

ASHEEP NEWS



Case Study: Entrepreneurship - Grains, Pellets & Feedlotting

ASHEEP interviews Neil Wandel

Neil and Mary Wandel moved to Esperance from South Australia in 1979. Neil had been shearing from the age of 16, and together they had started a family and owned 600 acres of land in SA when they made the bold decision to lift roots and cross state boundaries. They set their sights on 2000 acres that was 75% cleared, with Neil declaring it would set the whole family up and be the only land they'd ever need to buy. Fast forward to the present and many additional hectares later, the Wandels have established an enterprise that includes several farms and a grain cleaning, drying, containerisation and feed supply business. It's the classic spirit of entrepreneurship that has founded so much of Esperance's agricultural sector.

Business Overview:

On the farming side, Neil and Mary currently operate two properties that form the basis of their sheep, cattle and cropping enterprise. The first of these, "Yuwandi", is located in Neridup, with sandplain soils and an average annual rainfall of around 600mm. The second farm is leased in Dalyup, also in the sandplain with an average rainfall of 520mm. Neil estimate the farms are split 40% cropping / 60% sheep and cattle. The cropping program is half canola with the remainder going into wheat, barley, and lupins. The stock operation incorporates lamb feedlotting, backgrounding cattle, and a breeding program (150 dorper-cross ewes plus 500 angus cows to bulls from Coonamble & Allegrgia Park). Neil and Mary also own farms that they lease out to two of their sons, Scott and Mark, who have their own farming operations.

Image: Neil Wandel.

Continued over page.

Highlights

New Project Feed365 - 6

New Rhizobia Strain - 7

Pasture Variety Trials Update - 9

Tail Docking & Pain Relief - 10

Non-Mulese Project Update - 11

WA Rural Ambassador - 12

Annual Ryegrass Variety Trial - 17

MLA Board Member Interview - 18

Improving Fertiliser Efficiency - 21

Sheep Vaccines - 23

Shearing Shed Safety - 26

Continued.

In 2002, Neil and Mary expanded their operation to establish Esperance Quality Grains, a business based in Esperance offering grain cleaning and drying services, as well as exporting containerised legumes, and supplying feed grains and pellets.

It has been a great opportunity to get an insight from Neil into how these businesses operate and our thanks go to him for sharing his time and thoughts. Over to Neil.

Lamb Feedlot:

The lamb feedlot is based in Dalyup and we've set it up to finish 5000 lambs. Our breeding flock tops it up, but the bulk of the lambs are sourced locally and up to the Wheatbelt. The preference is to buy direct from farms, but we'll also look at the Katanning sales if we need to. The risk there is the increased chance of picking up issues like lice.

As far as breed, we mainly buy in merinos with some crossbred. The right type of merino feed well and it's surprising the portion of income that comes from wool. I look for a merino that's long bodied with free growing wool as they stack the weight on. Some lines do really well, and you can clearly see how different genetics perform under the same conditions.

Finished lambs are sold direct to WAMMCO. We invested in an auto-weigher and drafter (\$25K), which can run through 300 - 400 lambs per hour. Lambs are weighed after they've been on feed for 4 weeks, we draft out anything under 45kg - 52kg. The aim is to bring them up to 55kg. A challenge that has come up recently is that it can be hard to get space at the abattoir due to COVID.

Cattle Backgrounding:

We buy in and background around 500 cattle that we run in 20-30ha paddocks. We look for cattle at 300-320kg and our main model is to turn them off at 370-400kg to feedlot for finishing. Todd Fotheringham often takes a lot of them. This year it has been hard to find lighter cattle to buy, so we opted for more medium weight cattle (350-380kg) that we fed on to 450kg and sold into a feedlot in SA that takes heavy cattle. Our general aim is to try to buy at the same price or less per kilo than what we'll be able to sell them for.

We source cattle in from a range of markets - Mt Barker, Boyanup, and locally. We'll buy different breeds, but the secret with feeding stock is that it's very important buy the right type of animal, and to have the right buyer representing you. We have a good relationship with an independent buyer that has worked well for us.

Pellet System:

In the past we've incorporated grain into the ration for the lambs and cattle, but we've gone away from that into pellets. We ran a trial 2 years ago where I spilt 250 steers that had been running on a millet paddock. 125 went onto a grain ration (wheat / barley / legume mix rolled together through a roller mill) and ad-lib hay. The remaining 125 went onto pellets (hay is not needed for cattle on a pellet ration). They were weighed after 40 days, and both had put on an average of 60kg per head. I worked out the feed costs and the pellet mix sat at \$2.60 per/kilo of cattle weight gain. The grain ration came in cheaper at \$2.55 per/kilo of weight gain (including grain, hay and labour to roll the mix), but there's a risk of losing 1-2% of the cattle as they transition to grain. At the end of the day, we decided to move to pellets considering that there's no risk of poisoning, no waste (some grain passes through cattle), and a lot less labour involved without having to roll grain.

Images: Above - Neil and Mary Wandel. Below - Loading containers at Esperance Quality Grains.

Farm Snapshot

Business Name: Willawayup Farms & Esperance Quality Grains

Enterprise Mix: 40% cropping, 60% stock, grain cleaning, drying, containerisation and feed supply.

Location: Neridup, Dalyup, business in Esperance town.

Av. Annual Rainfall: 520 - 600mm

Stock: Dorper-cross sheep, angus cattle, plus mixed breeds bought in.

Soil: Sandplain

Feedbase: Serradella / clover pastures, feedlotting, pellets.



Continued.

Our feed system for cattle backgrounding is to put them into small paddocks with stubbles and pellets in feeders. They have a 'starter pellet' for a week that is then changed out for a 'finishing pellet', both tailored to cattle. The lambs in the feedlot get the same transition program but tailored to sheep. It's critical that the lambs get the right pellet transition, but not as much with the cattle as they are better at adapting. We bring the pellets in from Kojonup Feeds where they are milled. We truck lupins up and bring pellets back, and we also sell them through Esperance Quality Grains.

Paddock Feedbase:

Our breeding stock get access to serradella-based pastures with some clover, and we've also been crop grazing Moby barley over the last couple of years. We used to farm in Munglinup where we harvested a lot of serradella and we've been using that seed to build up the pastures in Neridup and Dalyup. It seems to suit the country. The mix is 25% Margarita / 75% Cadiz, we sell a bit of it too. Cadiz is an older, soft-seeded variety that will come up but won't persist well the following year. A lot of the seed gets mixed in when we spread fertiliser in February and thrown onto the paddock that way. We also spread Alosca out over the pastures, which works but it's not as efficient as sowing it with the seed. I try to get a mixture of legumes and grass in the pastures. I'm not afraid of ryegrass - continuous croppers don't like it but it's not a problem in our system.

We make our own silage and hay, which is fed to stock and is part of our drought management planning. We've had a good run but it's good to be prepared. We currently have about 1200 tonne of silage in a pit and 200 tonne rolled. I'm comfortable with confinement feeding and it's there if we need it. We have a greater focus on silage compared to hay, with reasons being that we can cut it earlier, turn poorer quality grass into silage, get a regrowth, and it's good to have something left in the paddock rather than cutting it all away at the end of the season for hay.

Animal health considerations?

On entry to the feedlot lambs are drenched and given a pulpy kidney needle. Since we've been doing that losses have halved. We were finding we'd lose lambs to pulpy kidney just before they were ready to sell. Fly control is a big issue in the spring.

With the cattle we give multimin to the weaners and 7in1. They're also treated twice a year for lice and drenched, generally at marking and then again in the spring if needed. Bought in cattle are drenched on arrival and it's important that they're not in calf. I like to buy yard-weaned cattle, and we follow that practice for our own cattle over 10 days with some magnesium in their water and lick feeds to settle them. As far as buying bulls we are very selective for feet and in the herd, we cull heavily for feet - it's an issue on the sandplain if there's any sign of weakness.

Grain cleaning, drying, containerisation and feed supply:

Esperance Quality Grains is built around grain cleaning, drying, storage and exporting containerised grain. We also sell pellets, feed grain and mineral supplements. The business has a team of 6 full time staff, who are kept very busy for three months of the year during harvest when we operate 24/7.

Exporting containerised grain is something we've been doing for the last few years, predominantly with pulses. Each container takes 25 tonne and we're currently delivering 2500 - 3000 tonne out of the port each month. Our first buyer came from a contact that was made on a SEPWA tour to China and passed on to me, at that time he had the view that peas out of WA were rubbish. I now sell him peas every couple of months which he repacks into small bags and on-sells for racing pigeon feed. Most of the customers I have are via word of mouth and a lot of the trading is on WhatsApp. It's high risk with low margin, but I've always enjoyed doing deals.



Above: Neil with Zoe, who worked with the Wandels over harvest.



Your key focuses for running a successful operation?

Having the right people is key. Mary looks after all the finances for the farm. We have a Farm Manager, Bruce Haggety, and Daryl Gifford manages Esperance Quality Grains. We have a great team of people that work with them.

Another focus is that I like to see my stock in good condition. I will hand feed earlier than most and when the heifers are calving I 'float' off any that have calved every 2-3 days and put them in a separate paddock with a pellet feeder. Keeping the heifers in good condition with good nutrition has been very successful. 96% of the first calvers were back in calf last year. We calve in February, so we generally don't have green feed on hand.

In our early days in Esperance, one of our focuses was that we pushed to buy land. That's enabled us to support two of our sons to farm, and we've also bought farms that we've restored and sold. I've always believed that Esperance land has been cheap.

Continued over page.

Focuses for the future?

When do I retire? That's the question my wife asks me. Not yet.

We're looking at investing in a colour sorter for Esperance Quality Grains to help us access the top premium markets for export. The best sorters can check for both colour and shape. We're also expanding our grain storage capacity having just bought a block of land where we'll build a big grain shed. Another thing under consideration is value-adding the waste we get from our business (canola husk, fine seed, etc). We'll have to manage the risk of contamination, but I've bought a big feed mixing wagon to see what we can do there.

At the Neridup farm we have some signs of waterlogging that I hope to address by planting more lucerne in a 3-to-4-year phase to also clean up grasses. We're also incorporating summer crops - if I get a pasture that does not look good in September, we'll spray it out and put it into millet.

With sheep breeding we're transitioning away from dorpers by putting Australian White rams over them. We've found the dorpers put on too much weight and don't have great lambing rates. The rams are in all year around and the lambs go into the feedlot when they're ready.

Looking at MLA's Carbon Neutral 2030 target, we have considered how some of our practices might impact climate change but haven't done an audit. We have a conservative stocking rate and the organic carbon level in our soils is going up more than down. We never burn any stubbles and don't cut too much for straw - we only bale what we need for emergencies. I think we could be planting more trees by putting the swampy / low lying areas back into them. Every bit helps.

You have held some key leadership roles in industry throughout the years, as a Founding Chair of the Pulse Association of the South East (PASE) and as a board member of CBH for 12 years with 5 as Chair. Do you have any thoughts for others on taking up these kinds of positions?

People should get involved. It's critical for our industry. You can start with a grower group on a local level and look at other options from there. It's a great way to learn, mix with new people, and get exposure to different ideas. The beauty of Esperance is that people are happy to share their ideas. There are some exceptional young farmers out there and I'd encourage them to step forward when opportunities arise.

One of the most valuable things that I did in taking on more public roles was a couple of public speaking courses. I also did a week training in Melbourne on marketing (futures trading, networking, etc). It was invaluable to building my understanding of risk management. I think growers should spend more time understanding risk and risk mitigation. Too many pay an advisor, get closer to it.



Biggest challenges and opportunities for the industry moving forward?

