

ASHEEP NEWS



FEED365 2022 Wrap – Esperance Sites

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

ASHEEP is coordinating three demonstration sites in the FEED365 Project; a collaboration between the Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development (DPIRD) and Meat & Livestock Australia to research and redesign livestock forage systems to fill feed gaps, develop new feed base options and integrate them into grazing systems.

Those who attended our Spring Field Day had the opportunity to visit two of the demonstration sites hosted by the Sullivan's at the Esperance Downs Research Station. Results were variable, with one treatment plan producing a high performing pasture, while a second paddock treatment led to capeweed dominance. Following is a summary of project activities over the year past. DPIRD intends to crunch the data and provide further analysis which will be released down the track as part of the overarching project. This will include a review of the financial costs and benefits.

Project Background

The FEED365 project commenced in 2021 at the Katanning Research Facility, and six grower groups around WA are now involved in demonstration sites. ASHEEP's sites are running from 2022 to 2024. These kinds of projects don't come together without a significant degree of in-kind support. Our thanks go to demonstration site hosts Josh & Tegan Sullivan, Mitchell Greaves & Demi Vandenberghe, to David Vandenberghe and Mark Walter for their involvement in the project committee, to Jake Hann (Nutrien Ag Solutions) for condition scoring sheep, to Sinead O'Gara (South Coastal Agencies) for pasture analysis, Nutrien Ag Solutions for donating the tedera seed, and to the team at Summit for providing N-Gauge strips and a component of the soil testing.

Image: Site 2 demonstration pasture mix in the FEED365 project.

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In late 2021, the DPIRD research team led by Dr Daniel Real with Dr Clinton Revell, Dr Angelo Loi, and Dr Paul Sanford, commenced exploring options that would address one or more feed gaps in the Esperance region. Treatments were developed in consultation with representatives of the ASHEEP Committee and data to be captured included soil testing, pasture growth (biomass and nutritive analysis) and sheep productivity (liveweight, condition score, stocking density, grazing days). Three demonstration sites were selected for Year 1 of the project. These sites will be utilised for the three-year duration of the project.

Site 1: Early Feed in a Pasture - Cropping Rotation

Location: Esperance Downs Research Station, Gibson

Host: Josh & Tegan Sullivan

Profile: Soil sample 0-40cm, sand to sandy loam, 5.9-6.4 pH(w)

Paddock History: Regenerating pasture of rye grass, sub clovers, capeweed.

Objective: To increase early and late grazing potential while preserving sub clover.

Demonstration Plan: This paddock was divided in half, with intention for a dry-seeded pasture mix sown at two different rates.

- Half A = 47 kg/ha seed plus 20 kg/ha Alosca rhizobia inoculum: Leafmore Brassica 2kg, RM4 Vetch 15kg, Triticale 30kg, Alosca FE 10kg, Alosca C 10kg
- Half B = 84 kg/ha seed plus 20 kg/ha Alosca rhizobia inoculum: Leafmore Brassica 4kg, RM4 Vetch 25kg, Triticale 55kg, Alosca FE 10kg, Alosca C 10kg

Brassica was included for early feed, vetch for late feed and nitrogen production, and triticale for early winter feed and stubble cover. There was no pre-sow knockdown in an attempt to retain the existing sub-clovers. The paddock was sown 19/5/22 into marginal moisture (this seeding date was later than intended due to availability of seed). The paddock was fertilised with superphosphate on 12/4/22 spread at 100 kg/ha, and 1 L/ha Pyrinex Super insecticide (90 L/ha water vol) was applied on 24/5/22 predominantly to control red legged earth mite.

Grazing commenced on 4/8/22 with 108 ewe hoggets in each half. Sheep were removed after 20 days on 23/8/22 due to scouring caused by a significant capeweed burden in the paddock. Sheep gained weight and condition score in the high seeding rate treatment but only maintained weight in the low seeding rate treatment. At that point the demonstration was terminated.

Project Snapshot

Name: FEED365

Sites:

Main research based in Katanning
3 demonstration sites in Esperance
Other demo sites around WA

Esperance Locations:

Gibson x 2 (Josh & Tegan Sullivan)
Dalyup x 1 (Mitchell Greaves & Demi Vandenberghe)

More Info:

www.agric.wa.gov.au/FEED365

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Half A (47 kg/ha sowing rate of seed)				
Stock Movement	Stocking Rate (sheep/ha)	Condition Score Average	Liveweight Average (kg)	Daily gain (g/hd/day)
04/08/22 108 ewe hoggets added	13	2.7	54.6	
23/08/22 108 ewe hoggets removed after 20 grazing days.	13	2.5	55.1	28.5
Comments	Sheep really only maintained weight in this treatment and were scouring.			

Half B (84 kg/ha sowing rate seed)				
Stock Movement	Stocking Rate (sheep/ha)	Condition Score Average	Weight Average (kg)	Average Daily gain (g/hd/day)
04/08/22 108 ewe hoggets added	13	2.7	55.8	
23/08/22 108 ewe hoggets removed after 20 grazing days.	13	3.4	58.3	124
Comments	Average condition score increased by 0.7. These ewes had less scouring than those in Half A.			



Sinead O’Gara (South Coastal Agencies) took pasture samples on 16/08/22. A quadrat cut (1m²) was taken in each half to measure dry matter (DM) production of the pasture. Visual analysis indicated capeweed was the dominant species in both treatments.

Measure	Half A (47 kg/ha sowing rate)	Half B (84 kg/ha sowing rate)
Wet weight (g/sample)	1466	1246
Dry weight (g/sample)	218	122
Dry matter (kg/ha)	2180	2220
Moisture content %	85	90
DM content %	15	10

Sinead reported that the capeweed would have contributed to the high moisture content of the pasture in August and likely led to the observed scouring. Adequate roughage/fibre needs to be provided to reduce the risk of weight loss and this was provided to some extent in Half B with the higher triticale seedling rate leading to a modest positive weight gain and less scouring. Even so, the capeweed still dominated.

The demonstration was terminated to allow broadleaf herbicide control measures. The paddock reverted to management at the Sullivans’ discretion, with Josh reporting that on 24/8/22 the paddock was sprayed with Amine 625 at 1.2 L/ha to control the capeweed and recover the paddock. Sheep were then used to graze the capeweed down and following that, the whole paddock was knocked down with 1L/ha Paraquat to desiccate the entire pasture mix and weeds.

Site 1 Key Messages

In this demonstration, the sowing of a pasture seed mix was not successful in meeting the main objective of establishing early grazing potential and preserving subclover. The two main challenges to success were:

1) The site was not sown early enough to provide early grazing.

While planning decisions were made in early 2022, it was too late for the required seed to be delivered in time to be sown early. Once the seed had arrived, the Sullivans had commenced their main crop seeding program and it was necessary to wait for an available window for them to have an opportunity to seed the demonstration sites. As a result, the pasture was not able to establish in time for an early grazing opportunity. An earlier dry sowing time would be considered by DPIRD in the future.

2) No pre-sow knockdown applied, allowing capeweed to establish dominance.

The treatment did not incorporate a pre-sow knockdown, with the intent of retaining existing sub-clover. The capeweed content was much greater than anticipated and dominated both halves of the paddock. There was no selective option for weed control that would eliminate the capeweed whilst retaining the pasture mix, given that any application available to target the capeweed would also impact two of the three species in the pasture mix (RM4 Vetch and Leafmore Brassica). The pasture mix in Half B (higher sowing rate) produced a modest weight gain in the sheep, however, capeweed was still observed as the dominant species. Understanding the weed burden is important when designing the species mixtures so that appropriate herbicide options are available and implemented.

In 2023 this paddock will be cropped, with the potential to monitor crop grazing.

Site 2: Pasture mix for long term pastures

Location: Esperance Downs Research Station, Gibson

Host: Josh & Tegan Sullivan

Profile: Soil samples 0-40cm, loamy sand / sand, subject to waterlogging, 5.7-6.2 pH(water)

Paddock History: Long-term regenerating pasture including brome grass, silver grass, geranium, rye grass, sub clovers.

Objective: To use tetraploid ryegrass to suppress unwanted grasses such as brome and silvergrass, and to increase pasture biomass

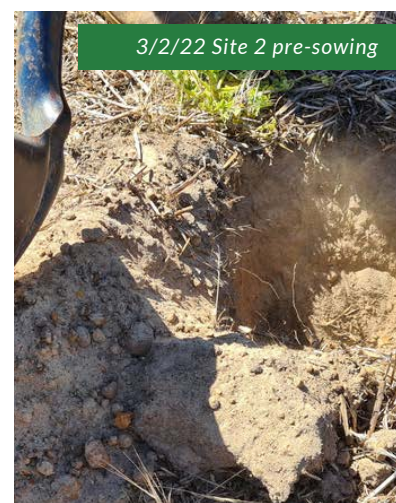
Demonstration Plan: This paddock was sown with a pasture mix and then divided in half, with one half grazed (Half A) and the other kept for hay (Half B). A deep rip strip was included for comparison purposes.

