MAY 2023 | ISSUE #69

ASHEEP NEWS

asheep Esperance

Cattle Field Day Wrap Up

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

ASHEEP's annual Cattle Field Day on 25th May 2023 saw around 60 people take part, kicking things off with a visit to John Sharpe's farm on South Coast Highway just north-west of Esperance. This property is currently being leased by Peter & Claire Hough, who farm approximately 2430ha mixed farming (cattle / crop) across two properties. Their second property is located in Coomalbidgup.

The Houghs met us along with John to go through the rotational grazing system that was originally set up by John 14 years ago. Peter and Claire now work the system, using the farm to run cattle. They calve in winter on this farm and when we visited were in the process of rotating their steers and heifers through the regenerating pastures (kikuyu, clover, serradella, ryegrass). The rotational system includes 12 paddocks of around 20ha each (6 for heifers, 6 for steers). Peter explained that he aims for a 30-day rotation where stock are left in each paddock for 3-5 days depending on seasonal conditions and plant damage. There were two mobs in the system when we visited, one of 260 steers and a second of 240 heifers. The heifers are set at about 10 head p/ha and the steers are stocked slightly higher than that this year because of numbers. Peter advised that in 2022 the cattle were run in the system from mid-April to December and put on an average of 1.4kg p/head p/day. The aim is to turn off steers finished at 480kg plus. Heifers are sold as future breeders or if culled sent to Coles or other markets.

Continued over page.

Image: "Wild West Wagu" calves produced via embryo transfer. ASHEEP Cattle Field Day 25/5/23.

Highlights

The image above shows the Hough's cattle grazing, noting that straw was put out to bring the cattle closer for the field day, but it is not being fed otherwise. Peter has been thinking about making silage and feeding it out over Autumn to keep the growth curve of the cattle going.

Management of the pasture includes keeping ground cover over summer. They applied 100kg of super phosphate at the beginning of May. The kikuyu has become more dominant over the last couple of years but slows down over winter when the other pastures in the mix pick up. They don't undertake weed control. John noted that it generally works out that each paddock is grazed for about 60 days total during the year. Even in drier years John found that he was able to finish the cattle at the same time each year.

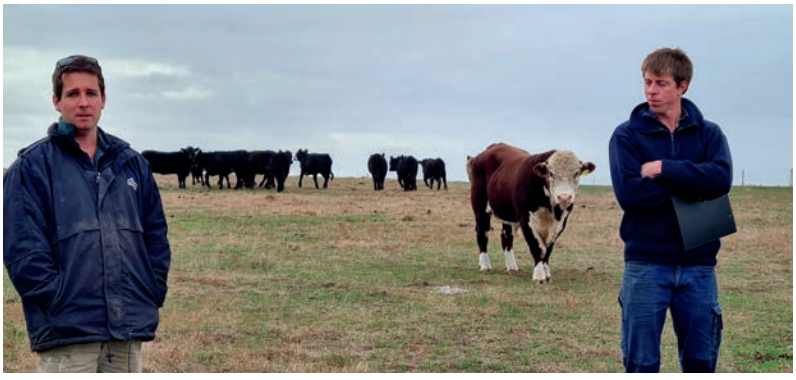
Both the Houghs and John have found the rotational system to be a good tool, giving them market flexibility. Peter & Claire were asked if having now used the system at John's they would consider developing a similar system on their home block. It's something they have thought about, but no decisions yet.

We then heard from Gerald Wetherall (Livestock Manager, Westcoast Wool & Livestock), who took us through a cattle market update, followed by Theo Oorschot (Esperance Rural Supplies) who covered growing more grass in a drier season (see page 17).

Top Left: Rotational grazing system. Top Right: Peter Hough, Claire Hough, John Sharpe. Above Right: Gerald Wetherall giving a market update. Images above right courtesy of Dorothy Henderson.

The field day bus was then loaded up and we headed west to Munglinup to meet Matt Bell, who farms with Paul, Anne and Kelly Bell. The Bells run a 900 cow mixed-breed commercial cattle herd at Munglinup and Jerdacuttup. Combined it is about 2500ha, with the enterprise split 70:30 cattle to cropping (canola and barley). They aim to produce crossbred calves for the feedlot market.

The herd is mostly mixed breed (Hereford, Simmental, Angus), and is crossed with purebred Hereford and Angus bulls. Matt explained that they aim to take advantage of the hybrid vigour observed by crossing breeds and running mixed breed cows, to turn off Beefmaker (Hereford/Simmental) and Baldy (Hereford/Angus) calves weighing 350-450kgs in a 9-11 month timeframe. The dominance of Angus cattle in the market is on Matt's mind, and he has weighed up moving in that direction, but at this stage they are reluctant to completely depart to a straight Angus herd when hybrid vigour has been playing in their favour. When it comes to the breeds in their mix, they are leaning more toward Hereford rather than Simmental at the moment. An interesting point raised by Matt was that they have been largely successful in selectively breeding out cancer eye conditions, with very few cases now arising in the herd. Pastures were another feature of the stop, with the Bells having established a good mix of clovers, serradella, ryegrass and other varieties. We got a good look at the cattle, particularly when one of the bulls decided to line up Cattle Committee Chair Ryan Willing (pictured with Matt Bell, left). It made for a good photo, but the bull was decidedly easy-natured as John Mitchell (Esperance Livestock Transport) low-stress-stock-handled him back to the herd.



Next up we heard from Sophie Willsher (South Coast Natural Resource Management) who spoke on drought resilience and future project opportunities that will become available through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund. Our thanks to South Coast NRM, who were able to utilise this fund to support the Cattle Field Day with a grant.

From there it was back to the Bells' shed, where Graeme Mulligan (Gallagher) addressed the group on the imminent roll-out of virtual fencing technology for cattle. Their eShepherd system is due to hit shelves later this year and producers can express interest by contacting Graeme on 0400 676 793. We were shown a range of product demonstration videos that left growers in the room keen to see more. ASHEEP's Cattle Committee has been staying in regular contact with Gallagher to keep updated.

Top: John Mitchell with Bells' bull.
Above Right: Sophie Willsher.
Images by Dorothy Henderson.

John Mitchell (Esperance Livestock Transport) then took the floor and discussed the importance of load preparation of cattle to ensure good transportation. This included that in the day or two prior to transport cattle be transitioned to hay. He reported that through his own observation and feedback from feedlotters, cattle fed hay did better in transport and on arrival than those straight off green feed or grain, as they burn through all the quickly metabolizable feed in their gut and are left low on energy in the journey. Hay is also beneficial prior to transport when feed quality in the paddock is low. John also spoke about the eNVD app which he said has challenges from a truck driver's perspective because they need to load the app onto their personal phone. John saw the opportunity for buyer and seller to connect digitally via the app, but from his view it is safer and simpler for the truck driver not to use the app. He said that Integrity Systems do say it is optional to involve the truck driver in the App.

Murray Green (Gallagher) then shared information on electric exclusion fencing options. A warm welcome went to Gallagher who have recently joined ASHEEP as Gold Sponsors.

Next it was on the bus and further up Springdale Road to "Wild West Wagyu", where Dr Matt Carrick (Bos Vet & Rural) and Dr Enoch Bergman (Swans Veterinary Services) were using their veterinary skills for their own farming enterprise - a Wagyu cattle stud breeding through embryo transfer into Angus cattle. They demonstrated the embryo transfer process and we were able to take a look at their latest batch of Wagyu calves (pictured on the cover).

Enoch then took the group aside to update producers on ASHEEP's four new Meat & Livestock Australia Producer Demonstration Site projects (CN30, bull breakdown, BVDV, and optimising age of weaning cattle). Ben Fletcher from Zoetis gave background on vaccine options for bull breakdown and BVDV, a big thanks to Zoetis for making free vaccine available for project participants.

Top Left: Graeme Mulligan speaking on virtual fencing.
Left: Dr Matt Carrick demonstrating embryo transfer, pictured with students from Wongutha Caps who joined the field day.

Finally, it was back to Wes & Fran Graham's, where they had built up a ripper bonfire and CWA were set up with their van handing out burgers and salad. A big thanks to V&V Walsh for donating the burger patties, they made for a great meal washed down with a beer.

We had one last discussion with a group of vets who are running a project trialling placing eID chips into cows' ears, with potential for this system to be used in place of ear tags, which can be lost.

It is due to a great group of sponsors, farm hosts, and volunteers that days like this come together, we can't thank you all enough.

Right: Enoch Bergman and Ben Fletcher discuss ASHEEP MLA PDS Projects. Top image courtesy of Dorothy Henderson. Below: Bonfire at Wes & Fran Graham's.

Autumn Field Day: Lucerne Follow Up

The Autumn Field Day held on 30th March 2023 was covered in an article in the last edition of the ASHEEP newsletter. It kicked off with a visit to Condowie Park on Cascade Rd. Here, Tihan Gilliomee showed us a paddock of Q31 Lucerne that was sown 05/09/20 at 5kg/Ha with 10kg/ha of AL Alosca. It had been established with a clearfield canola (44Y94). The aim was to have a pasture that was capable of using all the excess moisture (in sand-over-gravel soils), keeping the water table down, and preventing the soil from going acidic. Q31 Lucerne was selected as a summer-dominant variety producing high protein pastures throughout summer until early winter. Some of the farm's ewes drop crossbred lambs in February/March and by having access to this green feed Tihan aimed to have them ready for market in late July/early August.

Tihan's plan at the time of the field day was to continue grazing the lucerne, before cleaning it with a Paraquat or a selective chemical, and then in late May/early June use a disc seeder to put in a shorter season wheat crop in between the lucerne. Speaking with Tihan recently, very dry seasonal conditions have since put a hold on these plans. They have needed to retain the lucerne for grazing longer than planned, as their vetch pastures have not had the moisture required to get away. The same mob of ewes has been kept in the paddock, with Tihan noting that the lucerne has been a lifeline in dry conditions. At this stage they may not put the wheat crop in this year unless the rainfall improves.

The Autumn Field Day also took us to Feed365 Demonstration Sites in Gibson and Dalyup. See page 32 for an update on those sites.

Image: Lucerne at Condowie Park 30/3/23.

The Economics of it Just Won't Work – and it'll be Terrible for the Environment: Australia's leading expert on cell-based meat speaks out on latest study

Meat & Livestock Australia

A fresh study on the environmental impacts of lab-grown meat has led an internationally recognised expert on the future of cell-based protein, Professor Paul Wood, AO, to confirm the economics of producing lab-grown meat at scale "just won't work" and will be less sustainable than traditional red meat production systems.

The new study from the University of California, Davis, argues the global warming potential of cell-based meat production could be up to 25 times greater than the average for retail beef. (*Study Reference: www.ucdavis.edu/food/news/lab-grown-meat-carbon-footprint-worse-beef*)

"It might not be quite 25 times worse for the environment – but there are now multiple studies which have concluded that producing cell-based protein in a lab will be far more energy intensive when it's produced at scale," Prof Wood said. "In addition to these concerns, there is a distinct lack of nutritional data from the cell-based protein industry – and that's not good. There are a lot of big claims, but no data whatsoever to back them up," he said.

