

**Optimising the concentration of glycogen in lamb meat**

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## Declaration

I declare that this is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not been submitted for a degree at any tertiary institution.

.....

Robin Henry Jacob

## **Abstract**

The lamb industry is actively seeking to improve the quality of lamb meat produced in Australia. Ultimate pH (pHu) is a key determinant of red meat eating quality although this measurement has not been adopted formally by the Australian lamb meat industry. Muscle glycogen concentration is a major determinant of pHu in red meat. This thesis investigates glycogen concentration in lamb muscle and the ultimate pH (pHu) of lamb meat under commercial industry conditions as well as exploring by experimentation, some of the factors that control muscle glycogen concentration in lamb muscle. The results of this work has contributed to an understanding of the significance of high pHu meat to the lamb industry and will assist with developing new management strategies for lambs that avoid low muscle glycogen concentration at the point of slaughter, thus high pHu in meat derived from lambs.

The first part of the study (Experiments 1 and 2) undertook to determine the ranges of muscle glycogen concentration and lamb meat pHu found under commercial conditions and to measure any changes in these parameters associated with consignment of lambs from farm to abattoir and lairage at abattoirs. This study utilised a new biopsy technique that allowed muscle collection from lambs on farm. Some 16 different consignments of lambs and 3 consignments of lactating ewes were intensively monitored on farm and at abattoirs over a range of lairage times. Sensory evaluation tests were done using meat from 6 of these consignments.

The results showed there to be considerable variation between lamb consignments with some consignments having a very high and other consignments having a very low incidence of meat with a high pHu. On balance “on farm” factors were concluded to have a greater impact on muscle glycogen concentration at slaughter than “post farm gate” factors. However, there was evidence that muscle glycogen concentrations decreased during the farm curfew and transport period for some consignments so both “on farm” and “post farm gate factors” can be important. Characteristically glycogen loss occurred during the farm curfew and transport period in consignments of Merino lambs that had high muscle glycogen concentrations prior to consignment. Holding lambs in lairage caused no negative effects on muscle glycogen concentration although there was some evidence that very short lairage periods may increase meat pHu without causing a change in muscle glycogen concentration. It was concluded from these experiments that the mean muscle glycogen concentration of a group of lambs needs to be greater than 1.5 g/100g on farm in order for the pHu of lamb meat to be less than 5.7.

Subsequent to this industry study, an experiment (Experiment 3) was done to gain an understanding of muscle glycogen concentration as being an integral part of whole body glucose metabolism. This experiment investigated the effects of exercise on a range of different muscles and tissues of lambs including liver, kidney, skin and gastrointestinal tract. Interactions between glycogen concentrations in the liver and muscle with time after exercise showed that glycogen repletion occurred in the liver before muscle tissue. This effect was a unique finding and could explain in part the slow rate of glycogen repletion in muscle tissue that is characteristic for ruminants. Another major finding was an

accumulation of glycogen concentration in skin during the recovery period after exercise. It was postulated that this effect may be due to the supply of glucose to glycolytic tissues being continued even when demand for glucose in the skin was low and the capacity to store glycogen in muscle was very high.

Experiment 3 confirmed the existence of a relationship between metabolisable energy (ME) intake and glycogen repletion in muscle tissues and found a slightly different relationship between ME intake and glycogen repletion in the liver tissue of lambs. Muscle glycogen concentration did not change in fasted lambs and the rate of glycogen repletion in muscle after exercise was dependent on ME intake. Differences were observed between different muscles, particularly between *M. longissimus thoracis et lumborum* (LTL) and all other muscles, in relation to the change in glycogen concentration with time after exercise. Glycogen concentrations changed less rapidly in the LTL than other muscles. Glycogen concentration in the liver was associated negatively with time after exercise in fasted lambs and positively with time after exercise in fed lambs.

Several experiments (Experiments 4, 5 and 6) were conducted to determine the affects of different nutritional factors on muscle glycogen concentration in lambs, both on farm and after commercial slaughter. These studies showed that short term increases in ME intake will increase muscle glycogen concentration to a maximum level over a period of about 7 days (Experiment 4). Diet composition did not affect the change in muscle glycogen concentration associated with an increase in ME intake although results from this experiment (Experiment 5) were not entirely conclusive. There was evidence that the type of feeding and finishing system may influence the susceptibility of muscle glycogen

concentration to change during consignment of lambs to slaughter. Results from these experiments demonstrated that a goal for muscle glycogen concentration in lambs on farm of 1.5g/100g is quite achievable with contemporaneous management systems.

