

# ASHEEP & BEEF

## Quarterly



## Growers & industry backing Keep The Sheep

*Sarah Brown, ASHEEP & BEEF*

Despite the Federal Government having legislated the phase out of the sheep live export trade, the Keep The Sheep movement is still going strong. The grassroots campaign is ramping up its messaging on the value of retaining the trade and many continue to share their personal stories with #keepthesheep. Industry leaders continue to call out the legislation and political process that led to it.

Given that the Federal Government refuses to reverse its decision, as the 2025 elections approach the Keep The Sheep team has advised that they will be increasingly targeting efforts toward changing the balance of power. Whilst the trend over 2024 has been a decline in the WA sheep flock, the industry is not taking the challenges from government lying down.

ASHEEP & BEEF Chair David Vandenberghe commented, "There is a slight trend for a little more confidence in the sheep market, with the wool price slowly edging up, merinos still performing well, and people buying merino ewes as replacements. Our black tag [2024] merino lambs recently outpriced our crossbred lambs by \$12/head," said David.

"Three weeks in the feedlot produced \$147/head merino lambs and our crossbred lambs out of the paddock brought \$134/head. Admittedly, they got \$12 worth of feed. My point is they make the same money but you replenish the industry with ewes and you have their wool." [cont.]

*Image: Champion fleeces at the Esperance Agricultural Show wool room. Courtesy of Andrew Beaton. Left = Grand Champion Superfine Wool Terry Mitchell (Anthos), Middle = Supreme Champion overall & Grand Champion Fine Wool Geoff Thomason (Two Rivers), Right = Grand Champion Medium Wool Malcolm & Ruth Leske (Tallerack Farming).*

### Highlights

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[...] Merinos are capable of matching other animals as far as processing and we need to retain them in the WA flock system."

"It has been great to see the local community spreading the Keep The Sheep message, there were some good efforts at the Esperance Show. ASHEEP & BEEF continues to encourage farmers to be active members of WAFarmers or PGA. These groups need your involvement."

The Esperance Agricultural Show was held in October and saw Keep The Sheep feature in a number of ways. Andrew Beaton decorated the wool room in Keep The Sheep banners, CWA had a sign in their stall, stickers were handed out, but the best efforts have to go to the kids who got behind it.

ASHEEP & BEEF touched base with farmer Mareeka Coward, whose son Lachlan (12) and his sister's pony 'Autumn' donned a sheep outfit for the fancy dress.

"Lachlan wanted to take part in the fancy dress section of the show and I thought, as it is so important to our personal business, that the 'Keep The Sheep' theme should be included in our local Ag Show. So we decided he could dress up as a 'Protestor'," said Mareeka. "I utilised a horse rug I had, obtained two kilos of cotton wool wadding from Spotlight, and about six cans of spray glue from Bunnings and over the school holidays I put it all together. The magpies and other birds would do their best to reap some 'wool' from the rug for their nests. The team at "Keep The Sheep" headquarters posted me the corflute signs just to finish the 'Protestor' look. The pony in question is actually chestnut, so I had to utilise some black chalk to 'try' and turn her into a black Suffolk. All in all I think it was "good from afar...but far from good! Lachlan was very fortunate to win the Fancy Dress Competition and pocketed the \$50 prize that was kindly donated by Shelley Payne MLC, Esperance Labor Party."

Another good example could be found by those perusing the decorated cake section of the show with a rather impressive set of Keep The Sheep cupcakes taking out first prize for juniors 9-13 years. Nice work Fabianne!



Top: Lachlan Coward with pony-sheep 'Autumn', photo courtesy of Michelle Fowler. Bottom: Cupcake sheep by Fabianne.



## Executive Officer's Update

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP & BEEF

As we round out the year, I'd like to give a resounding thanks to all who have contributed to the grower group in 2024. Our members, committee, sponsors, field day hosts, speakers, those involved in projects, people who have been interviewed or written pieces for the newsletter, industry contacts who shared information and ideas, and of course staff members Jan Clawson and Courteney Pengilly. In technical terms, ASHEEP & BEEF is staffed by a small team but when you add up the efforts of everyone involved we are closer to a small army. It is a pleasure to work with you all.

A snapshot of activities ASHEEP & BEEF has undertaken over the past quarter includes our annual Spring Field Day, two Committee meetings, correspondence with Federal Ag Minister Collins regarding the sheep live export phase out and with State Ag Minister Jarvis regarding the state barrier fence, contribution to Regional Freight Strategy consultation, monthly meetings with DPIRD to share seasonal intelligence and ideas. I took part in Meat & Livestock Australia's strategic planning consultation and attended MLA Updates in Perth. We've had various data collection and reporting for our eight active projects and assisted a UWA led project that is researching grower collaboration to attract investment in collective natural capital (through which it has been refreshing to hear that sheep and cattle farms are recognised as having a valued role in natural capital systems!) We've also collaborated with a number of organisations to seek funding for future project work and research that will benefit sheep and cattle producers. Committee Members have been involved in various industry groups, including Dave Vandenberghe on AWI's Woolgrower Industry Consultation Panel, Thomas Pengilly on DPIRD's sheep & goat advisory group, Mark Walter as the Esperance/Ravensthorpe representative for the WAFarmers Livestock Council, Enoch Bergman on the WALRC industry council.

All the best for a great holiday season to all involved in ASHEEP & BEEF. Bring on ideal seasonal conditions in 2025!



**ASHEEP & BEEF**  
**Summer**  
**Field Day**  
**27 Feb 2024**



HALO research site, Neridup

## ASHEEP & BEEF Spring Field Day highlights producer innovation & latest pasture research

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP & BEEF



Dr Ron Yates

Around 70 farmers and those in the livestock industry gathered on the 18th September 2024 for our annual Spring Field Day, featuring the latest pasture legume research, new virtual fencing technology for cattle, and four locally run Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) producer demonstration site (PDS) projects. The day traversed six farms across the region.

After a welcome from ASHEEP & BEEF Chair David Vandenberghe, attendees went through the first stop at **Kalanjie farm in Neridup**, where producer Ryan Willing is hosting a **Harvestable Annual Legume Options (HALO) trial**, led by Dr Ron Yates and Ben Arthur from Murdoch University. Ron (pictured left) explained that the project's goal is to reduce the reliance on synthetic nitrogen in farming systems, ultimately enhancing resilience, profitability, and sustainability. The Neridup trial site is comparing four experimental legume varieties alongside three commercially available options, offering valuable insights for farmers in medium-high rainfall areas. In 2025, the trial site will be cropped to measure impacts of different treatments in a rotational system. An experimental legume in the trial that Ron was particularly interested in is a soft seeded serradella nicknamed "The Beast".



"The Beast"

A discussion on a new style of cattle tags with Brad McCormick from Shearwell, and updates on drench resistance checks from David Howey (Elanco) and asset finance from Jess Lush (Commonwealth Bank), rounded off the visit to Kalanjie.

At **Epasco A Section**, agronomist Adelaide Hagan and Taylor Crane from Elders took attendees through a pasture demonstration featuring a mix of brassica and conventional pasture varieties being run in collaboration with Farm Manager Nick Ruddenklau. The trial was to help fill feed gaps in late spring and provide a store of pasture for earlier weaned cattle to go hand in hand with an MLA-funded PDS project run by ASHEEP & BEEF to optimise the age of weaning.



Field Day Map

Louis Poiron from Australian Mineral Fertilisers then gave background on their product range, followed by a quick update from Victoria Bennett and Johanna Tomlinson from South Coast Natural Resource Management on the work they are undertaking.

Continued over page.

Lunch was a treat at **Willyama** shearing shed in Howick, with CWA whipping up burgers before the group went back to the paddock to look at a **mix of RM4 Vetch and Dargo Ryegrass** that is part of an **ASHEEP & BEEF / MLA PDS** project evaluating pasture performance. Full results from the trial will be available early 2025. Host Simon Fowler (Chilwell Farms) and Tyneal Callus (South Coastal Agencies) led a discussion covering the pasture's establishment, grazing and test results. Tom Campbell (Rabobank) took people through an update from the bank, including carbon markets and emissions profile workshops they are offering. Ben Fletcher (Zoetis) shared the news that Dectomax V (an injectable parasiticide) is now available for use in sheep. Previously the product has been known for use in cattle.

Next was a look at using **exclusion fencing** to reduce wild animal pressure at **Tagon Lea farm in Boyatup**, another of Chilwell's properties. Simon noted that 30 km of exclusion fencing is now complete and there are plans to do another 28km. Chilwell has been using Waratah 15 line which has an apron, putting a barb above the netting, using 2.25m steel posts and 2.25m maxi posts spaced at 7m, as well as spreading clay on the fence line before the fence is erected on the sandy soils which Simon noted as critical for its success. Neighbouring farmers have also been putting up exclusion fencing, with Ryan Willing commenting that he was planning on trialling a rabbit-proof mesh skirt along a section. The Shire has been putting cattle grids on road crossings. At this stop Simon and Tyneal also ran the group through a paddock of straight **RM4 Vetch** which was being assessed in comparison to the Vetch / Ryegrass mix at the previous site through the pasture variety trials PDS.

We were then given a look at how Chilwell Farms has been using the new eShepherd **virtual fencing system for cattle** for controlled grazing of summer and winter pastures to improve usage and profitability. The system uses solar powered, GPS enabled, livestock neckbands that enable farmers to create virtual fences that cattle learn to move with and remain within. Simon explained that by using strip/cell grazing the farm is achieving better animal and pasture performance. Other uses for the technology have/will be better grazing control whilst grazing winter crops, pasture deferment, virtual feed lotting and less requirements for permanent fencing infrastructure on leased properties. The team had experienced a range of animal welfare and environmental benefits from using the system, such as receiving animal health alerts and being able to protect remnant vegetation and biodiversity. Murray Green from Gallagher was on hand to answer questions, and demonstrated a brand-new Gallagher **auto-weigher**, which is a portable unit that can be set up in a paddock to capture and automatically communicate cattle weights and other animal health information back to the farmer by enticing animals with an attractant such as a mineral lick block.

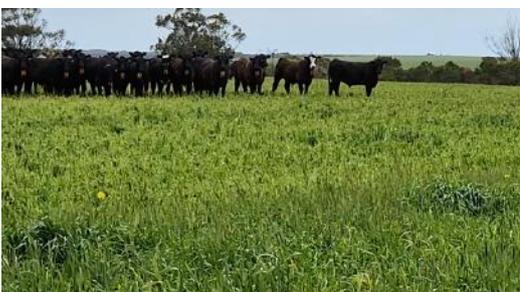
*Below: Cattle wearing virtual fencing neckbands approach the boundary where an audible beep starts to sound. The virtual boundary is clear in the grazing pattern. Right: Murray Green demonstrates an auto-weigher.*



*Top: Charlotte Della Vedova, Belinda Lay, Kerry Jackson, David Vandenberghe. Below: Willyama.*



*Above: Simon Fowler, Tyneal Callus. Below: Exclusion fencing at Tagon Lea.*





Dr Enoch Bergman from Swans Veterinary Services (left) then got the group laughing with a lively and informative update on two projects that he is facilitating for ASHEEP & BEEF that involve **reducing bull preputial breakdown** and **taking blood tests from heifers to identify and manage Bovine Pestivirus risk (BVDV)**.

The field day wrapped up at **Geovon Farm in Condingup**, where Nick Ruddenklau gave a tour of the farm's new Commander Ag-Quip **8-stand flat board shearing shed and covered yarding system**. The shed was built after they identified in 2020 that the current shed was no longer fit for purpose, with the team having to walk sheep up to 15 km to a shed in the middle of a cow farm on another block. The new shed sought to encompass the latest Australian Wool Innovation designs and recommendations and Nick has been pleased with the result.



Rob Davidson from WAMMCO ran attendees through a processing and market outlook, and Brad McCormick showcased a prototype of Shearwell's new turbo tagger for sheep which allows strips of ear tags to be loaded rather than having to do so individually.

