



The Smart Choice

Dohne Merino Matters

A newsletter publication of the Australian Dohne Breeders' Association

October 2025

Vale Phillip Terence Venning (A tribute as I have known him.)

Early in 1978, Erica was 6 and Thomas was 4 when Bev and the two children arrived at “Bundaleer” to join Phillip, who had begun employment there in late 1977. Bundaleer is a picturesque property nestled in the hills between Spalding and Gulnare and is still owned by the Ashby family.

Phillip had been working at “Old Cobran” in NSW, another sheep stud, he commuted each week while Bev and the children stayed near Pinnaroo. The move to Bundaleer brought the family back together.

In the four years that Phillip worked for W B Ashby and Sons at Gulnare, he specialised in the care of the Ashrose Merino stud sheep at this location. While there, he learned the skill of blade shearing, and he enjoyed practicing the art for many years.

He was the independent person who drafted each mob of sheep evenly when the large Ashby family business underwent planned rationalisation and equal division into smaller family units. He also bought a block of land near Booborowie where he could spend his spare time running sheep that were descendants of his Father’s flock from Pinnaroo.

After four years with the Ashby’s, he took a senior role at Barton Hill Merino stud for the Dunn family at Black Springs. His roles there included preparation and care of sale rams and classing flocks for their clients. Jonathan was born into the family during this time at Black Springs.

The next move was near to Auburn when the Davidson family from Gulnare bought land there with a spare house. (Phillip and Bev were good friends with Russell and Pam Davidson.) From here he developed his career into a more of an independent sheep Classer, travelling all over South Australia and Victoria practicing his craft. He also travelled widely as a judge for shearing competitions.

Volume 107



Dates for Diary

LambEx

7 to 10 July 2026

Adelaide SA

Australian Sheep & Wool
Show

17 to 19 July 2026

Bendigo VIC

NSW Dohne Prime Lamb
Schools Competition
29 July 2026 Orange NSW

Annual General Meeting
29 July 2026 Orange NSW

World Dohne Merino
Conference
18 to 24 October 2026
South Africa

World Dohne Merino
Post-Conference
26 to 31 October 2026
South Africa

Next Edition

States’ Year in Review
Western Australia

States’ Year in Review
New South Wales

Vale Phillip Terence Venning (continued)

The last significant move was when he and Bev invested in the property north of Clare by selling the Booboorowie block and it included a house, so they could live on their own block. Obviously, the sheep that he was so proud of came too!

Phillip had great success with his fine wool fleeces at the Australian Sheep and Wool Show in Bendigo, the largest sheep show in the Southern Hemisphere. Many times, his fleeces were considered the most valuable from South Australia, and sometimes even nationally. He garnered a good few Champion ribbons for fleeces at Bendigo and the Adelaide Royal Show. As a classer, he had strong views about a range of aspects of sheep production; and people. He felt that there were three evils that should be done away with; shed preparation of sale rams, foot trimmers and computers. I believe that after Bev's passing, it wasn't long before her computer that she had used for emails headed South.

Phillip became accredited as an Assessor for the Dohne Merino breed of sheep in 2004 and was widely respected for his adherence to strict standards of conformation and type. He was honoured by the Australian Dohne Breeders Association at a dinner in March 2025.

Phillip would often tell me that they enjoyed another two years of quality time together following Bev's recovery from a stroke.

Phillip was almost the classic definition of stoic. He had a terrible year health-wise this year, yet only a few weeks ago when we asked him how he was going his response was this: I'm still upright and breathing.

It was good to see him encourage young people in the sheep industry, including his own granddaughters Georgia and Maddie.

He will be missed by many people who had come to respect him.

Allen Kelly, Glen Holme Dohne Stud



2019 Australian Sheep and Wool Show Dohne Marquee Judges; Tegan Falkner, Charlotte Treloar, Phil Venning, Rick Power, and Michael Elmes with Allen Kelly, Glen Holme Dohne Stud with 2019 Grand Champion Dohne Ram.

Mid North classer remembered for lasting impact on Merino, Dohne flocks

Story courtesy of ACM (Catherine Miller) Stock Journal

Respected Clare-based sheep classer Phillip Venning was doing what he loved right up until the end of his life. Phil is being remembered for his considerable impact on many commercial Merino and Dohne flocks, not just in South Australia but also Victoria and NSW, as well as being a recognised shearing judge.

[Click here to read full story](#)



Respected classer Phil Venning with one of his favourite ewes that in 2008 won the champion superfine fleece at the Australian Sheep & Wool Show in Bendigo, Victoria. It was the most valuable fleece in the entire show at \$416. Picture supplied

States' Year in Review South Australia

South Australian Dohne Merino ram auctions for 2025 have overall been fairly well supported with an 80% clearance rate at an average of \$1390. This result is hard to compare to last year as a lot less rams were offered through auctions with a couple of studs opting for private selection only this year, due to drought conditions. The South Australian sheep market in general is seeing increasing returns for wool and meat which is encouraging going forward and lifting the spirits of producers who have seen an extended below average rainfall period.