The Monash University professor, who has led major research teams in Australia and the US, has just had his own peer-reviewed paper on the future of cell-based meat published in the world-renowned journal Animal Frontiers: Cellular agriculture: current gaps between facts and claims regarding cell-based meat. The paper discusses the millions of dollars being invested in cellular agriculture, including cell-based meat and precision fermentation, and notes the significant technical, ethical, regulatory and commercial challenges around the products becoming commercially available – or viable.

"The labs and factories required to produce cell-based protein at scale will have enormous energy requirements and their annual running costs will be huge, so seeing them compete with traditional livestock production environmentally or with price parity is very unlikely," Prof Wood said. "They will also not match a fine steak, they are producing commodity products like burgers, meatballs and sausages. Put simply, it just won't be sustainable in terms of energy consumption and the idea that it will transform the meat industry is ridiculous," he said. "And these are just some of the reasons investors and potential investors in the industry are walking away."

Prof Wood is among several Australian scientists to have had their work published in a special edition of Animal Frontiers – the official journal of four professional animal science societies including the American Society of Animal Science, the Canadian Society of Animal Science, the European Federation of Animal Science, and the American Meat Science Association. Dr Rod Polkinghorne, OAM, a leading innovator in the global red meat industry, and Professor Neil Mann, a human nutrition expert with more than 30 years of clinical trial expertise, have also had their work published in the journal. The Animal Frontiers papers formed the basis for discussion at a Dublin-based event held last year, the International Summit on the Societal Role of Meat, and for a Sydney-based event in March, The Good Meat Summit, hosted by AMPC and MLA.

Keep the Wool Clip Clean

Recent media reports indicate that China has concerns about foreign materials contaminating bales of wool from Australia. This can cause significant issues during processing. It's a reminder to keep the shed and catching pens clean, store loose items away from wool handling areas, put out rubbish bins, don't eat or smoke in wool handling areas, don't let dogs camp around wool. Contaminants could include combs and cutters, screwdrivers, bale fasteners, bale hooks, small tools, drink cans, dog hair, clothing, towels and grease rags. Any polypropylene products – baling twine, old wool packs and fertiliser bags – are a particular problem. When wool is processed, the fibres will break up into many single fibres that spread throughout the processing batch. These fibres can only be removed by hand picking in the fabric stage at great cost to the manufacturer. The entire wool batch being processed – up to 10,000 kg – can be affected by one small piece of baling twine.

Image: Black polypropylene (Bailing Twine) fibre in a fabric. Source: "The Four Pillars of Wool Handling", AWI & Woolmark.

Non-Mulesing Systems Meeting

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

Above: Ed Riggall and Liv Walter discuss the Walters' transition to non mulesing.

20th April 2023 saw a group of producers involved in the Supporting Shifts to Non-Mulesing Systems project (a Meat & Livestock Australia Producer Demonstration Site) head out to visit Mark & Liv Walter's in Cascade and meet up with facilitator Ed Riggall, AgPro Management (0428 299 007).

This WA-wide project brings together producers at different stages of the non-mulesing journey - interested but not transitioned, in the process of transitioning, or who have already made the move. Meetings are held around WA as an opportunity for farmers to get together, share learnings and hear from expert speakers. WhatsApp groups have been set up to link the network. If you are not already involved, you are welcome to join.

Mark & Liv had some of their red-tag ewe lambs in the yards and kicked things off by sharing some information about their sheep program. They are mixed cropping / sheep farmers, running 3300 mated merino ewes and about 1400 hoggets. They also bring in trade lambs when the opportunity is right in November / December (this year was a bit later). The lambs are backgrounded on stubbles and brought into a feedlot when the stubbles run out.

We were able to have a look through the Walters' feedlot, where lambs were being fed a mix of silage, oats, lupins and barley via fixed troughs running along the fence, as well as bales of straw (one 400kg bale per 100 lambs per week).

The Walters' decision to change to a non-mulsed flock was made many years ago and they started off by getting their genetics right. They source their rams from Penrose Poll Merino and Westwood Poll Merino - two local studs that run non-mulseing systems. When the Walters felt the flock was ready, they ceased mulesing and this is the first year that they have lambed from non-mulesed ewes.

Liv advised that they believe that when they first stopped mulesing their tail-dock was too short. Since then, they have adjusted the dock so that the tail just covers the tip of the vulva and the equivalent for males (see image above), this is between the 3rd and 4th palpable joint. Fly strike has not been much of an issue, but there were a few dramas this year with hoggets that were daggy.

A feedlot pen set up with a portable feed trough sourced from Valton Feeding Solutions.

The Walters shear at 8-month intervals and said that they had previously been able to get away without crutching and jetting, but after going non-mulesing they have needed to be onto that. Ed Riggall reiterated the importance of taking care to reduce the risk of fly chemical resistance by setting up an appropriate plan for chemical applications and rotations.

We wrapped things up with a visit to a paddock of vetch and brassica that ASHEEP is following as part of our Pasture Variety Trials Project, a Meat & Livestock Australia Producer Demonstration Site. ASHEEP has 3 sites in 2023 at Mark & Liv's looking at vetch on commercial scale. Site 1=Vetch, Site 2=Vetch/Brassica, Site 3=Vetch/Oats.

The images on the following page show a paddock of RM4 Vetch @20kg p/ha with Leafmore Brassica @2kg p/ha*, sown 24/3/23, shown with self-sown barley that was due to be grazed then sprayed out. *Note: Mark & Liv Walter's original intent was to sow Leafmore Brassica at 2kg, but actual seeding rate was likely 3kg due to seeder calibration.

The project involves taking pasture cuts and nutritive analysis from grazing cages. Analysis and collection of results is being undertaken by South Coastal Agencies. There are also sites on other farms in the Esperance region in different rainfall zones following other varieties including serradellas, ryegrass, lucerne and more.

Continued from previous page.

Esperance Working Dog School

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

ASHEEP is coordinating a Working Dog School with well-respected trainer and dog trialer Neil Kristiansen for the weekend of **22nd & 23rd July 2023**. There are 12 places available in the school and we have 6 remaining for person + dog/s. The cost is $400+GST for the two-day course. You will need to bring your dog, lead, notepad, camp chair, water, and a muzzle if your dog is likely to nip. The location will be at a farm out of Esperance and the training will take place with sheep. Observers can attend without a dog for $75+GST per day. Email Sarah Brown at eo@asheep.org.au to register. If you have questions about how the school will be run contact ASHEEP Committee Member Scott Welke on 0427 792 044. This is a great chance to get a young dog started or to refine the skills of your existing team.

Cattle Immune Ready Guidelines & Declaration

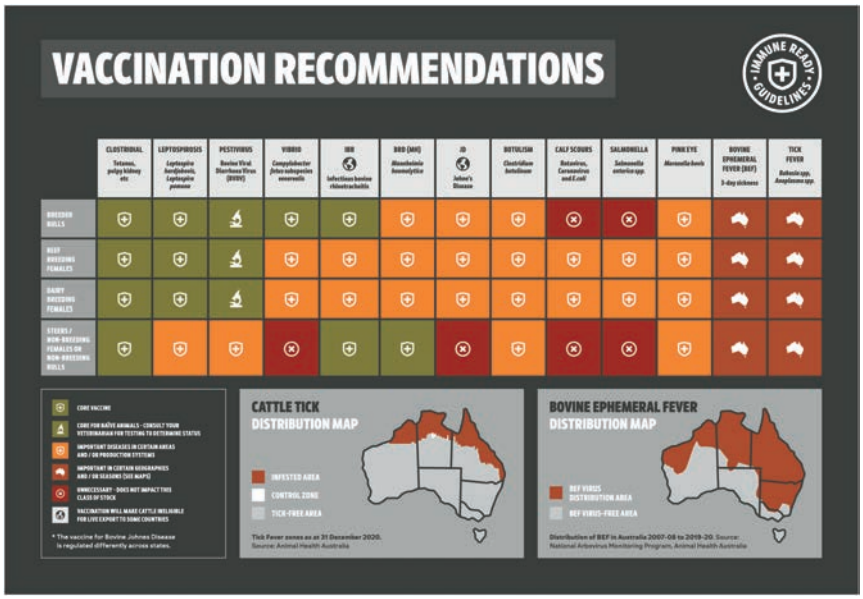
Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

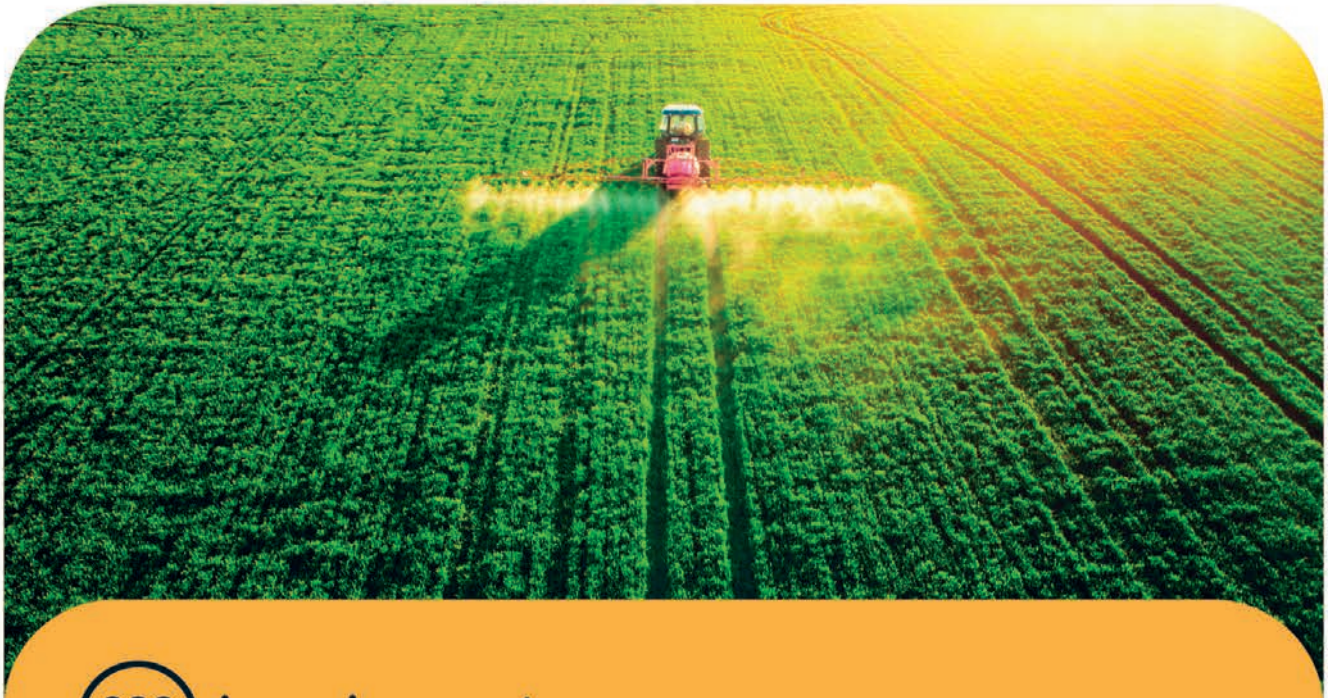
Cattle sellers and buyers have a new resource available to them to deliver a higher standard of animal health, productivity and performance when trading animals. "Immune Ready" is a system managed by Australian Cattle Veterinarians that has been endorsed by a range of industry bodies and major animal health providers. It provides guidelines that are designed to protect sale cattle during preparation, transport and arrival post sale. In simple terms, if producers vaccinate their cattle according to the guidelines, they will then be able to sell those animals under the Immune Ready logo and follow up by providing a National Cattle Health Declaration.