The day's formalities concluded with a talk presented by Jan Clawson (ASHEEP & BEEF), that took producers through key learnings from the group's recent eastern states tour and encouraged producers to **take advantage of support from ASHEEP & BEEF to complete a carbon emissions profile**.

Above: Nick Ruddenklau, Dave Vandenberghe, Simon Fowler, Steve Bingham, John Wallace, Ian Sassella.



All in all, a thought-provoking day, with good conversation and ideas shared. Many thanks to the many sponsors, site hosts and volunteers who come together to make these field days possible.

As the day wound down around a bonfire, Rick Wilson MP joined the group over dinner and drinks, with an update following the national agricultural rally, which saw thousands of farmers and those in the agricultural industry converge on the lawns of Parliament House in Canberra to protest over a range of political decisions negatively impacting the agricultural sector.



Below left: Rob Davidson (WAMMCO) presenting. Below middle: Jan Clawson (ASHEEP & BEEF) encouraged producers to complete an emissions profile. Below Right: Rick Wilson MP joined for dinner and spoke with the group around the bonfire.



## Shearwell Data

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# Cattle Projects: MLA PDS update + premating heifers BVDV serology call to action

*Dr Enoch Bergman, Swans Veterinary Services*

ASHEEP & BEEF is involved in three specifically cattle related Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) projects. We are well into our second year of collecting data. Thank you so much to all of our involved producers.



## Optimising Age of Weaning Cattle: Results Update

This project is designed to highlight the benefits of early weaning upon feed utilisation, carrying capacity, and ultimately kgs per hectare. The concept is that by removing calves earlier from their mothers that less feed is required to address the nutritional requirements of the cow and the calf individually.

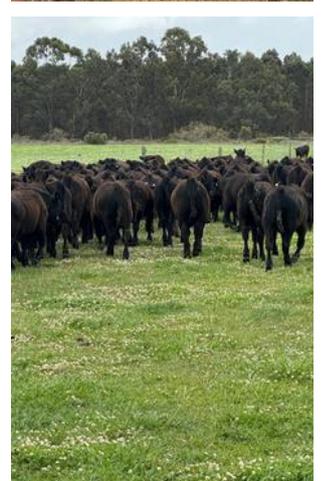
The methodology of the PDS is to remove half of the calves from a population of young cows with calves up to a couple of months ahead of a producer's individual preferred weaning date, to then measure the weight gain of the weaned calves and attempt to compare the expected weight gain reduction to the weight gain and body condition improvement of the dams of the weaned calves.

Exacerbated by the two last seasons with early finishes and declining feed quality, most producers involved have found the rate of gain reduction in their calves to be too pronounced and whilst the mothers of the weaned calves have enjoyed significant improvement in weight and body condition the design of the trial makes it difficult to extract the value of the potential feed savings the process could create should the entire mob of calves had been weaned. Due to the trial design, the mothers of the remaining calves, plus the mothers of the weaned calves are still requiring traditional management to maintain the cows' condition during the process.

Further, weaned calves require more crude protein or other nitrogen sources to be able to effectively continue to convert forage into sufficient energy to keep up with their siblings still "hitting the milk bar" for cheap energy (cheap to them, but very expensive to their mothers).

Regardless, whilst the results of the PDS have been disappointing in some ways, all producers involved have a better understanding of the benefits to the cow of weaning her calf, of the nutritional requirements of young calves, and the opportunities in poor seasons to wean early when required.

It was abundantly clear that producers who typically sell their calves straight off their mothers or very shortly thereafter, as opposed to retaining them to finish, were the most financially disadvantaged within the trial (noting that the earlier weaned calves were retained until the remaining calves were weaned and they were then sold together as a group). We are hoping to gather some data from some calves which were early weaned in the first year of the project as they progress forwards to their final destination as grass finished calves and will be keen to share that data with you.



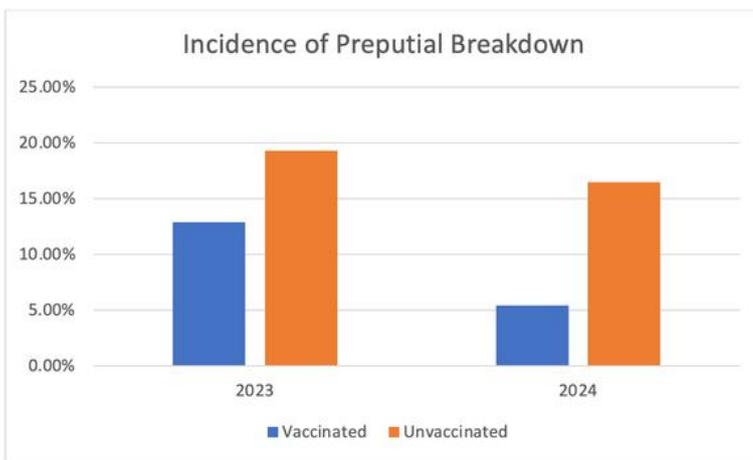
*Images:  
Top to bottom - earlier weaned calves in 2024 at Epasco (Nick Ruddenklau), Carnigup (Ryan Willing), Chilwell (Simon Fowler & Steve Bingham).*

*Left - Dr Enoch Bergman meeting with producers involved in the PDS to discuss the 2024 results.*

### Preventing Bull Preputial Breakdown by Vaccination: Results Update

The 'Preventing Bull Preputial Breakdown by Vaccination' Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) project also commenced in 2023, with final results expected in early 2026. The project aims to demonstrate that a commercial Bovine Herpesvirus vaccine (either Rhinogard or Bovilis MH + IBR) prior to mating can reduce the incidence and severity of Bovine Balanoposthitis and hence bull wastage in virgin bulls. We are also attempting to establish a baseline incidence of the syndrome potentially providing statistics useful to estimate both the cost of the syndrome to Esperance producers and the return on investment of vaccination. Approximately 50 properties with over 1000 bulls in total were surveyed, close to 300 of which were virgin bulls. Virgin bulls were considered vaccinated if the producer themselves had vaccinated the bulls prior to work. Some bulls within both groups had also been vaccinated previously by the stud from which the bulls were purchased.

Work to date has been very encouraging, demonstrating a 6.4% and 11.1% reduction in the incidence of balanoposthitis in 2023 and 2024 respectively. Proportionally, this reduction is equivalent to a 33.2% and 67.3% reduction of the proportion of bulls affected.



Year three is around the corner and Zoetis is kindly providing free Rhinogard vaccine to treat your bulls prior to the working season. Regardless of whether or not you vaccinate, the PDS is also supporting veterinary examination of your bulls should they break down with balanoposthitis.

Contact Swans Veterinary Services or Enoch for more details.

### Utilising Heifer Pre-Mating Serology to Manage BVD: Results Update

We are entering into our third year of the last PDS designed to demonstrate the value of "Utilising Heifer Pre-Mating Serology to Manage BVDV".

The goal of the PDS is to demonstrate the value of understanding the immune status of a group of heifers prior to mating allowing involved producers to invest in the most cost effective intervention. Simply put, owners with a high proportion of immune heifers are encouraged to ear notch each heifer in order to identify and eliminate Persistently Infected (PI) heifers and those with a low proportion of immunity to BVDV are encouraged to vaccinate them instead.

The concept of the intervention is to assist producers to work towards herd level eradication and to allow them to simultaneously surveil for reintroduction.

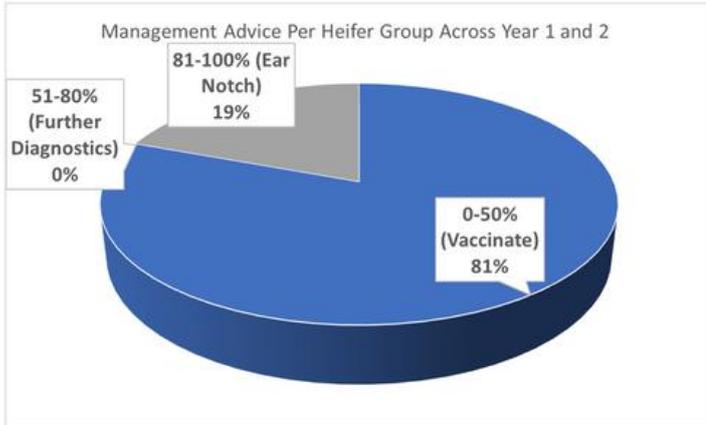
32 individual producers surveyed their heifers in 2023, and 30 in 2024. Blood was collected from the tail vein of either 5% of the total number of heifers from each management group, or from a minimum of six animals. The blood samples were then screened for evidence of exposure to BVDV. As BVDV is almost exclusively transmitted by PI animals, evidence of exposure to BVDV indirectly indicates exposure to a PI. A group of animals with "high seroprevalence" would indicate that most of them have been exposed to BVD and have measurable immunity to the virus. "Low seroprevalence" would indicate that only a small proportion or none of the heifers have been exposed to the virus.

When serological results were reported back to individual producers, management advice was provided in line with recommendations from the Australian Cattle Veterinarian (ACV) Beef BVDV Management Guide.

The ACV BVDV Beef Guide suggests vaccinating groups of heifers with 0 to 50% seropositive animals within the sample population, to pursue further diagnostics between 50 and 80%, and to ear notch all of the heifers should the proportion of seropositive animals exceed 80%.

*Continued over page.*

Remarkably, of the 62 individual groups of heifers surveyed over the first two years of the PDS, no results have led to advice to pursue further serological diagnostics, instead clearly directing the producer to either vaccinate or ear notch all of their replacement heifers.



In the final year, we hope to resurvey participating producers as well as enrol new producers. The goal is to encourage them to consider implementing the advice found within the ACV BVDV Guidelines. This advice will be tailored based on the serological results from their replacement heifers, helping both individual producers and potentially the entire district move closer to achieving BVDV freedom.

Pregnancy and calving data are also being collected and the results are quite interesting. It would appear that harbouring BVDV and potentially by choosing not to implement control measures could be associated with poorer production outcomes.

Pregnancy rates within individual heifer mating groups were compared taking into consideration their length of joining. It was assumed that 60% conception rate per 21 days was the maximum achievable pregnancy rate. In this sense, for a three week joining, 60% is "par", 84% for a six week joining. Integration of fixed time artificial insemination (FTAI) was viewed as a single mating opportunity of one week's duration. In this sense, "par" for cows enrolled in a FTAI program without bull back up would be 60%, and if backed up for one cycle, would be 84%. Essentially for each week of the first three weeks of joining to natural cover, 20% could be expected to fall pregnant, thereafter we would expect 8% per week for the following three weeks, and 3% per week for the third cycle. If AI'd, the first week would be apportioned 60%, the following three weeks 8% per week, then 3% thereafter. As an example, see Table A below.

**Table A**

Joining	Mating Opportunities
AI Only	1
AI then 4 Weeks	2
AI then 6 Weeks	2.6
3 Weeks Bulls	1
6 Weeks Bulls	2
7 Weeks Bulls	2.3
9 Weeks Bulls	3

The pregnancy rate amongst the properties with high pre-mating seroprevalence to BVDV were on average 12.1% lower than "par" at pregnancy testing. Further, within that group, those which chose to ear notch their heifers with the goal of removing any PI's were on average 10% lower than "par" at pregnancy testing. Those who chose not to ear notch their heifers to remove PI's were 18% lower than "par" at pregnancy testing.

The pregnancy rate amongst the properties with low pre-mating seroprevalence to BVDV were 6.3% lower than "par" at pregnancy testing. Further within that group, those which chose to vaccinate were 2.6% lower than "par" vs. those which chose not to vaccinate who were on average 10.7% lower than "par". (See Table B)

Calving data is still being collected.

Regardless, **please get involved this year in this project!** Your replacement heifers need to be in stable contact with each other for a minimum time of 2 months and must be at least 8 months old. By screening a small proportion (5% or a minimum of 6) we can direct you to the most cost effective intervention.