I think we have real threat from biosecurity, it has always concerned me. If Foot and Mouth gets to Australia it will be devastating. Input costs (such as fertiliser, chemical) are another challenge. It's fine if we get a good finish, but if there's a wet winter and the crop is underwater there's a lot more financial exposure. It's reasons like these that I keep a balance between cropping and stock.

We need a solution to the labour shortage. We have a great industry and I'm not sure why more young people are not attracted to it. There's great money, package benefits, and a good lifestyle. There are brilliant opportunities and we need to fix that disconnect.

We're currently seeing a real boom with pricing and with some of the research that's coming through with soils there's great opportunity for people to be increasing productivity by fixing the worst parts of their paddocks.

It's a very exciting time to be in farming, I see opportunities and I enjoy the challenge.

Left: Neil and grandson Tom.

Executive Officer's Update

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

I'll kick off this update to say that I hope the season is going well for all - pastures and crops coming up, calves looking good, lambs dropping etc. As always, there seems to be a big range in seasonal experiences between ASHEEP members, with some flooded while others looked for rain, but overall a promising start. I continue my learning-curve managing a "sheep enterprise" on 70-odd hectares with 450 sheep at various stages of life. Scanning percentages went well this year, which has been the case for many. Now I'm doing my utmost to deliver good results at marking, and in my enthusiasm I've ended up with 10 lambs so far to bottle-feed... I still have a few small windows to get some ASHEEP work done!

Current projects ASHEEP has underway in the pasture space include a newly awarded demonstration site in DPIRD's Feed365 project, which Project Officer Demi Vandenberghe is now driving (pg 6), and we also continue into Year 3 of our Pasture Variety Trials (pg 9). We have three sheep-focused projects, the first of which is ongoing work with the team at AgPro Management in the Supporting Transitions to Non-Mulese Systems Producer Demonstration Site (pg 11). The second is a 6 vs 12 Month Shearing Interval Demonstration with producers Ash Reichstein and Megan McDowall, who have been working with Courteney Pengilly as Project Officer. 6 month shearing and condition scores have just been captured and we hope to share more on that later in the year. And finally, we are taking the momentum from the concluded MerinoLink Project forward with our own Mastering Merino Genetics, looked after by ASHEEP's Jan Clawson.

We are keen to bring in some more cattle projects, and the Cattle Committee have been fielding ideas there. We recently submitted four applications in the Meat & Livestock Australia Producer Demonstration Site funding round, including on Age of Weaning in Cattle, Bovine Pestivirus (BVD), and Preventing Bull Preputial Breakdown by Vaccination. The fourth project put forward was titled Carbon Neutral 2030: Getting Started on Farm. We'll find out in July if we have been successful in progressing to round two of what is a competitive application process.

As far as events and workshops, we've recently held the Autumn Field Day (pg 22), are preparing for another great AGM & Conference (23rd June), plus the Cattle Field Day is set for 27th July. In the wool-department, Basil Parker has been working with Nick Ruddenklau to get another shearing training school off the ground (4-15 July), and we've also been working closely with WASIA to develop an AWI-funded pilot project driving take-up of the SafeSheds program. If you'd like help with a shed inspection they are going to be in Esperance 18-22 July (pg 26).

The ASHEEP Committee have recently reviewed our strategic plan and this will become available on our website shortly, we've been contributing to the Woolgrower Industry Consultation Panel and the Sheep and Goat Advisory Group (pg 11), we're looking at changing ASHEEP's name to better reflect the inclusion of beef producers. In short - we're working hard ensure that the grower group delivers good value for members and industry. If you have ideas, get in touch. eo@asheep.org.au, 0409 335 194.

Tori Kirk: New Industry Relations Officer for AWI in WA

Article by Australian Wool Innovation

Australian Wool Innovation is excited to announce the appointment of Tori Kirk as the new Industry Relations Officer in WA.

Tori is a passionate advocate for rural communities and the agricultural sector of Australia. Having grown up in the farming community of Wagin, the pride and challenges of agricultural enterprise have influenced and directed her career pathway to date. Post studying Agribusiness in WA, this passion led her all over Australia in broad and varied roles, developing a wider understanding of rural communities and how they intersect with city counterparts, governments and intermediates.

Tori is especially excited to bring this experience and skillset to AWI as the Industry Relations Officer, to play a role in increasing the connections between WA woolgrowers with their research, development and marketing body as well as an exposure of WA Wool Growers to the rest of the supply chain.

WA wool producers are well regarded for innovation often overcoming some of the most trying challenges, distance being one of the most overlooked. Highlighting these achievements and ensuring the best access to AWI resources and opportunities to provide feedback to the industry will be at the top of the agenda for Tori and she is enthusiastic to take on the role.

Key to the role is building relationships with the strong farming networks in WA, including ASHEEP of course. Please feel free to contact Tori for any issue or opportunity relating to wool and Australian Wool Innovation.

Contact Tori at Tori.Kirk@wool.com



New Project: Feed365

Demi Vandenberghe, ASHEEP

At the year's start, ASHEEP was chosen via an expression of interest to participate in a Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development (DPIRD) and Meat & Livestock Australia funded project – Feed365. The purpose of this project is to research and redesign livestock forage systems to fill feed gaps, develop new feed base options and intergrate them into grazing systems.

The project commenced in 2021 at the Katanning Research Facility, and this component of the trial was designed to evaluate traditional and novel forage species.

The Esperance-based component of the Feed365 trial will be over a three year period from 2022, and the demonstration sites chosen are at Josh Sullivan's leased property the Esperance Downs Research Station and at The Oaks in Dalyup.

Trial discussions were undertaken at a meeting in February between ASHEEP and members of the DPIRD Feed365 research team; Daniel Real and Clinton Revell. ASHEEP was represented by Mark Walter, Dave Vandenberghe, site host Josh Sullivan, Sarah Brown, Jan Clawson and myself (Demi Vandenberghe).

The trial specifics were decided and seeding has begun for most of the trial. The component of the trial located at the Research Station will span over two smaller trial-sized paddocks (15 hectares each) and a control paddock will be taken into account. One paddock has a low-lying topography and is prone to waterlogging, which will be used in the trial as a permanent pasture system, this was seeded in late May with forage oats, tetraploid ryegrass, balansa clover, and RM4 vetch. The second paddock chosen will be used to research pasture options in a cropping rotation and was seeded in late May, half with triticale, RM4 vetch, and brassica and the other half with a double rate of the same pastures. At The Oaks,

50 kilograms of Tedera will be seeded into a small 5 hectare creek-side paddock which is unsuitable for a crop rotation but has a sloping topography, higher rainfall and little by way of drainage issues.

*Feed365 is a four-year project (2021–2025) under the SheepLinks program that engages sheep producers and allied industries to re-design livestock forage systems for grazing all-year-round in Mediterranean environments. The SheepLinks program is a partnership between the **Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)** and the **Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA)**, to underpin the future prosperity of the sheep industry in Western Australia. For more information visit www.agric.wa.gov.au/Feed365*



Images: DPIRD and ASHEEP meet at the Esperance Downs Research Station to plan the Feed365 demonstration sites.

WSM4643. Patience is a Virtue!

Theo Oorschot, Esperance Rural Supplies, 0427 715 166, theoagron@bigpond.com

In the previous newsletter I made mention of the new rhizobia strain E/F that will be commercially available for 2023. An elite rhizobia strain WSM4643 will replace the current strain WSM1455. What does this mean? This improved strain will provide growers with a robust inoculant that enables field peas, lentils and vetches to nodulate and increase N fixation on infertile, acidic soils.

The background to some of the following information is from a presentation Ron Yates (DPIRD and Legume and Rhizobium Studies, Murdoch University) presented at the virtual crop updates this year. I have added a few local components.



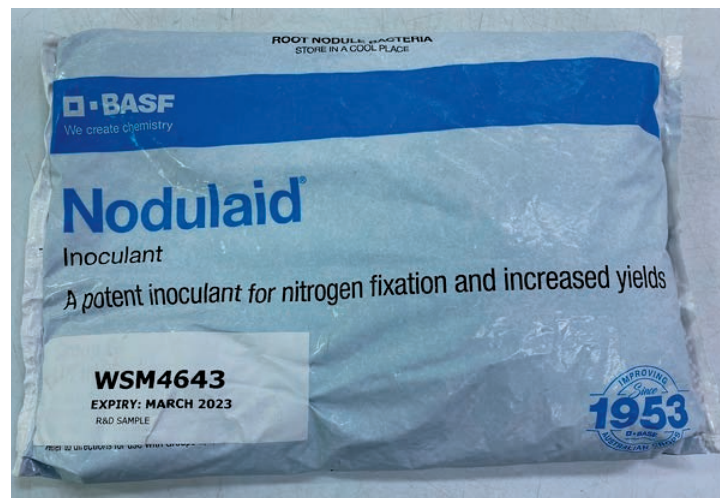
It has been long recognised that the current E/F strain has been performing poorly in the acidic soil types. Here in the Esperance zone, vetches have been progressively moving southward, out of the mallee alkaline soils to these sandplain low Organic Carbon and acidic soil types. Finding the right rhizobia was addressed by collecting nodules from field pea plants grown in low pH soils from southern Italy. As a result WSM4643 was selected.

In 2019, Ron's group instigated two replicated trials to test out this new strain. One was at Muresk, the other at Wayne and Tracey Lewis' Gibson property. In that same year, I had some early forage and herbicide tolerance trials that I was evaluating. It was convenient to have both trials located along side each other. Many farmers may recall going over these sites in the spring of 2019. The soil type at the Gibson site was grey shallow sandy duplex with a pH of 4.5-4.7 at 0-20cm with an OC level of 0.6%.

Breaking down the trial data and just looking at vetches in isolation, WSM4643 resulted in significant increase in nodule fixation and biomass N fixed compared to the old WSM1455. The vetch variety selected for this trial was the Woolly Pod variety RM4.

I myself have two clients testing this new rhizobia in the paddock, one near Gibson the other at Merivale. Both growing vetches on pH around 4.5. The comparison is against nil inoculated vetch seed. In the past, I have accepted to expect not much nodulation on these soil types.

This could be a "game changer"!



ASHEEP AGM & Conference

This year's ASHEEP AGM & Conference is set to be held at the Esperance Bay Yacht Club on Thursday 23rd June with a line-up of speakers and topics driven by the ASHEEP Committee. A few of the highlights include:

- Event sponsor Meat & Livestock Australia are sending Sarah Hyland, who will discuss **Carbon Neutral by 2030, and the Sheep & Beef Sustainability Frameworks**.
- Bronwyn Clarke (WALRC & Murdoch University) plans to update us with key learnings so far from the **Merino Lifetime Productivity Project**, and **WALRC's sheep & beef priorities**.
- Bruce Mullan (DPIRD) will give a wrap of **DPIRD research and development in sheep, beef and pastures**.
- Danny Burkett (Westcoast Wool and Livestock) will cover **wool certifications** such as SustainaWOOL the Responsible Wool Standard (RWS), joined by producer Scott Welke who has recently joined RWS.
- David Howey (Elanco) will share **preliminary results of drench resistance testing** in the region.
- Yarns with author, farmer and past rural land valuer **Bob Reed over dinner**.
- **More speakers to be announced**.

Further info and register at www.asheep.org.au or contact: Sarah Brown, eo@asheep.org.au, 0409 335 194.



IS YOUR CURRENT DRENCH REALLY WORKING?

TAKE THE
**ZOLVIXTM PLUS**
CHALLENGE

FIND OUT MORE



AND FIND OUT!

FREE
\$230
DRENCH
CHECK*

THE FIRST CHOICE PRE-LAMBING, WEANING AND SUMMER DRENCH

Reduced drench efficacy could be costing you thousands of dollars in lost productivity every year. Zolvix Plus is the only combination drench that delivers the power of monepantel. Its unique mode of action provides >99.9% efficacy against a broad spectrum of internal parasites, including single, double and triple resistant strains.^{1,2} Its new 21-day Export Slaughter Interval is the lowest of any combination drench containing abamectin. Visit ZolvixPlusRewards.com.au today and take the Zolvix Plus challenge!