- Seed mix 37 kg/ha plus 20 kg/ha Alosca rhizobia inoculum: Vortex Tetraploid Ryegrass 10kg, Balansa Clover 2kg, Express Forage Oat 15kg, RM4 Vetch 10kg, Alosca FE 10kg, Alosca C 10kg

Balansa clover was added for legume content and potential water logging issues. Forage oats was added for late production of feed and a longer grazing period. Vetch was included for late feed and nitrogen production.

The paddock was sown 19/5/22 into good moisture. Management included a pre-sow knockdown herbicide on 15/4/22 (1% Amsul, 400 ml/ha ester 680, 1.5 L/ha Roundup 540, 0.3% Inbound, with 80 L/ha water vol), and an insecticide application on 24/5/22 1L/ha Pyrinex Super (90 L/ha water vol). Fertiliser included superphosphate spread @100 kg/ha on 12/4/22, N gauge strips applied by Summit on 27/6/22, and 90 L/ha Proboost (liquid Nitrogen) which equals to 20 kg/ha nitrogen on 29/7/22.

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14/6/22 Site 2 Deep Rip Strip: Running from front centre of image to right of power pole with minimal discernible difference in pasture

Grazing commenced in Half A with 108 ewe hoggets added on 4/8/22. Shortly afterwards, Sinead O’Gara used a True Test Pasture Meter to estimate Food On Offer at 2950 kg/ha and used the MLA Stocking Rate Calculator to assess that, assuming grazing for the next 60 days, there was a need to increase the stocking rate to 26 sheep/ha (based on a feed allowance of 2 kg DM/head/day which is consumption plus loss from trampling). This calculator is freely available on MLA’s website. On 12/8/22, 108 additional ewe hoggets were added.

Early animal growth rates and overall grazing days were very high suggesting the pasture mix was beneficial. Growth rates fell towards the end of grazing, presumably due to declining pasture quality and sheep numbers perhaps should have been reduced. Sinead O’Gara took pasture samples for biomass and nutritive testing on 20/8/22 and at the end of grazing on 19/10/22.

Unfortunately, the second sample was delayed in transit resulting in the sample being mouldy on arrival at the lab, and whilst it showed the quality and quantity of pasture had reduced, it cannot be relied on for accuracy. Sinead also took samples from a grazing cage placed in a nearby paddock being used as a “control”, which contains a standard regenerating pasture mix for the property, including some oestrogenic sub clovers. The plan was to also graze and measure weight gain in the control paddock but this did not happen in this season. The comparison of the two samples is shown on the next page.

Paddock description

Paddock size: 1 ha

Pasture available at start of grazing: 2950 kg DM/ha

Pasture available at end of grazing: 1000 kg DM/ha

Pasture growth rate: 20 kg DM/ha/day

Number of days grazing: 60

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Alternative allowance (kg DM/head/day, 10MJ ME/kg DM)

2 Pasture allowance: 2, Stocking rate: 26.3

kg DM/head/day, 10MJME/kg DM # stock / paddock

Merino adult wether		Crossbred weaner	
Pasture allowance: 1.5	Stocking rate: 35	Pasture allowance: 1.5	Stocking rate: 35
<small>kg DM/head/day, 10MJME/kg DM</small>	<small># stock / paddock</small>	<small>kg DM/head/day, 10MJME/kg DM</small>	<small># stock / paddock</small>

Crossbred ewe		Crossbred ewe with lamb/s	
Pasture allowance: 2	Stocking rate: 26.3	Pasture allowance: 2.5	Stocking rate: 21
<small>kg DM/head/day, 10MJME/kg DM</small>	<small># stock / paddock</small>	<small>kg DM/head/day, 10MJME/kg DM</small>	<small># stock / paddock</small>

Stock Movement	Stocking Rate (sheep/ha)	Condition Score Average	Weight Average (kg)	Average daily gain (g/hd/day)
04/08/22 108 ewe hoggets added	13	2.6	53.8	
12/08/22 108 additional ewe hoggets added (40% weighed & condition scored. Stock already in paddock were not measured at this time.)	26	2.7	54.7	
15/09/22 40% of the 216 ewe hoggets in paddock weighed & condition scored.	26	3.2	65.5	318 (34 days - 12/8-15/9/22)
18/10/22 40% of the 216 ewe hoggets in paddock weighed & condition scored. Sheep then removed.	26	3.5	60.3	-157 (33 days - 15/9-18/10/22)
Comments	Josh Sullivan reported that the stock were in good condition and grew significantly more wool than he would usually expect (this was not measured as part of the demonstration). Average daily gain for the 67 days of grazing was 84 g/hd/day. Sheep grazing days in the paddock were approximately 1750 DSE days/ha. The paddock was slashed during grazing on 4/10/22 to control grass seed set.			



27/07/22 Site 2.



09/8/22 Site 2 at Spring Field Day.

Analysis	Control Paddock	Site 2 Demo Paddock	Comments
Sample Date	27/08/22	20/08/22	
Pasture composition	Existing regenerating base of ryegrass, Dalkeith / Junee / Dinninup subclovers, Margurita serradella.	Ryegrass, balansa clover, express oats, RM4 vetch	
Dry matter (DM) (%)	15.3	19.4	Demonstration paddock marginally higher DM most likely due to higher grass content.
Crude Protein (%)	24	22.1	Similar and high levels of crude protein.
ADF (%)	26.8	25.9	Slightly lower ADF and lignin in the Demonstration pasture leading to a higher metabolisable energy (more digestible). Higher NDF may lead to lower feed intake.
NDF (%)	39.8	42.5	
Lignin % of DM	3.08	2.36	
ME (MJ/kg DM)	9.69	10.35	
Relative Feed Value (RFV%)	159	150	Slightly lower in the Demonstration pasture probably due higher NDF.
Total Digestible Nutrients (%DM)	61.1	65.7	Similar but slightly higher in the Demonstration pasture.
Overall comment: Overall, both samples are of high quality and should deliver a positive weight gain in the sheep grazing these pastures. To ensure maximum utilisation of nutrients, "green feed" mineral supplementation maybe beneficial.			



Definitions	
ADF	Acid Detergent Fibre: This is the least digestible components of fibre comprising lignin and cellulose. It influences the total digestibility of a feed stuff.
NDF	Neutral Detergent Fibre: This is a measure of the slowly digested fibre in the feedstuff. It consists of both digestible and indigestible fibre fractions. I.e. it captures bad and good fibre. Includes lignin, cellulose, hemicellulose and some pectins.
Lignin	Completely indigestible fraction that is part of both NDF and ADF. No nutrient value.
ME	Metabolisable Energy per kg of Dry Matter
RFV	An Index scoring the feed relative to a baseline of 100 = mature lucerne (taking into account ADF and NDF)



As the season progressed, barley grass and brome grass became a problem. To extend the grazing life of the paddock, Josh initially slashed Half A on 4/10/22. This knocked off the developing seeds, and once they had reshot several weeks later Josh removed the sheep and spray topped to prevent further seed. At that point the last animal measurements were taken.

Meanwhile in Half B, where the pasture had been left for hay, the mix was looking very promising. The hay was cut on 5/10/22 and baled on 20/10/22. A sample has been taken for testing and we look forward to sharing the results when available.

Josh has reported that following the spray topping, he has been able to continue to graze both halves of the paddock and currently has 200 lambs finishing it off. In Half A the ryegrass and some vetch has come back following the spray topping and with the late rains the area has continued to provide feed. After being cut for hay, Half B has had vetch, oats, balansa, and ryegrass reshoot and is providing valuable late feed. The rain has not been ideal for harvest, but the pastures are enjoying it. Cost benefit analysis to come.

In 2023 this paddock will be put into two separate experimental pasture mixes sown in February ideally to provide autumn feed, spell over winter, then graze again through to late spring.

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20/10/22 Hay baling Site 2



19/10/22 Sinead O'Gara taking pasture cut at Site 2 on last day of measured grazing



19/10/22 Ewe hoggets from Site 2



Site 3: Lanza Tedera

Location: The Oaks, Dalyup

Host: Mitchell Greaves & Demi Vandenberghe

Profile: Soil samples 0-40cm, loamy sand to clay loam, 5.5-8.2 pH(w)

Paddock History: 5 ha creek-side paddock in pasture, unsuitable for a crop rotation with a sloping topography, higher rainfall and little by way of drainage issues.

Objective: Establish tedera as a permanent pasture to graze over the summer-autumn feed gap.

Demonstration Plan: Establish tedera in winter 2022 and graze in autumn 2023.

