

Second skins

By CARLA
WIESE-SMITH

PRODUCTIVITY losses associated with hypothermia in sheep post-shearing may be a thing of the past for Monaro farmers, Tony and Mary Goodwin, Countegany Station, Numeralla, near Cooma, thanks to a new product called Thermoskin.

The Goodwins run a commercial enterprise of about 2200 sheep and a small number of Angus cattle on their 405-hectare home block plus lease and agistment properties.

The fourth generation farmers have always run sheep and cattle, however, sheep provide their biggest income through the sale of wool and surplus stock.

On average, the sheep provide two-thirds of the income and the balance is from the cattle.

Cattle have been present since Mr Goodwin's grandfather acquired the Angus in 1930, while the Goodwin Merinos are based predominantly on the Barron family's Adina bloodlines, which they have used almost exclusively for the past 10 years.

Mr Goodwin endeavours to breed structurally sound, fertile, well-covered sheep.

Animals are culled on size, poor conformation, style, short staple, colour, handle and anything that may predispose the animal to flystrike.

Mr Goodwin said he aimed for the clip to be a medium-type wool possessing fine crimp definition and length of staple.

Last year his ewes averaged 20 micron, but the flock average was 19.2 micron, with the wool cut usually in the six to six-and-a-half kilogram range.

The last Countegany wool sale brought 690 cents a kilogram.



Fine form at Numeralla

AFTER seeing a trial of Thermoskin two years ago at his neighbour's place and having a chat with its designer, Henry King, Monaro district wool grower, Tony Goodwin, Countegany Station, Numeralla, decided to try the product for himself.

Thermoskin is an environmentally-friendly lanolin-based liquid sprayed onto shorn animals to form a film to help prevent hypothermia.

Ewes are joined in mid-April to lamb in September.

Two rams cover about 140 to 150 ewes between them, producing an average of 100 per cent lambing.

Countegany Station comprises what Mr Goodwin calls "well-improved" pastures full of perennial grasses such as rye, fescue, cocksfoot and sub-clovers.

In a good year feed is plentiful, but in the past few drought years the Goodwins have had to supplementary feed their stock with hay and cattle nuts.

Mr Goodwin also grows forage crops of turnips

Mr Goodwin (pictured) applied the Thermoskin using the Automatic Spray System.

The Countegany sheep have only had Thermoskin applied in the past couple of weeks, but so far Mr Goodwin is happy with the results.

"We have had some cold, wet weather and also snow and heavy frosts," he said.

"So far they look to be holding their condition."

and oats for winter feed.

Turnips grow well in the area and are sown for grazing only.

Mr Goodwin uses direct drill and minimum till methods to establish pasture.

Paddocks are sown to crops for the first two years, and then to pasture in the third year.

High analysis fertiliser is generally used but this year Mr Goodwin is concerned about the high prices for such fertiliser.

While the country is good, it is slightly selenium deficient, and so each sheep receives a selenium pellet bi-annually.