ElancoTM

elanco.com.au
1800 226 324

*Visit ZolvixPlusRewards.com.au for terms and conditions. References: 1. Refer to registered label. 2. Hosking, B.C. et al. (2010). A pooled analysis of the efficacy of monepantel, an amino-acetonitrile derivative against gastrointestinal nematodes of sheep. *Parasitol Res* 106:529-532. Zolvix Plus contains 25 g/L monepantel and 2 g/L abamectin. Always read and follow the label directions. For full product details, contact Elanco Customer Service on 1800 226 324 between 8 am and 5 pm EST Monday to Friday. ZolvixTM, Elanco and the diagonal bar logo are trademarks of Elanco or its affiliates. ©2021 Elanco or its affiliates. EAH21607, PM-AU-21-0662.

ASHEEP Pasture Variety Trials Update

A Meat & Livestock Australia Producer Demonstration Site

Year 3 of the ASHEEP Pasture Variety Trials Meat & Livestock Australia Producer Demonstration Site is underway. Year 1 & 2 were the plot trials, and for the next 3 years we follow producers who are using varieties from the trial - taking biomass cuts, nutritive analysis and sharing information on how growers use the varieties and their performance. We will also be monitoring regeneration of the plot trials where viable.

The project team met earlier in the year, and have selected the following sites to monitor:

Low rainfall zone

- Barloo / RM4 Vetch Mix (Simeon Roberts)
- RM4 Vetch (Simeon Roberts)
- Leafmore Brassica with Geraldton Clover / Ryegrass mix (Peter McCrea)

Medium Rainfall

- Sulla (Dave Vandenberghe)
- Snail Medic (Dave Vandenberghe)
- RM4 Vetch (Dave Vandenberghe)
- Abundant Ryegrass/ Forester Oats / Regina Vetch mix (Nick Ruddenklau)
- Forester Oat / Planet Barley mix in subclover (Nick Ruddenklau)
- RM4 Vetch (Mark Walter)
- Leafmore brassica (Mark Walter)

High Rainfall

- Abundant Ryegrass/ Forester Oat / Regina Vetch mix (Nick Ruddenklau)
- Forester Oat / Planet Barley in subclover (Nick Ruddenklau)
- RM4 vetch / Abundant Ryegrass / Planet Barley / Illabo Wheat/ Eliza Serradella/ Bladder clover / Oats mix (Ryan Willing)
- Illabo Wheat (Ryan Willing)
- Planet barley (Ryan Willing)

We welcome Chad Hall, Sinead O'Gara, and Rachel Minnet from **South Coastal Agencies** who will be adding their expertise to the trials this year, as they have agreed to take on the testing, measurements and monitoring for ASHEEP. The team at South East Agronomy Research will be stepping away after managing the plot trials in Year 1 and Year 2. Theo Oorschot, **Esperance Rural Supplies**, has had ongoing input on this project and we continue to value the knowledge he shares.

If you are planning on planting something next season that you think would be good to include, call Dave Vandenberghe 0427786049. We are running a **WhatsApp group** for the project and those interested are welcome to join and share information on pastures.



South Coastal Agencies installing grazing cages 6/5/22 at Mark & Liv Walters, Cascade. Top Leafmore Brassica, Bottom RM4 Vetch.



Image 1-4 below supplied by Ryan Willing, 24/5/22 Condingup.

1: Illabo wheat seeded 18/4 into minimal moisture. At time of photo is was quite dry at this farm on Savage Road. Plan to gaze mid-June.
2: Planet Barley seeded 24/4 on the same farm.
3: Completely different story out the eastern end, very wet after the huge rainfall event mid-April, this is my pasture mix on deep non wetting sand. Grass / cereals looking amazing but legumes are poor.
4: Unfortunately the rain event took out 80% of my pasture mix due to burst seed, so had to be reseeded 14/5.



Tail Docking: Best practice length?

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

I was recently involved in a meeting of AWI's Woolgrower Consultation Group where discussion included best practice length for tail docking in lambs. With producers and contractors docking tails to different lengths, I thought it may be useful to share what industry denotes as "best practice".

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) have a fact sheet stating that "Tail docking of lambs is recommended for blowfly control under the Code of Practice for Sheep in Western Australia, 2003 (COP – Sheep)", and that, "Lambs should be docked to the third palpable joint or to the tip of the vulva in ewes and to the same length in wethers to reduce flystrike risk. Shorter tailed lambs have higher incidences of rectal prolapse and vulva cancer. Tail docking at a shorter length does not necessarily mean less flystrike." [1]

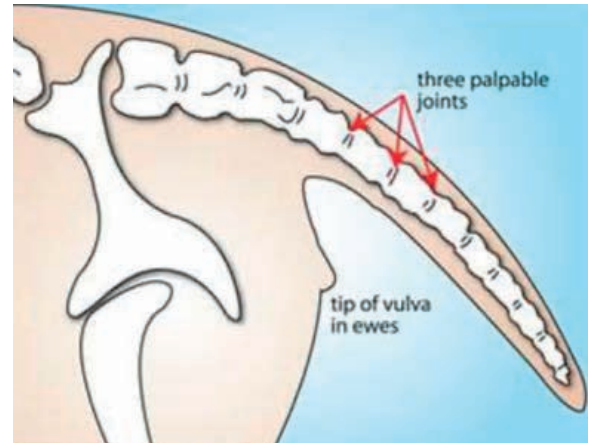


Figure 1: Diagram indicating where to find the third palpable joint and tip of vulva in a ewe. Source: "Best Practice Marking of Lambs", DPIRD, 2021.

This is a useful document even for those who are 'old hat' at marking lambs, as it also goes through current best practice for the **correct age to dock lambs, castration, mulesing, recommended tools, pain relief options** (including withholding periods) and more. To download it in full visit www.agric.wa.gov.au/management-reproduction/best-practice-marking-lambs.

Should the length be different in lambs that are unmulesed?

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) provide some clarity on this in their publication "A producer's guide to sheep husbandry practices", and according to them the answer is that "female and male lambs, and mulesed and unmulesed lambs, should have their tails docked to the same length". They recommend docking tails to just below the third palpable joint or through the third joint space. MLA emphasises the importance of leaving enough tail to cover the tip of the vulva in ewe lambs. To justify the recommended length, they state "A sheep with a tail docked shorter than the recommended length cannot lift its tail fully to defecate (or urinate, in the case of female sheep). In addition, short tails:

- Take longer to heal
- Are more likely to become infected during healing, increasing risk of arthritis
- Increase the lifetime risk of flystrike
- Increase the risk of rectal prolapse
- Predispose sheep to a higher risk of vulval and anal cancers" [2]

References:

1. "Best practice marking of lambs", DPIRD, 2021, page 2, www.agric.wa.gov.au/sites/gateway/files/Best%20practice%20marking%20of%20lambs.pdf (accessed 31/5/22)
2. "A producer's guide to sheep husbandry practices", MLA, 2013, page 47, <https://publications.mla.com.au/login/eaccess?elink=3GS9UMSdcGsMs351SXSL> (accessed 31/5/22)

Pain Relief in Sheep & Cattle is Expected

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

According to Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA), "The provision of pain relief with routine husbandry practices is now an expectation. Not only do producers need to consider the use of pain relief products in their animals, but also alternative husbandry procedures and management practices." "While pain experienced during routine husbandry procedures may result in decreased feed intake in the short-term, animals generally compensate and 2–4 weeks later there is no measurable benefit from pain relief. The benefit for producers in using pain relief during routine husbandry procedures is not only for their own peace of mind, but also in meeting consumer expectations and protecting the product they market. Where producers engage in quality assurance programs that require pain relief, specific financial benefits may also accrue." [1]

That being the case, where do you get the information you need on best practice pain relief, when to use it, what to use, and cost? Well first port of call is likely to have a conversation with your vet, but MLA have also made available some useful fact sheets that will give you an overview of what to consider:

- **Fact Sheet: Pain mitigation in sheep and cattle**
- **Fact Sheet: Pain mitigation for castration in beef cattle in southern Australia**
- **Fact sheet: Pain mitigation in sheep**

Download these sheets at:

www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/animal-health-welfare-and-biosecurity/animal-welfare/#

References:

1. "Fact Sheet: Pain mitigation in sheep and cattle", MLA, 2020, <https://publications.mla.com.au/login/eaccess?elink=YrS3U9SWc5sQsaADfMS0> (accessed 31/5/22)

Non Mulesing Project Update

Article by Ed Riggall AgoPro Management, 0428 299 007

Agpro Management's & ASHEEP's MLA funded Non Mulesing producer demonstration site is in its third year. The project focuses on groups of farmers around the state that have stopped, are in the process of, or just interested in see how their sheep perform when unmulesed. Individuals work out a management plan at the start of the program and with help of their peers, consultant and those that have had experience with unmulesed flocks, they adjust their plan along the way (time of lambing, time of shearing, chemical applications etc).

The main issue for unmulesed sheep in WA is dags and the management of them, much discussion has centred around decreasing these through genetics, grazing management, drenching and pasture management. Last spring, Geneticist Johan Greefe toured around the different groups and delivered on the potential to reduce dags genetically. His message was quite clear that those stopping mulesing needed to be buying rams from studs that were also focused on reducing dags, and that the impact of commercial on-farm selection would be highly limited if their stud was also not culling for the same traits.

On 8th June we will be catching up in Esperance with the groups again to see how the maiden non mulesed ewes and the plans around them are progressing. We will also be looking at the Responsible Wool Standard (RWS). This is an accreditation program available to non mulesed producers and those that have signed up are seeing large premiums for their wool. Recently a client had a 300 cent premium per kg to other similar lines at auction. Westcoast Wools Justin Haydock (RWS accredited) is going to join us to drill into what's entailed (it's more than just being non mules) and how to go about it. The meeting will be Scott Welke's property in Cascade, which is also RWS accredited, and Scott will share his experiences. Farmers are welcome to join.

Contact Ed Riggall for more information. There are various project locations around WA and producers are still able to join: 0428 299 007 or ed@agpromanagement.com

Welcome to Barenbrug as new Bronze Sponsor

ASHEEP would like to extend a welcome to Tim O'Dea and the team at Barenbrug Australia as a new Bronze Sponsor of our grower group. Barenbrug Australia is a leading seed business specialising in research and development, marketing, extension and distribution of proprietary pasture and forage seeds, cropping, turf and seed enhancement technology.



ASHEEP Panel Representation

- **AWI Woolgrower Industry Consultation Panel**
- **DPIRD Sheep and Goat NLIS Advisory Group**

ASHEEP is currently contributing to two key groups that impact the sheep industry.

The **Woolgrower Industry Consultation Panel** and **Woolgrower Consultation Group** assists Australian Wool Innovation to consult with woolgrower representative groups to ascertain woolgrower and industry priorities and needs, and provide information and receive feedback on AWI's research, development and marketing activities. David Vandenberghe is representing ASHEEP and he encourages you to reach out to him if you would like to him to raise any issues or ideas: 0427 786 049 or wattledale@vandenbergpartners.com.au

The **Sheep and Goat NLIS Advisory Group** is a being run by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and is consulting with industry on the potential (looking likely) introduction of compulsory eID tags in WA. Thomas Pengilly is representing ASHEEP in the group and welcomes contact from ASHEEP members to contribute their thoughts: 0438 657 739, penrosepollmerino@hotmail.com

Getting Involved in Ag Shows

ASHEEP interviews Kelly Gorter

In a world where actively maintaining the bridge between agriculture and the public is increasingly important, agricultural shows are one of the pathways we can use to do that. Kelly Gorter is a Livestock Officer with Stirlings to Coast Farmers grower group and runs her own business KG Livestock Services, which supports sheep producers to use electronic identification (EID) tag systems. On top of that, she is Western Australia's Rural Ambassador for 2022, a role she was awarded on a journey that started with the Wagin Woolorama. Our thanks to Kelly for sharing her experience of getting involved in her local show.