Finally this study highlighted the need for further research in a number of key areas in order that muscle glycogen concentration in lambs to be fully understood. In particular, the role of muscle glycogen turnover in relation to muscle glycogen concentration was noted as an area for which further research is warranted.

## Table of Contents

Declaration .....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
Table of Contents .....	vii
List of Figures .....	xv
List of Tables .....	xix
List of Tables .....	xix
List of Plates.....	xxvii
Published and submitted conference proceedings and papers .....	xxviii
Published Conference proceedings .....	xxviii
Submitted conference proceedings .....	xxviii
Published papers .....	xxviii
Papers submitted to the Australian Journal of Experimental Agriculture.....	xxix
Acknowledgements.....	xxx
List of Abbreviations .....	xxxii
Chapter 1 Literature review .....	1

1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Lamb meat eating quality.....	1
1.2.1 Brief overview of the lamb meat industry.....	1
1.2.2 Muscle glycogen concentration and meat acidity .....	2
1.2.3 Ultimate pH and meat quality .....	4
1.2.4 Significance of high pHu to the lamb meat industry.....	10
1.3 Glycogen.....	12
1.3.1 Glycogen properties .....	12
1.3.2 Glycogen depots in different tissues of the body .....	13
1.4 Control of glycogen concentration in tissues.....	17
1.4.1 Enzyme systems.....	17
1.4.2 Animal and environmental factors that influence glycogen concentration in muscle .....	28
1.5 General aims, central hypotheses and research plan.....	44
1.5.1 General aims .....	45
1.5.2 Central hypotheses .....	46



1.5.3 Research plan .....	46
Chapter 2 Materials and Methods .....	48
2.1 Animal Ethics Approval.....	48
2.1.1 Animal Ethics Committee Approval.....	48
2.1.2 Authority to perform operations or experiments on animals .....	48
2.2 Animal/Carcass Measurements.....	48
2.2.1 GR tissue depth .....	48
2.2.2 Carcass weight .....	49
2.2.3 Live weight .....	50
2.2.4 Blood collection .....	50
2.2.5 Rumens fluid collection.....	51
2.3 Muscle Measurements.....	51
2.3.1 Technique for taking muscle biopsies from live lambs .....	51
2.3.2 Muscle sample collection from carcasses .....	53
2.3.3 Muscle ultimate pH (pHu) .....	54
2.3.4 Muscle pH decline .....	56

2.3.5 Muscle colour.....	56
2.3.6 Consumer panel sensory testing of meat.....	57
2.4 Sample preparation and assays .....	58
2.4.1 Chemical Source .....	58
2.4.2 Spectrophotometry .....	58
2.4.3 Glycogen Assay .....	58
2.4.4 Lactate Assay .....	61
2.5 Statistical Analyses .....	63
Chapter 3 The effects of transport and lairage on muscle glycogen concentration, meat pHu and the sensory evaluation of lamb meat .....	64
Introduction.....	64
3.1.1 Experiment 1 The affect of transport and lairage on muscle glycogen concentration and pHu for sucker and carry over lambs .....	66
3.1.2 Aims .....	66
3.1.3 Hypotheses.....	66
3.1.4 Methods.....	67

3.1.5 Results .....	73
3.1.6 Discussion .....	113
3.1.7 Conclusions .....	126
3.2.1 Experiment 2 The effect of lairage time on consumer panel sensory scores for lamb meat and mutton .....	128
3.2.2 Aim .....	128
3.2.3 Hypotheses .....	128
3.2.4 Methods .....	129
3.2.5 Results .....	134
3.2.6 Discussion .....	154
3.2.7 Conclusions .....	159
Chapter 4 Changes in glycogen concentrations in different muscles and tissues of lambs after exercise .....	160
Introduction .....	160
4.1.1 Experiment 3 Depletion and repletion of glycogen in a range of muscles and tissues after exercise .....	162
4.1.2 Aim .....	162

4.1.3 Hypotheses .....	162
4.1.4 Methods.....	162
4.1.5 Results .....	169
4.1.6 Discussion .....	189
4.1.7 Conclusions.....	209
Chapter 5 Nutritional manipulation of muscle glycogen concentration on farm.....	211
Introduction.....	211
5.1.1 Experiment 4 The short term effects of increasing ME intake and shearing on muscle glycogen concentration in Merino lambs.....	214
5.1.2 Aim.....	214
5.1.3 Hypotheses .....	214
5.1.4 Methods.....	214
5.1.5 Results .....	218
5.1.6 Discussion .....	227
5.1.7 Conclusions.....	234

