

Flocknews September 2022

This edition is going to help create a check list to get you ready for the upcoming joining season

1. **Get your rams vet checked**



Rams are a vital component to a successful joining. As the sperm cycle is 7 weeks, it is very important that your ram team is in optimum condition for this amount of time prior to joining so that the best quality semen is being used. There are many factors to take into account when doing ram checks including body condition, testicle size and palpation, age etc. We recommend booking in to have your rams checked with our team 10 weeks prior to use. This will also allow time to find replacement rams if required.

2. **Go through your ewes**



Making sure your ewes are ready for another joining period is equally as important as checking your rams. On the day we examine your ram team, feel free to have some ewes yarded so we can help start this inspection and show you what to look out for. Condition score and mammary condition are some points we can discuss further.

3. **Have you thought about teaser rams?**

Teaser rams are rams that have been surgically vasectomised. Previously, teaser rams were 'created' by treating wethers with testosterone which was only effective for a few weeks. This option is no longer available as the drug used has restrictions in place. Ewes start to cycle as the day length shortens. Meaning that majority of joinings from November – January are out of season. This is when teaser rams can be helpful. If you think teaser rams may be an option on farm this season, please read our handout provided at the end of this Flocknews.

BREAKING NEWS!! We have a new sheep scanner in town!!

Frankie has been busy learning how to scan and we have just organised our equipment to offer this service. We are focusing on smaller mob sizes (<300) and as the season progresses will be able to offer larger numbers. The most important thing when deciding to scan your sheep is to contact us at the clinic the day you put your rams in. We can then discuss with you the ideal joining time and set a scanning date. This will ensure your ewes are at the right stage of pregnancy to get optimal scanning results. Remember, a lot of producers like to put their rams out on the 1st of November making it a busy time of year for the scanner.



Please call the clinic to update our system with your email account for future newsletter editions (03) 5484 2255. Do not hesitate to get in touch with Rochy Vets today!

Information on Teaser Rams

- **How to use your teaser rams**

Ewes come into season as the day length shortens – as we approach Autumn. When ewes are newly exposed to rams out of season (from mid October) they can start to cycle. This ram exposure is known as the ‘ram effect.’ This is where teaser rams can be very useful – they can bring the ewes into season and shorten the joining period. When joining out of season it is recommended to join for 7 weeks to allow for the ‘ram effect’ and 2 subsequent cycles. However, teaser rams can be joined with the ewes for 2 weeks and then be removed. The selected rams can then be introduced to the already cycling ewes for a minimum of 2 cycles (5 weeks). Hence, the lambing season will be for 5 weeks without the trickle of lambs at the beginning/end of a season. To make the most out of your ram effect and joining out of season, ewes should be kept 1km away from all rams/billy goats for 4 weeks prior to teaser ram introduction.

Teaser rams can also be used to optimise your ewe lamb joinings. Maiden ewes can benefit from having a 2 week exposure to teaser rams before being introduced to the ram team to help them reach puberty and cycle. This is as long as they have experienced a summer (for example March joined ewe lambs).

When using your teaser rams for the above purposes, they need to be joined at 1%. Have a chat to us about the percentage that rams should then be joined at as this will depend on season (rams are seasonal too and have larger testicles towards autumn), age and breed.

- **Best age to make teaser rams**

It is ideal to make teaser rams at approximately 7-9 months of age/weighing at least 40kg. The surgery involves removing a small section of the sperm pathway (spermatic cord) and in large, obese rams this can lead to complications.

- **Preparation for surgery**

- Surgery can be done on farm in the shearing shed over the slats.
- The vet will need an assistant provided by you to help hold the rams – see the picture on the next page.
- Rams need to be off food and held in the shearing shed from the afternoon/evening prior to the surgery (can still have access to water overnight).

- **What is involved on the day**

- Rams will be sedated with Acepromazine (drug used at shearing time).
- They will be restrained as seen in the below photo.
- Surgery will be performed.
- The skin will be closed with staples – these will not need to be removed.
- They will receive a once off antibiotic and pain relief injection.
- Please provide a fly preventative treatment such as Klik.
- Rams will need to recover in the shearing shed overnight and have food and water made available.
- Rams can be used 6 weeks after surgery.

- **\$ Cost \$**

Depending on the size and number of rams being vasectomised, the cost is approximately \$80 per ram. A minimum of three is required for a booking.

- **Complications**

Complications are possible with any procedure performed involving sedation and surgery but we take utmost care to try and avoid these. Choosing young fit rams and having the day set up as explained prior, will also help reduce complications and make the process run smoothly.



Image of Frankie performing procedure



Please do not hesitate to contact us on (03) 5484 2255 if you have any further questions.