What is the Rural Ambassador program?

The Rural Ambassador (RA) Award is a competition run by Agricultural Shows of Australia, that highlights and celebrates young people who have a genuine interest in rural and regional Australia or New Zealand and their local show. It's open to people aged between 20-30 years who are nominated by an Agricultural Society. Each show can nominate an ambassador, who has the opportunity to compete in zone finals and then the state championships, and then the state winner competes on a national level.

How did you become an ambassador?

I'd been involved in the Wagin Woolorama helping with one of the exhibitions when the show committee approached me and asked if I would be their Ambassador. I had a small interview to assess my suitability and interests, and was then offered the position. The role largely involved helping to promote the Woolorama in the lead up, giving a quick speech on opening night, and handing out ribbons in awards ceremonies across the two day show. Having a Rural Ambassador gives the show another angle to pick up newspaper and radio coverage and it gave me some excellent media training opportunities.

It's also a good way for shows to build succession plans, by encouraging young people's involvement to then take the shows forward in the future. Each show has a slightly different role for their ambassadors depending on the structure of their show and the Ambassador's interests. I found it to be low pressure, greatly supported by the committee and a great way to get more involved on a different level. The media, photos, interviews etc were a large part of the role but the rural reporters and interviewers were very kind and welcoming, so it was not too daunting. I also joined the show committee so that I could get a better understanding of how the show is run.

What was it like competing in the awards?

In 2021 there were no other local shows with a Rural Ambassador in our zone so I went straight to the State Finals at the Perth Royal Show in September 2021 as the Great Southern Zone representative. There I met the five other zone finalists from around WA who were an absolutely wonderful group of people! They all had such interesting backgrounds and careers, and it was wonderful to share this experience with them. I was fortunate enough to win the State title so from there I went to the National Finals which were this year held at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Because of the disruptions and cancellations of last year's national finals due to covid, we had that national cohort there as well, with Josh Antonio from the Northam Agricultural Society as the other WA representative. During our time in Sydney, we toured Government House and Parliament House, had time to explore the Sydney show, spent time with the head steward of sections we were interested in, had media sessions and one-on-one interviews, and engaged with the public in the animal sections. These interactions were judged quietly in the background, and we were also interviewed by a judging panel to select the national winners. At the Perth Royal Show I found that the panel were more looking for people who can demonstrate involvement in the community in these interviews, whereas the national competition there was more focus on political issues and broader industry leadership. Karl Milde from SA and Dione Howard from NSW were successful in taking out the 2021 and 2022 national awards respectively. I've also been organising Young Farmers Challenges in WA and was able to be a part of the WA team competing in the National Finals for that while I was over there.

What role do you see agricultural shows as playing?

Our local ag shows are a really good way for the community to come together. There's a lot of comradery involved in helping with all the jobs that build a show, and it's a great chance for town kids to see farm animals like sheep and cows, have fun and create friendships. There are a lot of kids that can't get to the Perth Royal Show and having one in their area brings the show to the kids. They can be quite educational, even if we don't realise it and brings outside vendors into our towns and boosts the image and offerings of our communities. It allows local adults and children to show off their skills and hobbies in areas such as photography, cooking, craft, quilting, flowers and produce among many others which are important for building a sense of community.

Continued over page.

What kinds of roles are there for people to fill in shows?

Every show is different, but roles might include being a steward or section head (for example running the sheep or cattle competitions and exhibits), promotion, helping set up, governance. If people want to get involved in the Rural Ambassador Awards they are not just for farm kids, it's about promoting all aspects of the ag shows. This year's Woolorama ambassador does not work in agriculture but she has been heavily involved with the fashion parade for many years and is very involved in the community so makes a great Ambassador for the show. I'd encourage people to get in touch with their local shows to find out more.



What's next for you?

The Royal Agricultural Society of WA is starting a 'WA Next Generation' committee (check us out on Facebook) to encourage and promote the involvement of young people in agricultural shows. We will primarily be focussing on the Rural Ambassador and Young Farmers Challenge competitions to start with as well as a function at the Perth Royal Show. I've been appointed as President, and we plan to include a representative from each zone of WA on the Committee (we still have a space available for the zone that covers the Esperance region!) I have since moved to Albany so am now looking to get further involved with the Albany show and Ag Society as well as travelling to other shows around WA as the State Rural Ambassador.

Contact Kelly Gorter: 0409 060 065, kelly.gorter@hotmail.com, twitter: @kelly_gorter

Opportunities to take part in the Esperance Show

If you are based in Esperance, and interested in volunteering or greater involvement in the local show, get in touch with the Esperance and Districts Agricultural Society at 90712598 or espag@westnet.com.au. Meanwhile, there are some great competitions and exhibitions that farmers and industry can contribute to.

Wool Competition

Andrew Beaton, Nutrien Ag Solutions, is organising the wool competition again this year. There are two main categories: "ewe/wether" and "ram", with divisions for strong, medium and fine. There are also categories for weaner and lamb fleeces. The majority of wool included is merino, although some dohne has been submitted in the past. This year Andy is looking to expand what's on offer in the wool room by incorporating an educational display to engage the public and give them a better understanding of wool. This will include different breeds and types - meat breeds, colours, crimps, breaks, dags, fleece rot, etc. So put your best fleece or two aside and if you have something unusual on hand, give Andy a bell on 0447 954 154 or at andrew.beaton@nutrien.com.au

Esperance Show Shears

K-D Shearing have kicked off organisation of the 2022 Esperance and Districts Agricultural Show shearing competition "Esperance Show Shears". Get behind this community event showcasing the skill of shearers and wool handlers. Opportunities for sponsorship and other support are available - get in touch with Des 0467394319 or Kahu 0487580298, or at esperanceshearingshow@gmail.com



Nutrien Ag Solutions is one of the leading livestock agents in Australia.

When it comes to livestock we are the experts, staying across market trends & developments in livestock supply chain & production that will deliver more value to your business.

The Chatley & Hutcheson Team specialise in:

- Auction Sales
- Private Treaty Sales
- Online Sales
- Stud Stock Sales
- Clearing Sales

For the best possible livestock marketing, service & advice please contact your local livestock representative today.



Darren Chatley
0457 553 969



Barry Hutcheson
0488 590 520



Jake Hann
0429 871 707

Livestock Leaders

ASHEEP interviews Liam and Michelle Vandenberghe

Liam and Michelle Vandenberghe are both involved in farming livestock and recently went through a Livestock Leaders Program which was run by Livestock Collective in conjunction with the WA Stud Merino Breeders Association. They are a great example of a young couple building their careers in agriculture. Liam got going with a Bachelor of Agribusiness at Curtin University, before working in financial analysis and then on the family farm at Scaddan for the last three years - a mixed sheep and cropping enterprise. Michelle works alongside her parents running a sheep and cattle operation in Munglinup which she returned to four years ago. Both have a passion for driving productivity through technology, integrated animal health, and genetics. ASHEEP touched base with them to find out more about the Livestock Leaders program and what they took away from it.

How did you find the Livestock Leaders course and what did it cover?

We were invited to join the program by a member of the Stud Merino Breeders Association of WA. The main areas it covered were media training and governance training.

The media training was very enlightening. It really made us understand that we know our industry best. This knowledge should give us the confidence to talk about and be more transparent about what we do. The training also gave us invaluable skills when it comes to media interviews. Including careful use of language, apparently not everyone understands terms like DSE, AI or Backlining. We would highly recommend that anyone interested in advocacy do some sort of media training.

Do you think that there's a need for people in agriculture to become better or more active advocates for the industry?

Absolutely. Social media has the potential to give our industry a voice. This can be used to showcase what we do to people outside of the industry, helping to bridge the divide between the city and country that we all understand to be widening. Secondly, those who oppose our industry are well funded and already use multiple platforms to push their point of view. Increased advocacy can help people to formulate an informed opinion about agriculture and make an informed choice in the supermarket.

If there are people in the industry who are trying to become more active advocates, or be more open about their practices, how do you recommend they get started?

Certainly some sort of training like this would be a good start. The media training in the Livestock Leaders Program was generic and not at all agriculture based. Outside of that, a good understanding of how both traditional and social media reach different demographics is invaluable. Knowing exactly what will broadcast well is important too. Having a clear, consistent, and concise message will always get through.

Where do you see the biggest challenges and opportunities being for the farms you are involved with and the livestock industry into the future?

The biggest challenges coming up are that the detractors of the industry are already up and running with a very well organised and well-funded campaign. This has really put us on the back foot. Also, we have a serious need for people. Not only shearers but farm hands, truck drivers etc. This is going to be a major challenge going forward but it also gives us the opportunity to reach people outside of the usual pools of people we draw from and even outside of the industry to not only fill these positions but to advocate for our industry as a whole.

What's the biggest positive about working in the livestock industry?

We get to feed the world. And it's a pretty good lifestyle.



Digital & Online Recommendations from Liam & Michelle:

- AgriWebb for stock management/ record keeping
- DAFWA Weather Stations App
- Enoch the Cow Vet on YouTube
- Agriminders podcast

Find out more about Livestock Leaders:
www.livestockleaders.com.au



Overseas Staff Induction Pack - Biosecurity

ASHEEP took part in a Foot & Mouth Disease Ready Project that concluded last year, with one of the results being the recommendation that farms include information on plant and animal diseases in their staff induction pack. The following information was developed.

What you and your staff need to know about emergency animal and plant diseases

Many diseases, currently exotic to Australia, would have a catastrophic impact on our primary industries, including livestock and cropping. Regardless of where an outbreak might occur, all Australian producers will be impacted by loss of international markets and flooding product on domestic markets. When you think about what you can do at a property level, here are some things you should consider:

- Many viruses and bacteria can be carried by people and while the risk of infection might be low, it is not zero.
- Viruses and bacteria can be carried in animal products such as salami and bacon for extended periods.
- Viruses, bacteria and other pests can also be carried on plant material, in dirt on boots or clothing, or on straw or in soil for extended periods.

Know where your risks are:

If you are employing people from other countries, or if you or your staff are travelling, please check the disease status (e.g. Foot and Mouth Disease, African swine fever, Covid-19) status of the country to know your risk.

- Google '**FAO plant pests and disease**' to get the most up-to-date information about bacterial and viral diseases, or pest concerns of plants.
- The **Farm Biosecurity** website has biosecurity information in other languages to help your staff.

Strategies to reduce risk of exposure and spread

- Quarantine/isolation for people is the best barrier to prevent an emergency disease outbreak. Consider increasing the time between leaving other countries and being in contact with your livestock. This might include an overnight stay in the port of arrival.
- Delay contact with stock by anyone who has recently travelled.
- Working clothes and boots that have left the property need to be thoroughly cleaned and inspected to make sure there is no dirt or organic material. Provide appropriate disinfection for shoes and insist on work clothes being washed regularly. Google virus and bacterial disinfection for more information.
- Make sure that work clothes and boots are left on the property when anyone travels overseas, whether you or your staff. This will reduce the chance of bringing back contaminated work gear.
- Make sure staff are not bringing in or receiving via post processed meats, plants or seeds from overseas.

Don't just rely on border control. Have a farm strategy!

This article was produced as part of the FMD Ready project, supported by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA), through funding from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment as part of its Rural R&D for Profit program, and by producer levies from Australian FMD-susceptible livestock (cattle, sheep, goats and pigs) industries and Charles Sturt University (CSU), leveraging significant in-kind support from the research partners.