5.2.1 Experiment 5 The affect of increasing ME intake with diets made of different ingredients on muscle glycogen concentration in Merino lambs.....	236
5.2.2 Aim.....	236
5.2.3 Hypotheses .....	236
5.2.4 Methods.....	236
5.2.5 Results .....	240
5.2.6 Discussion .....	253
5.2.7 Conclusions.....	260
5.3.1 Experiment 6 The impact of different feeding/finishing systems on muscle glycogen concentration, meat ultimate pH, and sensory evaluation of lamb meat.....	262
5.3.2 Aim.....	262
5.3.3 Hypotheses .....	262
5.3.3 Methods.....	262
5.3.4 Results .....	268
5.3.5 Discussion .....	283
5.3.6 Conclusions.....	291

Chapter 6 General Discussion.....	293
6.1 Introduction.....	293
6.2 Discussion of central hypotheses .....	294
6.2.1 Hypothesis 1: Both on farm and post farm gate factors contribute to muscle glycogen concentration at the point of slaughter. ....	294
6.2.2 Hypothesis 2: Interactions between glycogen concentrations in liver and muscle with time affect the rate of change of glycogen concentration in the muscle of lambs. ....	304
6.2.3 Hypothesis 3: Metabolisable energy intake is the major nutritional factor for the control of muscle glycogen concentration in lambs.....	308
6.3 Further findings.....	312
6.3.1 Industry targets.....	312
6.3.2. Future work.....	316
6.4 Conclusions.....	318
References.....	319
Appendix 1 .....	332

## List of Figures

Figure 1.1. The relationship between ultimate pH (pHu) and the concentration of glycogen in muscle ( <i>M. longissimus dorsi</i> ) post-slaughter.	3
Figure. 2.1. Glycogen/glucose standard curve.....	61
Figure 3.1.1 The correlation between pHu in SM and pHu in LTL.....	74
Figure 3.1.2 The correlation between pHu in ST and pHu in LTL.....	75
Figure 3.1.3 The frequency distribution for pHu of SM and ST .....	83
Figure 3.1.4 The cumulative frequency distribution for pHu of SM and ST	84
Figure 3.1.5 The correlation between the pHu of SM and pHu of ST.....	85
Figure 3.1.6 Carcass weight of sucker and carry over lambs in different pHu categories .....	89
Figure 3.1.7 Frequency distribution for glycogen concentration in the SM and the ST .....	93
Figure 3.1.8 Cumulative frequency distribution for glycogen concentration in the SM and the ST.....	94
Figure 3.1.9 Correlation of glycogen concentration in the SM with glycogen concentration in the ST .....	95

Figure 3.1.10 Correlation of pHu with glycogen concentration in the SM .	96
Figure 3.1.11 Correlation of pHu with glycogen concentration in the ST...	97
Figure 3.2.1 Consumer panel scores (Pooled data from lamb consignments N, O and P).....	141
Figure 3.2.2 The predicted rates for pH and temperature change during the post slaughter period .....	150
Figure 4.1.1 Glycogen concentrations (g/100g) in liver versus time after exercise.....	172
Figure 4.1.2 Glycogen concentration in muscle versus time .....	177
Figure 4.1.3 Glycogen concentration (g/100g) in skin .....	179
Figure 4.1.4 Glycogen concentrations (g/100g) in kidney.....	180
Figure 4.1.5 Glycogen concentrations (g/100g) in rumen .....	181
Figure 4.1.6 Glycogen concentrations g/100g) in duodenum.....	182
Figure 4.1.7 Glycogen concentrations (g/100g) in colon.....	183
Figure 4.1.8 Liver weight (kg) 48 hours after exercise.....	184
Figure 4.1.9 Correlations between ME intake and glycogen concentrations in liver and muscle at 12, 24 and 48 hours after exercise .....	188