**Table B**

Management Advice	Preg Rate vs. Par
Highly Seropositive	-12.2%
Ear Notched	-10%
Did Not Ear Notch	-18%
Advised to Vaccinate	-6.3%
Vaccinated	-2.6%
Didn't Vaccinate	-10.7%

It is remarkable how low the apparent incidence of BVDV is within the Esperance district when compared to prior survey work done nationally and completed in the early 2000's within our shire. The **cost of blood testing is covered by the project** and as a thank you for your involvement **Zoetis is providing a free 100 ml packet of Pestigard**. For more information contact Sarah or Enoch.

**Contact:**

Enoch Bergman, Swans Veterinary Services, (08) 9071 5777  
 Sarah Brown, ASHEEP & BEEF, 0409 335 194, eo@asheepbeef.org.au

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## Vet Spot: Making the grade – bull testing

*Dr Katie Kreutz, Swans Veterinary Services*

Bull testing is a vital practice for livestock producers. As veterinarians we recognize its important role in ensuring the health, fertility and overall productivity of herds. At Swans we conduct Bull Breeding Soundness Evaluations in line with the standard of the Australian Cattle Veterinarians. Now is prime time to start thinking about your need for bull testing while we are out performing pregnancy diagnosis in your herds. Flagging issues with reproductive health well before we are at the current stage of pregnancy diagnosis is critical to avoiding preventative herd health issues as well as proactively fixing any problems.

### What does a bull test involve?

**Scrotal measurement** – Using what is known as a “barth tape” we can reliably assess scrotal circumference. Scrotal circumference is a good indicator of daily sperm production and is genetically correlated with earlier age at puberty in female relatives. It also allows for visual inspection and palpation which can reveal abnormalities such as scrotal lesions, unusual swellings, cryptorchidism, and testicular asymmetry. The circumference measurement also has minimum standards for the breed and life stage that must be met for the bull to pass it’s examination.

**Testicular palpation** – Testicular firmness indicates whether the tubules contain sperm rich fluid. This can fluctuate and is a tool to determine pathological abnormalities that would result in sub-fertile or infertile animals. It is also an opportunity to evaluate the epididymis for inflammation, growths or abnormal reproductive changes.

**Structural evaluation** – While in the yards or during their journey up the race, a vet will examine the bull’s movement, checking for evidence of lameness, swelling or injury. While in the crush we will also look at the angle of the hocks as well as the structure of the hooves. This provides an opportunity to discuss whether this animal is likely to have issues serving or pass on traits that may result in increased lameness within the herd.

**Examination of reproductive structures** – Visual assessment of the prepuce and penis is crucial when assessing a bull’s reproductive function. Commonly using a gentle electro ejaculator probe, vets will stimulate a bull to protrude the penis to an erect position so that it can be examined. Vets will look for abnormalities such as lesions, warts, persistent frenulums and tendency to corkscrew. It is worth noting that corkscrew deviations should be fully assessed through serving ability if suspected while using the electro ejaculator. Unfortunately, there is no Viagra fix for bulls who fail to achieve erections, rather an assessment as to why it is occurring and whether it’s likely to be a permanent issue should be evaluated by the veterinarian.

**Semen testing** – After collecting an ejaculate sample the vet will use a microscope to evaluate several characteristics of the sperm. This is done to ensure that while the bull may look like he has all the right parts to get the job done effectively, that putting him out to the herd will translate to the desired pregnancy rates. We look for general concentration of the sperm and their degree of movement (mass activity), for them to be swimming in the correct direction and not just going in circles (motility) and we send a sample to a lab that can look for defects within the individual sperm cells which can affect their ability to get to and penetrate an egg (morphology).

**Jump Testing** – what is mentioned above is the basic structure of bull testing that many producers follow. Further testing involving utilizing cycling cows to evaluate the real time ability to service is known as jump testing and can also be performed for further evaluation of corkscrewing, libido, and willingness and ability to mount.

This is all to demonstrate that there are many factors to consider when determining which bulls to continue to keep in the herd. It also shows on how many levels factors must be considered if looking into low or disappointing pregnancy rates.

The last mention when you’re ready to get a veterinary assessment of your bulls, is safety. Being vigilant, [...]

*Continued over page.*



[...] ensuring equipment is lubricated and in working order is so important. Certain crushes are better suited to evaluating bulls based on where hinges and gates are. We recommend ensuring you've got a reliable, secure crush because a bull picking it up on its shoulders and running across the paddock with it with the yards trailing behind like a freight train is not a great way to start the day.

If you have any questions or to book in your bull testing in 2025 please call Swans Veterinary Service on 9071 5777 and speak with our staff or large animal vets.

Dr. Katie Kreutz



## ASHEEP & BEEF eastern states tour wrap 2024

Jan Clawson, ASHEEP & BEEF

So much can be learnt from visiting other areas and industries. The 2024 ASHEEP & BEEF Eastern States Tour started when we flew into Melbourne on Friday 2nd August 2024. Our group of farmers included Simon & Robyn Fowler, Steve & Bec Bingham, Alan & Bec Hoggart, Nick Ruddenklau, Wes & Fran Graham, Mark & Liv Walter and myself, Jan Clawson. Following is a whirl-wind snapshot of the tour, for a full write up with detail on stops visit [asheepbeef.org.au/latestnews](http://asheepbeef.org.au/latestnews) via the QR code.

On arrival we ticked off the first of many bucket list items by travelling to the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) on a Melbourne Tram.

The following morning was the first of our early starts, heading to our first farm visit at **Ed Weatherly's property in Streatham**, where we met **Audrey Gripper (Southern Farming Systems)**. The site we visited was their Farm Systems South site which is a crop sequence and rotation trial. The trial is in its second year of a 4-year trial. They are trialing 13 different systems using a canola / wheat rotation as the control. The rotations included adding legumes into the system, so we saw companion plantings of canola planted with peas (peaola), Wheat planted with vetch (wetch), as well as biennial ryegrass. Ed talked us through his farm system including moving away from a traditional Merino flock to Aussie Whites or Nudies. They are fortunate enough to have four abattoirs within an hour of their farm. Ed runs a canola, wheat, faba bean rotation. He uses chicken manure as a way of limiting chemical use.

We then travelled to meet **Mark Wootton at Jigsaw Farms**, one of the first farms to achieve carbon neutrality in 2011 (although they are now slightly off this mark as carbon sequestration by trees has slowed). Jigsaw Farms is a 3,500ha farm running 18,000 merino ewes, joining 12,000 ewes to Merino rams and 6,000 to terminal sires as well as 804 cows cross bred between Hereford and Angus, plus opportunistic trading. There is virtually no cropping, they buy in all their grain and hay. It's a high input, high production system. They have planted 692ha of trees and shrubs or 19% of the total farm area, of that 50% is native revegetation. Jigsaw Farms has increased production by improving pastures, vaccinating for OJD, improved sheep genetics with a focus on increased fat and muscle to create a more fertile and robust sheep. As a result they have increased their lambing percentage from 65% to 112%. They use confinement for both cattle and sheep to finish stock quicker as well as feeding to a market to achieve a premium.

Day 3 took us **south of Hamilton to Jo & Jonathan Jenkins farm Banemore**. Originally Banemore Hereford Stud, this stud was part of the establishment of Breedplan, the genetic evaluation service that produces EBV s for beef cattle. We started the visit in a Bluestone woolshed that was built in 1852. The Jenkins moved to composite sheep about 10 years [...Cont]



Top: MCG. Middle: Southern Farming Systems trial. Bottom: Sheep feeder & shelter (note the tree plantings in the background).



[...] ago, aiming for ewes under 60kg, easy care with black feet and wool under 30 microns. This move was because they found Merinos were not good in their wet conditions. Lambs are sold into a local store market at no more than 40kg. Their cattle have, for the last 30 years, been autumn calving but have recently moved to a spring calving when there is better feed availability, preferring to finish weaners in a feedlot to receive a more reliable return.

Next we travelled south to a **dryland and irrigated dairy at Yambuk where we met Phil White**. Phil started as an agronomist running his own consultancy business before leasing 100 cows as part of a dryland dairy in 2016, he now share milks 1000 cows with the aim of continuing to grow his numbers until 2025. Phil is in a 50% share milking arrangement. Phil is responsible for everything that moves, the landowner is responsible for the rest. This costs him 50% of the milk cheque. The share milking arrangement may seem expensive until you consider the current land values; the 300ha Phil uses would cost upwards of \$10M to buy today. Phil uses a rotational cell grazing system. He does a weekly pasture walk to score the paddocks, an assessment of pasture growth and quality to determine the cell size and which cell the cows currently being milked will graze for a 3-week rotation. Phil uses tracking collars which link to a computer program to track individual milk production and cow health, he can also set it up to auto draft cows out at a milking for any reason be it rebreeding, pre-calving or end of the lactation cycle.

Top: Bluestone Woolshed, tour group with Jonathan Jenkins.  
Below: Phil White's rotary dairy and tour bus in a grazing cell.



We continued south to Port Fairy for a quick visit and on the way back to Hamilton we called into the Hamilton & Region Livestock Exchange (saleyard) which was established in 1955.

Day 4 was **Sheepvention** day! We heard **Professor Richard Eckard (Melbourne University)** speaking on Carbon neutral livestock production. Richard developed the carbon calculator that we use in our **MLA Carbon Neutral 2030 PDS**. He gave us some confidence that we are on the right track to achieving net zero by 2050 and that the whole industry can achieve a reduction simply by focusing on efficiency targets. As for insetting like soil carbon and tree planting, farmers need to keep all carbon credits for themselves or their family.

Day 5 we met **Jamie Tidy and Dylan Brodie at Naracoorte Seeds**, a pasture seed seller and cleaner whose founder developed the now trademarked FreshCoat legume inoculation system. Jamie spoken on the various seed mixes they produce, of interest was a phalaris / chicory mix for clay soils. They also have their own pasture seed research farm where they test new varieties for suitability for both sheep and cattle including palatability and recovery from grazing. A big thanks to Bob Reed for organising this stop and recommending our lunch stop at the Willalooka Tavern.



We travelled on to **Tintinara to Thomas Food International (TFI) Southern Cross Feedlot** to meet **Ben Davies and James Sage**. What an impressive facility, which is still in development, seeing 30,000 head of Angus cattle across 216 pens, that's 160 head per pen, all under shade cloth.



Left: Sheepvention. Above left: Narracoorte Seeds. Above Right: TFI Southern Cross Feedlot.

We learnt how new entry cattle are processed then spend the first 90 to 100 days in an area close to a fully staffed hospital shed and pens before moving to the next section for 50-180 day then on to the final section near the out-loading facility. These cattle are fed for 150, 200 or 270 days exiting the feedlot at 350-500kg dressed. While it's not always possible, the preference is to receive straight lines of cattle in 160 head lots, one pen, they will stay together as a group right through the feeding process, even a mixed line will enter as a group and stay together, it's all about minimising stress. We finished the day at The Bend Motor Sport Park, Tailem Bend where we joined a group of Coorong farmers and some of the Platinum Ag Coorong team for dinner.

The first stop for Day 6 was the new **Thomas Foods International Murray Bridge meat processing facility** where we met Ben Davies again. After signing in we walked the 750 meters length of the facility to the cattle receival area. The cattle yards use the same Temple Grandin design as the feedlot with curved races, this keeps stress to an absolute minimum. The facility has been designed so that we could view the whole process from behind glass.

We then boarded the Captain Proud paddle boat for a three hour lunch and cruise along the mighty Murray River before heading for our final stop for the day. **Glenbrook** is just **south of Murray Bridge**. **Trent Muller** and his family own and operate an irrigated dairy, milking up to 400 Illawarra cows on 200ha with 40ha of pivot irrigation. They also have about 700ha they crop growing wheat, barley for hay, maize and a rye cereal mix for silage and 800ha for young stock and beef cattle. We walked through their irrigated lucerne, it was a very impressive stand (pictured below). We finished the day with dinner at the Bridgeport Hotel with **Chad Burbridge from Benefield Merino**.



Day 6 we travelled to **Adelaide to attend the first day of the LambEx Conference**.

