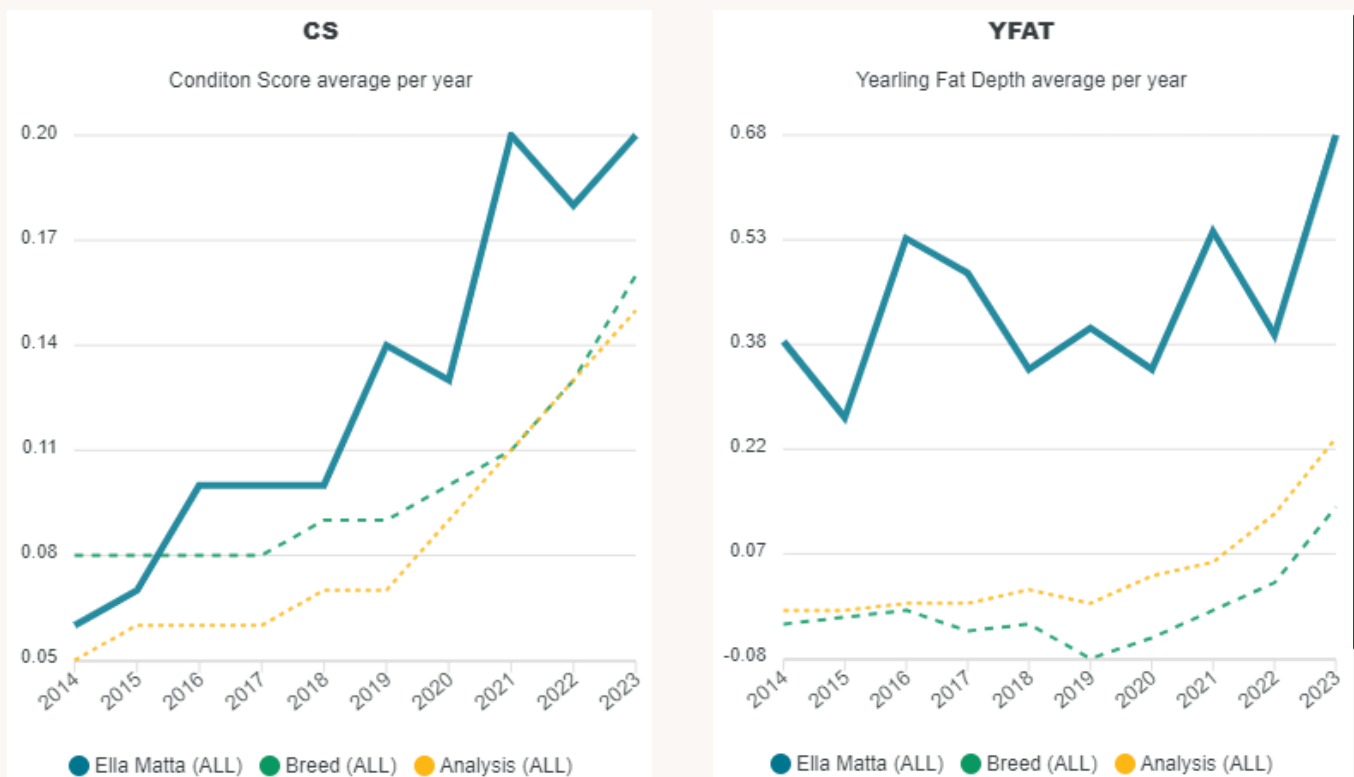
Black Feet in Maternals

Our clients continue to ask us about black feet in our maternals, while most of our maternals do have black feet we want to reiterate that there is absolutely no correlation between black feet and their susceptibility to footrot. Deb Lehmann (KI veterinarian, footrot eradication specialist) having many years in treating footrot affected flocks with both black and white feet, (and a 95% rate of eradication of footrot in flocks that follow her program), strongly believes that it doesn't matter what colour feet the animals have, they get the same rate of footrot.



Ewes that cope in tough years

It has been a hard season across most of South Australia (as well as other areas of the country). It's years like this that we can truly test the genetics of our animals and how they perform (and survive) in tough conditions. It has really shown the value of good genetic fat, muscle and condition scores in our sheep. This was one of our tightest lambing's in terms of available feed for a long time, yet we still managed to have very minimal ewe losses and on or above average marking percentages compared to previous years. A lot of this is due to supplementary feeding, but just as importantly sheep with higher genetic fat have a much larger buffer before they fall apart. Below is how our Poll Merinos perform genetically for fat and condition score compared to others across Australia.