A buyer will be able to more easily assess the vaccination status of cattle before purchase and offset many of the inherent disease risks that come with introducing new cattle on farm.

To find out more information about this program visit www.immuneready.net.au (where you can download the handy vaccination recommendation chart shown right).

Follow up by talking to your local cattle vet, selling agent or rural reseller.





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ASHEEP Annual General Meeting & Conference

ASHEEP's Annual General Meeting will take place at 10:00AM on 22nd June 2023 at the Esperance Bay Yacht Club.

Committee Position Nominations
At the AGM, six Committee positions at the end of their two-year term will be declared vacant. These positions are currently held by Enoch Bergman, Alan Hoggart, Nicholas Ruddenklau, Josh Sullivan, David Vandenberghe, and Mark Walter.

Nomination of financial members to take on a committee position will be accepted by submission of a nomination form to Sarah Brown by email at eo@asheep.org.au by 15th June 2022. Contact Sarah to receive a copy of the form.

Motion for Name Change
As per the letter already sent to members, there will be a motion under notice for special resolution:
That the organisation's Name be changed from the "ASSOCIATION FOR SHEEP HUSBANDRY, EXCELLENCE, EVALUATION AND PRODUCTION (Inc.)" abbreviated to "A - SHEEP", to be called "ASHEEP & BEEF (Inc.)", abbreviated to "ASHEEP & BEEF".

Conference
The AGM will be followed by ASHEEP's annual conference and dinner. We look forward to hearing from a range of speakers, including David Beatty from **Meat & Livestock Australia**, **Australian Wool Innovation**, **DPIRD** Government Vet Robert Graham, Technical Services Director **Rick White** from Elanco, DPIRD State Barrier Fence manager Tim Thompson, a farmer case study with **Neil Wandel**, an ASHEEP pasture trials update from **South Coastal Agencies**, dinner speaker **David Swan**, and much more. We hope you can join us.

How You Can Support a Voice for Industry

The Livestock Collective

The Livestock Collective is a not-for-profit organisation focused on growing the public understanding and acceptance of the livestock export industry and agriculture more broadly. We provide a united voice for the entire supply chain.

Our work is critical given the current government's policy commitment to phase out live sheep exports. This has impacts for the future of Australian agriculture more broadly. If an entire agricultural industry can be phased out without scientific evidence to support the policy, it becomes an attack on the livelihoods and future of everyone involved in Australian agriculture.

Unfortunately, animal activist groups continually have a significant operating budget contributing to their lobbying and campaigning against animal farming. Their influence on the Australian community and political landscape is clear. We want to be reaching the general Australian community and the next generation to counteract this. To do so effectively requires significant investment.

We are in a critical period and require financial certainty to continue our work. We exist to ensure everyone has access to real, transparent insights into the livestock industry so that informed decisions can be made. To support us and the work we do, Businesses and Individuals can join as paid subscribers.

Your support helps us:

- Ensure supply chain voices are shared
- Protect livelihoods and communities
- Break out of the 'echo chamber'
- Unite the supply chain
- People have access to information that counteracts animal activist groups
- Develop transparent educational material
- Ensure that informed decisions can be made

In return, we offer subscribers:

- Satisfaction from supporting advocacy
- Priority invitation to vessel tours & Livestock Leaders workshops
- Merchandise packs
- 'Behind The Collective' magazine
- And more!

www.thelivestockcollective.com.au/subscribe

Free Rhinogard & Pestigard Vaccine

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

Swans Veterinary Services has free Rhinogard Vaccine available for producers in the Esperance region to use on their first season virgin bulls as part of the project we are collaborating on called "Preventing Preputial Bull Breakdown by Vaccination". Our thanks to Zoetis, one of ASHEEP's Gold Sponsors, for donating the vaccine. To pick some up please drop by Swans Veterinary Services. You can contact them on (08) 9071 5777.

If you are involved in our other project, Utilising Heifer Pre-Mating Serology to Manage Bovine Pestivirus (BVDV), you can also access a free 100ml pack of Pestigard thanks to Zoetis. In this project, Swans Vet has been sending vets out to screen for evidence of exposure to BVDV in heifers pre-joining at a significantly subsidised rate. They are then providing information back to producers to help them to understand what action to take based on the serology results. If you would like to check your heifers' BVDV status pre-joining contact Swans.

If you have questions about either of these Meat & Livestock Australia Producer Demonstration Site projects contact Dr Enoch Bergman, Swans Veterinary Services, on 0427 716 907 or at enoch@swansvet.com.

Swans Veterinary Services

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mla MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA

Producer Demonstration Site

Clarke & Stokes Agriservices

Transitioning to Individual Electronic Identification of Sheep and Goats

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Protect Grow Innovate

DPIRD Flyer

The **Tag Incentive Payment (TIP) scheme provides discounted electronic identification tags** for producers of sheep and goats in Western Australia. While the scheme is operating, fully accredited sky blue tags for 2023 will receive a 75 cent discount per tag via participating manufacturers. Ask at your usual retailer.
By incentivising early adoption of eID tags, the goal is to:

- Help reduce some of the cost impact of the transition to eID tags.
- Maximise the number of sheep and goats in WA with eID tags.
- Enable downstream operators to test eID scanning equipment.

Background
Australian Agriculture Ministers have agreed to move toward national implementation of mandatory individual electronic identification of sheep and goats by 1 January 2025.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development will be coordinating this process in WA.
As we move towards mandatory eID, livestock owners must continue to meet all requirements of the National Livestock Identification System which are required by law.

WA rollout

For more information about eID tags in WA scan the code or go to:
agric.wa.gov.au/eid-sheep-and-goats

Reference: www.agric.wa.gov.au/livestock-movement-identification/electronic-identification-sheep-and-goats

Fully accredited tags with discount

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Importance of Hygiene at Marking

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

Reference: Meat & Livestock Australia, "A producer's guide to sheep husbandry practices", August 2022, Pg 10.

Last season there were a few reports of issues with lambs developing infections on the breach after marking. It's a good time to think about ways to improve hygiene when tail docking and mulesing to reduce infection risk. If you use a contractor, speak with them about their hygiene processes in advance and check to see how they are going when the job is underway. The following information is extracted from Meat & Livestock Australia's "A producer's guide to sheep husbandry practices".

Maximise hygiene during lamb marking to prevent infection

- Diseases such as the anaemia caused by infection with the blood borne bacteria Mycoplasma ovis can be transferred between lambs at marking through poor hygiene.
- Avoid mud and dust.
- Avoid wet and humid weather.
- Avoid methods that allow the transfer of blood between animals.
- Thoroughly wash and disinfect hands at the beginning of the day and at frequent intervals. Wash in one bucket and disinfect in another. Follow label directions for diluting antiseptic.
- Soak instruments in disinfectant at the start of the day. Clean between each animal and disinfect at frequent intervals. Soak instruments not being used in disinfectant. Follow the label directions for diluting the disinfectant and replace the solution regularly if it is contaminated with blood or dirt.
- Ensure lambs are clean, not daggy.

Welcome New Sponsors

ASHEEP is fortunate to be involved with a great group of sponsors who support and contribute to our work. We would like to extend a welcome and our thanks to several new sponsors who have recently joined.

GOLD

SILVER

Last year the ASHEEP Committee undertook a review of our sponsorship packages, which resulted in the removal of the bronze sponsorship package. We would like to thank the following past Bronze Sponsors who have sought to renew their support of ASHEEP as Silver Sponsors.

ANZ Bank | Aus Stock Transport | Barenbrug | Bedford Harbour Engineering

Clarke & Stokes Agriservices | Clearwater Motel Apartments | CSBP

Elders | Esperance Quality Grains | Farm & General | Farmanco

Swans Veterinary Service | Troy Animal Healthcare | WAMMCO International

Podcast Spot: Agrimaster & GRDC

Boots Off Log On is podcast by Agrimaster, talking all things farm business. With rapid progression within the industry, farm businesses are expected to comply with ever-changing legislation, implement HR policies and deal with legal issues. Through the podcast Agrimaster aim to impart relevant information and knowledge that will provide ease of mind and help improve the overall health of farm businesses.
Recent Episodes:
29: Boosting Your Farm's Profitability - Key Strategies Revealed with Joe Francis
28: The Challenge of Finding and Retaining Employees in Farming with John Booth

GRDC Podcast is run by Grains Research and Development Corporation. It covers a range of topics relevant to grain and pasture growers.

Recent Episodes:
Update on Herbicide Resistance in WA Weed Species
Re-Thinking Management Options for Redlegged Earth Mite
Predicting Nitrogen Loss - Better data better decisions
The Most Expensive Herbicide is the One That Doesn't Work

If you have a podcast to recommend please get in touch - eo@asheep.org.au

Animal Health Grazing Winter Pastures

Dr Scott Jackson, Swans Veterinary Services

With winter pastures at their tallest and greenest, it is easy to fall into the allusion that livestock will feed themselves and we can let nature nurture nutrition while we focus on seeding. Though most desirable pasture species (rye grass, clovers etc) contain fair amounts of carbohydrates and protein, nutritional content (metabolizable energy, protein, macrominerals, vitamins and trace elements) can vary substantially depending on the pasture species, soil, weather and season. The winter grazing season tends to coincide with the times that our cows are at peak lactation and ewes are lambing, therefore placing them at high risk of metabolic disease if we face any energy deficits or mineral imbalances.

Perhaps the most at-risk category of an energy deficit are heavily pregnant ewes. Though green grass may contain plant sugars which are converted by rumen bacteria into usable energy, they also contain lots of useless water, i.e they have a low dry matter density compared to weight and therefore ewes need to eat lots more grass to take in the same amount of energy as a lesser quantity of cereal grain. This means that ewes, with rumen capacities already reduced by often multiple energy parasite's (foetal lambs), are unable to sustain the high energy demand of late pregnancy on pasture alone. The consequence is pregnancy toxaemia which often precedes the loss of both the ewes and lambs. Supplementary feeding heavily pregnant ewes with high energy density feeds such as barley (lead up to 0.5kg/head/day), is an easy way of mitigating the risk and avoiding major losses. Prevention is better than cure! Once ewes are down from preg tox, the prognosis for recovery, even with intense treatment, is poor.

Not only can pasture vary in its energy content, but also its balance of essential macrominerals, vitamins and trace elements. We have already been seeing cases of grass tetany (hypomagnesaemia) in cattle which follows low magnesium/high potassium concentrations in young, rapidly growing and more specifically improved/cereal based pastures. Again, prevention is much better than cure, as by the time animals are seen to be recumbent/convulsing, death usually follows despite intense veterinary intervention. An effective way to supplement magnesium in cattle grazing high risk pastures (young, fertilised cereals) is to make a slurry of magnesium oxide (causmag) and pour over rolled out hay at a dose of 50g/cow/day.

Micromineral imbalances are also a risk when grazing improved pasture. Specifically, we have seen a couple of instances around Esperance (where we love to fertilise) of copper deficiency in calves grazing pastures fertilised with products containing molybdenum. Molybdenum is an antagonist of copper absorption and seems to be the more frequent cause of those ill thrifty "yellow hairy calves" rather than a primary deficiency of copper in the pasture.