There was a great line up of speakers. One of the messages we took away was the need to tell the farm story. One example of this is Kangaroo Island Wool Co who have developed a paddock to wardrobe promotion. The message was echoed by **Claire Taylor a Scottish Ag commentator** who talked us through the lessons learnt from Great Britain post Brexit when they proposed a ban on live animal export meaning the Scottish farmers couldn't ferry sheep and cattle to their nearest abattoirs. This decision was eventually reconsidered and an exemption implemented. Claire said, apart from the noisy minority, the general public do trust our farmers, we just need to build the

belief. TV shows like Muster Dogs are a good example. She suggested creating a "Legacy Advocacy Orchestra", bringing together the 270 Australian advocacy groups to sing from the same song sheet. We need to develop a public relations strategy and get ahead of the crises. This might include speaking to the media in good times, turning scrutiny into opportunity by controlling the narrative, build relationships with ministers early, and there it is again, tell our own story! We have a great opportunity right now with the Keep The Sheep campaign, they have the ear of the media, the politicians, and have built the support of the urbanites, we just need to keep it going.

The conference finished with the results of the LambEx carcass competition, **congratulations to ASHEEP & BEEF members Craig and Anna-Lisa Newman** for their second place in the most valuable lamb team wool clip **and Wayne Pech** coming third in the overall highest feedlot performing lamb team and second in highest feedlot ADG lamb team with his Suffolks. We finished the day as Rabobank VIP guests at the Grandslamb Gala Dinner thanks to Brad Crane (Rabobank Esperance).

Our final day of the tour was a trip out to the Barossa Valley stopping at the **Schuster Family Export Hay & Tourism** enterprise along the way, where Harry Schuster met us at their export hay sheds. They have done a bit of diversifying which includes a function centre and accommodation as well as grain, hay, and pigs. The export hay business started with one shed some 20 years ago, today they have 4 or 5 sheds storing 8,000 big square bales per shed. They also have 2400t of grain storage plus seed. We finished the tour at Seppeltsfield Winery and enjoyed lunch on the grounds.

A big thanks to all our site hosts, guests and attendees for making it a tour to be remembered, I don't think I've ever laughed for ten days before. As you have read, we saw some high production systems, the use of technology in production, the production possible with irrigation, diversification and of course good farm management. My take home is "You don't know what you don't know!" So, consider joining a farm tour if you get the opportunity, it will be worth it. ASHEEP & BEEF try to organise a tour every second year, and while we don't have anything planned now, we are always open to suggestions.



Left: Pre-dinner drinks.

Middle: Brad Crane & Steve Bingham.

Right: Liv Walter, Bec Hoggart & Robyn Fowler at the LambEx Gala Dinner.

# Managing seasonal challenges in livestock health



*Shonn Cruttenden and Rory Smith, Farm and General*

Recent rains and warm weather have created challenges for local livestock, and the team at Farm and General is here to help. Shonn Cruttenden and Rory Smith are on hand to offer practical advice on managing parasites and planning nutrition to keep your animals healthy.

Shonn and Rory recently attended the **Cultivate and Connect Conference** in Melbourne, where they gained valuable insights from suppliers and stakeholders across the country. They've returned full of fresh knowledge to support local farmers through the season. From the latest parasite control products to innovative feeding strategies, they're excited to share tools and ideas tailored to local conditions.

## Parasite Pressures

Recent warm, wet conditions have significantly increased the risk of flystrike and Barber's Pole worms, making proactive management essential for livestock health.

Flystrike prevention can be achieved through crutching, shearing, and the strategic use of fly products to protect vulnerable animals. Staying ahead of the risk can save time, stress, and money later in the season.

For Barber's Pole worms, monitoring worm egg counts is crucial to understanding the worm burden in your flock and determining when to drench. Using the right drenching products at the right time is essential for effective control and to prevent resistance.

Farm and General offers assisting in worm egg counting, helping you make informed decisions about when and how to treat your livestock. Our team can assist with selecting the most effective products and strategies to manage parasites, keeping your animals healthy and productive.

## Nutritional Management

Stubble paddocks are a valuable summer resource but often lack essential nutrients like calcium and sulphur. Supplementing these can improve digestion and keep animals in good condition. As the season progresses, balancing grain feeding with supplements and buffers is crucial to avoid issues.

At Farm and General, we understand the challenges of managing livestock health. Whether it's tackling parasites or planning feed strategies, our team is ready to help. Visit us for advice or to find products that fit your farm's unique needs. Let's work together to keep your livestock thriving this season.

For all your Animal Health needs please call Farm and General on 08 9072 0888.





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# Celebrating 20 years of innovation with ALOSCA Technologies

## ALOSCA

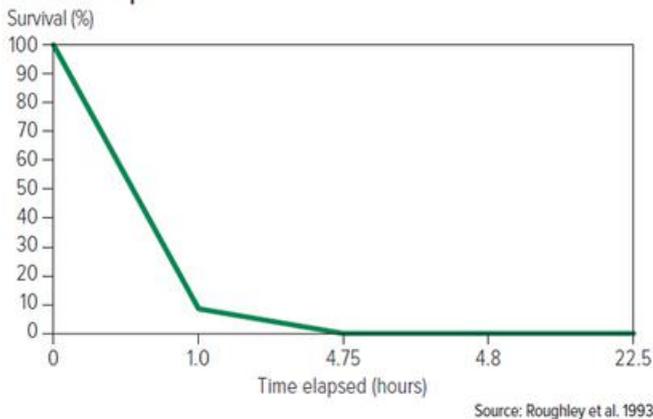
Since 2004 ALOSCA has established itself as a leading innovator in the field of legume inoculants, extending our supply chain Australia wide as well as developing international sales markets.

ALOSCA Sales Manager, Peter Dixon, said that ALOSCA's patented inoculant granules are supremely suited to Australian conditions as they are designed to be used in dry and acidic soils. Most legume inoculants used in other countries are peat based that have a lot of disadvantages well known to most growers. Peat based inoculants have very short efficacy windows once applied to seed, rhizobia are fragile little buggers and begin dying as soon as they are exposed to the elements and within 24 hours 99% of the rhizobia applied by peat inoculation may have perished.

Traditionally, peat has been the main form of inoculant carrier applied when sowing a legume or pasture. Peat supplies high numbers of rhizobia, but numbers can decline very quickly during the sowing process if sown into dry soils or unfavourable conditions such as acidic soils or alongside pesticide treated seed. Freeze-dried inoculants and inoculants delivered by liquid injection similarly can provide high numbers of rhizobia, but similar to peat inoculants the rhizobia numbers decline very quickly in unfavourable sowing conditions. Therefore, any of the wet inoculant delivery options (seed applied or liquid injection) are suitable inoculant options to use only where sowing will occur into a moist soil.

An example of how quickly rhizobia numbers can decline when delivered by wet inoculant delivery systems is shown in the below chart from GRDC. In this example, peat inoculant was mixed with seed and sown within five hours of inoculation into moist soil with the number of rhizobia surviving on the seed up to the point of sowing recorded and then a sample collected from the soil almost a day after initial inoculation. Importantly, more than 90 per cent of the rhizobia on the seed had died within an hour of commencing the inoculation process.

**Figure 4.3: The percentage of rhizobia surviving after peat inoculation and sowing of legume seed. Sowing was completed within five hours of commencing seed inoculation as a peat slurry and the number of cells surviving recorded throughout the inoculation and sowing process and collected from the soil 22.5 hours after the commencement of the inoculation process.**



Source: [grdc.com.au/resources-and-publications/all-publications/publications/2023/pasture-legumes-manual](http://grdc.com.au/resources-and-publications/all-publications/publications/2023/pasture-legumes-manual)



Trial work has also shown that top-dressing or surface-spreading ALOSCA granules with fertiliser or lime before planting as well as with the method of 'twin sowing'; drilling granules with cropping fertiliser or seed in the season prior to the pasture being planted to introduce new, more effective strains of inoculant to the soil have been shown to be very effective.

As well as working with ALOSCA Technologies supply partners, we regularly work alongside research and development bodies such as GRDC, Curtin University and numerous GGA groups Australia wide to continue our research and development in our continuing pursuit of excellence.

With the new season nearly upon us it is critical to ensure you supply of ALOSCA granular inoculants, contact your local distributor today to place your order and beat the February price rise and go into the draw to win one of three YETI coolers.

### Contact:

Peter Dixon  
0487 776 022  
pdixon@alosca.com.au

# Hogan

## Annual Ryegrass

#1  
ANNUAL  
RYEGRASS  
FVI 2024\*

- Latest maturity annual available (+22 days)
- Very fast establishment for early grazing potential
- Excellent autumn/winter production plus strong late spring growth
- Good spring growth and rust resistance
- Good prospects for second cut or after-spring grazing
- Well suited to high production areas with good spring growth prospects

**#1 Annual Ranked Annual Ryegrass  
in the February 2024 Dairy Australia  
Forage Value Index (FVI)**

# Fuze

## Annual Ryegrass

HIGH  
PERFORMING  
FVI 2024\*

- New late flowering (+14 days) diploid annual ryegrass
- Quick to first grazing
- Good spring growth and rust resistance
- Excellent autumn/winter production plus strong late spring growth
- Densely tillered, fine leaves and an upright growth habit
- Excellent silage and hay qualities
- Highly adaptable across a diverse range of enterprises and environments

**#1 Annual Ranked Diploid Annual Ryegrass  
in the February 2024 Dairy Australia  
Forage Value Index (FVI)**

## The succession stand-off

*Neil Hooper, Byfields Director*

I have heard a number of farmers say lately that they won't transfer farm land in their lifetimes, because it will cost too much in tax. Certainly, the massive jump in land prices and scale increase over the last 10 years, make the Small Business Capital Gains concessions almost impossible to access. So I definitely agree that there are some challenges. But what are the potential repercussions if the land is not transferred in your lifetime, and is instead willed upon your death?

The first and most obvious issue is the risk of your will being contested. This is a very real risk if the farm land constitutes a substantial portion of the assets of the estate. Anecdotally, we are hearing from legal advisors that they are receiving significantly more enquiries from the non-farming siblings in this regard. As such I would suggest the risk of contesting has never been higher!

This leads on to the second risk, that of the impact of the uncertainty of who will inherit the farm land. If you are in your 50's or 60's and the land has not been passed on to you, it would certainly impact on your decision making. Compare that to the situation where the land has been transferred to your control, and you can farm with the security of knowing that improvements you do to the land will be for the benefit of you and the next generation in the farm business.

The third risk I would raise is the issue of the land being used as security. Let's say you are in your 50's, have a son or daughter home on the farm with you and are looking to expand the operations. Let's also say that the majority of the existing land is still held in your parent's name, and they are in their late 70's and scaling back involvement in the farming operations. In most cases the existing land would need to be used as security to buy additional land, and as such the parents in their 70's would need to act as guarantor.

As anyone who has signed a guarantee knows, this is a somewhat daunting thing to do. What if the parents don't want to be a guarantor? Or, what about the possibility of either of the parents having lost capacity, and not being able to sign the guarantee? Yes it could potentially be signed under a Power of Attorney (POA), assuming the parents had signed a valid power of attorney. However there is a fiduciary duty on the person signing the guarantee under the power of attorney to be acting in the best interests of the person they are signing for. What is the direct benefit to the guarantor of them entering into a guarantee? It is an even bigger legal minefield if the POA is also the borrower of the money.

In summary, there is potentially considerable costs involved in transferring land within a person's lifetime, compared to under a will. But there are also some significant risks in leaving it to be sorted under the Will. One final point, if you are transferring land under a will, consider willing it to a Trust (or Testamentary Trust) so that the same issue does not occur at the next generational transfer! Contact a Byfields Director at any of our offices to discuss your succession plans further: [www.byfields.com.au/About-Us/Our-People](http://www.byfields.com.au/About-Us/Our-People)

The image shows a promotional graphic for Byfields business advisers. It features a circular portrait of Neil Hooper, Director, on the left. To the right, a dark blue box contains the text 'Specialising in...' followed by a list of services: Agribusiness, Business Advisory & Taxation, Succession Planning, Self Managed Superannuation, and Bookkeeping. The background is a scenic landscape with a windmill and a sunset sky.