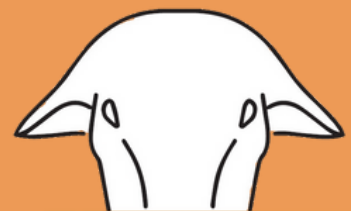


Ella Matta trendline compared to other Merino studs

Low adult weight Maternals

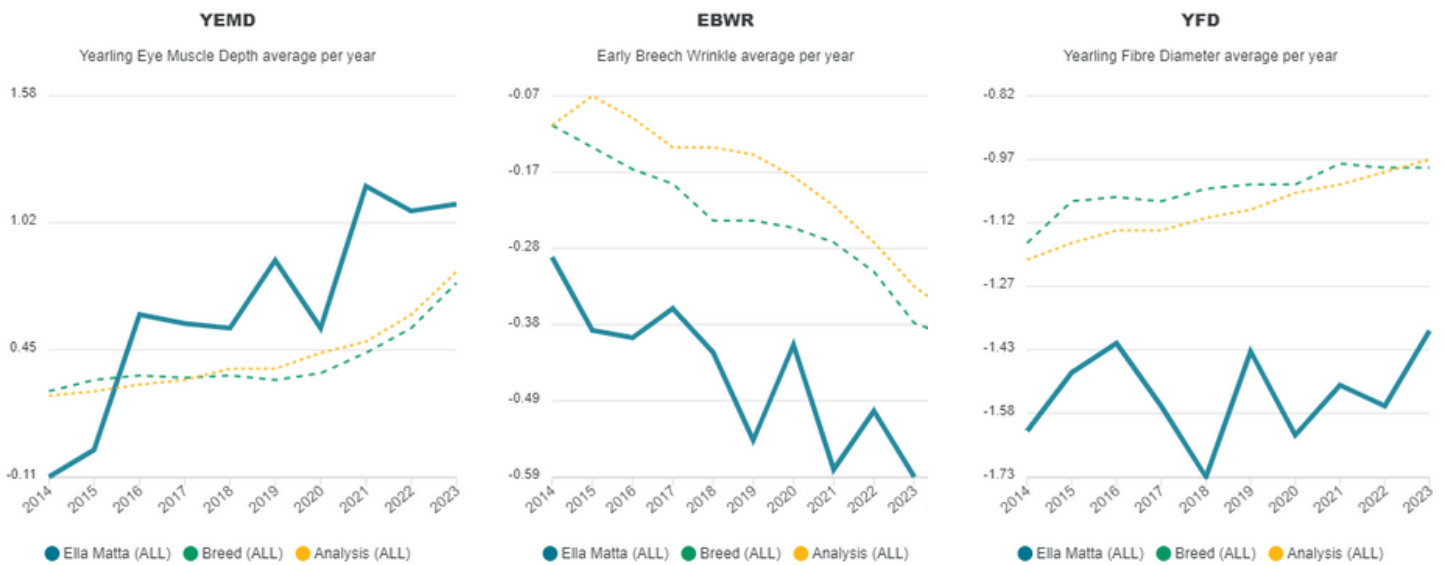
Good fat, muscle and condition scores are very important in how sheep can cope with tough conditions. This is also the case in maternal sheep. Our maternals are high-performing animals, with ours consistently pregnancy scanning up around the 200% mark. While this is great for kgs of lambs produced, we do need to be careful to make sure the ewes can handle it so that we minimise ewe and lamb losses and to make the most of the scanning result.

Adult weight is also a great tool in increasing lambs per hectare as you can run more smaller animals in the same area than larger ones. We have heard some clients speak about starving sheep into low adult weight. This is not a great idea, as especially in tough years this can turn into a major disaster. The answer is low adult weight genetics (AWT) along with good condition score and fat ASBVs. This way you can have your cake and eat it too, with sheep that are more likely to handle a system pushing the boundaries.



