

## TLG breaks new ground in Argentina



In March last year, Shane Ashworth took part in a ground breaking genetic improvement program for sheep in Argentina. Over 300 meat merino embryos were transferred in a program aimed at training local veterinarians in embryo transfer techniques for sheep.

The program was conducted in cold and bleak conditions on a property in southern Patagonia at Monte Denero, on the shores of the Straits of Magellan.

“It is open plain country with no trees, very flat and extremely cold,” says Shane. “A bit like the Nullarbor Plain only with snow.”

“Australian merinos do well in the harsh conditions and the Argentinian breeder concerned, Ricardo Fenton, is very progressive and keen to improve his returns through better genetics. We had previously exported semen and embryos on behalf of a client and saw the visit as an opportunity to support the product in Argentina.”

Ricardo Fenton has reported ‘lambs everywhere’ and is very pleased with the results.

Above: The conditions outside were bleak when TLG conducted ET training for local veterinarians in Patagonia, but Australian meat merinos (below) were doing well outside in the snow.



## China accreditation provides opportunities

TLG recently achieved another Australian first in gaining accreditation for the collection of cattle semen and embryos for China.

In a visit to Australia by Chinese officials in June last year, TLG was the first of a limited number of semen production centres to be checked against stringent Chinese requirements and the first to gain accreditation.

“Because China is potentially a very big market for Australian dairy genetics and there is also strong interest in beef, we could see the opportunity for our clients,” says TLG managing director, Shane Ashworth. “We have been lobbying the Federal Government for some time to encourage the Chinese to visit Australia with the view of gaining accreditation.”

“We are obviously very pleased for our clients to see this all come together. Accreditation for sheep semen and embryos hasn’t taken place yet but we hope that may occur later in the year.”

China has stringent conditions on some



The new collection centre at Camperdown meets stringent Chinese and EU requirements.

diseases and, like the EU, requires a separate collection centre for non IBR animals. Part of gaining accreditation for China involved building a new collection centre at Camperdown. Recent visitors to the premises will have seen the extensive work taking place to convert the previous embryo collection

centre into a large semen collection facility.

The new facilities are completely EU and China compliant with all EU and China bulls now held in one high security collection centre.

## Wagyu exporter chosers TLG for quality service

Five years ago when the managing director of Sher Wagyu and Beefcorp, Nick Sher, was looking for a semen centre to take his very valuable Wagyu bulls he did some industry research and decided that TLG had the credentials he was looking for.

“TLG had the reputation of being very professional and they have more than lived up to that reputation,” Nick says.

“Our Wagyu bulls are valuable animals and we have complete trust in TLG to handle them well. We know they are being well cared for and properly managed to produce the best possible semen quality. TLG also provide us with an efficient and reliable semen distribution service. They are a very professional outfit and great to deal with.”

Located at Ballan in Victoria, Sher

Wagyu is one of Australia’s foundation Wagyu herds and calved the first Wagyu embryo calf in Australia in February 1992.

Nick’s company Beefcorp contract with dairyfarmers to inseminate Holstein cows and heifers with Wagyu semen to produce Wagyu/Holstein F1 calves which they buy back at one week of age. These are then contract reared for three to four months before going to a Beefcorp grazing property where they are grown out for a further 12 months. They are then transferred to feedlots for about 400 days before slaughter and export to Japan as boxed beef.

“The Wagyu semen TLG produce is excellent quality which means our contracted dairyfarmers get good insemination results,” Nick says. “It gives us confidence when dealing with dairyfarmers that we are providing high fertility semen produced under the best possible conditions.”

F1 calves by a Sher Wagyu bull stationed at TLG for semen collection.



# Managing for ET success

An ET program can be a disappointment for a client if insufficient fertilised embryos are recovered. In some cases up to half the embryos recovered can be unfertilised. That sort of result is also a disappointment to TLG.

"It is hard to explain why some cows give you a lot of fertilised embryos and others don't," says Shane Ashworth. "The difference can be the management of the cows. Is everyone flushing cows doing everything they can to maximise their chance of getting a high percentage of fertilised embryos?"

"For example, nutrition and timing of insemination can be important to the outcome of a program."

"A high protein diet is a risk. We recommend that cows should be taken off lush pasture and onto a hard feed diet three to four weeks prior to flushing. Make sure their energy levels are going forward. If there is a fertility problem supplementary feed should be introduced."

"We know donors won't flush well if they are too fat, on the other hand, if a

dairy cow has just calved and she is low in condition it would probably be better to carry her over and flush her in autumn."

"The timing and frequency of insemination is critical to the success of an ET program. For the best chance of fertilised embryos we recommend inseminating 12 and 24 hours after heat detection. Making the extra effort is really worthwhile."

"In a good beef program we average about seven fertilised embryos per cow but in a dairy situation where cows are working hard in their lactations then we can only expect four or five fertilised embryos per cow. However within those constraints some clients consistently do better and that comes down to their management."

"The message is ensure your cows are in the right condition by putting them on the right feed and AI twice. That will put the odds in your favour."

For more information on managing your cows for an ET program please contact Gary Sivesind on 0418 932 015.

# Nine heifers from top cow

**A herd of well managed and contented cows has helped achieve some good ET program results for Western Districts dairyfarmers Graeme and Robyn Fleming. TLG embryo technician Gary Sivesind says the Fleming's good management of their cows is a major factor contributing to the success of ET programs in their herd.**

"Graeme and Robyn manage their cows well, nothing fancy - no bells and whistles - just well looked after healthy cows," he says. "Good management, sound nutrition and care about the details like the timing of inseminations can make all the difference."