**byfields**  
business advisers

**Neil Hooper**  
Director

**Specialising in...**

- Agribusiness
- Business Advisory & Taxation
- Succession Planning
- Self Managed Superannuation
- Bookkeeping

## 2024 season wrap up

*Chad Hall & Tyneal Callus, South Coastal Agencies*



The year 2024 will undoubtedly be remembered as an exceptionally challenging one for livestock producers in the Esperance district. Many producers faced significant hurdles, including the need for sustained supplementary feeding and water carting for much of the year. It might even become the story we tell our children, starting with, "That's nothing—back in 2024..."

Yet, tough years like this provide invaluable opportunities for learning. They underscore the importance of strategies that minimise risk during adverse seasons while enhancing profitability in more favourable times. The lessons gained from such hardships play a vital role in building more resilient farming systems and ensuring the long-term sustainability of agriculture. Let's not miss the opportunity to reflect on a few of the key lessons you've shared with us.

### Pressure relief (early action)

To effectively manage stocking rates and implement pasture grazing deferral, it's essential to develop a class-of-stock plan tailored to your operation. Begin by categorising livestock based on nutritional needs, age, and production stage (e.g., breeding stock, weaners, or the oldest single-bearing ewes). Establish a clear exit date for stock adjustments, taking into account pasture availability, seasonal conditions, and feed budgets. Acting early is crucial. Delaying this decision risks market saturation, which can lead to lower prices or, in extreme cases like those witnessed this year, market closures.

A proactive approach facilitates adequate grazing deferment, allowing pastures to recover, reducing supplementary feed costs, and focusing resources on the livestock classes that deliver the highest returns for your business. Regularly monitoring pasture conditions and livestock performance is key to maintaining a sustainable balance between stocking rates and feed availability.

### Pasture wedge / grazing management

In drought years, the sight of a green tinge on the horizon at dusk can spark hope and excitement that the tough times may finally be easing. However, as tempting as it is to graze this early growth, doing so can significantly impact both livestock condition and pasture recovery. Early-season pasture is typically high in water content and low in nutrients, forcing livestock to expend more energy searching for sustenance. This energy loss ultimately results in weight loss and reduced productivity.

Grazing too early or too heavily also depletes the pasture's biomass potential, prolonging the effects of a dry start. Without adequate biomass, the plant's ability to photosynthesise and generate energy for regrowth is severely hindered, delaying recovery or even causing plant death. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) advises delaying grazing until pastures provide at least 800 kg of feed per hectare (FOO), with 1,200 kg FOO being the ideal benchmark. This ensures sufficient foliage is retained to maximise photosynthesis and support vigorous growth.

Throughout the season, it is vital to monitor paddocks to prevent overgrazing or depletion beyond recovery. Regular assessments of pasture condition help maintain plant health and encourage continued growth. While deferring grazing during drought is undoubtedly challenging, this strategy reduces reliance on supplementary feeding and fosters better long-term pasture resilience. A little patience can yield substantial rewards, enabling stronger pasture recovery and improved productivity across the season.

### Feed quality over quantity

Managing the trade-off between feed quality and quantity is a familiar challenge for producers, particularly when rebuilding feed reserves after a tough season. While dry matter yield peaks after seed formation, the nutritional value of forage declines sharply. As plants enter their reproductive phase, digestibility drops significantly, leading to reduced energy (MJME) and crude protein (CP) levels. This decline is further compounded by rising Neutral Detergent Fibre (NDF) levels, which limit how much feed livestock can physically consume.

Lower-quality forage forces animals to eat more to meet their nutritional requirements, a physical limitation they cannot overcome with poor-quality feed. The solution? Prioritise quality over sheer volume. Optimising feed value and livestock performance requires cutting or grazing pastures at the optimal growth stage, even if it means sacrificing some yield. While this approach may seem counterintuitive, it ensures forage with higher nutritional [...]

[...] value, ultimately enhancing livestock productivity and supporting pasture resilience.

Once the nutritional requirements of livestock are met, the remainder of their diet can be supplemented with readily available, lower-quality feeds such as straw, effectively balancing cost and resource use.

In reflecting on the challenges of 2024, it's clear that resilience and adaptability are the hallmarks of successful livestock producers. The lessons learned this year—from timely decision-making and grazing deferral to balancing feed quality and quantity—underscore the importance of proactive, informed management. These strategies not only mitigate risks during tough seasons but also lay the groundwork for improved productivity and sustainability in the years ahead.

While the hardships of 2024 may become stories passed down to future generations, they are also a testament to the ingenuity and determination of producers who faced adversity head-on. By applying these insights, we ensure that every struggle contributes to stronger, more resilient farming systems capable of weathering whatever challenges lie ahead.

**Contact:**

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 Tyneal Callus, Account Manager, 0436 123 934

## Making More From Sheep relaunched

*Meat & Livestock Australia and Australian Wool Innovation*



The well-respected sheep industry resource Making More From Sheep (MMFS) has been relaunched with significantly updated and new information for sheep producers.

MMFS is a one-stop-shop for Australian sheep producers and has been updated to include the latest sheep industry research, tools and information on husbandry and management, including resources, videos, apps, technologies, podcasts and fact sheets.



MMFS began development by Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) and Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) in 2006, with its first release to industry in 2008. Since then, AWI and MLA have continued to invest in the development and update of MMFS as a key resource for the Australian industry. The MMFS offering has now expanded to include 12 Modules, animal health fact sheets and presentations and conference recordings, and for the first time ever in 2024, the Making More From Sheep eLearning course, which is housed on both the AWI and MLA eLearning platforms.

To access the Making More From Sheep Manual and associated resources visit [www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au](http://www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au).

## WA grain growers showing their support by donating to Keep the Sheep

*Keep The Sheep*

With the federal election coming up next year, WA grain growers are showing their support by donating to Keep the Sheep. Every donation helps give farmers and rural communities the voice they need to protect their livelihoods and ensure their concerns are heard at the election.

CBH Account Number: 4057 7777

If you or someone you know would like to join the campaign by donating grain your support would mean the world to us. Thank you for standing with us to [#KeeptheSheep!](https://www.instagram.com/keepthesheep) 🐏

Please note, any contributions should only be in addition to regular donations. We do not want to take away from contributions to community groups, sporting clubs who are the lifeblood of our communities and rely on grain donations to survive each year.



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# The risk of manganese deficiency is increasing

James Easton, Senior Agronomist, CSBP



Manganese (Mn) deficiencies are becoming more common—especially in paddocks that have had a lot of lime. Several CSBP trials have highlighted the risk of Mn deficiency after liming.

One long-term trial set up in 2011 at Bolgart had half the treatments receive 3.0 t/ha lime in 2011, with another 2.6 t/ha in 2014. The other half received no lime.

Soil tests in 2016 showed that in the lime-treated plots, soil pH (0-10 cm) had increased from about 5.8 to 6.5, enough to induce Mn deficiency in wheat grown in 2020 (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Manganese deficiency in wheat at Bolgart.

Plant tissue tests highlighted that Mn availability is highly sensitive to changes in soil pH after liming. Figure 2 shows that there is about 50% less Mn in wheat on the limed plots compared to the plots that were not limed.

Manganese deficiencies are a significant risk on 'Forest Gravel' soils, and are a greater risk after liming.

In a CSBP pasture trial set up on a 'Forest Gravel' at Darkan in 2001, 2 t/ha of lime-induced Mn deficiency in barley grown eight years later. The lime increased pH (0-10 cm) from 5.1 to 5.4—which is not high!

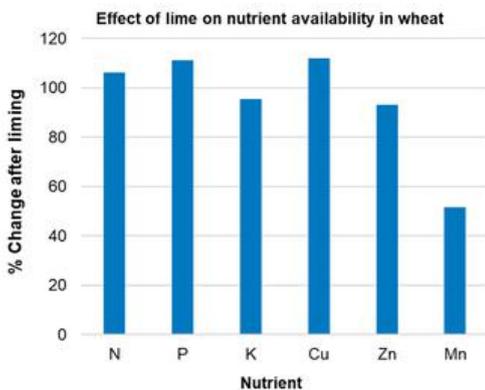


Figure 2. Effect of 3.0 t/ha lime (2011) plus 2.6 t/ha (2014) on nutrient availability in wheat grown in 2020. Data shows the relative changes in nutrient uptake from liming.

### So, what do we recommend?

Paddocks prone to Mn deficiency should receive 3–4 kg Mn/ha banded in a granular fertiliser with or below the seed.

Do not band liquid Mn products. They are ineffective as they are rapidly converted (oxidised) to unavailable forms.

Do not rely on foliar Mn applications. They can be effective, but often they're not, and several applications may be required given that Mn does not move from older to younger leaves.

Be careful not to over-lime paddocks. Check soil pH levels with soil testing and monitor Mn by plant testing crops grown in susceptible paddocks.

The fertilisers in Table 1 are very effective at correcting a Mn deficiency. The product rates will supply 4 kg Mn/ha. Product selection should be guided by the need for other nutrients.



Figure 3. Manganese deficiency in barley at Darkan.

Product (kg/ha)	N	P	K	S	Mn	Recommended Situations
100 Mallee Mn	12	12		10	4	Lower P requirement
100 Agstar Mn	12	14		8	4	Moderate P requirement
100 Agflow Mn	9	18		4	4	Higher P requirement
125 MacroPro Mn	10	13	11	13	4	Moderate P and K requirement
80 Big Phos Mn	5	11		6	4	Recommended for lupins

Table 1. Ideal fertilisers to correct a manganese deficiency.

Agras is another fertiliser worth considering. While Agras does not contain Mn, its acidifying properties will promote Mn uptake if it is drilled at high rates (>130 kg/ha).

If you'd like to know more about any of our current or past field trials, please reach out to your local CSBP Account Manager. [csbpfertilisers.com](http://csbpfertilisers.com)



## Local insights from local bankers.

Our agribusiness team has strong connections to the farming community in Esperance. Many of us grew up on farms and some of us still farm today. We have a deep understanding of the Sheep and Beef industry because we're a part of it.

Speak to one of our agribusiness bankers.



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Agribusiness Executive  
0417 963 562  
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Chad Holten  
Agribusiness Executive  
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[commbank.com.au/agribusiness](http://commbank.com.au/agribusiness)

Things you should know: If you have a complaint in respect of this information, the Commonwealth Bank's dispute resolution service can be accessed on 13 22 21 or [commbank.com.au/support-compliments-and-complaints](http://commbank.com.au/support-compliments-and-complaints). Commonwealth Bank of Australia ABN 48 123 123 124 AFSL Australian credit licence 234 945



# Biosecurity: Starling alert

*Sarah Brown, ASHEEP & BEEF*

The team at Chilwell farms, east of Esperance, recently sighted starlings on the property and responded by reporting them to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD). Very good spotting, as DPIRD was able to head to the area and eradicate the adult birds and their hatchlings from a nest in the wall of a disused house.

DPIRD runs an annual starling management program and has reported a busy response during the 2023–24 season.

Following the eradication of the breeding birds at Chilwell, the department has issued a reminder to farmers and residents along WA’s south coast to be on the alert, and has geared up their trapping and surveillance program in the south-east of WA to prevent the encroachment of the pest birds from eastern Australia.

DPIRD research scientist Susan Campbell said that the find was concerning, “as it is the first time in more than a decade that starlings have been discovered breeding on the south coast.”

“Starlings are a significant threat to WA’s agricultural, social, environmental and cultural assets, causing damage to high-value fruit crops – especially stone fruits and grapes – and consuming high volumes of livestock feed.”

The starling program extends west from the South Australian border for approximately 400 kilometres and covers 300km along the south coast between Cape Arid and Hopetoun. Dr Campbell said community reports played a vital role. “DPIRD officers are regularly checking more than 140 starling lure traps across the area,” Dr Campbell said. “The habitat area in WA that suits them is immense, so DPIRD is calling on the local community to assist, particularly in spring and summer when there are more starlings arriving in WA.

