TASMANIA'S

CORMO

- **Premium fleece**
- **High fertility**
- **Easy management**

What is Cormo?

Cormo is a system of breeding in which selection is based on scientific measurement of commercially desirable characteristics.

The criteria for selection are:

1. Clean fleece weight.
2. Fibre diameter (21-23 micron range);
3. Fast body growth rate, or body weight;
4. High fertility.

Scientific instruments and laboratory procedures are used to measure these characteristics, replacing the traditional subjective visual assessments.

The results are stored and analysed by computer.

No pedigrees are kept. Sheep are numbered and computer management makes Cormo the most strictly scientific genetic improvement scheme in the industry's history.

The internationally accepted Cormo breed originated at Dungrove, near Bothwell in Tasmania, Australia. The flocks graze from 610 metres to 1000 metres above sea level and take hot, dry summers and cold, snowy winters in their stride.

A ram-breeding nucleus and a commercial flock both are run all year under these natural environmental conditions.

This gives each animal an equal opportunity to express its genetic assets.

Three year old ewes

Cormo Characteristics

Scientific breeding has given the Cormo a remarkable range of commercial virtues, suited to both the wool and meat industries. These include:-

- Long staple, white high-yield wool (average fleece weight 5.5 kg);
- Soft, dense fleece with exceptional consistency (90 per cent within two microns of the average);
- Resistance to fleece rot and mycotic dermatitis;
- Long and large carcasses with flock ewes averaging 55kg and export wethers averaging 60kg;
- High fertility with over 110 per cent of lambs weaned;
- Open faces;
- Easy management with no stalling or artificial feeding.

Cormo have valuable breed characteristics:

- Producing a finer fleece when crossed with a stronger breed, but retaining body size and fertility;
- Increasing resistance to fleece rot, particularly in Merino and Polwarth types;
- Enabling wethers to achieve maximum body weights;
- As fat lamb mothers, producing a leaner type lamb with more valuable fleece.

The Cormo created history when Toyoba Mills of Japan paid a premium price for the entire Dungrove clip, unclassed, to produce an exclusive, luxury fabric, Donicormo.

Toyoba continues to pay a premium price for Tasmanian Cormo wool which has a unique softness and sponginess.

Donicormo, a unique cloth

Ram Selection

Since the initial cross-breeding in 1960, Dungrove has maintained a ram-breeding nucleus flock within its main commercial flock.

The nucleus of 2000 ewes produces sires for both the nucleus and the commercial flock of 8000 ewes.

No outside rams are introduced and those within the nucleus are culled rigorously for commercial faults.

Rams born in Tasmania in October (Southern Hemisphere spring) are tip shorn and weaned in January.

They graze naturally all year before being shorn again in December, when body weights are measured and wool samples sent to a laboratory for assessment.

When results are known, a final selection is made, based on:

- Clean fleece weight;
- Fibre diameter (21-23 microns);
- Type of birth, with twins preferred;
- Body weight.

The top 3 per cent of rams, assessed by these criteria, are retained for breeding.

Selected rams remain active in the breeding nucleus for only two years, so there is a rapid turnover of genetically improving sires.

Recent computer data shows the flock is continuing to improve genetically.

Ewe with twin lambs

Peter Downie with rams at Dungrove

Ewe Selecti

Ewes, born either into the ram nu
commercial flock, are culled for ob

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- Greasy fleece weight;
- Fibre diameter.

Animals failing to meet prescribed

Each year the top ewe hoggets fr
form the ram-breeding nucleus.

Ewes are shorn in September, bef
sound staple strength and easy m
lambing.

WOOL

Diameter	:	21-23 microns
Avg. Yield	:	76 per cent clean
Weight	:	5.5 kg
Micron range	:	90 per cent of wool in two micron range

BODY

Long and large frame
Open faces
More than 110 per cent lambs weaned
Avg. Ewes : 55 kg
Export Wethers : 60 kg

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ram nucleus flock or the
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easy management during

Management of the flock at Dungrove complements the scientific culling program.

