



MATTHEW & CHERIE CODDINGTON ROSEVILLE PARK MERINO STUD DUBBO, NSW



MERINOSELECT enables Matthew and Cherie Coddington to benchmark their sheep and provide independent evaluation to their clients with minimal extra work or cost.

Matthew is a fifth generation woolgrower and is co-principal with Cherie of the Roseville Park Merino Stud, run on their 2000 hectare property at Dubbo, NSW.

The Coddingtons artificially inseminate 3500 stud breeding ewes to top performing sires and sell 550 rams each year. The stud ewes have an average micron of 18.8 and fleece weight of 8.4kg. Roseville Park was established in 1938 and has been benchmarked to the Merino industry since the 1940s when Matthew's grandfather won three consecutive wether trials at Cootamundra. It is now one of only a few studs to

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benchmark to the Merino industry in every possible way through Central Test Sire Evaluation, wether trials, ewe hogget competitions, fleece competitions and in the show and sale ring.

“It was only natural progression that when MERINOSELECT came about we jumped at the chance to compare our genetics in an across flock evaluation system benchmarking us to the rest of industry,” Matthew said.

“Farming has to be run as a business and I like to continuously analyse my customers' requirements and how to deliver the genetics they demand.

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Matthew stresses there was little extra work or cost to become involved in MERINOSELECT.

“We have tight lambing times due to the extensive use of AI so all lambs measured are born over a 16 day period. The AI lambs are run as one big mob, split only by sexes, until they are ten months of age.

“At this stage they are shorn for the first time and fleece weight, micron, SD, CV, CF% and curvature are recorded. Body weight is measured after shearing.

“At 14-15 months of age a second micron test is taken and a muscle scanner is bought in to measure body weight, fat and eye muscle depth and scrotal circumference.”

Matthew said all results are then emailed to a third party provider who submits the data to Sheep Genetics and is paid on a per hour basis.

“It usually only takes two hours to sort through and tidy up the data,” Matthew said.

“The analyses at Sheep Genetics are run twice a month and reports with all ASBVs and indexes are emailed back straight after each run of my new data is complete.

“This system eliminates the need to spend hours on a computer typing in figures and information because my service providers, including my wool testing lab and muscle scanner, send me information which can simply be emailed off for submission.

“The resultant data with all ASBVs and indexes is then available to clients when the bulk of the rams are sold at 16 months of age.”

Matthew said his total cost for testing fees, administration and labour as well as Sheep Genetics subscription and reporting costs \$6.50 a head. Fleece testing and body weights have always been performed so the figure is even lower when these costs are removed.

This is a cheap investment for the Coddingtons, particularly when Roseville Park set a seasonal record in 2008 selling 201 rams at auction sales to a top of \$20,000 (twice) and averaging \$2366.

Matthew said MERINOSELECT was not a “silver bullet” solution to sheep breeding. “The most important thing that people need to keep in mind with ASBVs and concentrating on individual traits is that they should set a long term breeding objective to stick to and work out key profit drivers,” he said.

“It is pointless to become too carried away with traits of little economic value or traits that have very low heritability.”

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