The research partners for this project are the Commonwealth Science and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), CSU through the Graham Centre for Agricultural Innovation, the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) and the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, supported by Animal Health Australia (AHA).



Agro Spot: 2021 Annual Ryegrass Variety Trial

Jimmy Bidstrup, Elders, 0429 087 008

Last year Elders Esperance undertook a pasture trial aiming to examine the quality and quantity of biomass produced by 13 different diploid and tetraploid varieties of annual ryegrass in the high rainfall zone of Esperance.



Background

The site selected for this trial was approximately 45km East of Esperance with an average annual rainfall of 650mm. The site has a deep sand soil type with a pH of 5.5 and an organic carbon percentage of 2.03%. In 2020 the paddock was seeded to forage oats with a strong clover background existence in the paddock. During the year three biomass cuts were taken at 8, 16 and 24 weeks post seeding after which the plots were mowed to simulate grazing. Feed quality analysis was taken at 24 weeks and sent to the Agrifood Technologies laboratory to have key feed parameters examined. It is important to note that the biomass presented is dry matter and is only the sown ryegrass in furrow and not a measurement of the complete biomass of the pasture sward. The trial was sown on the 26th May with all varieties sown at 25kg in a triple replicated design on 10-inch spacings with the site experiencing waterlogging issues for several months before drying out in Spring.

Results

In Figure One it can be observed that the total amount of biomass produced by the ryegrass was between 8367kg/ha and 19033kg/ha over the 175 days between seeding and the last biomass cut. Astro led the race in cuts one and two but was beaten out by Grassmax in the third timing (simulated hay cut timing). The third and final cut was the largest with the average amount of biomass generated 8638kg/ha compared to an average of 553kg/ha at the 8 week cut and 3946kg/ha at the 16 week cut. Quality analysis was more variable with crude protein averaging 6.98%, metabolizable energy averaging 9.33MJ/Kg, Digestibility averaging 63.66% of dry matter and fat averaging 2.88%.

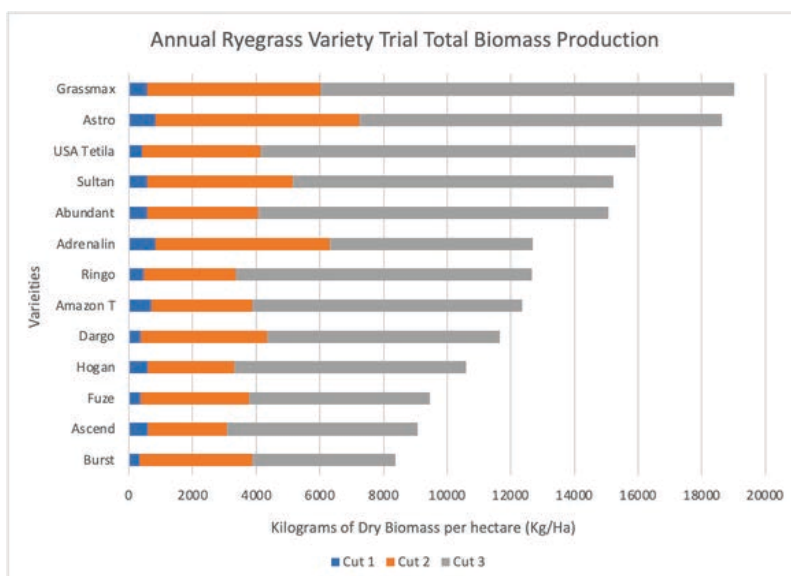
Summary

- Annual ryegrass is only able to sustain three living leaves per tiller at once after which it quickly becomes lignified, rigid and rank. To get the best bulk and quality value out of ryegrass it must be rotationally grazed evenly with ample nutrition applied post grazing.
- The maturity length of ryegrass matters. We saw a slow start from several varieties in the first biomass cut (8 weeks) but excellent late season growth in the 24-week cuts. Post recording also indicated much better aftermath heading and final grazing recovery.
- Fertiliser applications greatly improved not only the biomass produced but also quality. There was a 14% increase in protein, 20% increase in metabolizable energy, 10.1% increase in digestibility, 13% increase in fat and a decrease in ash.

Special thanks to the Michael and the Whiting family for the site and invaluable help and to seed companies Barenbrug, S&W Seeds and DLF Seeds for supplying seed. Elders Esperance will again be conducting pasture trials in 2022. If you would like any further information about this trial, our current trials or any other agronomy questions, please feel free to contact Jimmy Bidstrup on 0429 087 008.

Figure One (right): Total Biomass collected from the three biomass cuts at 8, 16 and 24 weeks post seeding.

Figure Two (below): Ryegrass trial site after the second biomass cut and 'simulated grazing' on September 20th 2021.



Meet: Erin Gorter, MLA Board of Directors

ASHEEP interviews Erin Gorter

Erin Gorter is one of nine members of Meat & Livestock Australia's (MLA) Board of Directors and is currently the only member based in WA. MLA's Selection Committee (made up of four member-elected producer representatives, three industry representatives, and two non-voting members of the current MLA Board) has recently released an invitation for applicants to fill three non-executive director positions, closing Sunday 19th June 2022. With these points in mind, it was a good opportunity to pick up the phone and check in with Erin, who agreed to share her thoughts and give insight into the role she plays on the Board, what led her to take on this leadership role, and how producers can connect with her.

Erin comes from a background of 25 years of mixed farming in Kojonup (sheep, wool, grains, agroforestry), before she transitioned to become a rural and regional industry consultant. She currently holds a range of leadership roles in the agricultural industry, including as a Director of the Grower Group Alliance, MLA, and more. Our thanks to Erin for taking time to speak with ASHEEP, it's critical that our industry continues to foster and develop good leaders and it was great to hear more about Erin's path.

You joined the MLA Board of Directors in November 2015, what led you there?

Having been a sheep producer for a really long time, involved both hands-on and in running the business, I started getting the farm involved in research and development projects. That involvement led to being on project committees and I became more and more aware of the industry machine that is out there. I felt it was an area I'd like to have input in. As I took on more roles, I felt that the skills and knowledge I had picked up could be of use. National industry strategy really interests me, and I wanted to take on a more influential role in that space. I'm passionate about research, development and adoption. A key focus of mine is making sure the investment into research and development (R&D) goes into areas that will be solving problems for farmers. I have other interests too, but that is my major driver.

What does your role on the MLA Board involve?

The role of the Board is at a high strategic level, looking at risks, opportunities, trends, issues and many other facets across the broad red meat industry. The main office is based in Sydney, and there are usually six meetings per year, as well as the AGM. Board members are from around Australia and we try hold the meetings in different areas of the country when possible. It works for me as I enjoy traveling, meeting people and having the opportunity to understand other systems and the broader red meat supply chain. Within the Board there are sub committees - I currently Chair the Remunerations, People and Culture Committee. There is also a Audit, Finance and Risk Committee, and a Research and Development Investment Committee.

Part of the role of being a Board member is that you are not an expert in everything. We do not make operational decisions. We are a skills-based Board, not representational (we don't represent particular areas, sectors or bodies). It is crucial however, that all Board members have strong governance skills and understanding. My skills are in on-farm innovation, ag tech, adoption of R&D, strategy, risk, financial management, governance, and in having broad industry understanding and experience. I often think I am the closest thing to being a producer, without still being a producer! It's important to maintain an interest in industry issues, engage with farmers, and feed that in.

What do you love about it?

I'm incredibly proud of MLA as a business - it's a highly impactful R&D corporation. I'm very conscious that producers pay a mandatory levy, and it is a big responsibility to be part of a team involved in the decision making that directs how funds are spent. I enjoy the challenge of questioning whether something is the best use of funds. I love that we are making a difference both on-farm and across big-picture industry. Red meat is an incredibly exciting Australian product that is valued both at home in Australia and around the world.

What do you consider the main challenges for the industry?

With challenge there is always opportunity, but I'll flag a few matters that are key.

A big challenge to our industry is from people who aren't involved in agriculture making assumptions and having opinions on what we do. It is very important that we maintain integrity and have clear communication to our consumers.



I am a strong believer that it's up to us to lead the conversation and inform people of what we do and why, in an honest and respectful way. We can't expect people to know if we don't tell them, and we need to know what their questions are. This includes around peoples' perceptions of plant-based and cell-based meat.

Having the labour to support our industry is crucial. People need to see our industry as having viable career options. From boning room staff to farm hands and shearers. I believe MLA's primary influence is to help build the productivity and profitability of our industry so that we can continue to develop strong, viable, sustainable businesses and are able to compete with others in the labour market.

The climate piece is also an important challenge – making sure that producers are able to adapt to variability in climate. Australian farmers are some of the best in the world at adapting, and as an organisation, I believe we need to make sure that we are driving the agenda, not reacting to it, in those areas.

What does promoting red meat look like for you?

Given the opportunity, I will shout red meat from the roof tops. We have an incredible industry. I enjoy weaving what we do into conversations with people to understand their drivers. I'm comfortable speaking about it with people who don't eat meat – having intelligent fact-based conversation to understand their views, not necessarily trying to convert them. Promoting the industry can be simple and subtle - gentle conversation starters, wearing my goodmeat.com hat, taking an MLA stubby holder to a BBQ – simple things that we can all do. I try to make sure that people know that they can come to me with questions. MLA has a broad network of people with more detailed knowledge than me that we can access to get information. I do use social media such as Twitter, but more to stay informed actively in the background than to make statements. And of course, I am always asking people if they have seen the latest Australia Day lamb ads!!

Are there any MLA projects that you are particularly keen on?

Very hard to choose! One thing I'm very excited about is measuring intramuscular fat in lamb so we make sure we don't lose the tender, juicy flavours of our Australian lamb. Another is feedbase and options to grow more grass. As livestock producers, growing grass is the essence of what we do – if we don't get that right then often other pieces of work are not of use. For example, you can have the best genetics, but if you don't feed the animals efficiently they won't necessarily express their full potential. One of the things I love about involvement with MLA is that I've learnt about so many more factors of industry than I'd ever imagined. Packaging innovations, consumer trends and insights, nutrition of red meat, the Australia Day lamb advert – list goes on! Learning about them is exciting and a privilege.

As an MLA Board member in WA, what can people get in touch with you about?

I'd encourage anybody with questions or feedback on what MLA does or how we do it to get in touch. If I can't answer I can connect you to others who will be able to. It can be hard in WA, as some activities can seem a long way away, and I am always happy to make those connections. MLA are very open to answering questions and coming to speak to groups. Send me an email: egorter@mla.com.au

MLA is currently seeking nominations for 3 non-executive director positions on its Board, would you encourage people to apply?

I encourage anyone who feels they are interested and can add value to the Australian red meat industry to apply. It's a very clear way to help others have an impact in your industry. It is a significant time commitment, but what you get back is ten-fold.

For more information on MLA and an information pack outlining the application process, visit www.mla.com.au/directorguidelines Please note Erin has answered these questions from her personal point of view and they are not an official response from MLA.

Towards 90 Project: Generating more lambs to sell

Have a problem with low lambing percentages or looking for an opportunity to bring yours up? There is new project underway that may be worth a look.

The Towards 90 program is all about sheep reproduction best practice. In simple terms, implementing the management to sustainably generate more lambs to sell. The T90 brand reflects the targets of achieving 90% and beyond in lamb survival across single and twin-bearing ewes. It's for producers, livestock agents, agri consultants and advisors, agriproduct retailers, agribusiness lenders, researchers and extension officers, livestock contractors and service providers.

Find out more about what is on offer: www.towards90.com.au



“I’d love to see the farm stay in the family forever. Bankwest get that”

Whether you require day-to-day banking support, or a customised banking solution - we’re here to help.