Sheep are not housed, rugged or given supplementary feeding, although they graze from 610 to 1000 metres above sea level at an approximate latitude of 42 South where summers are hot and dry and winters cold and snowy.

Annual rainfall averages around 533 mm (21 ins).

Genetic defects are exposed and culled naturally in this environment, instead of being concealed by artificial pampering.

Cormo have been promoted in the United States as "rugged range rams".

They are an EASY MANAGEMENT breed.

The Foundation

In 1960 the owner of Dungrove, Ian Downie, was running a high quality flock of Superfine Saxon Merinos.

Commercial considerations led him to two conclusions:

- There was a need for a more fertile, higher wool producing and larger framed sheep;
- A trend would develop towards the purchase of wool according to objective measurement and a breeding program should be instigated to meet this demand.

In seeking scientific help he learned of large-scale breeding trials conducted at Trangie, New South Wales, Australia, by Dr Helen Newton-Taylor, chief geneticist with the Division of Animal Genetics of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, in collaboration with Dr R.B. Dun and Dr F. Morley.

The Senior Sheep and Wool Officer of Tasmania's Department of Agriculture, Mr B.C. Jefferies, devised a breeding program which was based on the Trangie experiments and designed to meet Mr Downie's requirements.

Stud Corriedale rams were crossed with 1200 Superfine Saxon Merino ewes and those progeny which met rigid selection criteria, assessed by objective measurement, became the Cormo ram breeding nucleus.

The word Cormo is derived from letters from the names of the two parent breeds.

Freedom from Disease

Due to the Tasmanian Government's stringent control and eradication programs, and the island's natural protection from disease, Tasmania is completely free of the following significant sheep diseases:

Anthrax, Babesiosis, Bluetongue, Caprine Brucellosis (Brucella Melitensis), Epizootic Haemorrhagic Disease, Foot and Mouth Disease, Maedi-Visna, Oseophagostomum, Rabies, Scrapie, Sheep Pox, Sheep Scab.

Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia, Johnes Disease and Q Fever have never been recorded in sheep in the State.

A drover brings wethers down from Tasmania's high country for shearing

Wethers in rough bush country

Sale Availability

- Frozen semen pellets from top nucleus rams are available through the Tasmanian Herd Improvement Organisation. (Modern Laparoscope techniques have increased the success rate of artificial breeding to 80 per cent);
- Redundant sires;
- 1.5 year-old nucleus and flock rams;
- Breeding ewes.

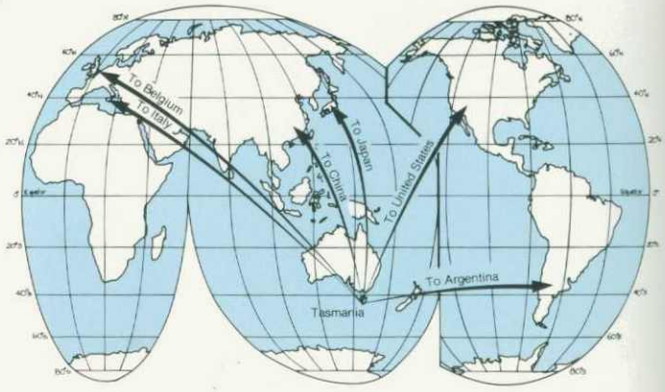
World Distribution

The reputation of the Cormo extends well beyond Tasmania. The Australian Cormo Sheep Association was founded in 1974 and was followed by the formation of the American Cormo Sheep Association, based in Utah, U.S.A.

Cormo fleece has won the Grand Champion Sweepstakes at the National California Wool Show.

A Cormo association exists in Argentina and flocks were established at an early stage in countries as widespread as China, Italy and Belgium.

Australia places no export embargo on Cormo sheep.



Export Ram Depot

A holding depot for Cormo rams has been established at Hamilton, Victoria, on the Australian mainland, for the convenience of overseas and local purchasers.

Large numbers of selected Tasmanian Cormo rams are sold from the depot each year.

Droving wethers from the high country and (inset) Dungrove, the home of Cormo

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