



**2016**

**GLOBAL DOHNE CONFERENCE**

**JULY 21 -22 | AUSTRALIA**

*Celebrating*  
**50 years**

**"A must for all sheep producers"**

**Dohnes: How They Stack Up  
Financially**

# Introduction

- Dohnes are a true dual purpose sheep breed
- How to assess whether they stack up financially
- How they stack up financially
- Other factors can impact on farm performance

# A Dual Purpose Breed

- A cross between the SAMM and medium wool Merino 50 years ago in South Africa
- Wool and meat balance the aim
- Early adoption and implementation of a clear breeding objective with modern genetic tools
- Introduced into Australia about 18 years ago
- Other dual purpose sheep generally have poorer wool production characteristics than the Dohne

# Assessing How Dohne's Stack Up

- Insufficient numbers to be confident of significant differences in all breed comparisons in Australia for reproduction
- South African comparisons also struggle but are better, but are run in South Africa, not here and not with our sheep
- Modelling the differences with GrassGro<sup>®</sup> is one logical way to approach this
- Allows different sheep enterprises in different locations to be compared

# Sufficient Numbers?

- For a recent trial to show statistically significant economic differences in reproduction
- Needed to have 1,932 sheep per treatment
  - According to the statistician!
- Most comparisons have insufficient numbers
- Most farm trials with Dohnes have insufficient numbers
- The result will be random! And that's why they are!

# South African Comparisons

- Are useful and have more numbers
- But is the Merino the same as we're comparing to?
- And the Cape is a strict Mediterranean climate
  - Like SW Western Australia
  - But not like the rest of Australia
- And soils are very different

# Model The Breed Differences

- GrassGro® has been validated to model livestock and pasture systems and in great detail across Australia
- Some key traits don't require a large number of measurements to get accurate estimates drive important financial differences
  - Wool
  - Bodyweight
  - Growth
- GrassGro uses sheep biology to model reproductive rates, so can have some confidence in the output

# Dohne's Stack Up Well

- Assumed last 10 years real wool and meat prices
  - Sourced from AWEX, ABS and MLA
- Used both South African and Australian comparisons for wool and bodyweight differences – were similar
- Reproductive results = benchmarking results and other comparisons for Fine Wool Merino & Crossbred
- Thus – confidence that Dohne result is biologically sound from GrassGro®



# Reproductive Results

- At Hamilton, Victoria with 655 mm over study period
- Fine wool Merino lamb marking percentage = 77%
- Dohne lamb marking percentage = 94%
- Crossbred lamb marking percentage = 115%
- Fine wool and Crossbred in line with industry results
- Provides confidence that Dohne result is about right

# Production Results

- Dohne wool cut was 10% lower than medium wool strain with Fine wool cut similar, but 2.9 $\mu$  broader
- Dohne ewe bodyweight 20% higher than Fine wool Merino and Crossbred 10% higher than Dohne
- Crossbred fibre diameter at 28 $\mu$
- Along with reproductive rates drove very different outcomes from where income was derived from
- All enterprises were profitable in comparison to long term farm benchmarking results