Dual Purpose Merinos

Our wool continues to hold around the 17-18 micron mark (with lambs getting in the 16 micron range). This while still making solid gains in fleece weights (ycfw), our fleece weights trend above industry averages on MerinoSelect. The most exciting thing is we are achieving these amazing wool results from a plain body, easy care merino, with great muscle and fat, above average growth, and above average weaning percentages. To combine all of these in one animal is rare, but with Ella Matta genetics you don't have to give up money on your wool cheque to pile fat and muscle on, increase lambing percentages and stop mulesing.

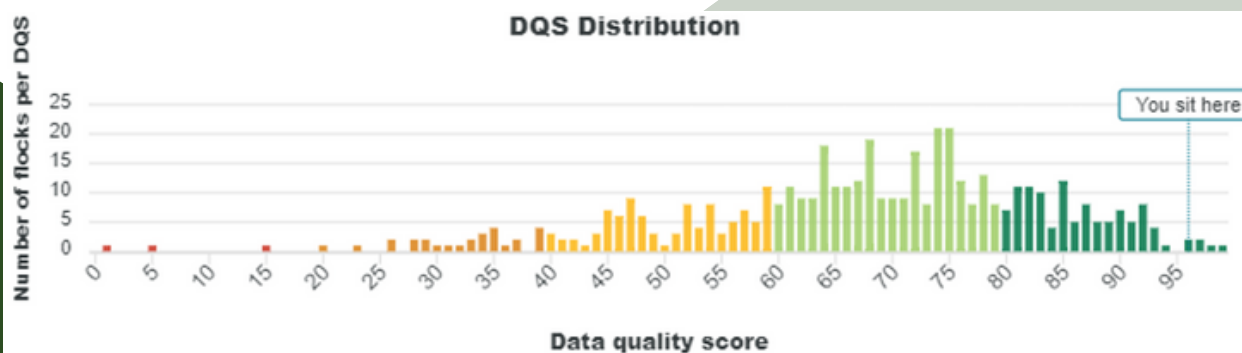


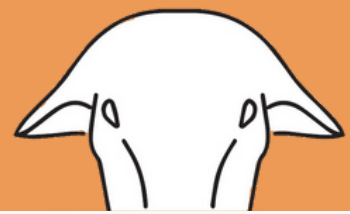
Ella Matta Poll Merino Breach Wrinkle, Eye Muscle Depth and Micron (Fibre Diameter) trendlines compared to other Merino studs.

Data Quality

To make consistent genetic gains the quality of data recorded on the flock is a non-negotiable. This is why at Ella Matta we cut no corners in collecting data on what seems like an endless number of traits across our 3 breeds. We are excited to see that this is reflected in our data quality score from Sheep Genetics. Below is our report card on data collection compared to other studs. If Jamie didn't get distracted with a few industry roles and submitted some of it to Sheep Genetics slightly earlier, we would have probably gained a perfect score.

Data Quality Score: 96.0



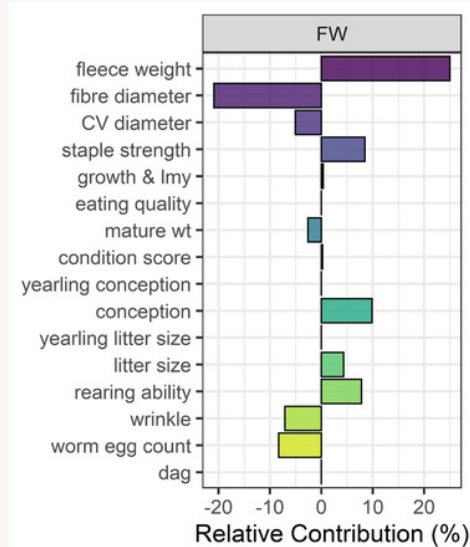


New Merino Indexes

These new Merino indexes have been added this year. The old ones are no longer available. Here is a summary of how each one effects genetic gain.