Figure 5.1.1 Ambient air temperatures .....	218
Figure 5.1.2 Daily rainfall.....	219
Figure 5.1.3 Mean ME intake (MJ/kg <sup>0.75</sup> live weight /day) at each sampling period .....	221
Figure 5.1.4 Live weight (kg) .....	222
Figure 5.1.5 Mean glycogen concentrations (g/100g) in ST and SM for shorn and unshorn treatments. ....	225
Figure 5.1.6 The correlation between glycogen concentration at day 7 and change in glycogen concentration between day 7 and day 14 for SM.....	226
Figure 5.2.1 Live weight of lambs on each diet .....	242
Figure 5.2.2 Total volatile fatty acid (VFA) concentration (mmol) at different times after feeding.....	243
Figure 5.2.3 The change in <i>M. semimembranosus</i> glycogen concentration (g/100g) between each sampling date.....	251
Figure 5.2.4 The change in <i>M. semitendinosus</i> glycogen (g/100g) between each sampling date .....	252
Figure 5.3.1 Daily ambient maximum and minimum temperature over the period of the experiment .....	269

Figure 5.3.2 Rainfall over the period of the experiment.....	270
Figure 5.3.3 Live weight (kg) of lambs in pasture (P) and the high energy feedlot (H) treatments .....	272
Figure 5.3.4 Stocking rates for lambs grazing pasture.....	273
Figure 5.3.5 Comparison of pHu for SM, LTL and ST for each finishing system.....	279
Figure 5.3.6 The mean time after stunning for pH to decline to pH 5.7....	280

## List of Tables

Table 1.1 Characteristics of muscle fibre types .....	25
Table 1.2 Enzyme activities for carbohydrate metabolism in rat muscle .....	27
Table 1.3 Comparison of fibre types in LTL for lambs cattle and pigs from different studies.....	28
Table 2.1 - Determination of L-Lactate Concentration.....	62
Table 3.1.1 Age, class and genotype of the lambs in each consignment .....	77
Table 3.1.2 The farm localities, abattoir localities, distances travelled and arrival dates for each consignment.....	79
Table 3.1.3 The time (hours) taken for each phase of the paddock to slaughter process.....	81
Table 3.1.4 Descriptive statistics for pHu in SM and ST for the 10 consignments A to J .....	82
Table 3.1.5 Mean pHu and pHu frequency of SM and ST of each consignment for consignments A to J .....	86
Table 3.1.6 Criteria for categorising carcasses according to pHu.....	88
Table 3.1.7 pHu values for SM at different lairage times.....	90

Table 3.1.8 pHu values for ST at different lairage times .....	91
Table 3.1.9 Descriptive statistics for glycogen concentration in the SM and ST .....	92
Table 3.1.10 Glycogen concentrations (g/100g) in the SM at each sample interval .....	100
Table 3.1.11 Glycogen concentrations (g/100g) in the ST at each sample interval .....	101
Table 3.1.12 Quantity estimates and nutritional analyses of pasture available to pasture fed consignments .....	103
Table 3.1.13 Quantity estimates and nutritional analyses of concentrate rations available to concentrate fed consignments of lambs.....	104
Table 3.14 Muscle glycogen concentrations on farm in concentrate fed consignments compared to pasture fed consignments. ....	105
Table 3.1.15 Regression coefficients (with SE) for the effects of age class, farm curfew time, carcass weight, lairage time, travelling time on; glycogen concentration in the SM at slaughter, glycogen concentration in the ST at slaughter, pHu in SM, and pHu in the ST consignments .....	108
Table 3.1.16 Adjusted hot carcass weights .....	109

Table 3.1.17 The frequency of different fat scores for each lairage period ...	110
Table 3.1.18 Regression coefficients (with SE) for associations with adjusted hot carcass weight and fat score.....	111
Table 3.2.1 The ages and genotypes of lambs and ewes in each consignment .....	134
Table 3.2.2 The times (hours) taken for each phase of the paddock to slaughter period for each consignment .....	135
Table 3.2.3 The farm locations, abattoir locations, distances travelled and arrival at abattoir dates for each consignment of lambs.....	135
Table 3.2.4 The mean pHu and the frequency of high pHu (pHu>5.7) for SM, LTL and ST of ewes and lambs in each consignment .....	137
Table 3.2.5 The effect of lairage time on pHu of ewes for SM, LTL, and ST	138
Table 3.2.6 The effect of lairage time on pHu of lambs for SM, LTL, and ST .....	139
Table 3.2.7 SEQ scores for ewes and lambs and different lairage periods....	140
Table 3.2.8 Tenderness scores for ewes and lambs and different lairage periods .....	140