Top price ram sold for the state was \$5000 achieved by Hillview stud who also enjoyed the highest average of \$1615. Good luck to everyone for the rest of this year hoping some late rains continue for those that are in need and looking forward to further improvement in 2026.

Stock Journal – Dohne Merino Sale Reports – [Click Here](#)

Rob Hall, ADBA South Australian President



\$5,000 top price and \$1615 top average for South Australia - Hillview Dohne Stud

World Dohne Merino Conference, South Africa

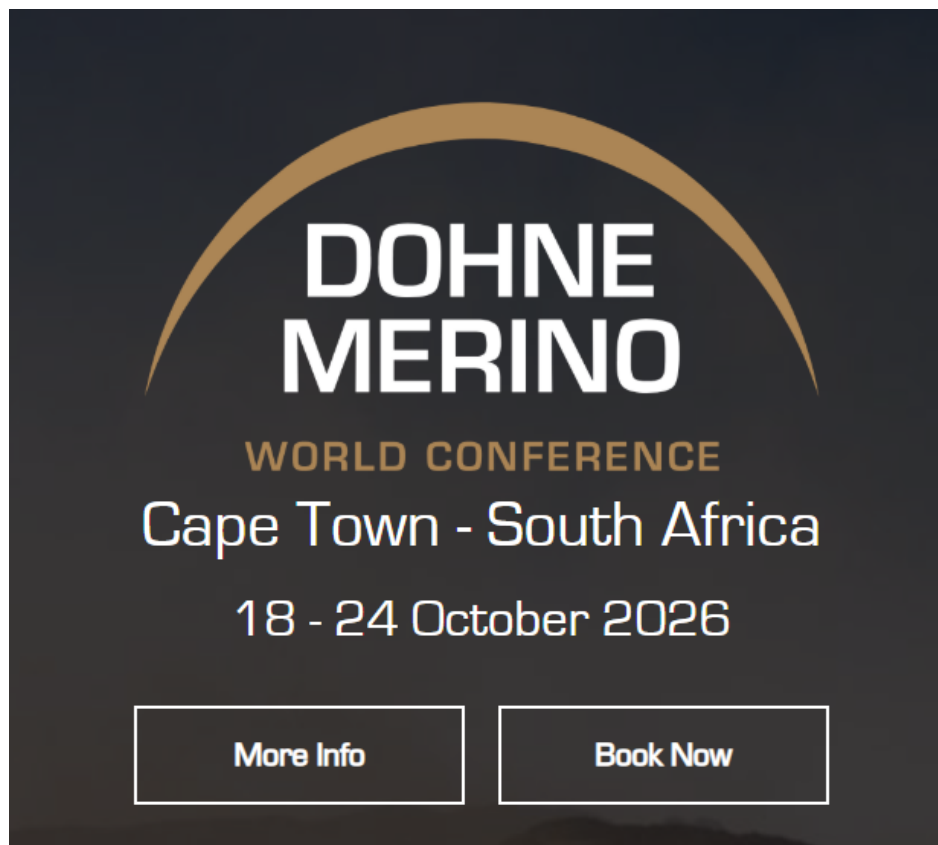
The Dohne Merino Society of SA is excited to host the World Dohne Merino Conference in 2026. This event will be in collaboration with the 60th year of existence of the Dohne Merino Society of South Africa.

The launched the official website for the conference is now up: <https://conference.dohnemerino.com>

Bookings can be made directly on the website and they will be posting more information as the time passes.

The Dohne Merino World Conference, to be held from **18 – 24 October 2026**, at the Arabella Hotel, in Hermanus, South Africa. This prestigious event promises to bring together Dohne Merino breeders, industry experts, and enthusiasts from across the globe, fostering collaboration, innovation, and excellence in our shared passion.

The week after the conference (**26 to 31 October 2026**), we are planning a post-conference tour to the central and eastern parts of South Africa.



The Dohne Merino Calendar is out now! - [Click Here](#)

Thank you to all members who have supported this publication.

Council

President

Greg Hall
0417 833 893

Vice President

Don Mills
0427 872 808

John Nadin
0427 474 610

Darren Gurnett
0400 205 943

Lynda Farrow
0488 188 526

Mitchell Applegate
0477 522 982

Daniel Pumpa
0428 665 016

Sandy Pye
0448 232 569

Dohne Data Manager

Brett Wilson
0411 541 034
data@dohne.com.au

ADBA Office

Secretary

Kaye Butler
PO Box 1369
WILLIAMSTOWN
SA 5351
P: 0477 889 748
secretary@dohne.com.au

dohne.com.au