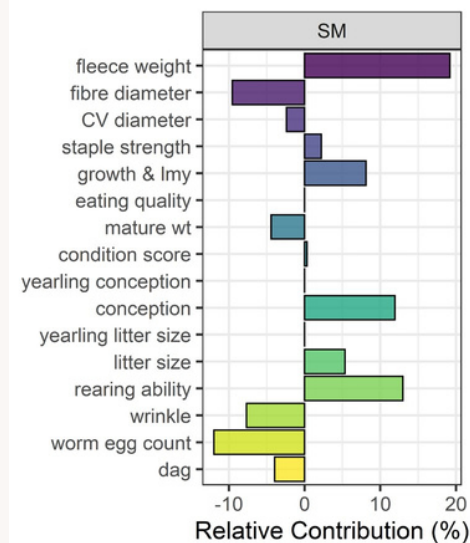
Fine Wool (FW)

- The Fine Wool index is based on a production system where the majority of income is from wool clip, with a strong focus on reducing the micron of the clip.
- FW focuses on genetic improvement of fleece weight, fibre diameter, staple strength and reproduction.
- Emphasis on reducing wrinkle and worm egg count is also included.



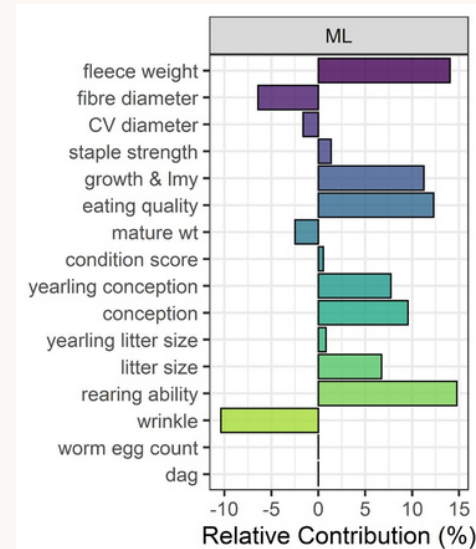
Sustainable Merino (SM)

- The Sustainable Merino index is based on a production system where the income is from sheepmeat production and the wool clip are reasonably balanced.
- The index focuses on genetic improvement of fleece weight, growth and lean meat yield and reproduction.
- Emphasis on reduced wrinkle, dag and worm egg count is also included.



Merino Lamb (ML)

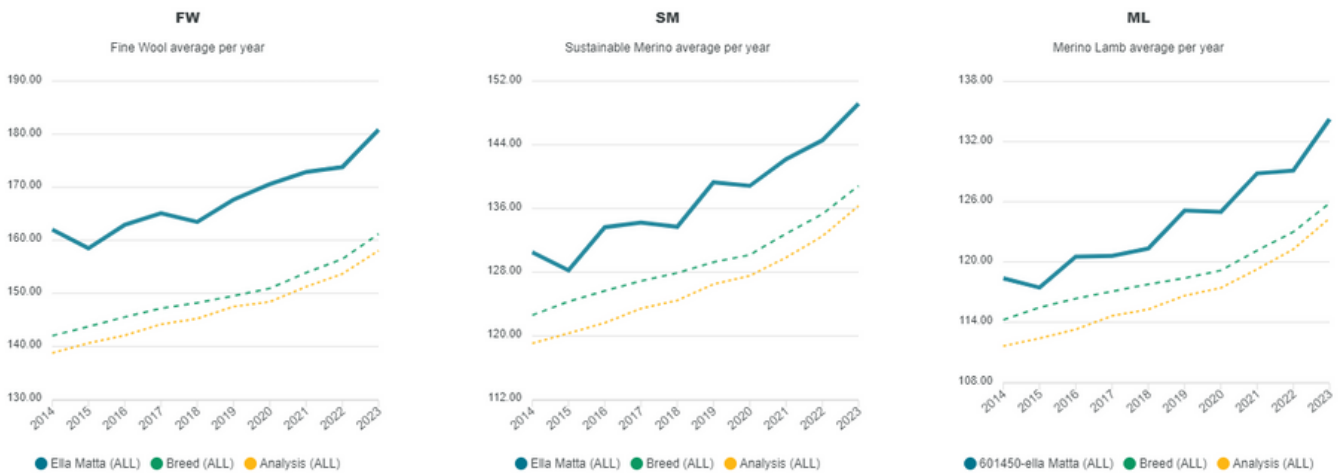
- The Merino Lamb index is based on a production system where the majority of income is from sheepmeat production, particularly lambs, with some income from adult ewe wool clips.
- The index focuses on genetic improvement of fleece weight, growth, lean meat yield, eating quality and reproduction.
- Emphasis on reduced wrinkle is also included.