Our Bankwest Business Relationship Managers have an in-depth understanding of the local areas and industries they work in.

Working closely with you, they are committed to delivering innovative banking solutions to help you reach your business goals.

Speak to your local Business Relationship Manager today

Anna Voice
Relationship Manager
Rural & Regional

Shop 20, Level 1 Dutton Arcade, Esperance
WA 6450
0472 863 563
anna.voice@bankwest.com.au
bankwest.com.au

Rebecca Cole
Relationship Manager
Rural & Regional

Suite 20, Level 1, Dutton Arcade, Esperance
WA 6450
0472 879 085
rebecca.cole@bankwest.com.au
bankwest.com.au

Use Summit inSITE to Improve Your Fertilizer Use Efficiency



Article by Summit

Today's environmental standards are high indeed and given the current price of fertilizer, there's never been a better time to maximise nutrient use efficiency and align application rates, timings and production targets using data from Summit inSITE.

Growers would appreciate there is potential for any nutrient to move off target and it's not just restricted to the more mobile elements like nitrogen (N) and sulphur (S). A good example is phosphorus (P). P is generally considered to be relatively immobile in the soil. However, this is not the case in every situation, in particular on sands with a low Phosphate Buffering Index (PBI) in higher rainfall zones. Hence P application rates and timings need to target the seasonal demand.

As a general rule of thumb, growers looking at maintenance P application should budget on around 1kg P/ha per dry sheep equivalent (DSE) per year. Therefore, one dry cow to the hectare would equate to around 8 to 10 DSE/ha and a cow with calf at foot up to 16 DSE/ha.

Historically, farmers have used application rates that typically do not vary across a paddock or farm. As we go forward and strive to improve fertilizer efficiency, that makes less economic sense, because even across relatively small paddocks, soil types can change and so to do the removal and/or demand for nutrients

Although many farmers fear terms like variable rate technology (VRT), it can be adopted relatively simply and application rates changed according to nutrient maps.

Within our inSITE toolbox, Summit can help you to develop these information rich maps to get a visual interpretation of soil test results across different depths and growing seasons, so you can see how your farm is tracking over time.

The example phosphorus status map illustrated (figure 1) considers the Colwell P value in conjunction with the PBI results to provide an overall P status. This is important as the higher your PBI the higher your critical value of Colwell P needs to be to ensure adequate phosphorus.

For further information, get in touch with your local Area Manager:

Tim Donkin – Area Manager, Esperance (West) – 0408 092 355, tdonkin@summitfertz.com.au

Nick Donkin – Area Manager, Esperance (East) – 0428 715 045, ndonkin@summitfertz.com.au

Figure 1: An example of how the Summit inSITE program can be utilised to give growers a better return is given above. In this example, the client's P status map takes into consideration Colwell P values read in conjunction with PBI results to provide an overall P status. This combination is important because the higher your PBI, the higher your critical value of Colwell P needs to be to ensure an optimal P status. It can be seen that the majority of the farm in this example has excess or luxury P in soil reserve and hence, P application is not necessary in the purple or blue areas. Two sites (green) have adequate P levels and only one (yellow) was marginal for P. If we assume a carrying capacity of 12 DSE/ha, in the area identified with adequate P, 12kg P/ha would be the maintenance rate. This may increase to 18kg/ha for the marginal P area. If this site also had a low PBI, splitting the P application would reduce the risk of leaching or run-off, therefore returning an even better result from the fertilizer strategy.





ASHEEP Autumn Field Day Review

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

ASHEEP's Autumn Field Day was held on 30th March 2022, right about the time that the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic was due to hit WA. Considerable discussion and planning was held to take the day forward and it was great to be able to hold the field day, which was largely themed around Workplace Health and Safety (WHS). Thanks to David and Katherine Vandenberghe for hosting the event at their Gibson shearing shed.

To kick things off, our first presenter was Kaitlin Trebley from human resource and safety business ProcessWorx, who took us through the changes in WHS laws that have come into effect this year. Key to her message was that the new laws include an expansion of the WHS Duty of Care, including, amongst other things, that farmers and senior managers have a duty of care over their own staff, as well as contractors and volunteers. Other items of note were that the new laws introduce positive due diligence, industrial manslaughter, expand the definition of a notifiable incident, and increase penalties for failing to comply with WHS duty of care. A lot to take on, as evidenced by the barrage of questions Kaitlin fielded. Farmers and ag businesses were encouraged to review their WHS system, get one in place if they had not already done so, and make sure that it takes into account a process for managing contractor safety - including inducting them on farm and checking that the contractor has their own fit-for-purpose safety management system. Despite the amount of information covered and all the changes afoot, the overwhelming feedback on Kaitlin's presentation was that attendees left it better positioned with an understanding of what needed to be done to manage safety and risk.

Next up was a talk from Darren Spencer and Valerie Pretzel from WA Shearing Industry Association (WASIA). ASHEEP has been undertaking discussions with WASIA to support the roll-out and uptake of the SafeSheds program. SafeSheds was developed by WASIA and Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) to drive safety in shearing sheds, and we've been successful in developing an AWI-funded pilot to get WASIA back down to Esperance in July to help producers check their sheds. Just prior to the Autumn Field Day, Darren and Valerie went through a check of the Vandenberghe's shed, the key results of which were shared with those at the field day. Read WASIA's article (pg 26) for more information on SafeSheds.

Following that we had a break from WHS, with a presentation from Mark Allington on behalf of The Sheep's Back that covered the 'Top 10 things leading producers do in business to achieve success'. Unfortunately, Mark picked up COVID-19 in days prior to the field day, so he delivered the presentation via a recording. The upside of this being that, if you missed it, it's now available to view on The Sheep's Back YouTube channel.

Images: Top - Mark Walter, ASHEEP Chair. Below left - Valerie Pretzel, David Vandenberghe & Darren Spencer. Below right Kaitlin Trebley.



Continued over page.

Continued.

Autumn Field Day - Sheep Vaccinations: What, when, how many?

Dr David Swan, Swans Veterinary Services, was the next presenter, engaged by The Sheep's Back to deliver a presentation covering sheep vaccinations. The session was informative and well received, and we've had ASHEEP members who couldn't make the field day reach out to find out if there was a way to get the details, so see as follows a snapshot of some key take-aways. The information below was written up by Sarah Brown (ASHEEP) and David has reviewed it.

Vaccines - antigenic stimulation

David's discussion commenced with an overview on the basics of how vaccines work, the stimulation of antibodies, and the generation of immune defence against disease. Some vaccines include live virus (like Scabigard) and others killed virus. Different vaccines also generate different forms of immune response, the example David used was humoral immunity versus vaccines like Gudair which impart cellular immunity, with the downside being the formation of a lump. As far as working with the vaccines, the key points were:

- **Timing is important** – the level of immunity offered by some vaccines peaks and then wanes. Look at the recommended timings of the vaccine and try to stick with them or you may have windows with reduced or no protection.
- **Immunity can be delayed** – take note of the recommended vaccination dose strategy on the box as you may need to start the program earlier than anticipated. Some vaccines build up immunity slowly and may include pre-lambing doses that benefit the lamb when it feeds on the ewe's milk.
- **Storage: Don't freeze!** Read the box for correct storage, don't store sheep vaccines in or near the freezer compartment, and if they freeze fully or partially then discard them as they won't be effective. If they are in the fridge and it goes off overnight, don't panic.
- **Very few vaccines offer 100% efficacy** – there is still a chance that a portion of the flock may be impacted by the disease you are targeting, but by using the right vaccines you can reduce risk.
- **Targeted Vaccination** - When vaccinating in the face of a disease outbreak, it is best to use just the one vaccine, so that the immune system can give all its attention to mounting a good response to that condition. E.g. in a pulpy kidney outbreak, use just a 3 in 1, with no other vaccines.



Above: David Swan presenting at the Autumn Field Day.

Kennel Cough - Dogs

Kennel cough can have a big impact on a team of working dogs. The old killed injection has been largely replaced by an intranasal modified live vaccine. This newer vaccine is highly effective and has greatly reduced the incidence of kennel cough. A great example of how better vaccines can induce herd immunity and suppress the disease in the population.

Glanvac - *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis (ovis)*

This vaccine comes with a range of options including 3 in 1, 5 in 1, and 6 in 1.

Glanvac 3 offers protection against cheesy gland (CLA), tetanus and pulpy kidney. Glanvac 6 against cheesy gland (CLA) and five clostridial diseases; black disease (liver fluke), black leg, malignant oedema, pulpy kidney, and tetanus. Swans Veterinary Services don't see a lot of tetanus in the sandplain but it can crop up in heavier country. David advised that Glanvac 3 is mostly what is needed in the Esperance area as they don't see a lot of the 'extra three'. Glanvac 6 is the preferred vaccine for rams and horned sheep that can be susceptible to swelled head.

David advised to always use a Glanvac product, not the straight 5 in 1 in Esperance as it does not include cheesy gland coverage which used to be common in the area, causing wastage and glands in the meat.

Vaccines with Added Trace Elements

David recommended discussing using vaccines that include added mineral supplements, or adding additional mineral supplements, with your vet. A vaccine may include additional supplements such as B12, Selenium and Copper, but they may not be in the amounts required to make an impact, or conversely they may include too much if used in multiple combinations. For example, David advised that Glanvac vaccines are available with added trace elements B12 and Selenium – he noted that the Selenium is generally not bad for lambs in the Esperance area but may not contain enough Selenium for ewes, and the quantity of B12 may not be enough to correct a deficiency. Copper & Selenium can be quite toxic, so consider the use of supplements in a targeted way and if you're not sure get advice from a vet.

Eryvac

Eryvac is used to target arthritis in lambs, a condition that is fairly common around Esperance. Eryvac targets Erysipelas arthritis, which is not the only cause of arthritis. David noted that infections causing arthritis are normally associated with marking

Continued.

wounds, but can also be from grass seeds or shearing cuts. If you want to know the type of infection causing arthritis in your flock, it is something that can be figured out by bringing in a couple of affected lambs to the vet. If you have Erysipelas on the property it is useful to know. A complete Eryvac program for lambs involves multiple doses, including in ewes pre-lambing which helps build immunity in lambs via the milk. David noted that it takes time for the animals to build up the immune response, so if you miss the pre-lambing and only do the lambs at marking it is a waste. If you've left it too late to do the pre-lambing vaccinations an alternative to using Eryvac can be using Alamyacin LA, a long-acting antibiotic, which according to David will cover a broader range of arthritis causes and will do the job if you use it at marking - but it will only be of benefit at that one point. So, if you are shearing or impacted by grass seeds later in the season you will have no coverage. Alamyacin LA can also be used in combination with Eryvac at marking if you are seeking broader coverage. Alamyacin LA is only available by vet prescription. Eryvac has recently become available in a combination with Glanvac.