- Lanza Tedera 10 kg/ha, Nodulaid Tedera inoculum



Jake Hann & Josh Sullivan weigh and condition score sheep

Establishment of the tedera is ongoing and has taken two attempts. The paddock was coming out of an existing regenerating pasture with a significant weed burden, and initial preparations involved a first knockdown spray on 6/6/22 (3 L/ha Roundup, 1% wetter), a second knockdown on 15/6/22 with insecticide to target redlegged earthmite (2 L/ha Paraquat, 300 ml/ha Le-Mat, 1% wetter). The paddock was then sown 16/6/22, followed by pre-emergent herbicides on 17/6/22 (500 g/ha Diuron, 1 L/ha Reflex, 1 L/ha Propyzamide). Redlegged earthmite (RLEM) proved persistent and on 4/8/22 a second insecticide application was delivered (300 ml/ha Le-Mat).

The paddock was assessed by Daniel Real on 10/8/22. An average of 6 tedera plants/m² were observed, severely damaged by RLEM. The last miticide/insecticide was sprayed a couple of days prior and stopped the damage, but plants were too few and too weak to try to recover the site. Comments also included that the decomposing pasture that the tedera was sown into would have challenged establishment of any pasture or crop and that with new weeds germinating (predominantly grasses and double gees) the decision was made to spray out the first establishment, and resow.

The second establishment involved another round of treatments for weed control. These occurred on 22/8/22 (Glyphosate 570 g a.i./ha [Roundup Ultra Max] at 2.5 L/ha), 1/9/22 (2.5 L/ha Paraquat, 25 g/ha Sharpen, 2% Hasten), and on 3/9/22 (pre-emergent, 1 L/ha Propyzamide and 0.5 L/ha of Pyrinex Super to control pests). The tedera was resown on 6/9/22 at 10.5 kg/ha plus Nodulaid Tedera inoculum.

16/6/22 Site 3 pre-sowing



2/8/22 Site 3 first establishment with tedera plants with RLEM damage & low numbers



As you can see from the photos of the September sowing (right), whilst the tедера got away, there was still a significant germination of grass weeds. On 24/11/22 Mitch sprayed out a selective grass control to remove these plus another round of insecticide (100 L/ha water rate, 500 ml/ha Clethodim, 100 ml/ha Le-Mat, 1% wetter).

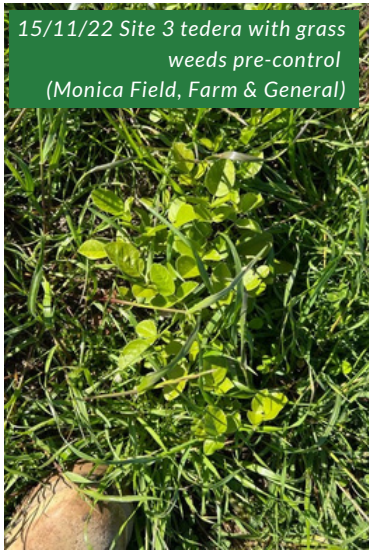
We expect to be able to start capturing measurements on this site in 2023, with hopes to graze during February / March. An interesting aspect of this demonstration for Mitch has been comparing the tедера to lucerne, which is also grown at The Oaks. Whilst we are not following the lucerne as part of this project, as we move forward it will be good to get his thoughts on how the two varieties comparatively perform.



26/10/22 Site 3 showing good establishment from the September sowing of Lanza Tедера (Photo: Daniel Real, DPIRD)

Key Messages for Establishing Tедера

- Select a paddock as weed free as possible, preferably after one or more crops.
- Early intervention to control weeds is important as tедера seedlings are not very tolerant of competition. Mature plants are much better at competing with annual weeds.
- If the paddock is a long-term pasture paddock, it is important that there is sufficient time for the pasture to die and break down before seeding.
- Tедера establishment requires regular and ongoing monitoring to respond to weed and insect pressure, similar to other crops and pastures.



15/11/22 Site 3 tедера with grass weeds pre-control (Monica Field, Farm & General)



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The state of play

Theo Oorschot, Esperance Rural Supplies, 0427 715166

It's been a great start to the summer cropping of forages, probably too good, with a number of paddocks sown to the forages suffering from water logging, including my own. There will be a number of broadleaf weeds that have or will emerge including radish, melons, blackberry nightshade and wireweed. Some post-emergent herbicide options are 2,4-D Amine, Triclopyr and Dicamba.



Above: A waterlogged paddock of Shirohie millet at Boyd Eime's, Merivale. Photo 16th November 2022.

Below: Oake Marsh Farm, Margurita serradella on a full profile of moisture.



On the positive side, the annual pastures have hung in. Of particular note is how well the serradellas continue to flower and pod. This sets up a magnificent seed bank for years to come if managed well. Most stands would have been protected with a budworm insecticide.

It has been the perfect year to establish lucerne and a number of stands have been cranking. Aphids were a problem in a couple of stands, but control was easily remedied with an application of LeMat insecticide. Established stands are showing their worth, growing quality feed and will continue to recover quickly after a graze.

Below: "Scottish" alias Ian McCallum, wife Caroline and son Alec, "pasture topped" by baling a very mixed sword of annuals and broadleaves that had established in their lucerne stand during the year. Result was 71 rolls and the lucerne all fired up. Photo 16th November 2022.





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Vet Spot: Summer grazing considerations

Dr Scott Jackson, Swans Veterinary Services

After a record wet winter and harvest finally under way, sheep and cattle producers will soon be transitioning their stock to dry pasture/stubble grazing and supplementary feeding. With dry fodder grazing comes some issues specific to the summer season.

Reduced nutrient values in pasture/stubbles

Dried pasture/stubbles are very much reduced in their energy/protein content, digestibility, palatability and the amount on offer will decline as grazed dead grasses are not replenished. Unfortunately, livestock also tend to be quite demanding for energy in the summer. Joining in sheep and calving in cattle both tie in with these drier months. Supplementary feeding ewes and rams with high energy grains such as oats, wheat and barley during joining is known to boost fertility and twinning rates. However, it is imperative they enter the joining already on a rising plane of nutrition (BCS of 3.5) and maintain it through to lambing. A thin ewe might conceive triplets with barley flushing at joining but may not carry them through to lambing/weaning if a rising plane of nutrition is not maintained. Feeding for a BCS of 3.5 in twin and triplet carrying ewes helps achieve the same lamb survival rate as in single lambing ewes with a BCS of 3 (separation of these groups can be achieved with pregnancy scanning). Similarly, cattle that are heavily pregnant must be supplemented with good quality hay/silage when pasture on offer is at its minimum. It is a fallacy to put a mob of well-conditioned pregnant cattle into the "Jenny Craig" paddock in an attempt to make the calves smaller as not only will the calves not be smaller, but the mother will more likely endure calving difficulty due to exhaustion from an energy deficit.

Grass seeds

One key dilemma of haying off we often overlook is the toll grass seeds can have on wool and meat production. Seeds caught in wool and between the toes can cause abscesses, resulting in pain, lameness and therefore reduced feed intake. Similarly, a mouth full of grass seeds in cattle will make them reluctant to graze and stack on less kilos of beef. Producers are encouraged to employ good shearing practises and individually identify/treat cattle and sheep showing signs of grass seed abscesses (lameness, swellings, weight loss, hypersalivation etc).

Ergot and ARGT

With the rye grass seed heads found in dry pastures also comes the pathogens that sometimes dwell within. The recent wet finish has provided the perfect conditions (warmth/humidity) necessary for the proliferation of the *Claviceps* fungus (responsible for ergotism) and bacterial gauls responsible for annual rye grass toxicity. In localities at risk of ergot and ARGT (we have seen most cases west of Esperance and north of Gibson), producers need to be aware of the symptoms of toxicity and hay that has been cut from paddocks with a history of these diseases should be tested before feeding to livestock. The first intervention necessary for dealing with an outbreak is to move an affected mob on a cool day into another paddock and supplement with hay/plentiful water. Specific management strategies to minimize the risk of toxicity on farms with a history can be discussed with your local veterinarian and agronomist.

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Agro Spot: A new herbicide tolerant barley that could have a fit for the mixed farming system

Monica Field, Farm & General

The reason this may be a good fit is because of a herbicide tolerance that could help to control problem weeds such as Brome, Barley Grass & Wild Oats in a cropping or pasture system.

Titan Ax

This is the first variety released that has tolerance to Group 1 Aggressor (quizalofop-P-ethyl), more commonly known as Targa.

It has a background of compass so is tall in height and suited to the low and medium rainfall zone. In a cropping or pasture situation this means you have a good weed control option (post emergent) to control germinating barley and brome grass in the paddock without the cereal dying.

Ryegrass control in this situation would depend on the natural populations that occur on your farm, many that have been in a mixed farming situation find little to no control of ryegrass with the fop type herbicides (Targa, Verdict).