“We urge local landholders, community groups, agricultural producers, ranger groups – anyone who has eyes on the ground in regional areas, to report suspected starling sightings. Detection of this breeding pair was due to the keen eye of a local landholder, highlighting how valuable community reports can be. If people can send in photos or videos as well, that greatly helps us verify the reports.”

According to DPIRD, “starlings are small to medium sized birds. They have distinctive glossy black feathers with an iridescent green and purple sheen. From a distance they can look plain black. The pest may be seen perched on livestock or nesting in abandoned buildings, farm sheds, machinery and rubbish tips. Starlings are aggressive birds and can form very large flocks that move, feed and roost together.”

“Suspect bird sightings, particularly in the Hopetoun and Esperance areas, should be reported to DPIRD’s Pest and Disease Information Service (08) 9368 3080 or [padis@dpiird.wa.gov.au](mailto:padis@dpiird.wa.gov.au), or through the department’s MyPestGuide® Reporter app.” Keep your eyes peeled!



Photos: 1, 2 & 3 courtesy of Simon Fowler of the birds found at Chilwell Farms. 4 & 5 supplied by DPIRD as general examples.

# Market Report: Sheep insights

ANZ Insights Team (Agri Research Team)



## OVERVIEW

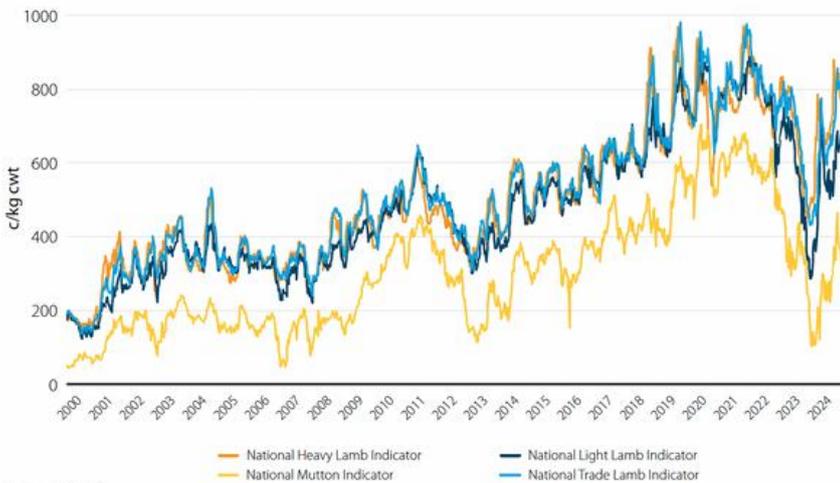
- Lamb prices have grown strongly over the past year, based primarily on a variable season in the south leading to a shorter supply of heavy lambs;
- The premium for heavy lambs over light lambs has gone from a discount earlier in the year to now sit over 200c/kg premium for heavy lambs;
- Slaughter numbers are high, but very mixed between States – with slaughter highest in New South Wales and Queensland while numbers have dropped in the southern States;
- Export figures remain very strong, particularly to the United States and United Kingdom;
- Retail lamb prices have begun to climb again after being discounted heavily late in 2023, although retail prices still remain under their peak in 2023, making the lamb roast very competitive for the Christmas table.

While the sheep industry has started spring with a boom, with prices pushing up strongly, particularly for heavy lambs, they have moderated slightly coming into summer. An influx of numbers into the saleyard and a mixed quality offering has put a dampener on prices. For many producers, the sheep (and cattle) industry is a 'weighting' game this year – as the premium for heavy or finished stock means producers are keen to put as much weight on the stock in the paddock as possible.

The start of spring saw a solid rise in the National Trade Lamb Indicator to push over 830c/kg. While the heat has slightly come out of the market in following weeks as it dipped under 800c/kg, prices are starkly higher than this time last year – by almost 340c/kg – putting a spring in the step of producers. Since late 2022, a persistent if volatile gap has emerged between lighter and heavy lambs, as dry conditions and concerns over feed availability in the major southern sheep producing areas has limited the number of heavy lambs on offer. While that premium for heavy lambs peaked earlier this year, it has increased throughout spring to now sit at around 200c/kg premium for heavy lambs compared to light lambs.

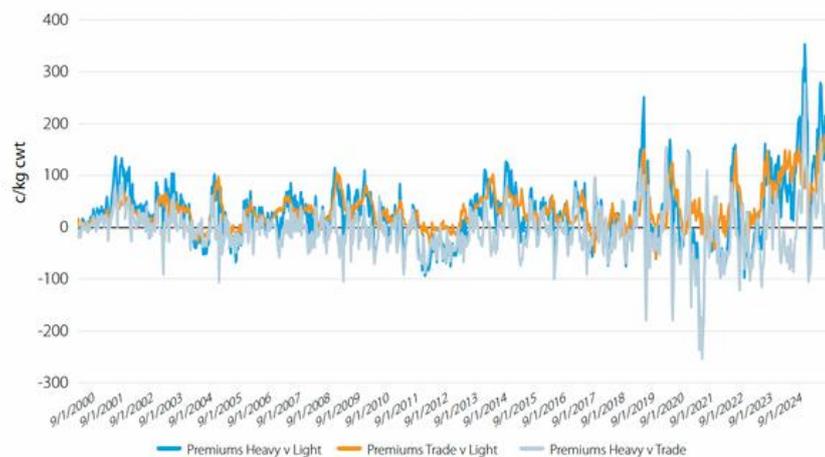
By state, prices in Victoria and South Australia are the highest, again pushed up by poorer seasonal conditions, lack of pasture and a lack of finished lambs. The impact of the turmoil in the Western Australian sheep industry is also being felt with trade lambs in the saleyards in the west selling at as much as a 200c/kg discount to those in the east.

### SALEYARD PRICES BY CATEGORY



Source: ANZ, MLA

### SALEYARD LAMB PRICE PREMIUMS



Source: ANZ, MLA

An increase in new season lambs coming into the saleyards has offset a decline in ewe numbers over recent weeks, contributing to total yardings remaining steady leading into Summer. Yardings for the third quarter were however up 16 percent on the same period last year. In October alone yardings were up 28 percent on October 2023. As a result, we may not see the spike in yardings which we saw in December 2023 – although much still depends on the weather and pasture growth. Demand for restocker and light lambs exists, but it is fairly limited to those areas with a strong season and good spring growth. As a result, restocker prices have shown some volatility week to week, but have seen solid growth since the beginning of the year.

High slaughter rates have persisted across the year with year-to-date slaughter sitting 6.5 percent higher than the same time in 2023. This figure hides the very strong increase of over 20 percent in New South Wales, and of lesser impact, in Queensland which has more than offset the not unexpected decline of around 20 percent in slaughter rates in Western Australia and South Australia and over 4 percent in Victoria. Unsurprisingly, the issues around dry conditions in southern Australia which have persisted since 2023 have led to lower turnover in the southern states, while the strong season in New South Wales and Queensland have led to higher slaughter rates. Looking forward, it is anticipated that slaughter rates will start to decline slightly as supply from the north [...]

Continued over page.

SALEYARD TRADE LAMB PRICES BY STATE



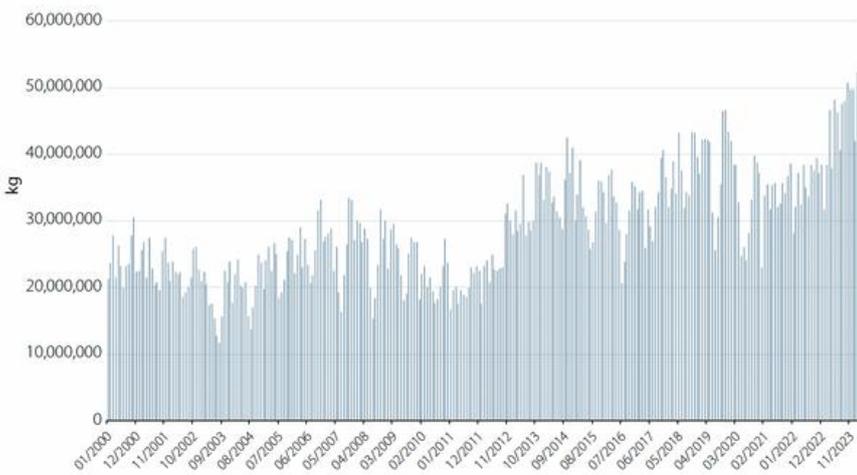
Source: ANZ, MLA

RETAIL MEAT PRICES



Source: ANZ, ABS

LAMB AND MUTTON EXPORTS



Source: ANZ, MLA

[...] declines and southern, weather impacted supply becomes the primary source.

Solid saleyard prices for lamb have translated, quite quickly, into higher prices at a retail level. The second half of 2023 saw a very solid drop in lamb prices, which peaked in June 2022. From their peak, retail lamb prices fell over 19 percent to hit their recent low in March this year. Since then, lamb prices have risen almost 16 percent in the past six months to now sit just over 6 percent below their peak. In comparison, while beef prices have also dropped, it has been less precipitous and retail beef prices now sit 4.8 percent below their peak, and falling to just 6 percent below their peak in March 2024.

**THIS MAKES LAMB PRICES VERY COMPETITIVE COMPARED TO BOTH PORK AND POULTRY SUCH THAT GROWTH IN LAMB PRICES IS ON PAR WITH POULTRY AND LESS THAN GROWTH IN PORK PRICES.**

This increase in retail lamb prices should reduce some pressure on processor margins, which have been under some pressure as saleyard prices for lamb increased and processors have shifted to mutton processing to recover margin.

Growth in Australian export markets for lamb are still continuing to underpin much of that demand for heavy lambs, although the heat has come out of total exports in recent months. The latest figures from October saw lamb exports fall 13 percent from October 2023, as a result in a large decline in exports to China. Mutton exports rose 35 percent since October 2023 with exports to China rising 43 percent in that same time.

Despite the fall in month on month exports in October, the year to October recorded strong growth with total lamb exports up by 14 percent and mutton exports up by 19 percent. Lamb exports to China were down 23 percent for the year to October, and volumes were down 25 percent to South Korea. Exports to the United States grew 33 percent in that time to now be the largest destination for lamb exports, while exports to the United Kingdom grew 56 percent and exports to the Middle East were up 62 percent in the year to October.

In that same time, mutton exports to the Middle East almost doubled while exports to the United States grew 62 percent. While mutton exports to China fell 13 percent, China remains the largest export market for mutton.

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*This market report is an extract from 'ANZ Agri INFOCUS, Commodity Insights Summer 2024/25'.*

**Read the latest ANZ Agri INFOCUS issue via the QR code.**

# WAFarmers livestock report

Mark Walter (*Esperance/Ravensthorpe Rep WAFarmers Livestock Council*)  
 Melanie Tolich (*Corporate Manager, Policy – Livestock WAFarmers*)



**Working collaboratively, WAFarmers would like to keep ASHEEP & BEEF members informed on what the WAFarmers Livestock Council current advocacy priorities are as we work together for a sustainable and profitable livestock industry in Western Australia.**

This year has certainly brought an interesting dynamic to the livestock sector. Record low prices for sheep and cattle, unusually dry season conditions, traceability reforms and turmoil in live export, has kept the Livestock Council busy over the past 12 months as it continues to develop and drive key policy areas at both a state and national level. Nationally, WAFarmers is a member of Sheep Producers Australia, Wool Producers Australia, Cattle Australia and Australian Live Exporters Council, which equates to over 30 staff working on policy on our behalf nationally. Importantly, a WAFarmers membership secures you a membership to all national peak bodies of whom WAFarmers pays membership to.