Table 3.2.9 The mean live weights, carcass weights, dressing percentages, intramuscular fat and GR measurements of ewes and lambs in each consignment .....	142
Table 3.2.10 Dressing percentages (%) for each consignment of lambs at each lairage time.....	144
Table 3.2.11 GR measurements (mm) of ewes for each consignment at each lairage time.....	144
Table 3.2.12 Tissue depth measurements (GR mm) of lambs for each consignment at each lairage time .....	145
Table 3.2.13 Regression coefficients (with SE) for the effects of age class and lairage time on the SEQ score of the LTL .....	146
Table 3.2.14 Regression coefficients (with SE) for the effects of age class and lairage time on the tenderness of the LTL .....	147
Table 3.2.15 Regression coefficients (with SE) for the effects of age class, fatness (GR) pHu in the SM, pHu in the ST, and live weight on pHu of the LTL, SM and ST .....	148
Table 3.2.16 Regression coefficients (with SE) for the effects of age class (AC), time from stun (SPT), lairage period (LP), the interaction between LP	

and SPT and consignment on pH of the LTL (dependent variable), during the immediate post slaughter period (approximately 5 hours).....	149
Table 3.2.17 Regression coefficients (with SE) for the effects of age class, LTL pHu and lairage period (LP) on luminescence (l), psychometric colour (C*) and psychometric hue angle .....	152
Table 3.2.18 Regression coefficients (with SE) for the effects of carcass fatness and live weight on carcass weight and dressing percentage .....	153
Table 4.1.1 Locations of sample collection sites for various tissues .....	166
Table 4.1.2 Glycogen concentrations (g/100g) before and immediately after exercise in a range of tissues.....	169
Table 4.1.3 The change in glycogen concentration due to exercise in liver and muscle .....	170
Table 4.1.4 Correlations between ME intake (MJ/kg) and glycogen concentration (g/100g) in the liver after exercise .....	174
Table 4.1.5 Correlations between time and muscle glycogen concentration for lambs fed to maintenance after exercise .....	178
Table 4.1.6 Correlations between time and muscle glycogen concentration for lambs fed to 3 times maintenance after exercise.....	178

Table 4.1.7 Nutritional analysis of the pellet diet .....	185
Table 4.1.8 Daily ME intake (MJ/kg <sup>0.75</sup> /day).....	185
Table 4.1.9 Correlations between ME intake and glycogen concentration in the liver and <i>M. semimembranosus</i> .....	187
Table 4.1.10 Calculated rates of change of glycogen concentration (grams/lambs/hour) for different tissues in fed lambs .....	207
Table 5.1.1 Predicted effects of rainfall on Lower Critical Temperature and heat requirement for shorn and unshorn lambs.....	220
Table 5.1.2 Mean daily ME intake (MJ/lambs/day) for the entire experimental period .....	221
Table 5.1.3 Glycogen concentration in <i>M. semimembranosus</i> (g/100g).....	223
Table 5.1.4 Glycogen concentration in <i>M. semitendinosus</i> (g/100g).....	224
Table 5.2.1 Nutrient concentrations of dietary ingredients.....	240
Table 5.2.2 Daily nutrient intake for each diet.....	241
Table 5.2.3 Concentration of volatile fatty acids (mM) in rumen fluid 2 hours after feeding .....	244
Table 5.2.4 The amount of each VFA as a proportion of the total VFA (%) 2 hours after feeding.....	245



Table 5.2.5 Ammonia concentration (mg/l) in rumen fluid .....	246
Table 5.2.6 The pH of rumen fluid .....	247
Table 5.2.7 The mean concentrations of glucose, urea and triglycerides in blood and plasma .....	248
Table 5.2.8 The glycogen concentration in <i>M. semimembranosus</i> (g/100g) .	249
Table 5.2.9 The glycogen concentration in the <i>M. semitendinosus</i> (g/100g)	250
Table 5.3.1 Nutrient analyses of the diets .....	268
Table 5.3.2 Pasture quantity, botanical composition, energy and protein content .....	268
Table 5.3.3 Growth rate and ME intake of lambs .....	271
Table 5.3.4 Carcass weight, dressing percentage and GR fat depth .....	274
Table 5.3.5 Regression coefficients (with SE) for the effects of carcass weight and finishing system on GR fat depth.....	274
Table 5.3.6 Glycogen concentration (g/100g) in the <i>M. semimembranosus</i> on farm and post slaughter .....	276
Table 5.3.7 Glycogen concentration (g/100g) on farm and post slaughter in the <i>M. semitendinosus</i> .....	277

Table 5.3.8 Meat pHu for SM, LTL and ST .....	278
Table 5.3.9 The colour of meat (LTL) from the different finishing systems.	281
Table 5.3.10 Sensory test values for the LTL .....	282