Other traits about this variety include:

- Feed barley only
- Will require management of scald and barley leaf rust
- Straw strength could be an issue in longer growing season environments
- No carry over issues (compared with the imi herbicide system)
- Yield wise looks slightly down on some of the highest yielding options in that similar zones like Combat, Rosalind & Maximus, but more similar to Spartacus (in limited NVT trials)

I can see a fit where cereal is being sown with other pasture legumes (serradella, vetch etc) as a feed source as a way to control problem weeds throughout the year. Or also as an alternative to the imi herbicide system (for example Spartacus or Maximus) to control those problematic weeds in crop. This is pretty new technology so I am hoping the variety breeding improves just like has happened in the imi herbicide system varieties.

Some cautionary things to be aware of are:

- Controlling volunteer titan barley will be a little harder than normal, will need to look at high rates of clethodim/factor, Ultro in a legume crop phase
- Group 1 (or the old Group A) can build resistance quickly, therefore be aware that continuous use of these to control the likes of brome and barley grass year in year out could cause resistance issues, spray topping to control survivors will be essential in a pasture phase
- Probably don't have a good handle of the feed comparison with other cereal seeded options like oats/other barley varieties
- Withholding periods are 14 days in a clover/medic pasture on the label.

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Figure 1: Titan Ax at Scaddan NVT this year.



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Market Report: Lamb & Mutton

Article by WAMMCO



After a very strong 2021/22 in the lamb industry, the current impact of the global economic slowdown is weighing on confidence as customers and consumers react to increasing pressures of high inflation, higher interest rates and increasing energy and fuel costs. There is growing resistance to the high prices that have been enjoyed over the past 12-18 months and markets are reporting of higher inventories, while at the same time there is strong availability of supply.

Volatility in the A\$ is contributing to market disruption. After a period of low exchange rates, the A\$ has recently increased by 8% against the USD – directly impacting FOB values, with limited options to increase selling prices in the current environment. Overall though, the A\$ remains historically low and is aiding the competitiveness of exports.

Solid chilled sales are being maintained to the USA under existing retail programmes. Although, the market reports of resistance on leg and loin sell-through. Despite this there is a solid programme of sales scheduled for Christmas in the northern hemisphere in both North America and Europe.

Access to the UK market looks set to increase in 2023 with the likely ratification of the UK-FTA. This will see an increase in quota of 25000 tonnes in the first year, with further increases scheduled over the coming years. Middle East markets are robust with strength in tourism helping to generate strong sales. Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE are performing well, and customers are optimistic about future sales. Good forward sales have been confirmed through to Christmas.

Regular sales of lamb and mutton are being maintained into China, though YTD volumes are lower compared with last year. Repeated incidents of COVID lockdowns have hampered demand and slowed the movement of containers through ports leading to congestion and reduced customer appetite for imports. A good volume of forward sales of lamb flaps and mutton 6-ways have been committed for November and December shipment, though prices are lower.

Shipping issues continue to provide significant challenges in getting product to market. Restricted container availability, limited space on vessels and delayed transit times are causing delays. The current train derailment in Victoria has created further issues with several loads of chilled product held up for a week or more. Consequently, there is more product travelling by airfreight, which unfortunately incurs higher costs. There is no time-line for improvement in shipping services which continue to be impacted by high trade volumes and restricted capacity at major overseas ports.

Domestic sales will receive a boost in December with the opening of the second COSTCO store in Perth. WAMMCO has a long and strong association with COSTCO in Australia and in North America and the new store will be a welcome addition to the overall business.



2023 Supplies of Premium Summit fertilizers in stock

Article by Summit Fertilizers

Disrupted global supply chains and geopolitical events have brought unwelcome turmoil to the global fertilizer market in recent times.

Summit Fertilizers was affected by these international issues, with supplies of some of our premium products being limited in 2022. Fortunately, after a lot of work behind the scenes, WA growers were able to access fertilizer for the 2022 crop, even though it may have been a change from the usual product of choice.



To minimise the potential for the current tight global fertilizer market to impact on our growers for the coming season, Summit has taken steps to sure-up availability of our extended product range. We have brought forward shipping and secured new suppliers to allow us to spread the risk of not being supplied if political factors escalate.

Several of our key products for the 2023 season (including MOP, MAPSZC, MAP & Mn, and SSP) have already arrived and are in Summit sheds. All these fertilizers are now available to collect by growers who want the added reassurance of knowing they have seeding fertilizer on-farm.

It will be good news for growers that have established great crops in the past with MAPSZC, that the first shipments of this premium seeding fertilizer for the 2023 season have arrived. MAPSZC was developed by Summit to meet the needs of our clients and over many years has built a reputation as one of the most reliable and popular cropping fertilizers. The exceptional storage and handling characteristics of MAPSZC means that it is one product that is especially well suited to early collection. As a full-compound fertilizer, all nutrients are supplied in each individual granule which provides a far superior distribution in the soil compared to many blended products.

Other unique Summit products are also locked in to be manufactured and due to be shipped in the next few months, meaning they will be ready for collection by growers early next year.



We recommend growers keep in contact with their local Summit Area Manager to stay up to date on fertilizer decisions for 2023.

We also suggest growers collect their fertilizers early in the new year so that all is on hand should the season provide an early seeding opportunity, rather than taking a 'just in time' approach and then scrambling to get fertilizer onto farm at the peak despatch time for the season.

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

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

Product	Full compound fertiliser	Typical analysis (%)							Bulk density t/m ³
		N	P	K	S	Cu	Zn	Mn	
MAPSZC	Yes	12.0	21.0		4.0	0.20	0.40		1.03
DAPSZC	Yes	16.0	18.8		8.0	0.10	0.20		0.98
MAP Cu & Zn	Yes	10.5	22.5		1.0	0.32	0.64		0.95
MAP & Mn	Yes	9.0	18.8		11.0			4.0	1.00
MAP & Zn	Yes	11.2	22.4		1.9		0.50		0.95
AllRich	Yes	16.0	8.7		12.5				1.00
Vigour	Yes	10.0	12.0	12.0	5.0	0.10	0.20		1.03

WorkSafe Ag Enquiry

Jan Clawson, ASHEEP

In June 2022 following the 12th death in 12 months in the agriculture industry, WorkSafe Commissioner Darren Kavanagh announced the appointment of Independent Inquirer, Pam Scott, to undertake the Agricultural Industry Inquiry. The inquiry included holding 4 public meetings in regional centres, 2 in the Perth Metro area finishing with a two-hour webinar as well as written submissions.

ASHEEP participated in the inquiry with a written submission which focused on the development of an agriculture specific safety management system, the development of an ongoing farm safety advertising campaign, as well as freely available farm safety education packages and courses.

I attended the final webinar on the 10th November with 13 others from around the state, the group included farmers, farm consultants and farm group representatives similar to ASHEEP.

Ms Scott started the meeting with some interesting statistics which included that WA's safety record is ranked 4th in Australia with approximately 10% of the national accidents and injuries being in WA. In WA, 91% of incidents were men and 50% were over 55 years old. 43% had access to protective devices and procedures that weren't used. If they had been used it was estimated, it would have resulted in 30% fewer incidences. Which is an indicator that we know what we "should" do but in practise helmets are not being worn, procedures are not being followed with a costly result.

We went on to work our way through 5 key points, following are some of the ideas and suggestions from the webinar.

- It was mentioned the Ag schools are increasing their safety components as a way of getting the young ones more safety conscious from the start.
- They also spoke about having a Green Card or a Farm Ready Card for the entry level employees which cover the basics. This might be an online course, preferably freely available. Businesses might make the card or course a condition of employment.
- When asked about ways to get compliance amongst staff it was suggestions senior management should take the lead in safety, one example was everyone wearing a helmet on a motor bike, not just the staff.
- Another suggestion was Worksafe develop learning notes which are distributed after an incident. There is quite a lot of information already available on the Worksafe website but it's not always easy to find.
- There was general consensus that there is a need for farm safety development and promotion, but it needs to be non-regulatory. This could be undertaken by the Ag Department or an educational division of Worksafe.
- The challenge of implementing new procedures and processes with older staff and how courses might be completed by those less inclined to read.
- It was recognised that you can have a rule book in the office but if no one reads it or implement the practises into everyday activities nothing is going to change.

The main point I took away from the meeting was, everyone wants to do the right thing, its just knowing what is right or if there are better ways of doing jobs.

I felt Ms Scott understood farm safety is a complex issue and from the stories she conveyed back to us she has certainly heard from many people. There was a genuine need to find ways to improve farm safety in a practical way.

ASHEEP will include a safety focused article in every newsletter as a way of promoting farm safety so if you find helpful information or resources that may help others, please let us know so it can be included.

Worksafe Link: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/hazard-information-farms>



Four New ASHEEP Projects: Carbon neutral by 2030, plus three cattle projects

Exciting times! ASHEEP has funding applications approved for four new producer demonstration site projects with Meat & Livestock Australia. We are in the final stages of getting these projects contracted, and part of that process is inviting producers to be involved. If any of the below topics are of interest to you, get in touch with Sarah Brown at eo@asheep.org.au or 0409 335 194, and we can give you more information. You don't necessarily need to be based in the Esperance region to take part.