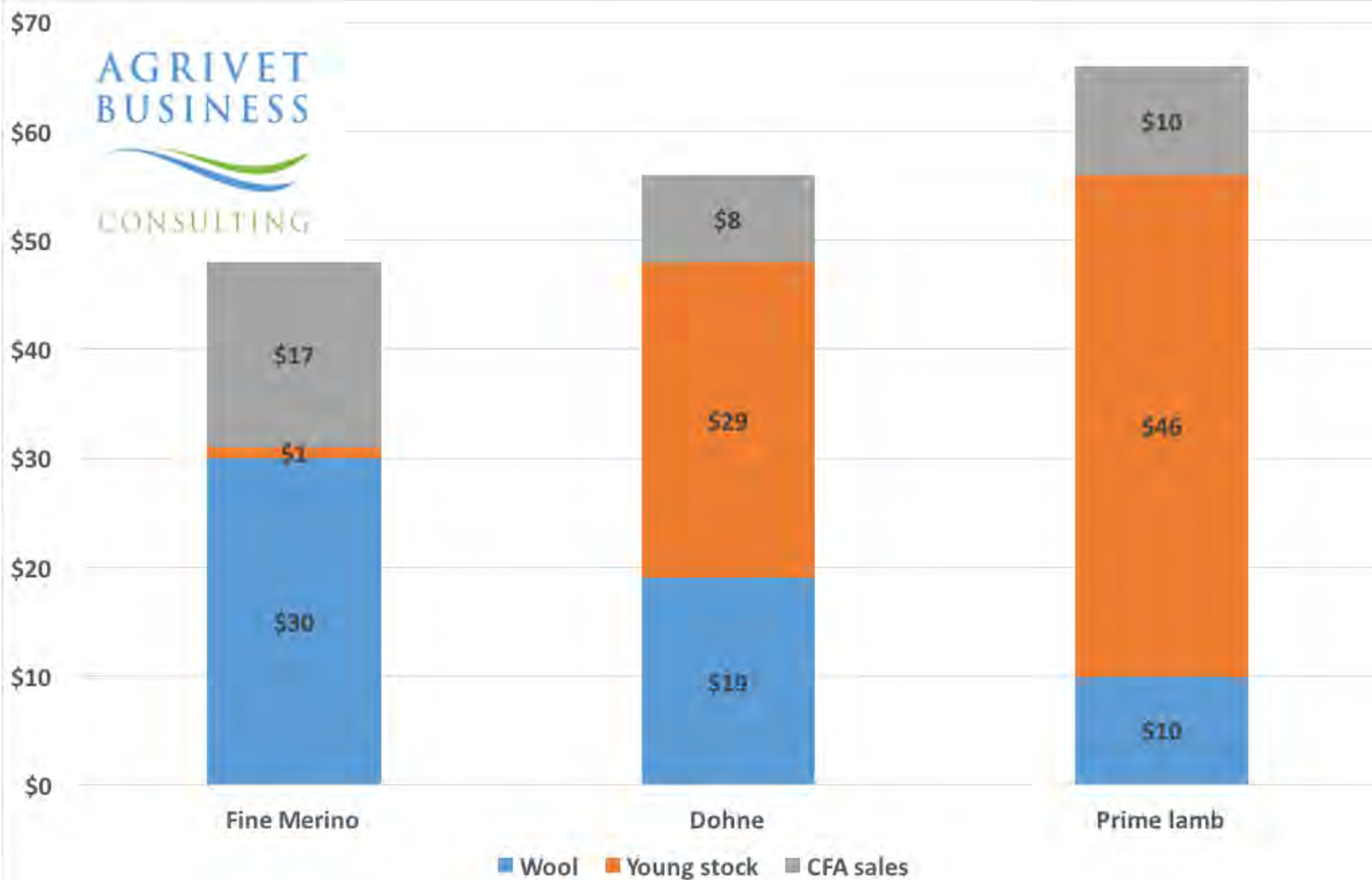


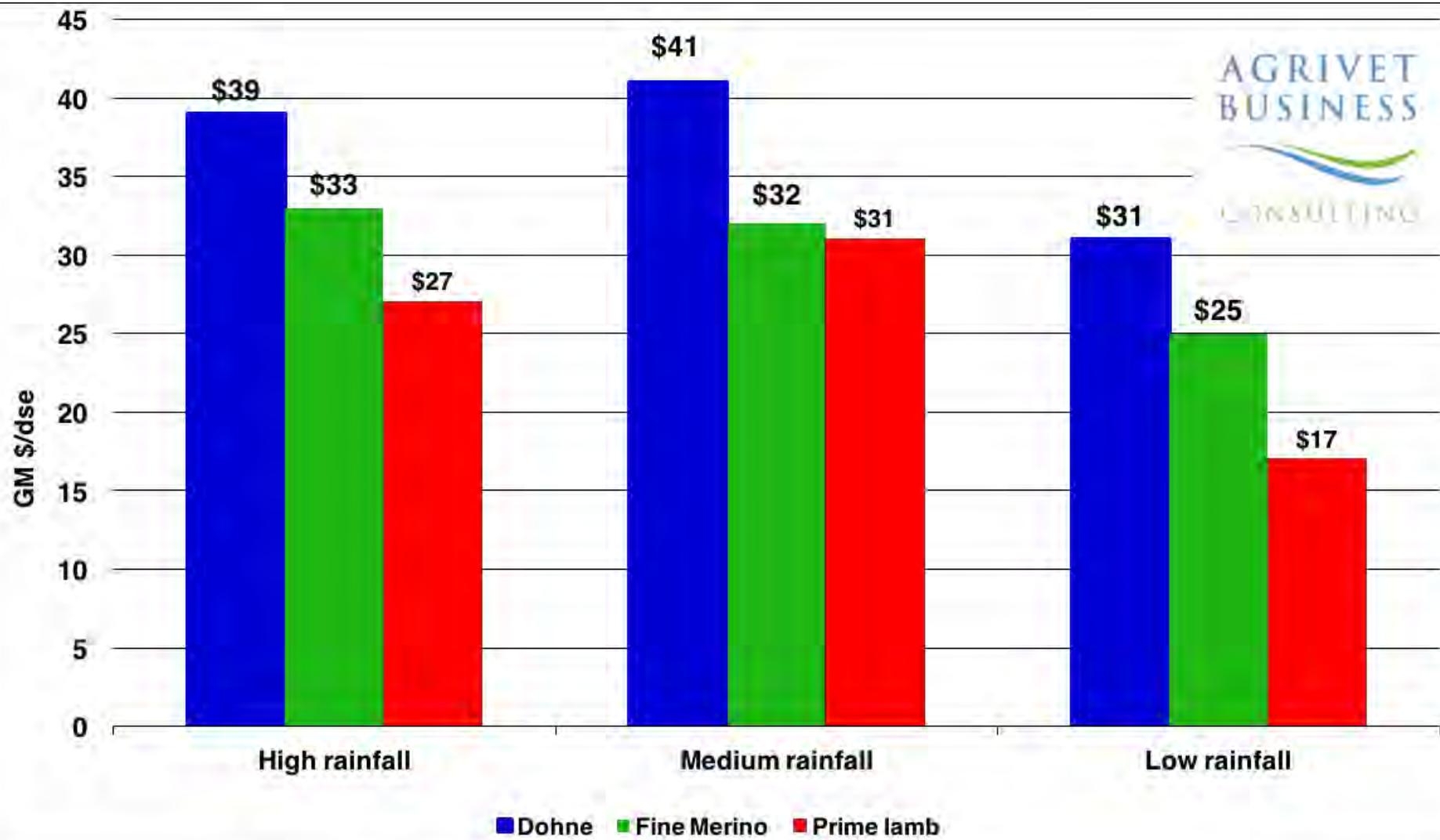




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# Other Factors

- This analysis doesn't mean that running Dohnes is a license to print money
  - But it's a good start!
- These are only “averages” for the breeds
- Big variation within breeds
- Environmental factors apart from rain not accounted for
- Labour costs, ease of care and interest should be accounted for as the previous figures are not profit
- Commodity prices as well as seasons vary enormously



# Summary

- Dohnes are a true dual purpose sheep breed
- How to assess whether they stack up financially
- How they stack up financially
- Other factors can impact on farm performance
- And yes, Dohnes stack up well financially