Some less common, though not unheard-of winter grazing toxicities that we have seen over the years, are rape blindness in cattle grazing canola crops and prussic acid poisoning in sheep grazing young vetch (I won't go into the specifics of these diseases in this article though they do beg a mention!)

Worm control during the wet is again beyond the scope of a 400 word vet spot article, however if you have any questions regarding worms or any of the topics covered above, feel free to contact us at Swans Veterinary Services for a yarn.

Swans Veterinary Services
(08) 9071 5777

Image: Ryan Willing's cereal pasture mix at the Cattle Field Day 27/07/22.

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Options to Grow More Grass

Theo Oorschot, Esperance Rural Supplies, 0427 715166

As they say no two seasons are the same, and certainly as time marches on, growing quality feed will be one of the many challenges this year. A below average start with rainfall in some areas, is just one of these challenges. There are many options producers are utilising to maintain their stock in condition this time of year. With the cold of winter approaching, I thought this might be an opportune time to remind livestock producers about the benefits of gibberilic acid.

Gibberellic acid is made naturally in plant roots and stimulates shoot and cell elongation, promoting plant growth during spring. The application of manufactured gibberilic acid in winter aims to stimulate plant growth and therefore increase winter feed production. In the paddock we see this as an extension of both stem and leaf elongation. Gibberilins have been around for more than 50 years, particularly in horticulture. There are a number of different brands and active strengths of gibberilic acid in the marketplace.

Many years ago I conducted a number of trials with Sumitomo's ProGibb, which is 40% gibberilic acid. Best results are achieved on grasses, but I have seen responses on sub clovers, serradella's and dock!!! Best timing is in the winter when naturally pastures slow up, but when ground temperatures are above 5 C. Visually you will see a response within 7-10 days with maximum production at 3-4 weeks after application. This is then the time to graze.

Another option is applying nitrogen. CSBP have many years of trial data explaining the virtues of growing more grass with timely applications of nitrogen. Gibberilic acid plus nitrogen is like "one plus one equals three".

Co-operator	Nil	ProGibb 20g/ha	Flexi-N 52 L/ha	ProGibb 20g/ha + Flexi-N52 L/ha
Capeview, Neridup				
Ryegrass, clover, serradella	1120	1320	1520	1680
Kimbadell, Coombalbidgup				
Barley, ryegrass, serradella	760	1200	1200	1480

Trials conducted 2010. Numbers indicate dry matter production in kg/ha.

ProGibb has a nil grazing withholding period and organic certification. ProGibb is compatible with several commonly used herbicides if considering manipulating pastures at the same time. At around $11/ha, I think this is great opportunity to grow more grass in the middle of winter.

Image: Theo Oorschot (left) discussing gibberellic acid at the ASHEEP Cattle Field Day.

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ASHEEP Tour - Ravensthorpe & Katanning

ASHEEP is running a trip from Esperance to Ravensthorpe and Katanning **25th-27th July 2023**.

The first stop is at Munglinup and then on to two farms around **Ravensthorpe** in collaboration with Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiate Network (RAIN) on the 25th July. Here we'll be looking at confinement feeding, an auto feeder system, a multi-purpose shearing shed, seasonal staff housing / employment conditions, and more.

The tour then goes on to **Katanning** where we are set to visit the DPIRD research station on 26th July to look at carbon neutral planning, revegetation, pasture rejuvenation, the methane shed, feed efficiency, and DPIRD's extensive Feed365 pasture trials. During the afternoon project participants in ASHEEP's CN30 MLA PDS will be able to meet with Richard Brake to start work on their emission reduction plans, while others have the opportunity to tour the Katanning Saleyards. During the dinners we'll have two speakers join us to hear about Katanning Energy Pty Ltd (a local community renewable energy company), as well as a market and processing update from WAMMCO with Rob Davidson.

On the way back on the 27th July we'll stop by two more farms looking at a carbon project, eID, a sheep feedlot, and a cattle feedlot.

If you are not based in Esperance and want to join in for part of the trip, you are more than welcome.

Express your interest by 16th June with Jan Clawson janclawson@bigpond.com or 0407 990 497. Places are limited.

The full itinerary will be out soon via enews. This tour is connected to ASHEEP's "Carbon Neutral 2030: Getting started on farm" project, a Meat & Livestock Australia Producer Demonstration Site.

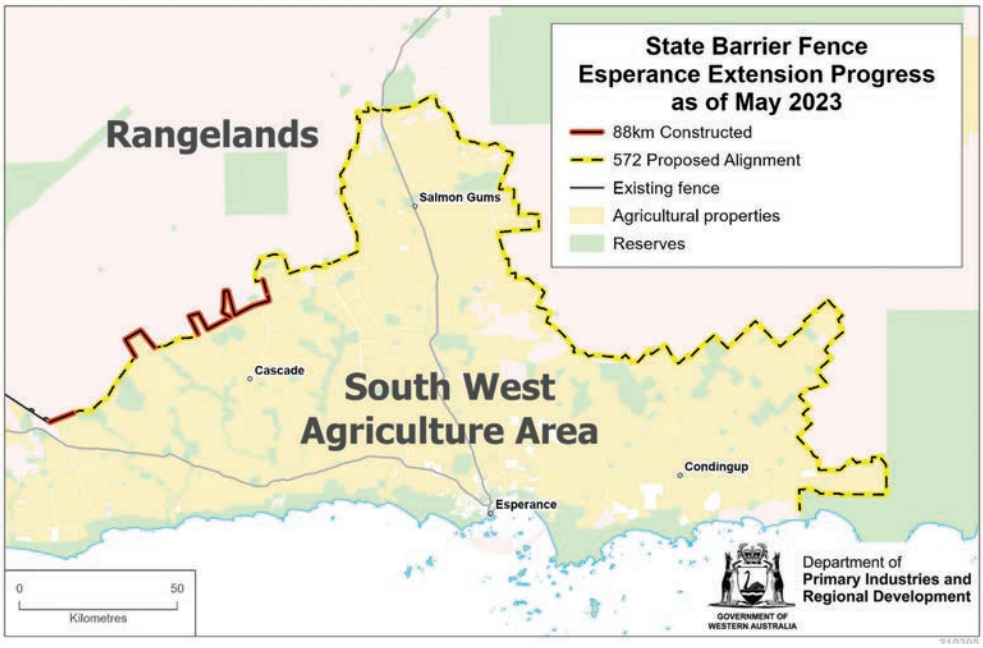
State Barrier Fence Update - Esperance Extension

Tim Thompson, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)

The Esperance extension project is progressing well. The first 300km of construction is under way, the alignment west of Salmon gums is now cleared and construction is progressing. Please see map.

The Department expects the section west of Salmon Gums to be completed in 2023 and is progressing approvals for the remaining sections.

For more information on the State Barrier Fence and Esperance extension project visit www.agric.wa.gov.au/invasive-species/state-barrier-fence-overview.



Contact for questions: Email sbf@dpird.wa.gov.au

Certificate III in Agriculture

South Regional TAFE WA. Course details: National ID: AHC30116 | State ID: BCW6

When students have completed this course they will be ready for a career in agriculture. This qualification provides a general vocational outcome in agriculture. The qualification enables individuals to select a livestock production, horticulture or livestock context as a job focus or, in the case of mixed farming enterprises, both horticulture and livestock. Students will have the skills and knowledge to perform tasks in a variety of contexts, which involve some judgement in selecting equipment and services.

FREE IN '23

This course will be **FREE from 1 January 2023**. The course fees are 100 per cent subsidised by the WA State Government. Some eligibility conditions apply for the free training, and other fees may apply for some courses. Please contact TAFE for further information.

Entrance Requirements

School Leaver	Non-School Leaver	AQF
OLNA or NAPLAN 9 Band 8	C Grades in Year 10 English and Maths or equivalent	Certificate I or Certificate II

Esperance Traineeship

Duration:	2 Semesters
When:	Available Semester 1 & Semester 2
Where:	Esperance
How:	Traineeship - Workplace

Job Opportunities

- Farm or station hand
- Farm or station worker
- Livestock transport driver

Please note this list should be used as a guide only.

Please note that this course is having some changes made to it next year that impact people enrolling in 2023, so contact Em McDonald 0409107466 or em.mcdonald@srtafe.wa.edu.au. Em can provide you with more information about the course and help you to select study units that won't be impacted by any course changes.

Esperance Biosecurity Association Update

Veronika Reck, Esperance Biosecurity Association

A bit of background: The Esperance Biosecurity Association is the Recognised Biosecurity Group (RBG) for Esperance. It received the Declared Pest Funds collected annually from landholders in the Esperance shire, that is matched by State government funding. It is governed by the Biosecurity and Agricultural Management (BAM) Act which is currently under review. This is different to the Federal Government levy that is coming in.

The EBA has been around since 2003, being formed under the Declared Species Groups and then changing to an RBG in 2017 when this model was brought in by the state government.

The focus of the EBA has remained unchanged in this time, to control Wild Dogs. The group was the main proponent for the Esperance Extension to the State Barrier Fence, lobbying State and Federal government for funding.

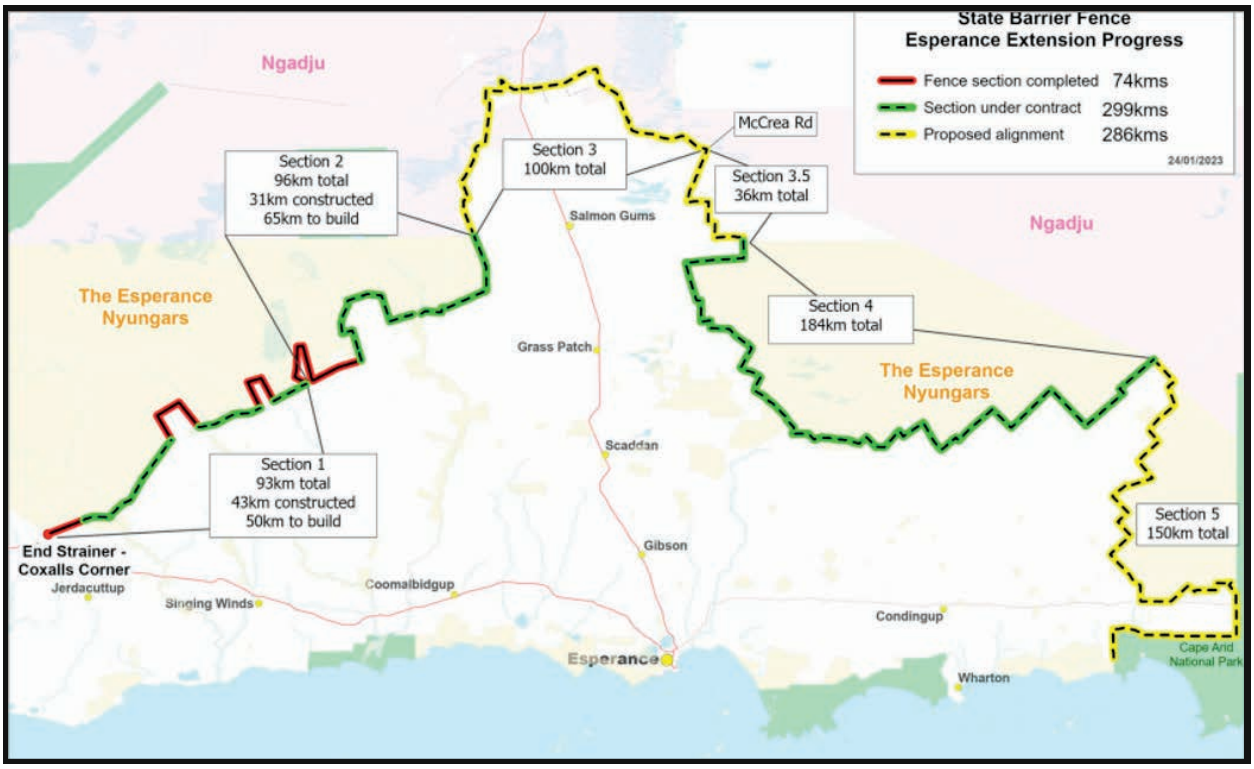
Construction of the Fence began in May 2019, however, was halted as land tenure changed and an Indigenous Land User Agreement (ILUA) had to be negotiated with the Esperance Tjaltjraak. Agreement was reached late 2021, with federal sign-off in mid-2022. Construction was due to recommence in October. Throughout this process, the EBA kept pushing DPIRD and the Minister for Agriculture to keep this project going.