Gudair

This vaccine is single dose vaccine, once in a sheep's life, that provides protection against ovine Johne's disease (OJD). It is considered that OJD is widespread throughout Australia and can cause significant wastage and death in infected flocks. It can be used in older sheep, although ideally it is administered to lambs at marking (4-16 weeks old) which can then be tagged as an 'Approved Vaccinate'. David advised that the reason for this is to try to vaccinate the sheep prior to them grazing too much and picking up the disease from pastures. David gave a word of warning that that vaccine includes an aggressive mineral oil adjuvant (causing a lump at the vaccination site and the life-long cellular immunity). He said that the lump is to be expected, but more lumps are associated with incorrect vaccination technique or if it has been used in older infected sheep. The lumps should not be progressing into abscesses. Because of reaction at the vaccination site, it is important to vaccinate sheep in the correct location (check the box for details as incorrect placement has been linked to 'OJD staggers') and to use the recommended applicator to protect the user from accidental self-injection and serious related health consequences. Zoetis advises that use of the vaccine will decrease OJD shedding and OJD mortalities by more than 90% in high disease sheep flocks. [1]

Campyvax

Campyvax is a vaccine targeted to help control reproductive losses due to Campylobacter infections in sheep. This infection has been found in the Esperance region. David advised that it requires 2 doses 3 to 8 weeks apart, typically at 'rams in' and 'rams out' for maidens, or 2 doses pre-joining. A point David raised was that if you are seeing a lot of reproductive loss in sheep (e.g. abortions), they can be caused by multiple issues so it is worth investigating the cause. Swans are able to check the cause via either blood testing the ewe or testing the foetus and will likely be able to access a significant subsidy via a surveillance program for ewe abortion and newborn lamb deaths run by DPIRD. The moral of the story here is that it is useful to understand what's causing reproductive losses, as Campyvax vaccine may or may not target the main causes on your property.

Mastitis Vaccine

If you are seeing a lot of mastitis in your flock, David raised that there is a vaccine available that may be able to help you get on top of it. Mastitis can be caused by a range of issues and bacteria, but if a bacteria called Pasteurella is at the root of it there is a bovine respiratory product which a veterinarian can prescribe for off-label use. The vaccine is used in lambs and combined with a culling regime it can assist producers to get on top of mastitis over 2-3 years. A vet may also recommend Alamyacin pre-joining. Look out for sheep that are coughing and speak to your vet if you are concerned.

Scabigard

Scabigard is a live scabby mouth vaccine that is only used in lambs. Because it is a live vaccine, if you don't have scabby mouth on property, you may introduce it. David recommended it for those who were exporting sheep or were concerned scabby mouth was a risk for marketing. He advised against using it within 6 to 8 weeks of shearing and to take care during administration, as it can infect humans.

Barbervax

This is a vaccine for barber's pole worm, which can be an issue in the Esperance region particularly in more coastal areas. The vaccine was developed in WA by Brown Besier and David recommended it as an alternate to those who had to drench against barber's pole multiple times to combat it, or where resistance has developed. He noted that it is well-used in the New England tablelands and South Africa where barber's pole is very bad. It requires giving sheep multiple boosters - useful immunity is not reached until the second dose and full after the third, but this immunity is not retained.

Footrot Vaccine

David noted that there is a vaccine available for footrot, but it requires approval from the Chief Veterinary Officer for use in WA and is not currently used here.

This article is based on a presentation given by Dr David Swan in April 2022 at ASHEEP's Autumn Field Day. The information provided is with best intent, however we recommend discussing livestock health management decisions with your vet prior to implementation.

References: [1] <https://www.zoetis.com.au/all-products/portal-site/beef-dairy-sheep/sheep-gudair.aspx> (27/5/2022)

Field Day Conclusion: WHS for Livestock Transporters

The final session at the Autumn Field Day was delivered by John Mitchell, Esperance Livestock Transport. John covered off on WHS considerations that transporters themselves have, and some of the things farmers should consider given that they have a responsibility for their contractors under new WHS laws. Paramount was that the ramp should be well-maintained and fit-for-purpose (National Ramp Standards are available), and that yards should have good access for the operator, suitable gate latches, and a correct lead-up to the ramp. Fatigue management was also raised, with John noting that there are clear limits provided by Worksafe and that farmers should make themselves aware of how their transporter and drivers manage WHS as the risk is shared. Other items pointed out were working at heights on the trailer, overloading, and ensuring that animals are fit to load. And that's a wrap for the Autumn Field Day.

The NEW addition to the Gold Standard Sheep Vaccine range

Article by Zoetis

The GlanEry® range will protect your valuable assets and maximise on farm profits.

Zoetis Australia is proud to announce the addition of **GlanEry 4 in 1® B12** to the innovative GlanEry sheep vaccine range, which includes GlanEry 7 in 1 B12. GlanEry 4 in 1 B12 will soon be available in stores near you from May 2022. This product is a new formulation that combines the market leading proven protection of Glanvac® 3 B12 and Eryvac® into one convenient vaccine.

PROTECT YOUR EWES AND LAMBS FROM:

- ERYSIPELAS ARTHRITIS
- +
- CHEESY GLAND (CLA)
- +
- PULPY KIDNEY
- +
- TETANUS
- &
- BOOSTED WITH VITAMIN B12

ALL IN A 1ML DOSE

GlanEry 4 in 1 B12 is a worthy addition to the Gold standard sheep vaccine range as it will protect sheep and lambs against 4 endemic sheep diseases in Australia: **Erysipelas arthritis, Cheesy Gland (CLA) and 2 major clostridial diseases** (Pulpy kidney and Tetanus), all in a **convenient 1mL dose**. According to the MLA, Arthritis and Cheesy Gland collectively **cost the Australia Sheep Industry approximately \$60M annually**[2].



Dr Kelly Graham, Associate Director of the Zoetis Livestock Veterinary Team is really excited about the addition of Erysipelas protection into the Zoetis Glanvac 3 in 1 range. Kelly indicated that, 'Erysipelas arthritis, caused by the bacterium *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae*, is the **most common cause of lame lambs** on farm and results in significant losses both on farm and at the abattoir. **Losses on farm are due to culling, poor growth rates and reduced trading options** if animals are unfit to load, and abattoir losses are associated with **trim, reduced carcass weights and potential carcass condemnations.**'

There are 3 common bacteria associated with arthritis; Erysipelas, Chlamydia, and pus-forming bacteria, all of which are commonly found on either the sheep's skin, or in the soil and the environment. Although it is difficult to isolate the causative organism when investigating arthritis, recent survey work in southern Australia by Joan Lloyd[3] (2016) found that 57.6% of culture positive samples included Erysipelas. In a Western Australia study, Paton et al[4] (2003), showed that 100% of culture positive cases included Erysipelas. In a southern NSW survey, Ferguson and Munro[5] (2014) showed that 86.3% of culture positive samples included Erysipelas. **This research confirms that *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae* is the most common cause of bacterial joint infections in Australian lambs.**

- ✓ Stops **Lame Lambs** (Erysipelas arthritis)
- ✓ Protects your **Wool Cut**
- ✓ Protects **Meat Quality**
- ✓ More **Lambs to Sell**
- ✓ **Easy & Convenient**

Arthritis causes significant loss of production because of poor weight gain and reduced wool production in lame lambs, and failure to thrive in lambs with chronic arthritis. An abattoir study[1] showed that lambs with arthritis had a **reduction in total carcass weight of (HSCW) 1.2 kg** compared to healthy lambs without arthritis. This does not include the losses due to **trim, which have been estimated at approximately 3kg per carcass**[6]. In Western Australia, Paton et al[4] (2003) also estimated that **1.4% of lambs born, died before weaning or are culled due to arthritis.**

When asked where these bacteria come from, Kelly said '**Erysipelas is found all over Australia and it can persist in the environment, including in water.** It is carried on to a farm by many ways; from **introduced sheep** (i.e. sheep that are chronically infected, **by feral pigs, and a variety of other native animals**). In fact over 30 species of wild birds and at least 50 species of wild mammals are known to harbour Erysipelas, as well as cattle, dogs, kangaroos and mice. All these animals and birds provide an extensive reservoir and are a source of environmental contamination. So, given this bacterium can survive in the environment and is carried by a range of animals, contamination on any farm can change from year to year, therefore if a farm doesn't experience infection one year it does not mean it won't experience problems in subsequent years.'



The **NEW** addition to the **GOLD STANDARD** Sheep Vaccine Family

Erysipelas arthritis is a significant issue and is found in all Australian sheep producing regions. The National Sheep Health Monitoring Project annual report (2018 – 2019) [7], which details the abattoir findings from approximately 8.7 million sheep inspected across Australia, showed a high percentage of sheep lines (~50%) had evidence of arthritis at slaughter.

GlanEry 4 in 1 B12 has been developed in Australia and is manufactured in Melbourne, Victoria. GlanEry 4 in 1 B12 provides the convenience of 2 vaccines in 1 with premium disease protection, and so will save time, labour and cost whilst making sheep vaccination simple and easy.

REFERENCES: 1. Lloyd et al (2018) Trimming and production losses associated with bacterial arthritis in lambs presented to an abattoir in southern Australia, Animal Production Science. 2. MLA 2015 Priority list of endemic diseases for the red meat industries, Project B.AHE.0010. 3. MLA 2016 An investigation of the potential link between arthritis and tail length in sheep, Project B.AHE.0238. 4. Paton et al, Effect of mulesing and shearing on the prevalence of Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae arthritis in lambs, Aust Vet J, Vol 81, No 11, November 2003. 5. Ferguson E, Munro J (2014) Incidence over a 3 month period of Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae as a cause of polyarthritis in sheep carcasses in abattoirs in Southern NSW, The official Newsletter of the Australian Sheep Veterinarians. 6. Farquharson B (2007) Arthritis in Prime Lamb Sheep, A Review. MLA Project B.AHW.123. 7. NSHMP Annual Report 2018-19.

SafeSheds in Esperance

Article by WA Shearing Industry Association



At the end of March, Darren Spencer (President) and Valerie Pretzel (Executive Officer) of the WA Shearing Industry Association (WASIA) spent two days in Esperance at the invitation of ASHEEP. The visit was funded by Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) and included speaking about shearing shed safety at the Field Day and then assisting four growers to inspect their shearing sheds and use the SafeSheds safety program.

We visited sheds with David Vandenberghe, Josh & Tegan Sullivan, Leigh & Karina West, and Nick Ruddenklau and did a walk-through inspection of the shed using the SafeSheds Program (books and app). Each inspection took about 1.75 hours and also gave time for lots of conversations about shearing, shed improvements and work practices.

The timing was helpful as ASHEEP also had Kaitlin Trebley from ProcessWorx speak at the Field Day regarding the commencement of the new WHS Laws. WASIA and AWI developed SafeSheds to:

- Provide employers with an understanding of their duty-of-care obligations;
- Provide a best practice guide, checklists and a handy mobile app to assist woolgrowers, shearing contractors and shed workers to assess their current shearing shed working conditions, environment and equipment;
- Allow woolgrowers to create an improvement program to improve and comply with modern workplace standards;
- Make the workplace safer for all participants with health and safety as priorities for the wool harvesting industry by identifying and rectify safety hazards and providing options to manage risks and conditions in the shearing shed.

WASIA and AWI are working with ASHEEP and Grower members (and their shearing contractors) to pilot these facilitated, hands on inspections of shearing sheds and introduction and training on the use of the SafeSheds Program. The two days in March were a pre-cursor to Darren and Valerie spending a week from July 18-22 assisting as many growers as possible review their sheds and work practices and use the SafeSheds program.

“It was great to walk around the shed with both the grower and their shearing contractor and assist in having some really valuable discussions,” said Darren, “We found improvements that could be made even in some of the newer sheds and were very pleased with how open everyone was to making needed changes”.

Valerie said “I think it was very useful having lots of different eyes looking at things in different ways from a shearing and wool handling point of view; the concerns and interests of the grower and WASIA and Sarah Brown from ASHEEP providing a broader industry perspective. It also threw up some anomalies with the system that we could go away and improve on.”

Darren and Valerie are looking forward to working with more ASHEEP growers between 18-22 July.

The cost of a SafeShed assistance session would normally be \$500 but AWI is subsidising this week so the cost to growers will be only **\$250 per shed**. Spots are already filling fast as we can only manage about 20 in a week so get in touch with ASHEEP now to register your interest:

Jan Clawson
ASHEEP
jan.clawson@bigpond.com
0407 990 497

SafeSheds - The Shearing Shed Safety Program

Making the wool harvesting workplace safer for all

The shearing industry is one of the most physically demanding occupations, and as an industry, wool producers and wool harvesters need to do as much as is possible to reduce the risk of injuries and accidents occurring in shearing sheds as well as provide the best working conditions possible.

