



AWGA - News Update

weights and fertility, and maintaining our worm resistance because that's very important in this climate."

Another New England sire that performed well was from 'Petali Poll'. He had the lowest percentage of culls, showed good worm resistance, and had body weights that owner Martin Oppenheimer labelled 'reasonable'.

While some of the rams from outside of the region didn't perform so well in New England conditions, Mr Oppenheimer says it's important not to ignore genetics from other parts of the country.

"There are some outside genetics that will perform in this environment but it is a challenging environment. It means we can breed genetics that can go anywhere in Australia and in the world.

"There is so much variation within the merino breed and there's so much opportunity to improve merinos."

Mr Oppenheimer says a focus on genetics has allowed producers like him to simply breed better sheep in an ever-changing industry.

"We're actually running more sheep now than we have in the past but our productivity in fibre and lamb and sheep meat is growing.

"We're still striving to produce the best quality fibre we can but we've got another string to our bow now. Our lamb meat and sheep meat is more valuable, and we're producing more of it."

Callan Schaefer works at Gostwyck Station at Uralla in the New England. He says the sire evaluation is an opportunity to assess sires side by side.

"One of the main reasons I came was to see what some of the other states are doing and how they react to our area.

"There's a lot of variation here but you get that with the superfines but it depends on what you're looking for. It's good to be able to see the size of the sheep compared to the wool.

"We're trying to find another ram that's going to keep our style, the colour of the wool that we're after, and maybe with a bit more size. That's the hard thing to find."

The next stage of the trial is a couple of months away when the progeny will be shorn and fleece weights measured..