To date, re-clearing of the fence reserve has been done to the north west of Grass Patch to existing Fence. Contractors are on site and fencing is happening. The EBA has spoken to Minister Jarvis recently to advocate an increase in rate of construction by constructing stages concurrently. The Minister has agreed in principle and is investigating if this can be achieved.

DPIRD has begun ILUA negotiations with the Ngadju for the area around Salmon Gums (for Section 3 of Fence).
To limit incursion of Wild Dogs into Esperance farmland, the EBA contract a Licence Pest Management Technician (LPMT – Dogger) who works primarily on "crown land" around Esperance, maintaining a buffer zone. Due to exclusive native title being held by the Ngadju in the land north of Salmon Gums, we can no longer bait and trap in this area. We are currently seeking permission from them to continue until the fence is constructed.

If you see a Wild Dog in the district, please email Veronika at eba.wilddog@outlook.com or call 0459 084 077.

As the Wild Dog control program reduces with the State Barrier Fence completion, there is the opportunity to diversify the focus of the EBA into other Declared Pests, which may include Rabbits, Foxes, and plants such as Cape Tulip, Cotton bush or Prickly Pear. We are always looking for input from landholders about programs that they wish to pursue.



ASHEEP Pasture Variety Trials: Regeneration Results & 2022 Agronomic Summary

Chad Hall & Rachel Minett, South Coastal Agencies

Background: The ASHEEP Pasture Variety Trials is a five-year Meat & Livestock Australia Producer Demonstration Site project. In 2020 and 2021 plot scale pasture demonstrations were set up at six sites, with around 15 varieties in each. Between 2022 - 2024 the project evolves to monitor commercial scale demonstration sites by following farmers who are using the varieties demonstrated in the plot trials. In the last edition of the ASHEEP newsletter we published the results of the 2022 commercial scale demonstration sites. ***In this edition we are sharing the second part of the 2022 Annual Report, relating to regeneration observations that were taken in 2022 of the plot scale sites sown in 2020 & 2021, as well as the overarching agronomic summary for 2022 results. To view the full report, including commercial scale site results, visit www.asheep.org.au/pasture-variety-trials.*** *ASHEEP has partnered with South Coastal Agencies to undertake monitoring and report results, ASHEEP thanks Chad Hall and Rachel Minett for this report.*

Re-establishment Sites

Whilst the main project activity in 2022 was to assess the commercial scale demonstration sites, the second aspect to this trial was to monitor the trial sites from 2020 and 2021 (sown by South East Agronomy Research) to identify which varieties would re-establish in following years under differing management systems and environments. This could be useful in assisting growers when choosing long term pastures or in identifying pasture that could re-establish after a year or two in crop. Overall, the re-establishment sites have some interesting results. Unfortunately, the Neridup site was accidentally sprayed out, so there was nothing to observe this year, although, it could be a point of interest next year. The 2020 site at Grass Patch had been overgrown with a medic, and therefore no re-establishment was observed this year. However, the 2021 North Cascade and the Grass Patch sites had a number of pasture species that were of particular interest as stand out performers for re-establishment. There were ten samples collected at the 16-week cuts, five from each site. These were tested for feed quality (NRI test) and their biomass was measured and calculated as kilograms of dry matter per ha (kgDM/ha). Dry matter was then used to calculate a theoretical carrying capacity measured as DSE/ha (dry stock equivalent per hectare).

North Cascade Re-establishment Site

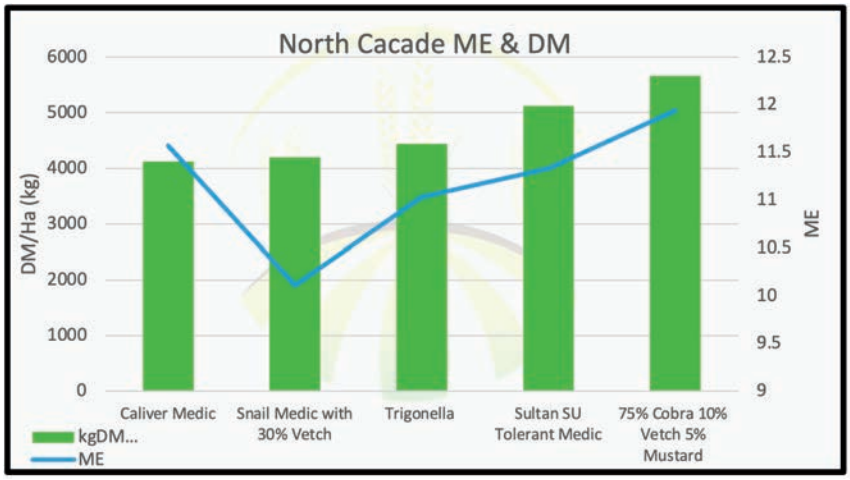
In 2021 the North Cascade site was sown to fifteen varieties or mixes and randomly replicated three times. This site had strong growing season rainfall, providing a good establishment with a soft finish, positioning all varieties for great seed-set potential. It was noted that all varieties performed well except for Casbah Biserulla which had a poor establishment.

North Cascade - Lortleaze 2021	
Sown	16/03/2022
Soil PH (CaCl)	5.8 (0-10cm) to 6.5 (50-60cm) measured 2021
Sowing Details	25kg RM4 Seed
Post-Emergent Herbicide	Clethodim & Targa 25 May
2021 Varieties & Rates	Spartacus Barley @ 80kg
	RM4 Vetch @ 25kg
	Capello Vetch @ 25kg
	Express Grazing Oats @ 70kg
	RM4 Vetch @ 20kg & Express Grazing Oats @ 50kg
	Trigonella @ 8kg
	Tetila Ryegrass @ 15kg
	Cavalier Medic @ 12kg
	Snail Medic @ 12kg
	Sultan Medic (SU Tolerant) @ 6kg
	Casbah Biserulla @ 6kg
	SARDI Grazing Lucerne @ 6kg
	Cobra Clover @ 6kg
	Ballard Mix Ball ThumpA @20kg – *(Rose clover, bladder clover, soft pink serradella, sub-clover & tetraploid Italian ryegrass)*
	Ballard Mix Ball SalinA @ 20kg – *(Scimitar burr medic, balansa clover, tetraploid Italian ryegrass)*

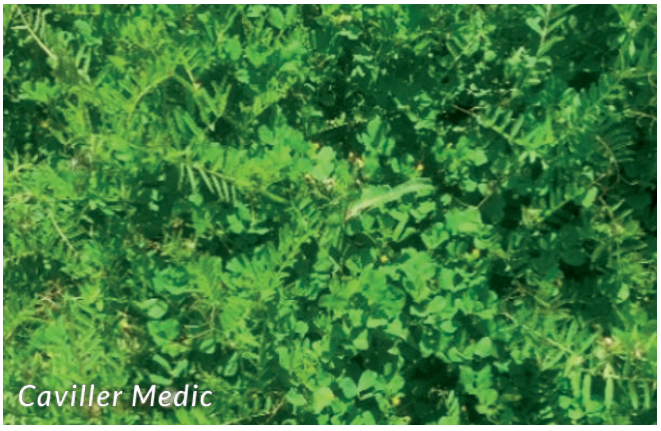
In March 2022 all plots were over-sown with RM4 vetch along with the rest of the paddock. The season broke with a 97mm rainfall event over three days in mid-April and continued to be a very soft season. The RM4 quickly covered over and became dominant. A grass selective herbicide was applied which effectively took care of ryegrass and cereals that may have persisted from the previous year. At the time of the ten-week cuts there was insufficient biomass produced from the 2021 pasture regeneration therefore, samples were unable to be collected. At sixteen weeks there was a markable difference in the presence of 2021 self-seeded pastures. The five varieties that had sufficient biomass to be collected in this reestablishment trial were Sultan medic, Trigonella, Cavalier medic, Cobra balansa and Snail medic. In some cases, varieties that weren't originally sown in the same plot in 2021 were found together in 2022. It is likely that through the processes of oversowing vetch, the seed-set from the 2021 pasture was spread across neighbouring plots.

Pasture variety	Moisture	DM %	Crude Protein	ADF	NDF	Lignin	TDN	ME	RFV	DM/ha	PGR	DSE/ha
Sultan SU Tolerant Medic	83.4	16.6	27.8	21.6	21.9	3.42	70.9	11.33	306	5119.44	38.49	30.79
Trigonella	82.1	17.9	24.1	26.9	28.7	4.05	69.3	11.03	220	4439.2	33.38	26.70
Caliver Medic	84.6	15.4	31.9	22.2	20.3	3.6	72.2	11.57	328	4121.04	30.99	24.79
75% Cobra 10% Vetch 5% Mustard	83.2	16.8	30	21.4	19	3.45	74.2	11.94	354	5664.96	42.59	34.07
Snail Medic with 30% Vetch	86.3	13.7	23.3	26.5	29	4.85	64.4	10.11	219	4197.68	31.56	25.25

The sixteen-week cuts all included oversown RM4 vetch, however there was a significant difference in DM of 922kg and PGR of approximately 7kg per ha per day, which would translate to over five DSE per ha of extra carrying capacity between the highest and lowest performing pastures. Although the ME was considerably higher than a DSE's requirements, the variation between pastures is still worth noting. The ME content between the highest and lowest performing pasture was 2ME/kgDM, enough to maintain an extra quarter of a DSE/ha. The sample containing the Cobra balansa, RM4 vetch and a small amount of Indian hedge mustard produced both the highest level of biomass (5664kg) and megajoules of energy (11.94ME/kg/DM), however, the lignin levels were also high. We assume this is because of the presence of the Indian hedge mustard. While there are limited options to control Indian hedge mustard in clover and vetch, it's tall and prostrate growing habit would make it possible to target with a wick wiper prior to its seed set.



