

Alan McCormack – 2011 Young Farmer of the Year Finalist

Alan McCormack manages “Walwa”, a 3,300 hectare mixed farm on the NSW southern tablelands, midway between Goulburn, Crookwell and Gunning, in partnership with his father, Alan senior.

Their farm’s 14,000 head sheep business consists of a Merino stud, a large fine and superfine commercial flock, first cross ewe production and prime lamb production.

They also run a 650 head commercial beef herd and a cropping program of around 250 hectares.

Alan recently started developing a Santa Gertrudis stud in partnership with his fiancée Claire that currently has 25 cows.

Farm income is supplemented with opportunistic stock trading, royalties from a 46 megawatt wind farm constructed on the property and contract freighting, spraying and sowing.

Due to his father being confined to a wheelchair, Alan is responsible for all physical work and most farm management decisions, while Alan senior concentrates on business management.

Alan is assisted with day-to-day farm work by one employee.

While each business partner has specific roles, daily discussion of issues and ideas ensures both father and son stay in tune with what each other is doing.

Alan aims to maximise productivity whilst ensuring the farm remains sustainable through strategies including value-adding, genetic improvement and good pasture and nutrition management.

Profitability is boosted by growing out stock instead of selling stores, selling pregnant stock rather than dry females and cleaning grain so that it can be sold as seed.

An artificial breeding program has been introduced to increase the quality of merino genetics as the stud business recovers from the impact of Ovine Johne’s disease.

Between 250 and 400 stud ewes are artificially inseminated each year and next year this will be expanded to include an embryo transfer program.

Nutrition is managed through growing both summer and winter fodder crops to fill feed gaps, finish stock and harvest for hay or grain.