The Flemings milk 160 to 170 mainly commercial cows at South Purumbete with a small number registered in their Dockaville Holstein stud. They are really happy about the results of three flushes from one of their best cows Delroe Jenny 521 who was a winner of the Cobden AB on-farm Commercial Cow of the Year competition. The three flushes so far have yielded nine heifer calves and four bulls with more frozen embryos waiting for recipient cows.

"We only had one heifer from Jenny and always wished we had more," Robyn says. "After she won the Cow of the Year we decided to flush her and are wrapt with the result."

"The herd are fed crushed triticale and mineral pellets, about 4 kg of grain a day, with silage in the dry time. We like our cows to be healthy and content. That way they work hard and hopefully get back in calf."

"We always inseminate twice a day at 12 and 24 hours and watch the cows really closely. If we have to get up at 4.30 in the morning to do a cow we will. It's worth the effort."

"We believe you get much better results flushing cows when they are not in full milk - it's best towards the end of lactation or when they are dry. In full milk they are working hard and may be too stressed to achieve good flush results."

The Fleming's seem to be on the right track. From a total six flushes in the herd they have achieved 74 fertilised embryos. This year they have 20 or 21 cows in calf from 25 embryos and say they are thrilled with that result.

The recent TLG program in which we transplanted 300 sheep embryos in



Argentina provided an opportunity for us to support our product in an export market. It ensured that our Argentina clients achieved the results they needed to make their ET program viable.

It is an example of our commitment to our clients and the success of their programs. If we have to fly to the most southern human habitation on the planet and transplant embryos in minus 20 degrees Celsius, we will do it!

Customers who embark on a program with TLG can do so knowing we are prepared to travel that extra mile to make sure they achieve their objectives.

We like to discuss our customers ET programs with them to ensure we know the outcome they are expecting so we can do everything we can to ensure their expectations are realised.

Our aim is not to be the biggest at what we do in the industry but rather the best. That aim is reflected in our recent new staff appointments which are designed to make sure our product is highly accredited and we continue to offer the best in customer service..

*Shane Ashworth*  
Managing Director

## More new faces at TLG

Since the last edition of Total Times three new faces have appeared at TLG.

Amy Stringer has joined the team to work with the stock at Glenormiston. She assists with health testing and the general care of the animals on centre for collection. She also supports Debra with import and export, and customer service.



**Amy Stringer**

Amy knows cattle well having been brought up on a dairyfarm and been involved with stud cattle and recently established her own small stud. Before joining TLG she completed an Agriculture degree at Roseworthy and, while studying, worked with the Semex Elite Heifer program. "I am really pleased my first full time job since graduating is with TLG who have a great reputation in the industry," Amy says.

Kasey Templeton is the new person in dispatch. Kasey is often first contact with clients and is responsible for packing and dispatching semen orders interstate and data entry on all stock in storage.



**Kasey Templeton**

"I've got a great job which I really like and TLG are really good to work for – it's a very friendly work place and everybody is keen to do the best job possible," she says.

Stephanie Osicka first came to TLG for work experience as part of her studies for a degree in Agriculture, majoring in Animal



**Stephanie Osicka**

Production. She obviously impressed as she was invited back to join TLG as an embryologist working with Gary Sivesind. Stephanie comes from a vineyard and winery background but has always loved working with cattle. She has already met many clients as she travels around the country with Gary and says she is looking forward to meeting many more.

### Research continues

Shelley Underwood is a University of Sydney Veterinary Science graduate whose work for her PhD involves sex sorted semen.



She has recently spent time at TLG carrying out semen freezing experiments and associated trials aimed at ensuring semen arriving at Sydney University is of the optimum quality for the sex sorting trials. The trials are being conducted at the Veterinary Science Faculty in conjunction with TLG and the Gardner Foundation.

**Shelley Underwood**

## TLG leading the way on livestock identification

When livestock which have been quarantined at TLG prior to export leave the property their National Livestock Identification Scheme (NLIS) identification and history goes with them. TLG was one of the first in Australia to introduce a method of linking all health tests results directly to each animal for export through its NLIS ID.

As reported in our previous edition of Total Times, TLG has been involved in a major heifer export project. Heifers

assembled at the TLG export facility are electronically scanned through a specially designed air operated crush with their ID then linked to a database which stores all the on-farm and on-centre health test results.

In the event of a problem at the overseas destination, the results for each animal can be traced back through the quarantine process to the farm of origin.

The innovative system provides TLG with a competitive advantage in livestock exports.

## Charge for embryo storage

From 1 February 2006 there will be a charge for embryos stored on behalf of clients at TLG. The charge which will be \$1/embryo/quarter is being applied to recover some of the significant cost of holding embryos in storage. All clients with embryos in storage will receive a full report of stock held on their behalf as invoices are issued.

Clients can also obtain a full inventory of stock held on their behalf through the TLG website. To do so please contact Kathryn to arrange a password

which will provide access to this secure information.

### Insurance

We remind clients that embryos and semen held in storage on their behalf at TLG is not fully insured. Clients who want to take out a policy which will provide full cover should contact Kathryn who can make the necessary arrangements. The first step is to nominate a value for stock held. If you are in doubt about the cover you have please call Kathryn on 03 5593 2630.

### Opportunity for beef producers

*\$700 per calf!*

A TLG client wants beef herds for embryo transplants.

They will purchase the resulting male and female calves for \$700 at weaning. This will be a regular program for large numbers.

For details contact:  
Shane Ashworth on  
0417 502 803

### Contact us



Phone 03 5593 2016  
Fax 03 5593 2630  
Email [tlg@tlg.com.au](mailto:tlg@tlg.com.au)

Postal address:  
PO Box 105  
Camperdown, VIC 3260

[www.tlg.com.au](http://www.tlg.com.au)