Images: North Cascade Re-establishment Site - 16 Weeks Cuts 24th August 2022



Grass Patch Re-establishment Trial

The Grass Patch trial was also originally sown as a plot trial in 2021 to fifteen different varieties and mixes. This site experienced very strong opening rains and subsequently had an excellent establishment across all varieties, with the exception of Sulla which was unable to be collected. All other varieties measured high levels of DM at the 16-week cuts with express oats and tillage radish being the standout varieties, recording 8900 and 5000kgDM/ha respectively. As the season continued, rainfall subsided and the soil began to dry out during September, resulting in a poor finish and less than optimal seed set.

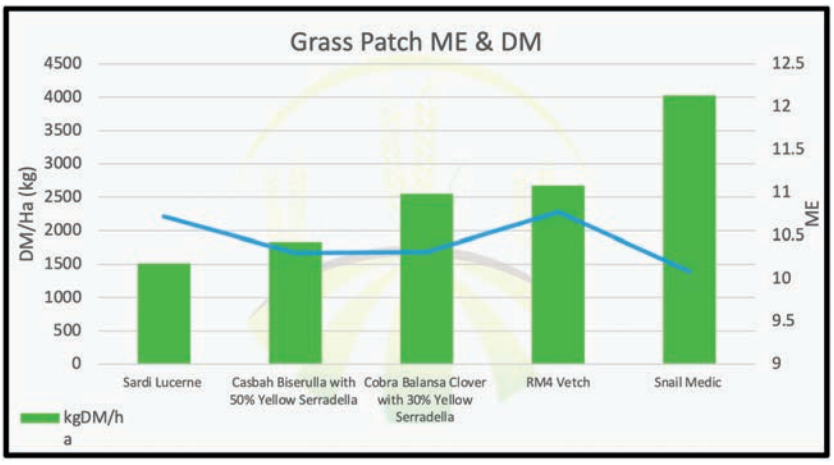
Grass Patch - Wattledale 2021 Trial Site	
Sown	Not over sown in 2022
Soil PH (CaCl)	7.4 (0-10cm) to 8.7 (50-60cm) measured 2021
Pre-Emergent Herbicide	None
Post-Emergent Herbicide	None
2021 Varieties & Rates	Sulla @ 5kg
	Trigonella @ 8kg
	Express Grazing Oates @ 70kg
	Express Grazing Oates @ 50kg & RM4 Vetch @ 20kg
	Tillage Radish @ 6kg
	Snail Medic @ 12kg
	Leafmore Grazing Brassica @ 5kg
	Casbah Biserulla @ 6kg
	RM4 Vetch @ 25kg
	Mawson Subcover @ 6kg
	Cobra Clover @ 6kg
	SARDI Grazing Lucerne @ 6kg
	Tetila Ryegrass @ 15kg
	Ballard Mix Ball ThumpA @20kg – *(Rose clover, bladder clover, soft pink serradella, sub-clover & tetraploid Italian ryegrass)*
	Ballard Mix Ball SalinA @ 20kg – *(Scimitar burr medic, balansa clover, tetraploid Italian ryegrass)*

In 2022 this site was left as a pasture, and it was neither oversown nor treated with additional fertilisers or chemicals. The April rainfall was exceptional, followed by a drier-than-average May through July and a wetter-than-average August. Due to the drier winter and cool conditions, pastures established well but grew slowly. As a result, no 10-week samples could be collected or analysed. Of the fifteen varieties planted in 2021, there were five that re-established well enough to allow for pasture cuts to be collected in 2022. These five varieties were Casbah biserulla with yellow serradella, snail medic, Sardi lucerne, RM4 vetch and Cobra balansa with yellow serradella.

The 16-week cuts reveal adequate levels of CP and ME with the biomass ranging from 1835kg to 4030kgDM/ha, more than doubling the number of DSE that can be maintained between the top and bottom performers. The standout variety for biomass in this trial was snail medic, although it also recorded the lowest levels of ME/kg, DM which is consistent with the north Cascade trial. RM4 vetch once again performed well in both ME and DM/ha. However, grazing strategy must be considered if you are planning on letting vetch set seed. As mentioned earlier in this report, woolly pod vetch such as RM4 can induce secondary photosensitisation and can lead to livestock deaths if grazed during seed-set. Cobra balansa may be a better option if seed set is the target as it remains nontoxic during flowering. In this trial, it produced slightly less biomass and ME than the RM4 vetch. However, Cobra balansa has an extremely high seed count of around 1.4m seeds per kg, providing a dense re-establishment after seed set. It is also relatively hard seeded in cooler climates, protecting it against false starts. Being the earliest flowering balansa clover, Cobra ensures seed-set even in a tight finish, however, stocking rate should be carefully managed as over grazing during pasture reproduction will reduce seed-set and therefore plant density in the following year.

Continued over page.

Pasture variety	Moisture	DM %	Crude Protein	ADF	NDF	Lignin	TDN	ME	RFV	DM/ha	PGR	DSE/ha
Casbah Biserulla with 50% Yellow Serradella	81.5	18.5	24.3	28	29.8	4.8	63.9	10.3	210	1835.2	13.80	11.04
Snail Medic	77.2	22.9	20.8	28.2	29.8	4.67	64.2	10.08	209	4030.4	30.30	24.24
Sardi Lucerne	82.4	17.6	25.7	22.4	25.3	3.91	67.6	10.72	263	1513.6	11.38	9.10
RM4 Vetch	80.4	19.6	31.4	26.2	26.9	4.27	67.9	10.77	237	2673.44	20.10	16.08
Cobra Balansa Clover with 30% Yellow Serradella	80.2	19.8	25	24.4	25.5	4.4	65.4	10.31	255	2550.24	19.17	15.34



Agronomic Summary of 2022 Project Results

This extract of the annual report relates to both Commercial Scale Sites & Re-establishment Site results.


Snail Medic


Cobra Balansa

While the 2022 results report acknowledges pastures that stood out from a biomass and feed quality point of view, there are many other factors that should be considered, such as paddock history, weed control or the future plans for the paddock. A whole farm systems approach should be considered when selecting pasture options. Some of these considerations are outlined below.

Carrying Capacity

When choosing the type of pasture to grow, consider the key times of the year where the highest feed requirement is and, where possible, match the livestock class to fit these key periods. For example, late pregnancy and early lactation is when livestock are at their greatest demand for feed. If your farm system allows, lambing could be aligned with peak pasture growth. However, if this didn't suit the overall farm system, surplus peak season feed could be baled to produce hay or silage for feeding during times of peak feed requirement when pasture is less available. Often more than one variety may be required to match livestock demands or season variability. For example, a quick-to-graze species could be paired with a species that will grow biomass in winter and spring to extend your grazing window. Or an aerial seeded species could be paired with a subterranean clover to ensure pasture persistence in a tight year while staying well positioned to make the most of a soft finish when the opportunity presents. Furthermore, a biodiverse pasture can reduce the risk of livestock health issues.

Stocking Rates, Big Paddocks and Crop Grazing

When crop grazing, low-density stocking can cause livestock to graze paddocks unevenly. This could make it hard to get the best value out of the grazing opportunity and leave valuable feed in the paddock. Perhaps even worse, you could be at risk of overgrazing a section of a paddock, costing valuable yield potential. Therefore, matching stocking rate to paddock size and situation is crucial to maximising return from the area grazed. Where the mob size can't be matched to paddock size, strip grazing, using a temporary hot wire, could be an effective tool. When introducing livestock onto lush pastures or crops, stock should be treated with a clostridial vaccine to prevent pulpy kidney disease. It's also important to make hay available to slow the rate of passage as stock acclimatises and the feed hardens.

Weed Populations

Just like any other crop, weed control in a pasture phase has its limitations. It will be important to understand the population dynamics of the weeds on your farm leading into the pasture rotation. An emphasis on the potential need to drive down broadleaf weed populations in cereal rotations, before sowing a pasture, must be considered. While multispecies pastures have many benefits, they can reduce your options for weed control. On the contrary, a carefully considered pasture mix can create a great opportunity to chase grass weeds at a later application date compared to canola. This allows for the control of grass populations with extended dormancy and a later germination window.

Soil Benefits

A pasture phase can provide many soil benefits; perhaps the most notable in a mixed enterprise farm is nitrogen fixation from legume species. Green-manured pastures that break down and add humus and organic material to the profile do wonders for sustaining the longevity and integrity of the soil. They will result in healthier, generally higher-yielding crops. Remember to treat legume species with the correct inoculum group if there is minimal history. Furthermore, deep-rooted pasture species can add organic material further down the profile, improving soil structure and providing conduits for moisture in non-wetting soils. A well-thought-out pasture rotation can also create a break for soil pathogens and diseases such as nematodes. It is important to consider any disease bridges between pastures and cash crops. For example, when using species such as barley or grazing brassica, consider the rotation as a whole and assess the potential for these species to carry stubble-borne diseases over to the following crop.

Fertilising Pastures

When fertilising pastures, be mindful of nitrate levels. High pasture nitrate levels will be toxic to livestock and may cause deaths. Lower rates applied more often are safer and, when timed well, promote higher plant nitrogen use efficiency. Plant biomass can be tested for nitrate levels to determine how safe it is to graze.

Phosphorus plays an important role in legume pasture systems as it generates cell division and new tissue growth. This allows for an increase in biomass and production which ultimately, allows for a greater carrying capacity. Each pasture species has varying nutritional requirements to achieve optimal biomass. For example, clover-based pastures have relatively high phosphorus requirements compared to serradellas medics and grass species.

Some of the soil types surveyed in the project can be characterised as deep sands, which are typically low in potassium. Soil potassium levels need to be monitored closely in hay and silage production country as removal is high under those systems. Adequate soil potassium levels are critical in plant production in terms of the movement of water, nutrients and carbohydrates. Sufficient levels in the plant result in improved cell strength and standability and allow the plant to combat disease and stress.

Soil Test Results

It is interesting to note the variation in soil types and soil constraints across the different sites and the effect that will have on the selection of pasture mixtures. Pastures can be just as sensitive to declining pH levels or soil sodicity, and consideration of soil constraints is an important component of pasture species selection. Identifying the nutrient status of the soil will enable the fertilisers with the correct composition to be selected to meet pasture requirements and optimise growth and biomass. The nutrient levels of the sites tested were generally considered adequate to meet plant requirements, with no significant nutrient deficiencies noted at any of the sites. Some areas will be responsive to lime. While lime application is not critical this season, pH will decrease over time, indicating that liming may be required in the future. Potential issues associated with the acidity found in the topsoil include root pruning from aluminium ions etc.

Rotational Nitrogen Supply and Value of Soil Supplied Nitrogen

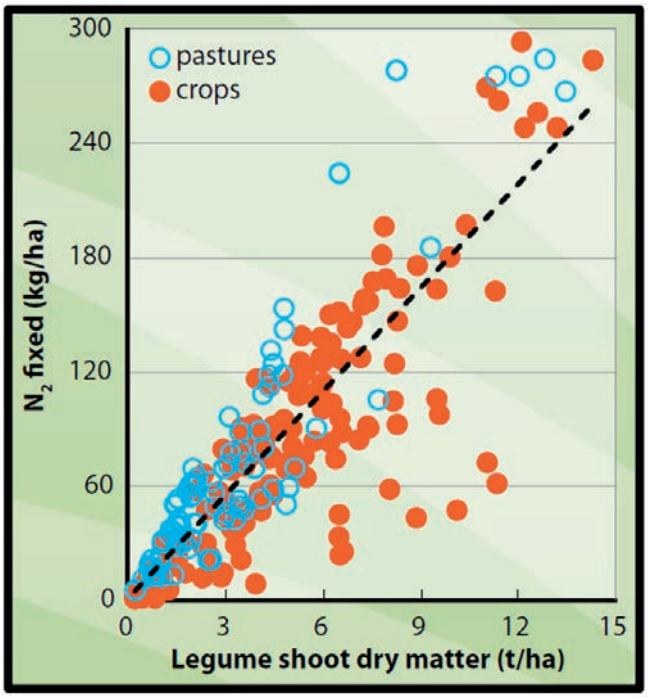
Considering 2022 fertiliser prices, a legume-based pasture in the rotation provides economic benefits in supplying available nitrogen to the following crop and improving soil fertility.