- Carbon Neutral 2030: Getting started on farm
- Optimising Age of Weaning Cattle
- Utilising Heifer Pre-Mating Serology to Manage BVD
- Preventing Preputial Bull Breakdown by Vaccination



Pause to prepare plans for animals and properties in a bushfire emergency

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development



Rural landholders and residents have been urged to prepare their properties and business operations for an elevated risk of bushfires this season. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has a wealth of preparatory measures on its Season 2022 webpage, as well as crucial advice for animal owners in the event of a fire emergency.

DPIRD incident and emergency management director Pam l'Anson encouraged landholders to take action now. "There have been several recent fires in the Wheatbelt, while the widespread distribution of bushfires last summer demonstrates that no landholder is immune to the risk," she said. "It is not too late for landholders to implement fire mitigation activities and familiarise themselves with the emergency response actions and resources so they can act quickly and decisively if there is a fire."

The Season 2022 webpage includes a link to the Fire on Farms in Western Australia – Reducing the risks article with information on identifying hazards and how to make a farm fire-safe. There is also a link to an 'Oats: hay production' article with advice on how to prevent spontaneous combustion in hay sheds, caused by inadequate airflow. Visitors to the page can also find a link to the DFES website, where a free online Bushfire Plan template can be downloaded.

In the event of a bushfire, owners of livestock, pets and companion animals are encouraged to follow the Animal Welfare directions on the emergency.wa.gov.au Bushfire Alerts. "These actions are governed by the Australian Warning System's levels, including yellow for Advice, orange for Watch and Act, red for an Emergency Warning and black and white for All Clear," Ms l'Anson said. "It is important to stay up to date with the advice by visiting emergency.wa.gov.au and re-checking the website regularly for updates, as conditions can change suddenly during a bushfire. Animal owners can print or bookmark the DPIRD Animal Welfare – Bushfire Advice ratings so they can respond quickly and effectively if threatened by a bushfire – particularly if they lose power."

The DPIRD website also has factsheets to assist animal owners and carers to prepare a Plan for Animal Welfare in Emergencies, including evacuation options, what to do after the fire and advice on returning home. More bushfire preparedness information for rural landholders is on DPIRD's Season 2022 webpages found at www.agric.wa.gov.au.

For general advice on preparing for bushfires visit www.dfes.wa.gov.au and for bushfire warnings and alerts during emergencies refer to www.emergency.wa.gov.au.

New eNVD mobile app tackles connectivity challenges

Meat & Livestock Australia

The red meat industry now has access to the electronic National Vendor Declaration (eNVD) Livestock Consignments app, a new tool designed to increase adoption of digital consignments even when there is no mobile connectivity. The new app has been in development with industry for more than a year by Meat & Livestock Australia's (MLA) subsidiary, Integrity Systems Company (ISC).



The app is a complete mobile solution which enables consignments to be transferred from producer to transporter, saleyard, feedlot and processor, even while offline. The consignment data is transferred from one mobile device to another using a series of QR codes and then syncs with the eNVD database when the producer and receiver are back in service.

MLA Managing Director Jason Strong said development of the app, and its capacity to increase the use of digital consignments, has been a significant piece of work and something that industry has been seeking for some time.

"Until now, about 30% of all NVDs have been completed using the web-based eNVD system and further widespread adoption by red meat producers has been held back by connectivity issues in some parts of Australia," Mr Strong said.

"This innovative new app means mobile coverage is no longer a barrier to use the eNVD. Digital consignments will save all supply chain users time, create efficiencies and prevent errors, which is why we're excited to be able to offer this new option to industry."

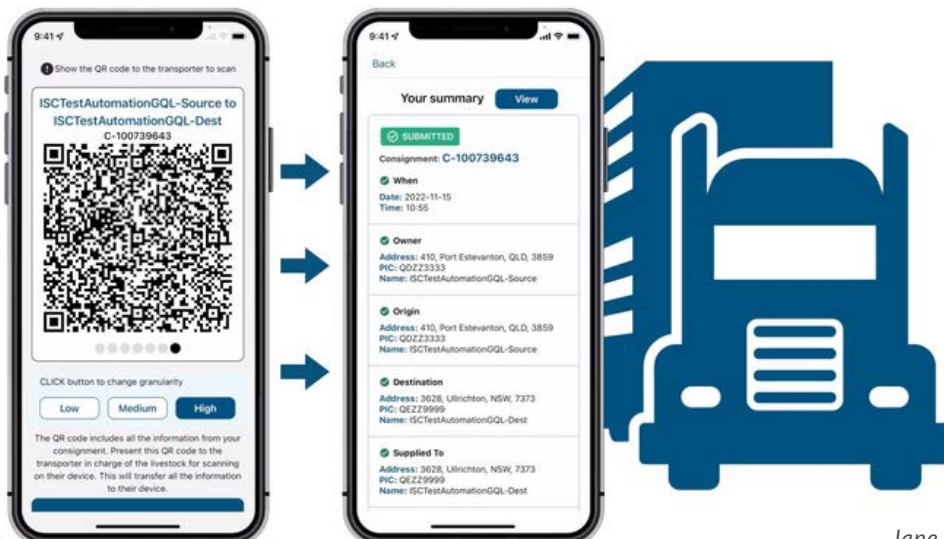
ISC Chief Executive Officer Jane Weatherley said the rollout of digital livestock consignments had been a major focus for 2022 and the organisation had been working with industry stakeholders to communicate the benefits and prepare supply chains for increased adoption.

"We know that developing the app is just one step on the digital adoption journey and we will continue to work with our supply chain partners to support them with this process," she said.

"Our adoption team has been working with supply chains to understand individual business requirements, helping to set up supply chain capabilities for digital consignments and upskilling where needed. Our adoption and promotion program will continue into 2023 and we will be progressing further updates to the app's functionality as uptake progresses."

The eNVD Livestock Consignments app is available for free download through the Apple Store and the Google Play Store. A suite of 'how-to' resources is also available to assist users at eNVD app.

A launch video which explains the features of the eNVD Livestock Consignments app can be found here: [Introducing the eNVD Livestock Consignments app - YouTube](#).



Jane Weatherley, CEO, Integrity Systems Company

Expression Of Interest now open! WA Livestock Industry Funding Schemes – Management Committee Member EOI

Karen Swanborough, Senior Project Officer, Industry Funding Scheme, DPIRD

Do you have passion for biosecurity and a thriving WA Agricultural industry?

Our livestock Industry Funding Schemes (IFS) are seeking individuals with industry connection and/or with relevant industry knowledge, who are interested in being an advocate for biosecurity in Western Australia.

As a committee member you will contribute and advocate on behalf of industry to facilitate improvements in biosecurity, productivity and viability of the Western Australian agricultural industry and raise broader awareness in WA. We are inviting producers and others with relevant industry knowledge and experience to submit an Expression of Interest to be considered for one of three upcoming vacancies in the Sheep and Goat IFS and Cattle IFSs Management Committees. [This opportunity has now been extended until 9.00am, 31 January 2023.](#)

IFSs provide the framework for industry to decide which agricultural pests and diseases pose the greatest threat, and to manage producer contributions to fund the actions needed to tackle these threats. As an IFS committee member, you will ensure industry has its say on how these funds are used, raise awareness and understanding of the importance of biosecurity and of the critical role it plays in your industry's viability. In addition to having this strong biosecurity ethos, committee members must also have a depth of industry experience to ensure producer contributions deliver the best value and outcomes for industry. The Committees meet quarterly, all travel expenses are covered. Committee members are paid sitting fees. The following vacancies are available from 1 July 2023:

- Cattle Industry Funding Scheme (2 vacancies)
- Sheep and Goat Industry Funding Scheme (1 vacancy)

Visit DPIRD's website for selection criteria, resume template, Management Committee terms of references, and information on the appointments process, IFSs and Management Committees. For more information contact Karen Swanborough 9368 3172 or email: IFS@dpird.wa.gov.au Your EOI can be lodged by emailing IFS@dpird.wa.gov.au.



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ASHEEP Pasture Variety Trials Update

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

Measurements from the third year of the ASHEEP Pasture Variety Trials, a Meat & Livestock Australia Producer Demonstration Site project, have been collected and we're nearing the time when we can release this year's results. South Coastal Agencies have been doing great work monitoring the demonstration sites, plus analysing pasture cuts and performance. We anticipate being able to release an annual report in early 2023.

