

# Backing instinct with science

**Victoria Archer chairs the Performance Corriedale Group and advocates for using genetic evaluation to drive on-farm productivity and profitability.**

Victoria is the fourth Archer to hold the reins at the 102-year-old Quamby Plains Corriedale Stud, taking over from her father Richard in 2013.

Richard began recording the performance of the Quamby Plains flock and submitting data to LAMBPLAN in 2006, when he co-founded the Performance Corriedale Group.

*Feedback* spoke to Victoria about the group's eating quality genomics project.

**What are you hoping the research will deliver for the Corriedale breed?**

Our group believes one of the strengths of the Corriedale is the eating quality, but this is anecdotal, so we're hoping the trial will back up our belief. There's also been a concern that selecting for more growth or other maternal traits could cause us to lose our eating quality, so ensuring we keep that trait is another aim.

**What about for your own flock?**

We want to be known for producing an article the consumer wants – that is, Corriedale lambs and commercial ewes producing terminal lambs that are known for their eating quality.

**Tell us about your flock's particular genetic challenges and what direction you would like to take your enterprise in.**

Corriedales need to continue to lift

productivity, which we're achieving. As a group, we've made great productivity gains in lambing percentage, growth, muscle and fat. However, we also need to balance the traits we're selecting for, which will be helped by the new LAMPBLAN index, Maternal Wool Production Plus (MWP+). MWP+ has a focus on improving wool quality and quantity while simultaneously improving reproduction and carcase traits.

**Are there benefits to having genetics and science to back up your on-farm decisions and direction?**

Since becoming involved within the Performance Corriedale Group, and recording data and using LAMBPLAN, we've seen significant gains in our flock, resulting in higher profitability.

We're operating a commercially viable sheep enterprise, producing both meat and wool on a consistent basis. We've seen great improvement in the ratio of number of lambs to ewes joined, and we've been able to turn off lambs more quickly, either directly off mum or off the crop.

We're achieving higher weaning weights and carcase weights and are meeting our target market specifications, which is supermarket supply lambs at 22–24kg.

We're conscious of the shape of our lambs, which we measure by scanning for muscle and fat, which helps in selection. ■

✉ Victoria Archer  
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**SNAPSHOT: Victoria Archer, Quamby Plains Corriedale Stud, Hagley, Tasmania**



<b>Area:</b> 1,200ha	<b>Enterprise:</b> Corriedale stud, self-replacing commercial Corriedale flock, prime lambs, Poll Hereford stud, commercial Poll Hereford herd, cropping	<b>Livestock:</b> 450 stud ewes, 3,200 commercial ewes, 940 ewe weaners, 200 stud cows, 170 commercial cows	<b>Pasture:</b> Perennial ryegrass mix with white and red clover and sub-clover	<b>Soil:</b> Sandy loam	<b>Rainfall:</b> 680mm
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