Where 100kg of urea supplies 46 units of N
Price of urea:

- $920/t; 1 unit is worth $2
- $1200/t; 1 unit is worth $2.60
- $1500/t; 1 unit is worth $3.30

A basic rule of thumb is that for every tonne of biomass grown by a legume, 20kg of soil nitrogen is supplied. If the pasture composition is 50% legume and 50% non-legume pasture, the rotational nitrogen will be 10kg (50%) of N per tonne of pasture biomass grown.

The project results mention the available nitrogen from legume pasture cages after the 16-week cut. It should be noted that this figure doesn't reflect the exact amount of available nitrogen for the following season, as many other variables are hard to measure. Nevertheless, the figures provide an overview of the value of biomass and nitrogen according to approximate current fertiliser pricing.



Source: Soilquality.org.au, Legumes and Nitrogen Fixation

To view the full 2022 Annual Report, including commercial scale site results, visit: www.asheep.org.au/pasture-variety-trials

The ASHEEP Pasture Variety Trials project has two years remaining. In 2023 and 2024, the project will again follow pastures grown by farmers on a commercial scale (10ha minimum) throughout the Esperance region. South Coastal Agencies will continue to drive data collection and analysis. Members of the project team selected 2023 sites early this year. If you have ideas for 2024 sites, please get in touch.

WALRC Looking for an Esperance-Based Producer Council Member

Founding producer member of the WA Livestock Research Council, John Wallace, completes his second and final term with WALRC this year and the organisation is on the hunt for an Esperance region replacement.

“We are looking for someone who has a particular affinity for and interest in livestock research and a willingness to be a conduit between producer and researcher,” said executive officer Esther Price. “I know the producer members on the Council particularly enjoy the opportunity to have a deeper than average understanding of the workings of the livestock research community; and the way it priorities and plans its projects,” she said.

The commitment involves 2-3 face to face meetings a year and a preparedness to be available on line to review and comment on research proposals.

“To do the job well you first and foremost need an interest in livestock research and the impact it can have once adopted; as well as be well connected with producers in your region,” Esther said. “As many would know, WALRC is lucky to have Esperance-based Vet Enoch Bergman on council – however his representative role is as a vet, even though he is a cattle producer as well.”

Applications for the position will open next month with the successful candidate set to step into the role at the August 18 AGM. More information: Esther Price eo@walrc.com.au

WALRC Livestock Matters Forum

An exploration of the Camarri family business at Nannup

View the full program and register to attend at https://walrc.com.au/events/

Inquiry into Safety in the Agricultural Industry in WA

Jan Clawson, ASHEEP

In April 2023 the Department of Mines, Industry & Regulation – WorkSafe, released the Agriculture Industry Inquiry report completed by Ms Pamela Scott to the WorkSafe Commissioner. It is a 128-page report which I appreciate not everyone has time to read. So, I will attempt to summarise some of the key information from the report.

To set the scene, there are approximately 5,725 agricultural enterprises in WA. The industry employs around 44,800 workers of whom approximately 36,700 are directly employed.

Ms Scott found the agricultural industry covers a broad spectrum of businesses. Ranging from small, family-owned and operated farms, through to large corporatised, sophisticated operations, some of which are still based around families. The differences include a number of aspects, two of which are the attitudes to the operations of the business and the resources they have available to them.

ABARES agriculture industry demographic from the 2016 census.

The agricultural industry has had the highest number of fatalities of all industries in WA and Australia for many years. In 2021-22, the number of deaths was significantly higher in WA than they had been for a number of years. On 23 June 2022, following the twelfth work-related death in the agricultural industry in WA in the preceding 12 months, the WorkSafe Commissioner, Mr Darren Kavanagh, announced that there was to be an inquiry into the agricultural industry in this State.

In the report Ms Scott works through the terms of reference and makes recommendations. When examining the circumstances of all the deaths or serious injury she found some common causes which serve as a good reminder or something to learn by.

They included:

- a failure to use safety equipment and personal protective equipment
- use of unsafe methods, particularly in dealing with plant and equipment and large animals
- a lack of awareness of the location of bystanders and other workers

It also showed approximately 90% of the fatalities were men and nearly half of the men were aged over 55. The most common circumstances were:

- being crushed or struck by a tractor or other large machinery
- a quad bike crash resulting in the driver being crushed a vehicle roll-over or crash
- being crushed by livestock
- falling from the roof of a shed under construction

When comparing Agriculture in WA to other states and industries she found it is difficult to identify any particular trends, due to both the fluctuations and the statistically low numbers of fatalities. However, what stands out clearly is that agriculture is the most deadly industry in both WA and Australia, as well as in Europe, Great Britain and Ireland. While WA has had a spike in incidents in 2021-22, New South Wales, Victoria & Queensland have also experienced spikes in the last five years.

Ms Scott examined the attitude towards the regulator, she found there needs to be a change in approach from both the regulator and the industry. Two issues arise here. Firstly, fear of the regulator and secondly, attitudes towards compliance with the law versus attitudes to safety and practices. The message to the industry needs to be more about how to be safer and how the regulator can assist in that, and less of a focus on punitive measures.

Fear of the regulator is counterproductive. She also noted the resources allocated to the agricultural industry by DMIRS are negligible and proactive activities are very limited. This needs to be rectified, and a positive focus placed on the agricultural industry. There is no shortage of reports and recommendations for changes which need to be made. What is now required is a commitment by all stakeholders to contribute to change, other than through legislation, and by the industry through leadership.

Continued over page.

There are a number of initiatives to achieve improvement in safety in the agricultural industry.

- with the industry, ensure funding of non-regulatory, advisory service to farms
- properly resource a well-planned, sustained program of inspections in conjunction with education
- with industry, undertake a positive, sustained media campaign aimed at improved practices
- work within the industry to establish a fund for the purposes of promoting the safety message.

The Tasmanian, Victorian and New South Wales governments have taken a leadership role in improving health and safety in agriculture. The most significant in terms of engaging with and educating farmers generally about safety are:

- The Safe Farming Tasmania program
- New South Wales Farm Safety Advisory program
- Victoria Making Our Farms Safer
- And the short-lived ThinkSafe WA program. This program ceased in March 2014 due to budget cuts. The abolition of the program is said to have resulted in increased demand on WorkSafe's call centre and a lack of continuity in engagement with industry.

Part of her recommendation included the establishment of an advisory service that would:

- Be staffed by advisors with administrative support.
- Have advisors who are recruited based on their: Knowledge of agricultural safety and ability to gain confidence of farmers and farm workers.
- Have advisors without regulatory powers.
- Provide advice to the benefit of the farmer.
- Work with industry associations to promote the service.
- Initiate advisory auditing visits to a substantial number of farms per annum
- Conduct a proactive program of visits aimed at particular sectors each year, plus a reactive program to respond to requests for visits.
- Attend agricultural events such as field days.
- Create a comprehensive, up-to-date website.

She suggested this advisory service might be **funded through a levy on the industry and matching contributions by government**. Ms Scott noted through the community consultation and comments by advisory and training bodies demonstrate that the agricultural industry is crying out for practical guidance.

DMIRS and other regulators, as well as farm safety programs in Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales, already have a large amount of material which provides practical guidance. It needs to be brought together in a suite of documents, linked together, and directed to the needs of the agricultural industry. Where the existing information relates to industry generally it can be extracted and modified to suit agricultural needs. As well as materials appropriate to the different sectors of the agricultural industry and their particular needs could be developed. She also noted though, that codes of practice are lengthy and contain many formal parts which are off-putting and of no interest to a person looking for a simple guide of "how to" and "how not to". More practical, audience focussed materials are necessary to ensure that they are helpful to the groups who need them most.

When considering deterrence and compliance Ms Scott found the regulators use a range of approaches to achieve compliance, including to deter those regulated from breaching the scheme and to encourage them to voluntarily comply. Voluntary compliance may be achieved through advice, assistance, training and other resources. The relationship between deterrence and voluntary compliance is complex. Deterrence includes the threat of punishment by the system and the prospect of public censure. In the WHS system, deterrence includes prosecutions for breaches, with the prospect of financial and other penalties. The deterrence may also include coercion, and in the WHS Act, this includes prohibition notices and improvement notices. The compliance and enforcement policy notes that the regulator monitors compliance with WHS laws in various ways including the use of inspection powers, carrying out of proactive and reactive enforcement activities, and other matters. However, there are few proactive activities and inspections in the agricultural industry to monitor compliance in this industry.

There were issues raised during the community consultation process that made it clear that the industry is not aware of the discretionary considerations the regulator or the DPP have available. There appeared to be a view that if someone dies at work, someone will almost automatically go to gaol and receive a large fine, which will destroy the business.

She examined incidents where the regulator has decided whether to prosecute in circumstances of deaths in the agricultural industry in the last five years. She noted, with respect, that balance has been brought to those decisions. Very few prosecutions have been brought in respect of those deaths for a number of very valid reasons. *Continued over page.*

Those reasons include:

- The recognition of the inherent penalty that the loss of a loved one imposes on the bereaved family members is likely to exceed any potential penalty the courts may impose for any offending conduct.
- Where there is little reasonable prospect of establishing a prima facie case
- Where the only person exposed to the hazard undertook the actions leading to their death in a way that casts no culpability on a duty holder.

She also studied the importance a preventative work and found there has been considerable research and a number of significant reports which recognise the importance of engagement with industry and of the positive effects of proactive and preventative measures by regulators. Research shows that preventative work, including advice, education and assistance, as well as enhanced communication, are tools that an effective regulator may successfully use, as well as formal compliance measures such as enforcement and prosecutions.

For both substantive rules-based compliance and improved safety to be achieved, the regulator needs to engage not only with peak industry bodies, but with individual businesses. This engagement should be through:

- The provision of information and advice
- Inspections both with and without enforcement measures and finally
- Prosecutions for non-compliance.

Ms Scott recommended a plan that will meet part of the regulator's responsibilities and the objects of the WHS Act. Fulfilling the regulator's role in providing education, advice and assistance to duty holders. The program of proactive inspections, initially using an educative and supportive approach, will assist the industry to move towards compliance. They will move towards overcoming the large deficit in training and support, aimed at eliminating deaths and serious injuries in the industry.

Ms Scott then worked through the various high-risk activities and concluded there are high-risk activities that the agricultural industry has in common with other industries and some that are unique. There are known ways to deal with many of those risks and they are reflected in already existing materials. These can be modified and used to improve the health and safety of those engaged in high-risk work if they are accessible, known and applied.