**Below are two highlighted key policy areas the WAFarmers Livestock Council has been working on throughout 2024:**

## Live Exports

Live Export has remained the number one advocacy topic for the WAFarmers Livestock Council throughout 2024. The council remains steadfast in its position that it will not support the Albanese Governments policy to phase out live export of sheep by sea and we continue to support the "Keep the Sheep" Campaign. In the last couple of months, WAFarmers has been approached to provide advice on co-design process for the rolling out of the \$46m transition package to assist producers and the supply chain to transition away from live exports. WAFarmers continues to provide feedback to the Government that the amount of funds they have put on the table is totally inadequate and that the trade should be allowed to continue. However, the government is forging ahead with its transition package and therefore WAFarmers will participate in the consultation process to hold government to account on how the funds allocated and distributed to avoid it being chewed up by the bureaucrats.

## Biosecurity and Traceability

Biosecurity remains a hot topic for the council in 2024 with the presence of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) in Indonesia. Although the situation has improved the threat to the Australian livestock industry is still present with a potential cost of \$80b to the Australian economy.

Mandatory EID's for sheep and goats will come into effect on the 1 January with all new lambs born after 1 January 2025 required to have EID tags before they can move off farm and all other sheep to be fitted with the devices before 1st July 2026. Expert advice confirms that EID's for sheep and goats along the already implemented cattle traceability system will significantly improve traceability, allowing for timely management, control and eradication of biosecurity threats, effectively saving the industry millions of dollars.

WAFarmers along with other industry bodies as a result of the mandatory decision, advocated to the WA State Government to recognise the cost imposition of moving to EID tags and to apply a discount to the price of electronic tags. The State Government listened to industry's concerns and introduced the State Government funded "Tag Incentive Program" (TIP) that provides a .75 cents discount on the relevant year of birth tag, which for 2024 was for black tags. This program has been extended and will be available on white tags for 2025.

WAFarmers understands farmers concerns in relation to this mandatory decision and the associated cost incurred through this process, however we remind farmers that this was made mandatory by the State Government on the back of major biosecurity threats on our doorstep, with the potential to wipe out the livestock industry Australia wide.

**WAFarmers Livestock Council in early 2025 will continue to work on the below issues:**

- Advocating to retain the Live Export trade for sheep and cattle, along with improving processing capacity with WA.
- Working with partners across the industry to improve traceability and biosecurity outcomes.

*Continued over page.*

- Supporting the use of correct pain relief for invasive procedures.
- Development of nationally consistent policies on animal health and welfare best practice across the supply chain.
- Advocating for continued industry-specific R&D funding and understanding consumer demand and ensuring research and development is fit for purpose.
- Maintaining market access and international demand.

## Join WAFarmers: Membership includes national representation



For more information: [reception@wafarmers.org.au](mailto:reception@wafarmers.org.au) | 9486 2100 | Scan QR code

## Workshop Upcoming: Understanding carbon emissions on your farm

Jan Clawson, ASHEEP & BEEF

The red meat industry's aspirational goal of being carbon neutral by 2030 is now just five years away and there's ever-present pressure for all farmers to be lowering emissions. Now might be a good time to come along to our half day workshop 'Understanding Carbon Emissions On Your Farm', to learn more about your farm's emissions and how they can be lowered.



**On Wednesday 19th March 2025, ASHEEP & BEEF will once again hold a half day workshop facilitated by Richard Brake (Richard Brake Consulting).**

The day will start at 8am with information on Meat & Livestock Australia's CN30 target and an update on the industry drivers for carbon neutrality. We will then work through what an emission profile is and why we need one.

Following morning tea, we will look at the Melbourne Uni PICCC Tool and the information required to complete this free calculator. Richard will provide a demo of the calculator and explain the results. This session will finish with ideas on how to reduce your emissions.

This workshop is also suitable for those people who have had a carbon calculator completed as part of a farm review and are wondering what it all means. The workshop will help you understand the results and give you some ideas on where you might start reducing your emissions.

We hope you go home inspired and with enough information to complete your own calculator. To help you with that we have created a **toolkit guide "Starting your CN30 journey on-farm"** which is available on the ASHEEP & BEEF website [www.asheepbeef.org.au](http://www.asheepbeef.org.au) or scan the QR code below.

If you're still not sure why you should complete a farm emissions profile go to the website where you'll find a video case study with Wes Graham. Wes talks through why it was important for him to complete a carbon emissions calculator and why others should consider doing one as well.

If you would like more information on the workshop and to register call Jan Clawson or email [janclawson@asheepbeef.org.au](mailto:janclawson@asheepbeef.org.au). All farmers are welcome.

This workshop is part of the Meat and Livestock Australia funded Producer Demonstration Site project Carbon Neutral 2030: Getting started on Farm, a four-year project concluding in 2027.



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**Cindy J Gilchrist**

*Authorised Representative of WFI (1301257)*

Southern Wheatbelt and Goldfields, Esperance

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Insurance

## Safety Spot: Emergency planning

Jan Clawson, ASHEEP & BEEF

Have you thought about what you, or those around you, would do in the event of an emergency?

It's possibly the last thing we want to consider, that is until we find ourselves having to deal with an emergency.

We might have systems in place for dealing with emergencies that occur more regularly, like fires during summer, but there could be other situations we can plan for better. Having an emergency plan that you've discussed with your family and staff could save a lot of precious time.



I have recently been working with a business to develop a new emergency plan, which started with developing an emergency management plan document. I found a template on the Safe Work Australia website which I downloaded and started to work on. And while I was putting lots of words on a page, the real value came from talking to the owners and staff within the business. Simply by bringing up the subject and asking a few questions triggered thinking about what would happen in an emergency. Discussing the most likely emergency events and how they would be handled has been a worthwhile exercise.

### Some of the things we identified were:

We set up an emergency management team. Because staff work at different times, we decided not to allocate people to roles, preferring to set the job position to the roles. So, a manager or supervisor assumes the role of warden or primary decision maker in an emergency. This person can assign someone to help if needed, becoming the deputy warden. We then identified who was happy to provide first aid, if required, to become our first aiders.

Communication and how to raise the alarm were both a big parts of the evacuation procedure discussion. As well as ensuring everyone knew the location of the muster point. Following some discussion, we even decided to move the muster point to a more suitable place.

When it came to emergency procedures, we decided an early action would always be to call emergency services via 000.

While the emergency procedures will be different depending on the emergency, it has been great to get everyone thinking and talking about what they might do in a variety of emergencies and to know what the expectations are of business owners.

Thankfully, we haven't had to test the emergency plan, but we have run an around-the-table scenario and discussed the various roles and actions required and identified and filled the gaps in the plan.

Finally, we identified what extra training was required and by whom, for us, that included first aid training for key staff and snake handling training.

We will review our plan annually, after our desktop emergency drill, as well as after any incident.

I like to think we are now a little more prepared for an emergency, but hope we never have it tested.

### References:

- [www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-04/Emergency%20plan%20template.docx](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-04/Emergency%20plan%20template.docx)
- [madedc.edu.au/emergency-preparedness/](http://madedc.edu.au/emergency-preparedness/)
- [farmsafe.org.au/emergency-preparedness](http://farmsafe.org.au/emergency-preparedness)

July 2024



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# Australian Wool Innovation update

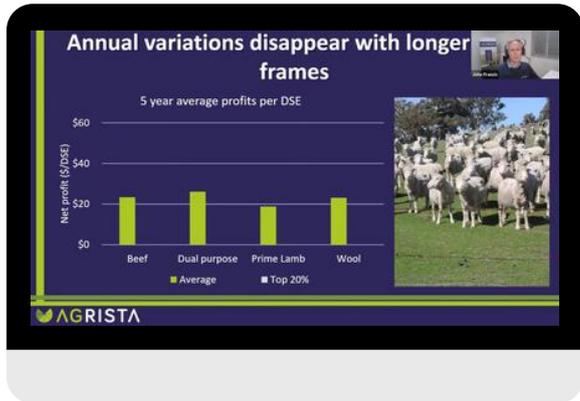
Tennille Norrish, Industry Relations Officer WA, AWI



Following is a selection of key news and information from Australian Wool Innovation (AWI).

## 'Why Stay in Wool' Webinar Recording

Catch up on the webinar: 'Why stay in wool sheep?' presented by John Francis. The webinar discussed the detail of John's analysis of the profitability of wool-growing enterprises, 'Why stay in wool sheep?'.  
Visit: [www.wool.com/news-events/news/recording-why-stay-in-wool-sheep/](http://www.wool.com/news-events/news/recording-why-stay-in-wool-sheep/)



## AWI's Wear Wool Not Waste campaign viewed more than 40 million times in first three weeks of campaign



AWI's powerful Wear Wool, Not Waste campaign has been viewed more than 40 million times since its launch on September 23. The eye-catching campaign, released by AWI's subsidiary The Woolmark Company, follows the successful Wear Wool, Not Fossil Fuel campaign, this time framing the fibre as a transformational solution to fashion's environmental challenges.

Watch the video here: [www.wool.com/news-events/news/awis-wear-wool-not-waste-campaign-viewed-more-than-40-million-times-in-first-three-weeks-of-campaign/](http://www.wool.com/news-events/news/awis-wear-wool-not-waste-campaign-viewed-more-than-40-million-times-in-first-three-weeks-of-campaign/)



## Commonwealth Government throws support behind groundbreaking AWI's Woolmark+ insetting program

AWI welcomes a \$4 million grant from the Australian Government to kickstart its ground-breaking Australian Wool Industry Insetting Program as part of the recently unveiled Woolmark+ roadmap.

The program will connect fashion and textile brands with Australian woolgrowers looking to reduce emissions through nature-based solutions, with AWI and its subsidiary, Woolmark, spearheading the industry's move towards nature positive outcomes.

This industry-first initiative will develop and trial an insetting framework, aimed at enabling emissions reductions within the textile supply chain.

AWI is inviting Australian woolgrowers, along with global fashion and textile brands, to collaborate in achieving GHG reductions. Interested woolgrowers are invited to contact us at [woolmarkplus@wool.com](mailto:woolmarkplus@wool.com) to get involved or for more information. Full story here: [www.wool.com/news-events/news/commonwealth-government-supports-awis-groundbreaking-woolmarkplus-insetting-program/](http://www.wool.com/news-events/news/commonwealth-government-supports-awis-groundbreaking-woolmarkplus-insetting-program/)



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# WASIA Update: Fasting of sheep for shearing

Valerie Pretzel, WA Shearing Industry Association



Fasting sheep before shearing is a standard practice in the Australian wool industry, involving withholding food and water from the flock for a period of time prior to shearing. This is for the benefit of the animal, the shearer and quality of the wool clip. Opinions often differ on the length of time for fasting, and this will vary according to conditions, and this is often a source of conflict between shearing teams and the wool grower. Research has shown that it has considerable advantages for sheep and shearers.

## Why Fasting is Important

If the sheep's stomach is full, it can significantly increase the weight of the animal, adding to the downward pressure on the organs as it is being shorn, making the sheep feel uneasy and stressed. As a result of their discomfort they will kick and struggle more. Fasting ensures that the sheep are lighter and more comfortable, which makes them easier to handle and less prone to stress or injury. There is also less chance of the animal slipping when it stands up after being shorn, if they are less likely to urinate and defecate - better and safer for the shearer as well.

Additionally, fasting can help prevent contamination of the wool which negatively affects wool quality. A period of fasting reduces the contamination on the shearing floor and in the pens, helps reduce pen stain and reduces the chance of wool contamination by allowing the sheep to eliminate any leftover feed or waste material.

## How Long Should Sheep Be Fasted?

The fasting period needs to be long enough for sheep to urinate, defecate and clear their digestive tracts before entering the shed yards. The minimal fasting periods ensure that the stomach is emptied, while the maximum periods protect the sheep's wellbeing. Remembering that if all sheep are confined at once, the last sheep to be shorn will have fasted for a longer period of time than the first.

Sheep should be held in yards or a genuinely bare holding paddock (pasture cover no greater than 600 kg DM/ha when measured with an electronic pasture probe, or no more than 10 mm in height if measured manually) before being put in the shearing shed.

ASHEEP & BEEF worked with the WA Shearing Industry Association and the local Esperance shearing contractors to develop this set of recommendations and guidelines to help this process and improve the relationship for everyone involved in the wool harvesting operation.