Ella Matta's performance on the new Merino Indexes

Clearly we were ahead of the game with these new indexes as we have been breeding modern dual purpose merinos for a long time. This is reflected in how we rank compared to other studs on all 3 of these indexes. Luckily at Ella Matta you can find a very high performing ram, regardless of whether you are looking for a high wool quality, high fleece weight, low micron sheep (17-18 micron), or a more meat focused muscle, fat and weaning percentage animal. Our sheep are leading the way with both! (we also rank very well on the fourth fleece weight centric index, WP).



Ella Matta Poll Merino Index trendlines compared to other Merino studs

BredWell FedWell Workshop

We hosted a successful BredWell FedWell Workshop on our farm last month. It was great to see so many people in attendance to learn about making the most of their genetic selection through ASBVs and best practice management. We had Bridget Turner do the morning smoko and lunch, she did an amazing job and we highly recommend her to anyone looking for catering.





International visits

We were honoured to host a visit from the Global Sheep Producers Forum – Next Generation initiative in the build-up to LambEx. This was a group of very impressive young sheep industry people as well as industry leaders from the American Sheep Industry Association, Beef & Lamb New Zealand, the Canadian Sheep Federation, the National Sheep Association (UK) as well as Sheep Producers Australia. Jamie was part of the inaugural version of this program nearly a decade ago and has been involved in its multiple forms ever since. The aim is to collaborate with other sheep producing countries to ensure we have a successful sheep industry well into the future.

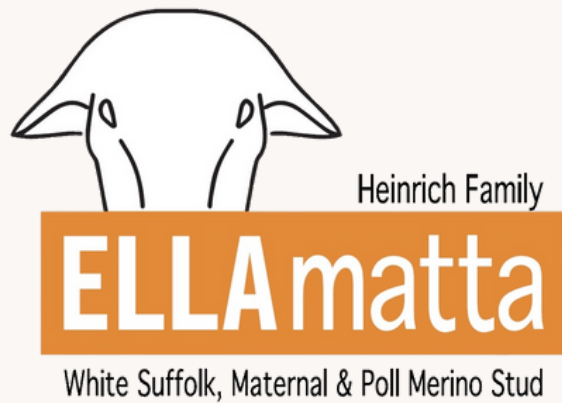


Community and Industry Involvement

Aphid is still as busy as ever in his roles as Chair of the Kangaroo Island Landscapes Board and on the Australian White Suffolk Association board. This includes the many associated committees such as the Pig and Cat eradication projects.

Tracie has been busy in her FaB (Farm and Business) support role with PIRSA. Her role has been put in place to support the islands farmers and community.

Jamie remains Chair of Ag KI and on the national boards of Sheep Producers Australia and the Sheep Sustainability Framework. He is also on the MLA board selection committee representing sheep producers. More recently he joined the inaugural 28 National Board which is the parent company for LambEx that brought Lambex back from it's COVID caused near extinction to a record 1,500 attendees last month. In the past 18 months, Jamie has been on two international delegations representing the Australian sheep industry in the important export markets of USA and the Middle East.



We (at Ella Matta) continue to be blown away by how amazing our community is and how much it bands together through tough times. It is important that we continue to support each other, personally and through our local businesses. It is our local people and businesses that are there when needed and provide the sponsorship money and volunteer hours for all our community groups and sport on the island.



Biosecurity

If you have visited our farm in the past 18 months you would know that we have taken our biosecurity plan to a whole new level. We are dedicated to ensuring our clients can rely on getting disease free rams from Ella Matta and would challenge anyone to find a stud in Australia doing it to a higher level than we now are. So please understand when Tracie bails you up at the ram sale to ensure you have clean boots, or even better, arrive in clean boots. We are doing this not only for our own farm but for all of you who buy our rams.

2024 RAM SALE 11TH OF OCTOBER 2024.

512 Stokes Bay Road, Duncan, SA 5223 - Kangaroo Island

We look forward to welcoming you to our on-property sale for one of our famous lamb pies.



Catalogues are available at:
ellamatta.com/ram-sale

AuctionsPlus

Our full sale will again be live on AuctionsPlus, we offer free delivery of rams off island, further transport can be arranged.

Andrew
0427 596 108

f @ellamatta
team@ellamatta.com

Jamie
0427 361 830