During 2022, we have had a mid-year update from Chad Hall (South Coastal Agencies) at our annual livestock conference, plus had the opportunity to visit two of the sites at field days. We stopped by Peter & Linda McCrea's Brassica at the Winter Field Walk (9th August), and Nick Ruddenklau's mix of Abundant Ryegrass, Forester Oats and Resina Vetch at the Spring Field Day (21st September). On both occasions we have heard from Sinead O'Gara (South Coastal Agencies) along with the producers, and other researchers, agronomists, and industry representatives attending the field days. There has been some great discussion along the way.

At the start of 2023 the project committee will be meeting to select next year's sites. We're putting out the call out to all our members in the Esperance region to get in touch if you are planning on putting in an interesting pasture mix next year, or a variety that you think would be worth looking at. We need to choose at least two sites in each rainfall zone. Below is a list of the sites we've been following this year.

Low Rainfall Zone

- Peter & Linda McCrea (Brassica)
- Simeon & Christine Roberts (Barloo / RM4 Vetch Mix, & straight RM4 Vetch)



Medium Rainfall Zone

- David & Katherine Vandenberghe (Sulla, Snail Medic, & RM4 Vetch)
- Nick Ruddenklau (Abundant Ryegrass / Forester Oats / Resina Vetch mix, & Forester Oat / Planet Barley mix)
- Mark & Olivia Walter (straight RM4 Vetch, & straight Leafmore Brassica)

High Rainfall Zone

- Nick Ruddenklau (Abundant Ryegrass / Forester Oats / Resina Vetch mix, & a Forester Oat / Planet Barley mix)
- Ryan & Elisha Willing (Mix of RM4 Vetch, Abundant Ryegrass, Planet Barely, Illabo Wheat, Eliza Serradella, Bladder Clover & Oats, and paddocks of straight Illabo Wheat, and straight Planet Barley)

Continued over page.

Images: Top - Brassica at Peter & Linda McCrea's 9/8/22. Middle - Peter McCrea, Sinead O'Gara, and Ron Yates discussing Brassica. Below left - Abundant Ryegrass / Forester Oats / Resina Vetch mix at Epasco (21/9/22). Below right - Nick Ruddenklau & Sinead O'Gara.



Plot Scale Trial Site Regeneration Observations

In Year 1 & Year 2 of the Pasture Variety Trials, South East Agronomy Research put in plot scale trials of a range of pastures, which South Coastal Agencies have since been monitoring for regeneration. Some of the sites are no longer viable for a range of reasons, including seasonal conditions and spray drift. Following is an update from South Coastal Agencies on the two sites that they were able to monitor this year.

Year 1 Sites (2020):

- Neridup – John Wallace (Monitoring ceased)
- Salmon Gums – Sam Guest (Monitoring ceased)
- Grass Patch – David Vandenberghe (Checked in 2022, but overgrown with medic)

Year 2 Sites (2021):

- Neridup – John Wallace (Monitoring ceased)
- Cascade – Simeon Roberts (Monitored in 2022)
- Grass Patch – David Vandenberghe (Monitored in 2022)

Year 2 Cascade Site Regeneration (2021 sown)

Site Host: Simeon Roberts

2022 Inputs:

Sown	16/3/22
Soil PH (CaCl)	5.8 (0-10cm) to 6.5 (50-60cm) measured 2021
Sowing Details	25kg RM4 Seed
Post-Emergent Herbicide	Clethodim & Targa 25 May
2021 Varieties & Rates	Spartacus Barley @ 80kg RM4 Vetch @ 25kg Capello Vetch @ 25kg Express Grazing Oats @ 70kg RM4 Vetch @ 20kg & Express Grazing Oats @ 50kg Trigonella @ 8kg Tetila Ryegrass @ 15kg Cavalier Medic @ 12kg Snail Medic @ 12kg Sultan Medic (SU Tolerant) @ 6kg Casbah Biserulla @ 6kg SARDI Grazing Lucerne @ 6kg Cobra Clover @ 6kg Ballard Mix Ball ThumpA @20kg – (Rose clover, bladder clover, soft pink serradella, sub-clover & tetraploid Italian ryegrass) Ballard Mix Ball SalinA @ 20kg – (Scimitar burr medic, balansa clover, tetraploid Italian ryegrass)



Regenerated Cavalier Medic (with RM4 Vetch), Cascade



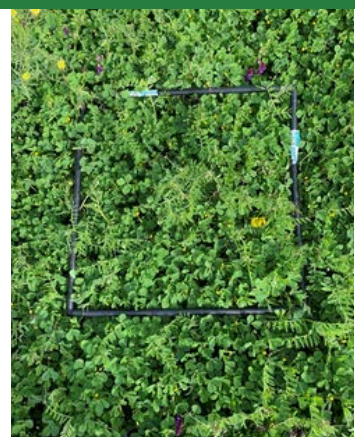
Regenerated Cobra Balansa with some Rose Clover, Cascade

The 2021 pasture variety trials at the Cascade site were over-sown with 25kg/ha of RM4 Vetch in March 2022. A very dry summer and favourable opening rains contributed to excellent conditions for plant establishment. With these optimum conditions, the grasses and cereals were effectively controlled by the pre-em knockdown and the post-em selective herbicides; therefore, their re-establishment was non-existent. However, the stand-out varieties in this reestablishment trial were cavalier medic, snail medic, sultan medic, trigonella, rose clover and cobra balansa. In some cases, varieties that weren't originally sown in the same plot in 2021 were found together this year, it is likely that through the processes of oversewing vetch, the seed set from the 2021 pasture was spread across neighbouring plots.

Regenerated Snail Medic, Cascade



Regenerated Sultan SU Tolerant Medic (with RM4 Vetch) Cascade



Regenerated Trigonella (with RM4 Vetch at Cascade site)



Year 2 Grass Patch Regeneration (2021 sown)

Site Host: David Vandenberghe

2022 Inputs:

Sown	NA
Soil PH (CaCl)	7.4 (0-10cm) to 8.7 (50-60cm) measured 2021
Sowing Details	NA
Pre-Emergent Herbicide	None
Post-Emergent Herbicide	None
2021 Varieties & Rates	Sulla @ 5kg Trigonella @ 8kg Express Grazing Oates @ 70kg Express Grazing Oates @ 50kg & RM4 Vetch @ 20kg Tillage Radish @ 6kg Snail Medic @ 12kg Leafmore Grazing Brassica @ 5kg Casbah Biserulla @ 6kg RM4 Vetch @ 25kg Mawson Subcover @ 6kg Cobra Clover @ 6kg SARDI Grazing Lucerne @ 6kg Tetila Ryegrass @ 15kg Ball ThumpA Ballard Mix @ 20kg – (Rose clover, bladder clover, soft pink serradella, sub-clover & tetraploid Italian ryegrass) Ball SalinA Ballard Mix @ 20kg – (Scimitar burr medic, balansa clover, tetraploid Italian ryegrass)

Grass Patch Site Regenerated Snail Medic

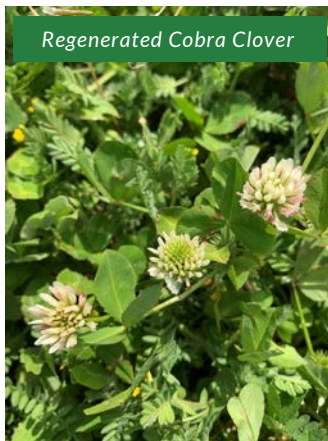


The Year 2 Grass Patch site (sown in 2022) was not oversewn in 2023, and was allowed to regenerate. The site had very good opening rain in April, followed by a dryer than average May to July and wetter than average August. Due to the drier winter and cool conditions, pastures established well but were growing slowly. While the overall biomass was behind the Cascade trial, the standout varieties at the Grass Patch site were the Cobra, RM4, Snail Medic, and Sardi Lucerne. Biomass and feed quality tests will be shared in the annual report to come.

Grass Patch Site Regenerated RM4 Vetch



Regenerated Cobra Clover





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The Current Status of Footrot in WA

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

Recently an ABC news article was released stating that a ram infected with virulent footrot was imported into WA from the eastern states, and that "Prior to the incursion, the virulent strain was **not** present in Western Australia".[1] This statement is **not** correct.

Virulent footrot has been present in WA for many years and there are currently 61 businesses in the state under virulent footrot disease management plans. This means that virulent footrot has been identified on these properties, and that the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has issued them with a Pest Control Notice restricting the movement of sheep and goats until the infection has been eradicated.

Properties with virulent footrot have the option to either eradicate or control footrot. According to DPIRD, eradication can be achieved by either "destocking the property of all sheep and goats, or repeat inspection and culling of affected sheep during the summer period." "If a farmer chooses to control virulent footrot for economic reasons, sheep can still be sold for slaughter under the terms of the Pest Control Notice. Farmers opting for control must contain the infection to their property and are subject to biosecurity audits." [2]

So, moral of the story is stay alert to prevent footrot in your flock

DPIRD advises that the greatest risk of introducing footrot into your flock is by buying infected stock, or having infected stray stock mix with your flock.

