

FREDDIE AND MARK SCHMIDT OF THE KROMSPRUIT AND STORMHOEK DOHNE STUDS, MEMEL, ARE THE 2010 WINNERS OF THE TOP BREEDER COMPETITION OF THE DOHNE MERINO BREED SOCIETY OF SA.



Freddie Schmidt, the 2010 national winner is an experienced animal breeder who understands the principles regarding the genetic improvement of beef and dairy cattle as well as woolled sheep. He puts theories and evaluation techniques to the test in a practical manner as proved by the result of a recent experiment (published elsewhere in this Journal). He mated two sires with high and low breeding values for body weight respectively to two groups of randomly selected ewes to determine the body weight response of the progeny. His son, Mark, is quickly learning the principles of the recipe for success with stock farming from Freddie and he could hardly wish for a more

Above: Mark, Freddie and Selma Schmidt of the Kromspruit and Stormhoek Dohne Studs are the 2010 winners of Top Breeder Competition and Virbac Trophy.

experienced tutor. Freddie won the National Top Breeder Award in 1992 and has since been actively competing in the competition by

winning the Regional competition (Eastern Free State) six times. Six regional winners competed for the national Top Breeder award this year which was evaluated according to an objective set of standards. The competition was marked by marginal points differences between competitors. To further support their abilities as stock farmers they both got nominated for Farmer of the Year for the Free State Region by the Agricultural Writers Association (Central Region) and they won the 2010 Molatek Freddie has been serving on the is making a meaningful towards technical aspects of the



National Cattle Farmer (commercial) competition of the year. council of the Dohne Merino Breed Society since 1996 where he contribution towards the industry in general and particularly Dohne Merino.

A detailed report on the National Sheep Farmer of the article makes mention of some

production system operated by Freddie when he won the Year award appeared in the 2007 Dohne Merino Journal. This aspects of the system which have changed since 2007.

Kromspruit and Stormhoek Fine Wool studs:

Freddie has two registered Dohne Merino studs and operates an open nucleus system which is registered on the Foundation Flock Register of the Dohne Merino Breed Society. The Kromspruit stud was founded in 1978 and the Stormhoek stud in 2002 when animals with the highest body weights and lowest wool fibre diameter were selected from the Foundation Flock and the Kromspruit stud. In the years that followed the selection objective for animals in the Stormhoek fine wool stud was to select animals with high body weights and low wool fibre diameter.

The selection response achieved, reflects positive progress in terms of all production traits for the Stormhoek fine wool stud since the time of inception. Noteworthy is the fact that the stud is characterised by high body weights with low

wool fibre diameter as well as a very slight increase in clean fleece weight. (*A comprehensive analysis of phenotypic values of both studs was published in the 2007 Dohne Merino Journal*). These results clearly illustrate how traditional ideas i.e. that sheep with low wool fibre diameter are smaller, are proven to be incorrect through purposeful selection. It further illustrates that efficient production, and the subsequent increase in farming income, can be successfully achieved through the application of modern breeding practices.

Stud ewes are mated by means of artificial insemination in November to lamb in March. Ewes with multiples are closed up in pens for five days after which they go onto pastures. This increases lamb survival and facilitates pedigree recording. A 180% lambing is recorded in both studs. During the rest of the year stud animals run together with the commercial flock under natural conditions.

Commercial flock:

The commercial flock is mated in two groups at different times of the year. The first group gets mated during May to lamb in October. Ewes are synchronised (no hormones are administered) and natural mating is practiced with one ram to eight ewes for a three day period. Follow up rams are left with the ewes for one heat cycle. This is done to limit the period during the time during predators. Mating balanced lick is October on sour Ewes with five days to limit natural pastures percentage is 150 days. Wether marketed at 45 kg average 47% and ewes go back on enough and ready



Mark Schmidt with some of the young sires to be used in the 2010 mating programme of the Stormhoek and Kromspruit studs.

which lambs are born and to reduce which lambs are being exposed to is done on natural grazing and a provided. This group lambs in veld grazing with a balanced lick. multiples are closed up in pens for losses after which they go back onto with an appropriate lick. Weaning with a weaning weight of 32 kg at 100 lambs go to the feedlot and are live weight. They dress-out on 95% grade A2 and A3. Replacement natural pastures until they are old for selection and mating.

The second group September to lamb procedure is

the ewes lamb on natural sour veld grazing with an appropriate lick. Ewes with multiples are also closed up in pens for five days to limit losses after which they go back onto natural veld with an appropriate lick. Due to the severe winters these lambs are weaned earlier (60 to 90 days) and their live weights vary between 26 kg and 29 kg. Replacement ewe lambs go to green feed pastures. Wether lambs go to the feedlot from where they are marketed at 45 kg live weight. The dressing-out percentage of this group is 47% and 95% achieving A2 and A3 grades.

Public sales:

Production Sales			
Term	Average No. rams	Average Price ®	Top Price ®
2002 - 2010	50	5 262	38 000
National Sales			
2005 - 2010	3.8	17 340	60,000

Table 1

Freddie has not only achieved good results on public sales, (**Table1**), but the distribution of genetic material from the Kromspruit and Stormhoek studs also has a positive impact on the national Dohne flock in the RSA. On behalf of the members of the Dohne Merino Breed Society of SA we congratulate Freddie, Mark and Selma with their impressive records, achievements and awards.

SPONSORS OF THE WINNER OF THE TOP BREEDER COMPETITION

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The Society and all the members wish to thank our sponsors for the generous sponsorship of this award. We also extend a hearty welcome to our new sponsor, Voermol, who will in future be sponsoring the Winner of the Top Breeder competition together with Virbac and BKB.