Ms Scott also took a deep dive into DMIRS and WorkSafe as an organisation and previous completed reports and recommendation. She found that the term WorkSafe is used by many to refer to what was once a separate agency, but WorkSafe no longer exists as an entity, staff previously designated as being WorkSafe staff have been spread throughout DMIRS and the resources available to WHS regulation have not been able to be identified.

By the commencement of her inquiry, there was a statutory position of Commissioner which had responsibilities under the WHS Act, but which had no direct staff; had to rely on the allocation of resources from DMIRS; and to obtain resources and to set priorities, was required to negotiate with DMIRS.

In around 2013-14, the then WorkSafe Division of the Department of Commerce issued the Agricultural Action Plan 2014-2016, Ms Scott was unable to find a replacement or updated plan, and it seems that the attention to the industry has not been sustained in any planned or structured way.

In June 2017, the Parliament of Western Australia, Legislative Council Standing Committee on Public Administration commenced an inquiry call the "Coming home safely report" which was completed in August 2020. The Coming home safely report recommended that the State Government take steps to establish WorkSafe as a public sector body, with its own publicly recognisable identity and comprising all former WorkSafe staff.

In January 2022, the Commission for Occupational Safety and Health commissioned a study of the views of the industry, which reported in March 2022. The industry engagement in this study involved telephone interviews of 18 industry representatives from a variety of organisations as well as one pastoralist. It made a range of recommendations that are reflective of many of the same views expressed to this Inquiry.

Finally in April-May 2022, DMIRS considered a range of programs and reports to develop a plan including strategies to minimise agricultural workplace injuries and fatalities. It seems that very limited action has been taken in response.
With the exception of some funding to SafeFarms WA, the State Government does not fund any farm safety advice or awareness programs.

This all demonstrates that there is no shortage of information and strategies to improve safety in the agricultural industry. What remains is an urgent need to act. The consultation process of this Inquiry has made it very clear that the industry as a whole has a commitment to improving the safety of those who work in agriculture and is working to improve the safety of its workplaces and its workers. It is not simply sitting back and wanting someone else to do the work.

Reference: https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2023-04/231238_RP_AgInquiry%20WEB.pdf

Feed365 Demonstration Site Updates

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

Background: The Feed365 Project is a collaboration between the Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development (DPIRD) and Meat & Livestock Australia. The purpose is to research and redesign livestock forage systems to fill feed gaps, develop new feed base options and integrate them into grazing systems. ASHEEP is coordinating three demonstration sites in the FEED365 Project between 2022-2024. Two are hosted by Josh & Tegan Sullivan at the Esperance Downs Research Station in Gibson and the third site is hosted by Mitchell Greaves & Demi Vandenberghe at The Oaks in Dalyup. You can find more information and a report on 2022 results at www.asheep.org.au/feed365.

Esperance Downs Research Station Demonstration Sites - Gibson

Demonstration Site 1 (Paddock "E2")

The site is cropped into cereal as part of the Sullivans' cropping program. There is potential for a crop grazing demonstration depending on seasonal conditions.

Demonstration Site 2 (Paddock "N4")

Site is split into halves (7ha each) with an electric fence. Two experimental pasture mixes were sown on 22nd February, ideally to provide autumn feed, spell over winter and then graze again through late spring. With a very dry start to the season, the aim to graze during autumn was not met. The most recent visual assessment of the paddock on 24th May 2023 determined that the plants were not advanced enough to cope with grazing and then be able to rebound for a second grazing, so in the interest of extending feed throughout the year grazing was not conducted.

Images Taken 24th May 2023

Mix 1: Express Oats @ 32kg/ha, RM4 Vetch @ 26kg/ha, Balansa @ 1.4kg/ha. Alosca C & F/E residual from previous year.



Mix 2: Tetila ryegrass @ 10.7kg/ha, Margurita / Cadiz serradella pod mix @ 20kg/ha, Express Oats @ 43Kg/kg, Balansa @ 5kg/ha, Alosca Group G/S @ 14k/ha (for serradella), Alosca Group C residual from previous year.



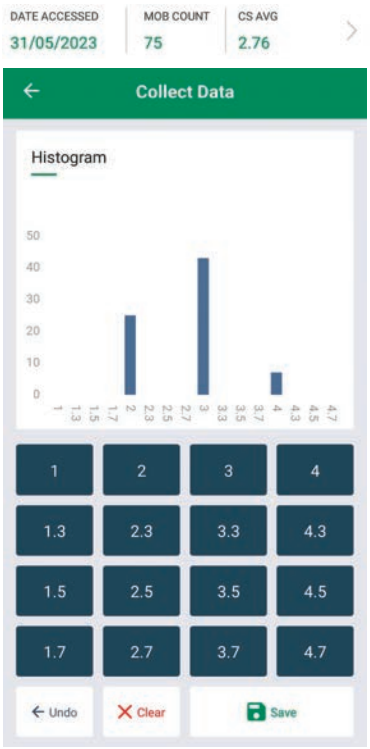
The Oaks Tedera Demonstration - Dalyup

Sown in June 2022 with Lanza Tedera 10 kg/ha, Nodulaid Tedera inoculant. Intent was to establish tedera as a permanent pasture to graze over the summer-autumn feed gap. First establishment failed, knockdown applied, second attempt sown in September 2022. The tedera was assessed as ready to graze in mid April, however as this was in the middle of seeding it was not the ideal time for the site hosts to be bringing sheep in and starting up the trial. As a result, grazing was held off and is going to be commenced in early June. Condition scores were taken of the sheep with thanks to Jake Hann, Nutrien Ag Solutions on 31st May. They will then be shorn in the coming week (not related to the trial but needs to be done), and then weighed and put on the Tedera. Biomass cuts and nutritive analysis has been undertaken and these results will be shared in the post-grazing review. The tedera site is very variable, with some areas more successful than others. Below are a series of images taken in about the same place to demonstrate the recent progression of the plants.

Top: 28th April 2023. Bottom: 31st May 2023.

Right: Mitchell Greaves preparing sheep.

Condition Scoring App



As a side note, when it came to recording condition scores we used an app developed by DPIRD and available free on Apple and Android. Search "Sheep Condition Scoring" in your app store.

Above: Jake Hann taking condition scores.

The app allows you to save multiple mob records. You simply set up the mob, and the screen shown on the left allows you to enter the scores. When finished it generates a graph of the results, a mob count, and an average. You can email the data to export it from the app.

What's Next?

The tedera will be grazed for 6 weeks and after that we'll be able to share the results. We will keep monitoring the sites at the Esperance Downs Research Station to determine when grazing will commence. If you have questions about the demonstration **contact** Dr Daniel Real, DPIRD, Daniel.Real@dpird.wa.gov.au.

Saltland Genie App

ACCESS NOW

Or visit SALTLANDGENIE.COM

THE SALTLAND GENIE APP - HAVE YOUR SAY!

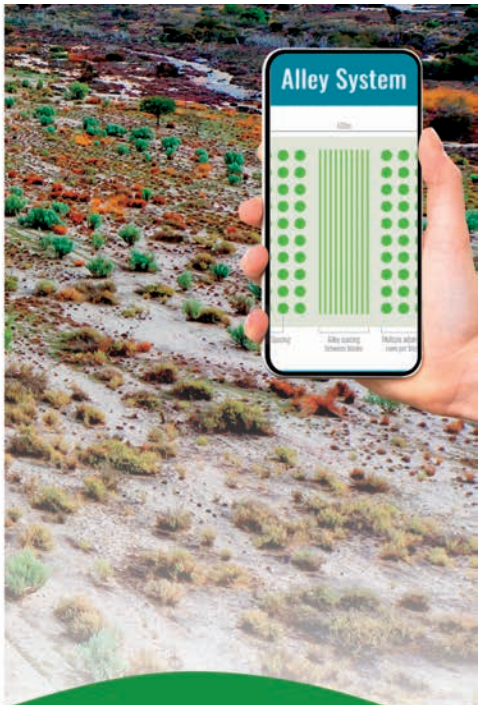
The Saltland Genie Web App is a working prototype version of the Saltland Genie App. Users are encouraged to submit feedback on its functionality, technical content and to suggest other practical tools to improve the user experience. The user feedback form is available on the Genie homepage.

The Web App development team is comprised of experienced practitioners from the private and public sector, including farmers and researchers. The Web App is an inspiration taken from a website of the same name and was a product of the Future Farm Industries Cooperative Research Centre that operated in mid-2000s.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Saltland Genie Web App is a product of a partnership project between The Gillamii Centre and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), made possible by funding from the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program.

natural resource management program



SALTLAND GENIE

Web App

Find the best management solution for your saline land.

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

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HOW THE GENIE WORKS

Saltland Genie Web App provides the latest information on profitable saltland solutions for your property.

The app brings together decision making tools, on-farm case studies, industry research and resources into one place to help you find the best management solutions for your saline land.

The Web App is integrated with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development's (DPIRD) website which provides the most up to date information.

Saltland Genie has been developed with a focus on saline land in the southwest of Western Australia.

SALTLAND GENIE WEB APP

THE TOOLS

WATER SALINITY CALCULATOR

Compare your water quality against the current Animal Drinking Water Safety Levels to determine if your water sources are safe for stock to drink.

SOIL SALINITY CALCULATOR

Use the results from your soil test to calculate the Salinity Class of your soil and then explore suggested crop and/or pasture species that may be suitable to establish on your site.

SOLUTIONS EXPLORER

Unsure if perennial pasture, saltbush or revegetation will work for your farming system? This tool can help determine which of the six Saltland Solution Systems will match your particular site. Answer four questions and the Genie will recommend what system will work best for you.

PLANT SPACING CALCULATOR

Designed to assist you in the planning phase of your saltland remediation. Choose between an Alley or Block planting to calculate how many stems per hectare are required for your site.

SGSL ECONOMICS CALCULATOR

Calculate your years to payoff and Benefit Cost Ratio based on the establishment cost of your chosen saltland system compared to the production value from grazing (compared against the cost of agistment or ration grain feeding).

THE SALTDECK

SALTdeck has been developed to assist livestock producers identify plant species that grow on salt affected land. Cards focus on correct identification, value and salinity/waterlogging tolerance for each species.

'MAKING IT WORK' ESTABLISHMENT VIDEOS

A series of videos designed to take you through the critical steps for successfully establishing different saltland pasture systems and sustainably managing them.

GENIE'S MAP

Explore the southwest of Western Australia and what farmers have been up to in your patch, linking to both written and visual saltland case studies.

ASHEEP'S CATTLE SUB-COMMITTEE

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Ian McCallum - 0427 715 205
Nicholas Ruddenklau - 0488 070 065

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 22/06/23 - ASHEEP AGM & Conference (Esperance)
- 23/06/23 - WARLC Livestock Matters Forum (Nannup)
- 24/06/23 - WA Shearing Industry Association AGM (Perth)
- 25-27/07/23 - ASHEEP Ravensthorpe & Katanning Tour
- 4-6/07/23 - Australian Grassland Association Symposium "Pasture legumes for sustainable, productive systems" (Perth)
- 22-23/07/23 - Working Dog School Esperance
- 26-28/7/23 - AAABG Conference (Perth)

WALRC Newsletter

Subscribe to the WA Livestock Research Council newsletter

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admin@walrc.com.au
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JULY

Next ASHEEP Committee Meeting is scheduled for July 2023.

Contact a committee or staff member to raise an item.

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