



Farrer students with AWSA Councillors Brad Honeysett and Paul Routley

FARRER CLEANS UP AT HOOK & HOOK COMPETITION

By Julia Wythes



FOR Darren Smith, seeing his students checking lambing ewes or selecting stud genetics brings a great deal of pride.

But for the teacher at Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School, each day is filled with moments like these - but this is all part of running the school's White Suffolk stud.

Mr Smith is the White Suffolk stud manager as well as an agricultural teacher at Farrer, and each day he is thrilled with the students' massive involvement in the development of the stud, from AI programs to lamb marking to showing.

And this year, the students' dedication to the stud has certainly paid off.

Farrer White Suffolk stud only took two pens of three lambs to the Dubbo Show All Breeds Prime Lamb Hoof and Hook Competition - and it cleaned up.

Farrer claimed first in the trade hoof class and third in the export hoof class.

Farrer was also named champion school entry, and reserve champion on the hoof.

On the hook, Farrer was awarded the AJ Morris grand champion pen of lambs and reserve champion pen of lambs.

"That is our best result to date by far," Mr Smith said.

"It's going to be hard to top in the future. The boys were very excited with the result."

The 10-month-old lambs were grazed on pasture with a little supplementation of faba beans, and were shorn about eight weeks before Dubbo.

"The shearing made a huge difference to their presentation," he said.

"Our sheep are fairly easy-going. They do really well, so we actually have to slow them down enough to meet the fat requirements of these competitions."

Farrer also competed in the Northern School Prime Lamb Competition at Inverell in April, claiming first and second in the champion lightweight pen and reserve champion in the medium light pen in the hoof competition.

Farrer has only shown its sheep at Dubbo Show since 1996.

At this year's show in May, Farrer claimed a swag of placings, including reserve champion White Suffolk ewe with Farrer 220239.

Farrer was also named Most Successful Exhibitor for White Suffolks, as well as the Most Successful School Exhibitor.

Mr Smith said one of the best things about being involved with White Suffolks as a breed was the open-mindedness of the other stud breeders.

"The breeders are willing to take on technology, such as Lambplan. As a breed, they are very helpful with the students. When the students go to Dubbo Show, they feel welcomed and appreciated by the other stud breeders. It makes a huge difference," he said.

He said the White Suffolk sheep were ideal for the students to work with.

"They are so quiet, and it makes it so much easier to handle," he said.

He said the Farrer stud focused on meat eating traits, such as intramuscular fat and shearforce in the stud, especially focusing on the lamb eating quality (LEQ) index.

"We also want to make sure our sheep are easy-care, so we concentrate on things like worm resistance. We encourage the students to target these traits when they select sires," he said. ▶



**Farrer - Chamion Pen of Lambs -
Hook - Trade Class**



Farrer lambs at the Hoof & Hook Competition

The students are heavily involved in all aspects of running the stud.

"The students help out with the AI programs. We make sure they take responsibility for their selections. Not only do the Year 10 students pick the AI sires, they are involved in the lambing supervision, so they follow it all the way through," he said.

"This year the students are also recording the new udder traits to ensure our ewe base stays highly productive into the future.

"The students are also involved in preparing for the sale, including taking the photos and putting the catalogue together.

"There are only a few schools that have the students as involved as we do. We want them to take ownership. Some of the students have their own sheep studs, and hopefully they will take something of what we do here at Farrer and implement it back into their own breeding programs."



*Farrer - Reserve Champion
Pen of Lambs - Hook - Export Class* ▲

◀ *Farrer exhibited the Reserve
Champion White Suffolk ewe at the
2024 Dubbo Show, pictured with
judge Shane Baker, Booloola Stud*



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