Not only will workplaces be safer, this will go a long way to increasing industry workforce entry, retention and career longevity, it will also improve industry productivity and profitability.

Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) and WA Shearing Industry Association (WASIA) have developed a new program to do just this, to improve safety in shearing sheds. Safe Sheds, The Shearing Shed

Get started for free

Your work email

First name

Last name

Company name

Are you a Wool Grower or a Shearing Contractor?
 Wool Grower Shearing Contractor

What did growers & shearing contractors think of the SafeSheds checks?

All parties involved in shed inspections said that they got value from going through the process. ASHEEP spoke to a couple of the growers, Karina West and Nick Ruddenklau, to get further thoughts from them.

Karina West (shed pictured right) noted that their shed is relatively new, so there weren't too many things to adjust. A few things picked up were that they needed to move the back aid fixing points slightly, place a fire extinguisher and first aid kit in the shed, and put up some signage for exits and muster points etc. What they found most useful was having their contractor there to get a shared understanding of what was expected from the grower and the shearing contractor, i.e. never remove wool press guards and wearing appropriate footwear. Karina said that she would definitely recommend others use the inspection system, and she noted that people using the program in older sheds may pick up more items to work on.



Nick Ruddenklau noted that the major thing picked up at the inspection of one of Epasco's sheds (pictured above) was having safe access via steps and stairs; generally easily fixed with hand rails and locating of steps to a better spot. Simple things were discussed like chaining-off loading docks and painting visual safety lines on the edge of raised boards. Electrical E-Stops also came up as a good safety measure to have in sheds allowing anyone to stop power quickly in an emergency. Nick also appreciated having their contractor in the shed at a time that wasn't in the middle of shearing - he thought they both learnt things. He also saw it as a great framework to start Workplace Health and Safety plans and understand the shearing staff's point of view.

Desiree Woller and Kahu Hokianga have newly taken up a shearing run as "KD Shearing". They attended the shed inspections at the Wests', Sullivans' and Epasco. Desiree is a wool classer and Kahu is a shearer, on top of their new roles running the business. Their feedback on the process was very positive, including that it was great to be able to share their thoughts and bring the perspective of both staff and contractors into discussions. They are now sending out the SafeSheds checklists to the growers they work with and they are using the system to work on safety amongst their own team and at the sheds.

Overall, it was a great experience learning more about the SafeSheds program, and it is a fantastic opportunity to have WASIA back in Esperance in July to help guide more people through the process. If we can deliver workplaces for shearing and farm staff that are safe and a pleasure to work in, it goes a long way to encouraging people to have long, successful careers in the wool industry, and to forging strong relationships between growers and shearing teams.



WESTCOAST

WOOL & LIVESTOCK

Proudly 100% Australian owned

Joining us from South Australia, Westcoast Wool & Livestock is excited to welcome Sam Wakefield to our livestock team as one of your Esperance based Livestock Representatives.

We cover all aspects from on-farm wool buying and auctions to wool marketing and forward selling, strongly supported by on-property livestock sales and access to various saleyards across WA.

Contact us to find your local representative today!



ESPERANCE WESTCOAST WOOLS

Danny Burkett | 0418 848 314

ESPERANCE WESTCOAST LIVESTOCK

Sam Wakefield | 0457 869 368

WCW.COM.AU

Optional Earmarking & Branding for Sheep and Cattle

A reminder that from 1 January 2022, earmarking of sheep and earmarking and/or branding of cattle became optional. Find below an extract from the DPIRD website detailing the changes.

Following consultation undertaken by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development in 2020, changes have been made to the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management (Identification and Movement of Stock and Apiaries) Regulations 2013 for the identification of sheep and cattle (including buffalo).

Sheep identification requirements

- Earmarking of sheep is optional from 1 January 2022. This means that it is up to each owner to choose whether to earmark their sheep.
- Some owners may wish to reduce the costs, labour, time and physical impacts on their stock by ceasing to earmark, while other owners may have reasons to retain earmarking as an additional form of identification, such as for farm management purposes.
- Owners who continue to earmark will still be required to use the registered earmark allocated to them as listed on their PIC card.
- **NLIS tagging on property of birth with an accredited year of birth coloured NLIS visual or electronic tag remains mandatory.**
- **NLIS tagging with an additional pink tag prior to leaving any subsequent owner's property remains mandatory.**

Cattle (and buffalo) identification requirements

- Earmarking and branding of cattle / buffalo are optional from 1 January 2022. This means that it is up to each owner to choose whether to earmark and/or brand their stock.
- Some owners may choose not to use their earmarks or brands, while other owners may have reasons to retain earmarking and branding as additional forms of identification, such as for farm management purposes.
- Owners who continue to earmark or brand will still be required to use the registered earmark and/or stock brand as listed on their PIC card.
- **NLIS tagging with an accredited white NLIS electronic device remains mandatory on property of birth.**
- From 1 January 2022 the requirement for NLIS tagging of cattle will change to:
 - In the southwest land division (agricultural area): by 6 months of age or before they first leave the property, whichever occurs first
 - Outside the southwest land division (pastoral region): by 18 months of age or before they first leave the property, whichever occurs first.
- **NLIS tagging with an accredited orange NLIS device remains mandatory for any cattle not on property of birth and in absence of any other NLIS device.**

Source: www.agric.wa.gov.au/livestock-movement-identification/changes (accessed 31/5/22)

Please refer to this website for more information and frequently asked questions.



Calling WA sheep producers

Article by Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)

Are you a sheep producer in WA with more than 500 sheep in the past year? If so, we want to hear from you! DPIRD is conducting the 4-yearly Western Australian Sheep Producer Survey to give a fresh snapshot of the State's billion dollar industry.

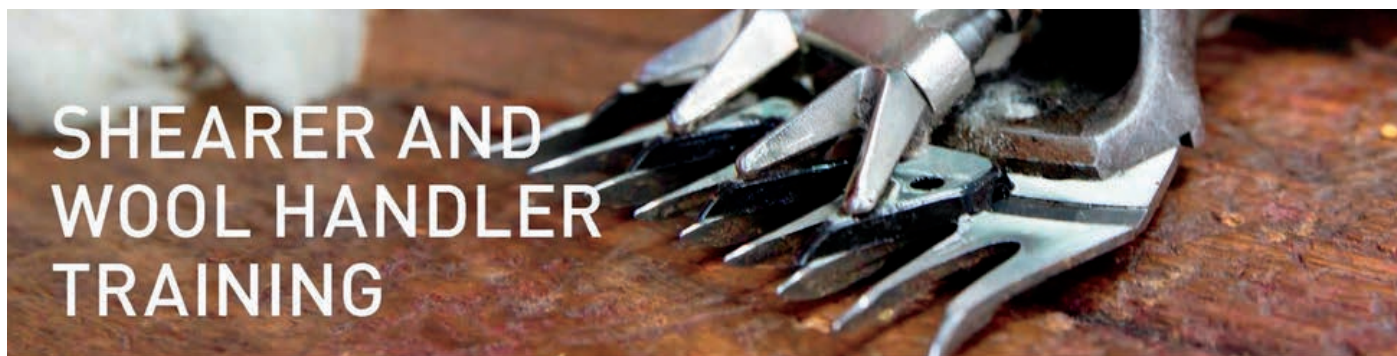
This is the fourth survey of its kind conducted by DPIRD and aims to capture an overview of flock dynamics, along with understanding producer intentions and practice change over time. This information is vital in guiding future research and development programs to help support a progressive and thriving sheep industry. Survey questions relate to general flock demographics, breeding and selection, reproductive rates, use of labour-saving devices, participation in capability building activities and changes in management practices including carbon accounting.

The survey should take about 25 minutes to complete. All information will remain anonymous, and a summary report of survey results will be provided. Completed surveys will also go in the draw to win one of five \$100 fuel vouchers. The survey is being conducted via telephone and online.

You may be contacted by an independent marketing company, Ipsos, to complete a phone survey or you may receive an email link via DPIRD. You can also complete the survey now and view previous reports by visiting www.agric.wa.gov.au/sheep-survey

AWI Shearing & Wool Handling Training

ASHEEP's thanks to Basil Parker and Nick Ruddenklau for working to arrange a shearing school in Esperance again this year.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA Shearing & Wool Handling in shed training:

For more information:
1800SHEARS

NOVICE | Esperance
4th July- 15th July 2022

NOVICE | Badgingarra
18th July - 29th July 2022

Both courses are novice level
for the first week and at an
improver level for the second

APPLY HERE:

<https://forms.gle/vp3Vf3J55djWQFjg8>



**SHEARER &
WOOL HANDLER
TRAINING**

WA

Upcoming ASHEEP Events

- Non-Mulese Project Producer Meeting - 8th June
- ASHEEP AGM & Conference - 23 June
- Shearing Training - 4-15 July
- Shearing Shed Inspections - 18-22 July
- ASHEEP Cattle Field Day - 27 July

South Coastal Agencies are hosting an EID Day - 9 June in Esperance for sheep and cattle producers.

ASHEEP'S CATTLE COMMITTEE

Chair

Ryan Willing

0447 075 650, ryan.carnigup@gmail.com

Members

Enoch Bergman

Amy Forrester

Simon Fowler

Wes Graham

Ian McCallum

Nicholas Ruddenklau

Matthew Ryan

WALRC Newsletter



Subscribe to the WA Livestock Research Council newsletter



www.walrc.com.au
admin@walrc.com.au
 0418 931 938

JUNE

Next ASHEEP Committee Meeting is scheduled for June 2022.

Contact a committee or staff member to raise an item.

YOUR ASHEEP COMMITTEE & STAFF

PRESIDENT

Mark Walter

0427 951 417

mark@walterag.com.au

VICE PRESIDENT

Dave Vandenberghe

0427 786 049

wattledale@vandenberghpartners.com.au

TREASURER

Alan Hoggart

0428 320 755

alan.hoggart@bigpond.com

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Enoch Bergman

0427 716 907

enoch@swansvet.com

Nick Ruddenklau

0488 070 065

nick@epascofarms.com

Scott Welke

0427 792 040

scottwelke@bigpond.com

Simon Fowler

0428 750 012

simon-robynflower@bigpond.com

Tim Starcevich

0448 896 960

timstarcevich@gmail.com

Karina West

0447 765 040

leighnkarina@bigpond.com

Thomas Pengilly

0438 657 739

penrosepollmerino@hotmail.com

Josh Sullivan

0427 754 046

josh_tegs@bigpond.com

Ryan Willing

0447 075 650

ryan.carnigup@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Sarah Brown

0409 335 194

eo@asheep.org.au

BOOKKEEPER

Jan Clawson

0407 990 497

janclawson@bigpond.com

PROJECT OFFICERS

Courteney Pengilly

0450 036 093

Demi Vandenberghe

0447 125 458

ASHEEP SPONSORS

PLATINUM



GOLD



BRONZE

ANZ Bank | Alsoca | Aus Stock Transport | Ballard Seeds | Barenbrug
Bedford Harbour Engineering | Clearwater Motel Apartments | CSBP | Elders
Esperance Quality Grains | Farm & General | Farmanco | Clarke & Stokes Agriservices
Swans Veterinary Service | Troy Animal Healthcare | WAMMCO International | WSD Agribusiness

Disclaimer: The Association of Sheep Husbandry, Excellence, Evaluation and Production (ASHEEP) does not accept any liability whatsoever by reason of negligence or otherwise arising from use or release of the information in this newsletter, or any part of it.



Association for Sheep Husbandry, Excellence,
Evaluation and Production Inc.