## **List of Plates**

Plate 2.1. Collecting a muscle biopsy with the biopsy drill .....	52
Plate 2.2 Location of muscle biopsy site in the SM and ST .....	54
Plate 2.3 Measuring pHu of the SM in an abattoir chiller .....	55

## **Published and submitted conference proceedings and papers**

### **Published Conference proceedings**

- (i) Jacob, RH, Pethick, DW, Masters, DG, and Milton, JTB. (2001). Changes in muscle glycogen in lambs with low levels of basal glycogen fed two levels of metabolisable energy. *Recent Advances in Animal Nutrition in Australia* **13**, 8A
- (ii) Jacob, RH & Pethick, DW. (2002). Comparative changes in glycogen concentrations after exercise in muscle, liver, kidney, skin and duodenum of lambs. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society of Australia* **26**, S274.

### **Submitted conference proceedings**

Jacob, RH, Pethick, DW, and Masters, DG. (2003) The interaction between shearing and metabolisable energy (ME) intake for muscle glycogen concentration in lambs.

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### **Published papers**

- (i) Gardner, GE, Jacob RH, &Pethick, DW. (2001) The effect of magnesium oxide supplementation on muscle glycogen metabolism before and after exercise and at slaughter in lambs. *Australian Journal of Agricultural Research* **52**: 723-729.
- (ii) Pethick, DW, Cummins, L, Gardner GE, Jacob, R., Knee, BW, McDowell, M, McIntyre, BL, Tudor, G, Walker, PJ & Warner, RD. (2000). The regulation of

glycogen level in the muscle of ruminants by nutrition. *Proceedings of the New Zealand Society of Animal Production*, **21**, 353.

### **Papers submitted to the Australian Journal of Experimental Agriculture**

- (i) The effect of commercial transport and lairage on glycogen concentration and ultimate pH of lamb meat. Jacob, RH, Pethick, DW & Chapman, H
- (ii) The effect of lairage time on consumer panel sensory scores of the *M. longissimus thoracis et lumborum* for lamb meat and mutton. Jacob, RH, Walker PJ, and Pethick, DW.
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## List of Abbreviations

a	Redness	mmol	Millimoles
A\$	Australian dollars	mol	Moles
acetyl CoA	Acetyl coenzyme A	NA	Not applicable
AD	<i>M. adductor</i>	NAD <sup>+</sup>	Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide
ADP	Adenosine diphosphate	NADH	Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (reduced form)
ATP	Adenosine triphosphate	NEFA	Non-esterified fatty acids
ATPase	Adenosine triphosphatase	ng/mL	Nanograms per millilitre
b	Yellowness	NST	Non shivering thermogenesis
BF	<i>m. biceps femoris</i>	%	Percent
C*	Psychometric colour	PDH	Pyruvate dehydrogenase
Ca <sup>2+</sup>	Calcium ions	PEP	Phosphoenolpyruvate
cAMP	Cyclic adenosine monophosphate	PFK1	Phosphofructokinase 1
CoA	Coenzyme A	PFK2	Phosphofructokinase 2
[ ]	Concentration	pHu	Ultimate pH
CPK	Creatinine phosphokinase	Pi	Inorganic phosphate
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific & Industrial Organisation	PK	Pyruvate kinase
DFD	Dark firm dry	PM	<i>M. psoas major</i>
DM	Dry matter	RN	Rendement Napole
FFA	Free fatty acids	SEQ	Lambs eating quality
g/100g	Grams per 100 grams	SM	<i>M semimembranosus</i>
GLUT	Glucose transport protein	SS	<i>M. subscapularis</i>
h	Psychometric hue angle	ST	<i>M. semitendinosus</i>
H <sup>+</sup>	Hydrogen ions	SU	<i>M. supraspinatus</i>
IS	<i>N. infraspinatus</i>	TB	<i>M. triceps brachii</i>
kg/m <sup>2</sup>	Kilograms per square metre	TM	Trade mark
K <sub>m</sub>	Michaelis-Menton coefficient	TCA	Tricarboxylic acid cycle
L	Luminescence	TCA	Tricarboxylic acid cycle
LTL	<i>M. longissimus thoracis et lumborum</i>	TL	<i>M. tensor fascia latae</i>
m <sup>2</sup>	Square metre	VFA	Volatile fatty acid
mATPase	Myofibrillar actinomysin adenosine triphosphatase	VO <sub>2</sub>	Maximum rate of oxygen consumption
ME	Metabolisable energy	max	