## A recommendation of 18 hours minimum and 30 hours maximum off feed means that:

- The time from when sheep are mobbed up during mustering to when the first sheep in that mob is shorn should be no less than 18 hours
- The time from when sheep are mobbed up during mustering to when the last sheep in that mob is shorn should be no more than 30 hours.

Table 1 on the following page is taken from the NZ "Fasting of sheep prior to shearing guide" which is widely referred to.

## Key points:

- The key is good communication between the grower and the shearing team, have the conversation up front with your contractor or classer about curfew times.
- WASIA recommends a good rule of thumb is to bring stock in between 9am and 12pm the day prior to curfew.
- Think about the class of the animal and how long you should be having them on curfew.
- Consider the management of mobs in terms of distance to the shed and their pregnancy status.

Fasting sheep before shearing is an important practice in wool harvesting that helps improve animal safety, ease of handling, shearer health and safety and wool quality. By fasting sheep for a controlled period, wool growers can ensure a smoother, more efficient shearing process with happier shearing teams and less stressed animals. When managed correctly, fasting contributes to the overall success of the shearing operation.

*Continued over page.*

Recommended webinar - "AWI Webinar Preparing for shearing" with WASIA President, Darren Spencer and Dr Michylla Seal, Genstock Vet - <https://vimeo.com/1018253123?share=copy> or follow the QR code to the right.



As a group member of WASIA, ASHEEP & BEEF members are welcome to contact WASIA at any time on 0412 227 252 or at [admin@wasia.com.au](mailto:admin@wasia.com.au)

TABLE 1

The recommendations for emptying out sheep prior to shearing are summarised in Table 1 below. It should be noted that they refer to the minimum and maximum periods of time without feed and water prior to shearing for any individual sheep.

RECOMMENDED MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM NUMBER OF HOURS WITHOUT FEED AND WATER PRIOR TO SHEARING					
	Minimum number of hours without feed	Maximum number of hours without feed	Minimum number of hours without water	Maximum number of hours without water	Special considerations
<b>Ewes (and adult male sheep)</b>					
Non-pregnant, non-lactating	20	32	12	24	Exceeding these maximums may induce metabolic problems and/or precipitate clinical diseases.
Early - mid pregnancy	18	30	12	24	
Late pregnancy and lactation	12	24	8	20	Exceeding these maximums may induce metabolic problems and/or precipitate clinical diseases. Where practical, unweaned lambs should remain with their mothers until ewes enter the woolshed.
<b>Hoggets</b>					
Non-pregnant, non-lactating	18	30	12	24	Use special care when handling pregnant hoggets. Exceeding these maximums may induce metabolic problems and/or precipitate clinical diseases. Where practical, unweaned lambs should remain with their mothers until hoggets enter the woolshed.
Pregnancy and lactation	12	24	8	20	
<b>Lambs</b>					
Pre-weaning	6	24	6	20	Exceeding these maximums may precipitate clinical diseases.
Weaned	12	24	8	20	

Table 1: Summary of recommendations for emptying out sheep prior to shearing

## New Resource: Optimising establishment and utilisation of saltbush-based forage systems

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP & BEEF

A new guide has been published aiming to help inform producers of the potential benefits of different types of saltbush in southern Australia, and how best to get them working for you. The work is a collaboration between CSIRO, DPIRD and Chatfields Tree Nursery, with support from MLA and AWI.

The guide covers understanding whether saltbush is suited to your farm / production system, what the benefits could be, seeding and area design, understory choices, optimising grazing, and more. It references the following common types:

- Old man saltbush
- Anameka
- River saltbush
- Creeping or berry saltbush
- Mallee saltbush
- Small-leaved bluebush



ASHEEP & BEEF has hard copies of the guide and you can access it online by searching for the title or following the QR Code above.







### Optimising establishment and utilisation of saltbush-based forage systems

Dr Hayley Norman, Matt Wilmot (CSIRO), Dr Ed Barrett-Lennard (Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development), and Dustin and Lisa McCreery (Chatfields Tree Nursery)





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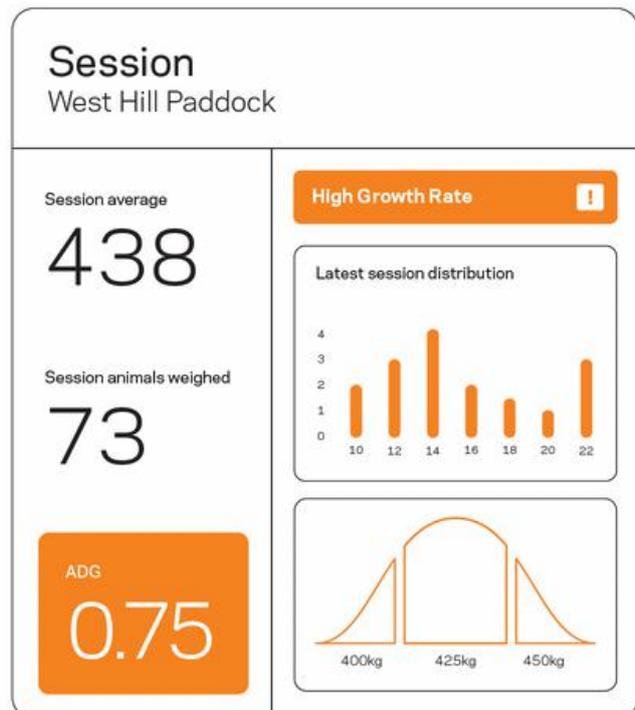
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# Savouring the benefit of saving on supplementary feeding with saltbush

*Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development*

New generation saltbush has proved to be a viable option to help reduce supplementary feed costs, while revitalising poor land and improving carbon sequestration credentials.

The trial at the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development's (DPIRD's) Katanning Research Station produced sufficient feed in just six months to reduce autumn supplementary feeding by up to 30 per cent.

DPIRD senior research scientist John Paul Collins said the saltbush performed well and helped fill the autumn feed gap, despite the protracted dry seasonal conditions of 2023-24.

"A 70 hectare moderately saline site was planted with Anameka saltbush seedlings in early-mid September 2023 and grazed six months later," he said. "The site was sown at about 600 plants per hectare in twin rows, three metres apart at a spacing of two and a half metres, with an inter-row width of 10 metres. The saltbush flourished on the site, tapping into the water table to grow to a height of about 0.5 metres at an 80-90 per cent survival rate, despite no further rainfall being received after it was planted."

Another 15 hectare salt-affected site at the station was direct-seeded to Old Man and River saltbush at a rate of 200 grams per kilometre in early September, at the same time as the saltbush seedlings were planted. The saltbush performed well in the dry conditions and produced 0.5-1 tonnes of edible dry matter per hectare in six months. The saltbush was fenced into paddocks of 10-20ha and rotationally grazed for six weeks during April to May with the station's Merino weaners, until there was 10-20 per cent leaf material remaining.

"The saltbush provided about 30 per cent of the flock's daily feed intake, partially replacing the cost of the pellets that would otherwise be required," Mr Collins said. "Saltbush is also high in protein and vitamin E, providing additional nutritional benefits. The saltbush also enabled the department to defer grazing pasture paddocks to aid establishment, while also preserving ground cover."

Several of the saltbush paddocks were recently undersown with tall wheatgrass and messina, which have germinated well, to provide additional out of season feed. One of the paddocks was sown to barley to be used as standing fodder to complement the saltbush at the next grazing opportunity.

"While the saltbush seedling option requires a significant initial financial commitment, these paddocks will be able to be grazed and save on supplementary feeding costs for the next 20 years," Mr Collins said.

"It has also been a great investment in the future of the site."

More information about the trial is available in the June edition of the Ovine Observer newsletter, found via the department's website [www.agric.wa.gov.au](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au).



*Image: DPIRD research scientists Umair Khan (left) and John Paul Collins, with development officer Darren De Vos in a paddock of nine month old Anameka saltbush in July 2024 at the Katanning Research Station.*

## Is your livestock ready for eID?



*Michael Britton, Project Manager, Animal Biosecurity and Welfare, DPIRD*

Starting 1 January 2025, Western Australia will begin phasing in an electronic identification (eID) system for sheep and goats. This initiative is designed to improve whole of life livestock traceability, bolstering the state's ability to mitigate emergency disease and food safety incidents as quickly as possible.

Emergency animal diseases can spread very quickly through the movement of animals between properties and through the supply chain. In today's interconnected markets, the risk of these diseases remains high. Robust traceability systems provide the mechanism to quickly determine the potential spread and scale of an outbreak in Australia, enabling deployment of resources to at risk areas and minimising the impact to the livestock industry.

To address this risk, all Australian Agriculture Ministers have committed to a National Plan to implement eID for sheep and goats by 2025. In Western Australia a \$25.6 million government investment has been allocated to support producers and industry operators in adopting the eID system across the state.

This funding has gone toward providing a 75-cent subsidy, at the point of sale, on eID year-of-birth coloured NLIS tags. To date, over 4 million tags have been subsidised under the Tag Incentive Payment (TIP) scheme. Black eIDs will continue to receive the subsidy until 31 December 2024 with white eIDs receiving the subsidy from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025.

Additionally, around \$3.52M in grants have been provided to downstream operators (such as saleyards, processors, feedlots, and export depots) as well as grower group alliances and Community Resource Centres toward the purchase and installation of eID equipment.

### What is eID and How Does It Work?

eID tags are microchip-enabled devices that provide unique identification for each animal. These tags allow for electronic recording of an animal's journey from birth to processing, offering a faster and more accurate method of tracing sheep and goat movements.

This enhanced traceability strengthens biosecurity measures, enabling quicker responses to disease outbreaks and helping the resumption of trade.

### Beyond Biosecurity: The Benefits for Producers

In addition to biosecurity advantages, eID tagging offers producers valuable data to optimize their operations. With insights into individual growth rates, weight records, and carcass feedback, producers can:

- Meet market requirements more effectively.
- Improve livestock genetics.
- Enhance meat quality through informed management decisions.

### Collaborative Effort for a Smooth Transition

Implementing eID on this scale requires cooperation across the supply chain, including farmers, processors, technology providers, and policymakers. Regulations that will enable the mandating of eID in sheep and goats will come into effect on 1 January 2025.

### Key dates

Any sheep and goats that you own and were born prior to 1 January 2025 will only require an eID unless they depart your property after 1 July 2026. All sheep or goats born from 1 January 2025 onward will require an eID. eIDs are species specific and you'll need to ensure you're purchasing an NLIS-accredited eID. A list of accredited eIDs can be found at Integrity Systems Company's website.

For downstream operators, saleyards and abattoirs will start scanning any sheep or goats with eIDs from 1 July 2025 (while continuing to process visual tags until 1 July 2026).

From 1 July 2026, all sheep and goats will require an eID prior to departing a property and will need to be scanned upon arrival at any property or facility. Visual tags, for the purposes of movement, will no longer be valid from this date.

To support this effort, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) will continue its education and engagement programs to ensure all stakeholders are equipped to maximize the benefits of eID tagging.

For more details and the latest updates, visit [agric.wa.gov.au](http://agric.wa.gov.au) and search for "eID."

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## e-News Spotlight



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 Scroll to the bottom of the webpage.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- AgriFutures evokeAG**, 18-19 Feb, Brisbane
- Not-for-Profit Governance Training**, 26 Feb (Esp), 27 Feb (Ravy)
- ASHEEP & BEEF Summer Field Day**, 27 Feb, Esperance region
- Talkin' Soil Health Conference** - 13 Mar, York
- Understanding Carbon Emissions on Your Farm** (ASHEEP & BEEF workshop delivered by Richard Brake), 19 Mar, Esperance
- WALFA Better Beef**, 20-21 Mar, Bunbury
- ASHEEP & BEEF AGM / Conference**, 19 Jun, Esperance
- LIVEXchange Conference** - 26-27 Nov, Perth

## • FEBRUARY •

**Next ASHEEP & BEEF Committee Meeting is scheduled for FEBRUARY 2025**

Contact a committee or staff member to raise an item.

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