"Sensible precautions to avoid this include:

- buy direct from properties with a known health status. If importing sheep from interstate, inspect their feet on arrival on your property and keep them isolated until they have passed their required post-border footrot inspections.
- inspect the feet of animals before buying
- ask for a Sheep Health Statement
- treat sheep returning from agistment as you would purchased stock
- keep newly introduced stock separate from existing stock for as long as possible and examine their feet regularly
- maintain sheep-proof boundary fences to prevent stray sheep from entering your property." [3]

Signs of Virulent Footrot

There are two strains of bacteria that cause footrot, one strain develops "benign footrot" and the other "virulent footrot". Benign footrot has milder symptoms and usually heals once feet dry out, it is not reportable. Virulent footrot is a more severe form of the disease and DPIRD must be notified of any other signs of footrot. An inspector will visit and sample affected sheep. The strain can be determined via laboratory testing of swabs taken from the lesions.

"Both virulent and benign footrot start as inflammation of the skin between the toes seen as moisture, reddening and loss of hair. The additional signs of virulent footrot as it progresses are:

- varying degrees of lameness
- separation or under-running of horny material at the junction of the skin and the horn of the hoof, starting at the heel
- usually more than one foot is affected
- both toes of each affected foot are often involved and
- loss of body condition and decreased wool production"

Why is DPIRD controlling the spread of virulent footrot?

Industry funds the Footrot Control Program activities via the Sheep and Goats Industry Funding Scheme. DPIRD runs the WA Footrot Control Program "at the request of industry, in order to limit the negative financial and welfare impacts of virulent footrot within WA. Pre-border conditions, Border controls and post border inspections are also in place to reduce the likelihood of introducing virulent footrot from other jurisdictions in Australia. Owners are advised to keep imported stock separate from their own stock until all the post border inspections and treatments are completed."

References [1] Lucinda Jose, ABC News, "Virulent footrot detected in Western Australia after routine check of ram travelling from interstate", <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-11-25/virulent-footrot-detected-ram-western-australia-border-check/101700436>, accessed 30/11/22. [2] DPIRD, "Managing Virulent Footrot in sheep and goats in Western Australia", https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/livestock-biosecurity/managing-virulent-footrot-sheep-and-goats-western-australia?page=0%2C0#smartpaging_toc_p0_s0_h2, accessed 30/11/22. [3] DPIRD, "Managing Virulent Footrot in sheep and goats in Western Australia", <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/livestock-biosecurity/managing-virulent-footrot-sheep-and-goats-western-australia?page=0%2C2>, accessed 30/11/22. [4] DPIRD, "Managing Virulent Footrot in sheep and goats in Western Australia", <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/livestock-biosecurity/managing-virulent-footrot-sheep-and-goats-western-australia?page=0%2C1>, accessed 30/11/22.



Above: Score 2 = mild inflammation including moisture, reddening and hair loss of the skin between the toes, and tissue damage of the soft horn of the inner wall. Below: Score 3 = under-running and moderate tissue damage of the inside wall and the sole. DPIRD advises that in WA footrot doesn't generally present any worse than a score 3 lesion.



Virulent footrot is a reportable disease in WA. If you think an animal/flock has signs of footrot, you must contact your local DPIRD biosecurity officer or vet to take samples for laboratory testing.[4]



Wool Harvesting Innovation Demonstration Day Summary

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

Jarrold King's property in Boxwood Hill is home to a brand-new race delivery shearing shed, and on 7th October 2022 he hosted an Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) Wool Harvesting Innovation Demonstration Day. ASHEEP had a couple of representatives head across, with Nick Ruddenklau (Committee Member) and Sarah Brown (Executive Officer) making the trip from Esperance.

The event gave producers and industry the opportunity to see Jarrod's shed in action, and to look through and discuss a range of shearing systems, with manufacturers on hand to demonstrate portable stands, mechanised sheep delivery, and handling equipment. AWI also gave an update on their research into safer, more productive and efficient wool harvesting systems, as well as shearer and wool handler training initiatives. We've put together a summary of some of the take-aways from the day here, and AWI have provided information on their biological wool harvesting research in the following pages.

Race Delivery Shearing Shed – Jarrod King, Boxwood Hill

Jarrold kicked off the day with a tour of his shearing shed, giving background on key elements of the design, including that the focus was on building something that would still be performing well in 15-20 years. During the planning process he engaged closely with shearing contractor Howard Morrison (Morrison Shearing), to make sure that the layout would suit their team. The two main features of the shed are the race delivery system (eliminates the catch & drag of the sheep from pen to stand), and the flat shearing board.

Howard shared his thoughts on the shed, primarily that he and the team were pleased with the outcome. He noted his appreciation that Jarrod was willing to take the initiative to try something new, engage shearers in the process, and that with fewer shearers around it was great to see changes that made the job easier and would encourage people to love shearing again.

As well as being an owner of Morrison Shearing, Howard also shears, so was able to give some insight into how the shed performs from a shearer's perspective. His thoughts were that the race delivery system was easier, and physically better on the body compared to a typical shed with catching pens. At the end of a day without having to catch and drag, there was less strain felt in the lower back. He said that initially it had taken a bit for the team to get used to, as they were shearing sheep a lot faster and had to slow down and pace themselves, taking time to stretch. Even once they had slowed down, they were still shearing 10% more sheep a day.

Howard commented that the design of the shoot made a big difference too, with the entry being turned in toward the shearer and a drop at the top of the slide. This meant that the shoot was well-positioned to release sheep and that the front feet just had to be dropped into the shoot for the sheep to slide away rather than being pushed. Another point Howard raised was that there was a good amount of space at each stand for shearers to put their equipment, which is valuable in the functionality of the working area.

Jarrold went on to discuss some of the other adaptations that they'd made when working in the new shed compared to their previous shed with catching pens. He noted that with the shearing team working faster, it changed how the wool and sheep handling team worked. A full-time penner must be on hand to keep sheep up in the race. Meanwhile, the rousies are busier keeping the board cleared, so what used to be a penner/presser role became a presser/rousie role.

Focuses for getting the shed to work effectively included building the bugle that delivers sheep into the race with no dead corner so that the sheep would flow well, and also having the floor of the shed raised high enough to get a machine underneath to clean. Jarrold noted that there appeared to be less stress on the sheep than in a shed with catching pens. Jarrold approximated the cost of the shed at \$200K (5 stand shed, including labour and materials).

Overall, there were very few downsides raised about the shed design by Jarrod or Howard. Even a couple of conversations after the presentation with some of the other shearers had them hard pressed to come up with issues to raise. A lot of the problems they had thought they'd encounter in using the shed had not been problems in the end.

For example, one of the concerns often raised by shearers with race-delivery systems is that the person on the last stand will end up with the harder-shearing sheep, as shearers in the stands at the start of the race will have the opportunity to select the best sheep first. In practice, the shearers have not found this to be a problem in Jarrod's shed. When they first started shearing there, the team decided on a system of rotating stands each day so that the same person wouldn't be stuck with the last stand. After a few days of doing this, they stopped – the feeling was that with the way sheep were positioned and held in the race (there are leg barriers to stop sheep backing up) each shearer was simply taking the sheep directly at their gate and the mix of sheep remained even.

On the flip side of the coin, in discussions after the day with other shearing contractors it has been flagged that there are benefits to being able to select sheep from within a pen. For example, a shearer may choose to shear a sheep with dermatitis or fly strike at the end of a run, or just before they change their cutters. At the end of the day, there will always be pros and cons to weigh up.



Above: Barriers prevent the sheep from backing up in the race and hold them in the correct position at each gate.



Left & below: The design of the bugle was seen as key to getting the sheep to flow properly.



Along with being an ASHEEP Committee member, Nick Ruddenklau is the Farm Manager at Epasco Farms in Esperance and is considering building a new shearing shed. From his point of view, it was great to be able to see Jarrod's shed in operation and to speak with the shearing contractor and farmer about their design process. He noted that one of the challenges in moving away from more traditional designs with catching pens is getting all the stakeholders on board – farmers, shearers and wool handlers. The perception of race-delivery systems can be poor as there is a hangover from crutching trailer days where shearers could push sheep past them. Nick got a lot of value from being able to see the shed and other shearing modules in action, but his shearing contractors weren't there, and they didn't get the benefit of being able to assess the designs. To Nick, the idea of Jarrod's shed made good sense to reduce the amount of dragging but he is now in the process of working through this with his shearing team, who have varying opinions. Nick was hopeful that AWI would run more events like this in WA in future, it was a good initiative. *[Cont'd over pg]*



Left: The angle of the catching pen was an important feature of the design. Jarrod noted that the measurements of the race are slightly different to the designs on AWI modules, with the decision made to lower the floor level of the race to make it easier for their shearers to pull the sheep down. Below left: Jarrod King. Below right: Howard Morrison (Morrison Shearing).



Portable shearing unit (Haynes Engineering)

Haynes Engineering presented a portable shearing module that would fit on a trailer, and could be suited for farmers who do not have a dedicated shearing shed. The shearing board was set low enough that it was not required to have a rail under work safe legislation. Each stand was fitted with an emergency cut-off switch beneath the board so that a wool handler could shut down power if needed. One comment put forward on the day was that the floor of the race was higher than in Jarrod’s shed, and that some may prefer a lower race to reduce the drop of the sheep onto the board.



Above: Haynes Engineering portable stand. Below: Commander pneumatic sheep delivery system built in the previous 2 weeks. The design was a work in progress, and they invited suggestions from attendees.

Pneumatic sheep delivery (Commander)

Commander took on the challenge of building a mechanised sheep delivery system in the two weeks prior to AWI’s event. They demonstrated how it would take a sheep from a race, turn it onto the board, and tip it up ready for the shearer. The idea of the unit was that it could either be part of a portable system or fitted into a shed. Commander noted that they were still working on the design / functionality and invited feedback from attendees. Some of the feedback offered included that it would need manual operation as a backup and that a “no-go” zone should be marked on the board where the unit swings out for safety purposes. People could also see other uses for the unit, such as in Artificial Insemination programs where sheep need to be turned over.



Mechanised ram handling

Jury Shearing brought along their mechanised handler for shearing rams, which tips, holds and turns a ram to be shorn. This significantly reduces the physical challenges associated with shearing large sheep. They had predominantly been using the unit for shearing meat-breed rams. It was a slower process than traditional shearing and more expensive per sheep; Nick was advised it about double the normal per head cost of shearing, but that combating that there wasn’t the need for as many wool handling staff. Despite the slower pace and cost, Nick saw it as a good solution for handling rams more safely.



Above: Jury Shearing demonstrated a mechanised ram handling unit.

See the units & shearing shed in action

If you would like to see videos of the shed and some of the shearing modules in operation you can visit the ASHEEP Twitter page or Facebook pages. Jarrod King also has a range of photos and videos of his shed on his twitter page “Jarrod King Warralea Poll Merino Stud” www.twitter.com/jarroddking18

Below: Updates were given by (left to right) Tori Kirk - Industry Relations Officer (AWI), Darren Spencer - Chair (WA Shearing Industry Association), Carolina Diaz - Program Manager Agritech (AWI), Craig French - National Manager, Wool Harvesting Training & Careers Development (AWI), and Todd Wegner (Heiniger).



AWI Update: New biological wool harvesting research

Tori Kirk, Australian Wool Innovation

Many woolgrowers will probably have heard of Bioclip®, a biological defleecing process developed by CSIRO and made available in the 1990s, which allowed wool to be harvested without the use of a mechanical handpiece. To harvest the wool, sheep are given a single vaccination of Epidermal Growth Factor (EGF) that causes a break to occur in the wool fibres. Over the sheep and fleece is placed a net into which the fleece is shed about one week after the sheep is injected. It works, but there was little take-up by woolgrowers, mainly because the putting on and removal of the nets from the sheep made it a labour-intensive process.

However, there is potentially a new opportunity for biological wool harvesting based on a new protein, the zein class of protein found in corn, that could enable harvesting without the need for nets. "This protein was shown by the University of Adelaide to cause a weakening of the staple of most of the fibres, to such an extent that a mechanical removal device will break the fibre and remove the fleece without the need for cutting equipment," said Dr Jane Littlejohn, AWI General Manager, Research.

"The important thing about this proved concept was that this treatment allows the fleece to stay on the sheep without a net – and that's revolutionary, and potentially could be a real labour-saving option for woolgrowers compared to Bioclip. Compared to traditional shearing, biological wool harvesting also eliminates second-cuts and skin pieces and can reduce variability in wool fibre length.

A small trial has already been undertaken by the University of Adelaide in which the fleece did not fall off in the paddock under normal grazing conditions for up to ten weeks after the protein was administered. This trial has provided AWI with the confidence to proceed to larger scale trials.

"The University also must develop some sort of machine or method to break the fibre and harvest the wool in the most efficient and labour-saving way."

The project will run over several years to check whether there are any negative impacts on wool growth and quality as well as animal growth and health.

"It's important that the fleece stays on for long enough for the staple to grow a few millimetres to protect the sheep from sunburn and hypothermia – and we certainly want the next growing cycle to be unaffected by any product that is being given to the sheep," Jane said. "Although this is a high-risk project, it has already shown a lot of promise and it is being fast-tracked."



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Podcast Spot: Behind the Beef & The Weekly Grill



A couple of podcast recommendations for the cattle producers amongst us.

Behind the Beef is put on by Angus Australia, going behind the scenes and into the every day activities of beef producers and those involved in the industry. Recent episodes delve into the beef supply chain, marketing, an AI go to guide, interpreting sale catalogues, and more. It's an easy going chat with good information, worth a listen.



The Weekly Grill is Beef Central's podcast with host, Kerry Lonergan. Each week Kerry chats with "a beef industry mover and shaker - turning up the heat and asking questions about the burning issues and topics that impact the beef sector". Lately they've talked carbon neutral beef brands, lotfeeding, market updates, finance, and interviewed Meat & Livestock Australia's corporate chef, as well as McDonald's global head of beef procurement.

You can find these podcasts by searching for them online, or in your preferred podcast player app. If you have other podcasts to recommend let us know and we'll share them with group.

WA Shearing Industry Association Update

Valerie Pretzel, WASIA



Shearing & Wool Handling Demonstrations at Esperance Senior High School

In early November 24 interested students from the Esperance Senior High School took part in shearing and wool handling demonstrations at the Esperance Farm School. The demonstration by Rob Carter, Wool Classing Lecturer from South Regional TAFE Narrogin and WASIA member, was part of the 'Careers Taster Program' and was arranged by Andrea Gallager (Program Coordinator) in conjunction with Chloe Nella from South Regional TAFE Esperance and Jazmin Parker Esperance Senior High School.

The idea behind the program is that not all students want to follow career pathways that are predominately academic. The students get to hear about some interesting Wool facts about the world's most amazing fibre!

- Wool is a natural and renewable resource. Just add sheep, water, sunshine! If there is grass to eat - sheep continue to produce wool.
- Wool is made of 50% organic carbon, captured from the atmosphere prior to the fresh wool being shorn!
- Wool is 100% biodegradable and even when it's lifecycle is done and disposed of, wool naturally decomposes, releasing valuable nutrients back into the earth.

The students started by assisting penning up the sheep followed by Shearing and Wool Handling demonstrations, followed by interested students "having a go". Shearing, Wool Handling, Wool Classing and Wool Pressing are all components of a Shearing Team that services Wool producers.



The wool harvesting industry via Australian Wool Innovation, WASIA and our agricultural colleges is doing a lot of work to promote the Wool Industry as a great career choice. It provides wonderful opportunities for travel both locally, state-wide, nationally, and internationally. Whilst the work is physically demanding the rewards are many and the financial compensation can be very appealing. There are not too many industries that can offer a new student fresh on the board the sort of income that can be derived from being a part of a shearing team.

More Wool Handling Workshops and Novice Courses are being organised for Esperance in 2023 and we encourage growers to help by suggesting to young people that they contact the contractors in the region to get trained up and join the wool harvesting workforce.

SafeSheds - the Shearing Shed Safety Program

WASIA is working with ASHEEP to arrange another visit to assist growers with their SafeSheds review prior to the 2023 shearing season. ASHEEP are keeping a list of interested growers, so please contact the ASHEEP office to get your name on the list.

Meanwhile the Guide can be downloaded and sign up to the app from www.wasia.com.au/services/safesheds and hard copies can be ordered from AWI by calling 1800 070 099.

Quick Tip - Flooring

Have your shearing shed floors seen better days? This checklist comes from *SafeSheds*.

- Are your floors & battens throughout the shed sound and well maintained?
- Floors & battens throughout the shed should be even, without steps or gaps for tripping hazards.
- Secure raised or warped battens to achieve a smooth walking surface. There are no large tin patches, sagging tin or raised edges.
- Changing floor levels must be eliminated or highlighted with stripes of bright paint.
- Check and repair missing, rotting, warped, loose, slippery flooring or flooring made of high friction material (e.g. melwire).
- Check for protruding nails & screws.
- Floors must be dry & secure - ensure all wet areas and spillage are mopped up.

WASIA January Meeting

You are invited to WASIA's general meeting on Saturday January 21. RSVP to admin@wasia.com.au

ASHEEP are a group member of the WA Shearing Industry Association and full details of WASIA services are available from the website www.wasia.com.au or you can contact the WASIA office by calling 0412 227 252 or emailing to admin@wasia.com.au

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WALRC Newsletter



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JANUARY

Next ASHEEP Committee Meeting is scheduled for January 2023.

Contact a committee or staff member to raise an item.

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