

ASHEEP NEWS



Case Study: Innovation for Simplicity

ASHEEP interviews Tihan Gilliomee

With two farms in Cascade and one closer to the coast in Coolmabidgup, Tihan Gilliomee has a wide range of farming conditions to consider in his role as Farm Manager for Neville Welke & Son. ASHEEP was fortunate to steal a few hours of Tihan's time as he explained the combined focus on innovation and simplicity that drives the sheep, cropping and engineering enterprise.

Tihan originally hails from a farming background in South Africa and made the move to Esperance 7 years ago, followed a year later by now wife Loré. He took up a position with the Welke Brothers - Brian, Michael and Neville - who shortly afterwards enacted their succession plan to separate the business. Brian and Michael now farm together with Michael's sons Scott, James and their partners Odile and Ash, while Neville created "Neville Welke & Son" with son Jack.

Tihan accepted the role of Farm Manager with Neville and Jack, and together they have been farming three properties. Tihan is based in Cascade on a farm named Wilaust, which features a range of soils including loamy sand over clay, deep sand, sand over clay, and an annual average rainfall of around 320-350mm. The last few years have been dry, ranging from 150mm to 220mm, with drought conditions making for challenging farming. Despite this, Tihan noted that the good soil types on Wilaust have made up for it. A second farm is located in the Mallee country of northern Cascade, with heavier soils and an annual average rainfall of 300mm.

During the drier years it has been beneficial for the business that their third farm is in Coolmabidgup, closer to the coast in the higher rainfall band at around 500mm with sand over gravel soils. This is where Neville, Jack and the engineering workshop are based.

Image: Merino ewes on RM4 Vetch, September 2021, Wilaust farm, Cascade.

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Engineering has long been a passion of Neville's, and he now works alongside Jack to build chasers, field bins, comb trailers, and more. Over the years they have become known for their innovative approach to engineering solutions for on-farm problems. This has included adapting a header front to harvest pasture seed, and more recently building an automated sheep feeder. More on that soon, for now, over to Tihan to take us through the farm system.

The sheep program

We run a predominantly merino flock, with a focus on a big-framed ewe (60-65kg), wrinkle free over the body, with 18.5-19 micron wool. The breeding has come from Scott Welke's work before the Welke Brothers separated the business, and I still work closely with Scott as I take the sheep forward. They are a hardened animal that can handle tougher conditions and keep up the weight. There are some key things I look for in the sheep, and one of those is a big emphasis on motherability. They must be able to raise a lamb and have a good motherly instinct.

Classing of the sheep starts when they are ewe lambs, I remove anything with notable issues in build and conformation. They go through a second cull at around 17 months when we get Bill Walker out from NSW who has a closer look at wool, frame, etc.

The overall structure of the flock is separated out into two groups that we call 1st Commercials and 2nd Commercials. The 1st Commercials are the main flock that we breed our replacements from. The 2nd Commercials are the culls and go to a terminal Suffolk sire. We generally have around 3500 breeding ewes and work to a maximum total carrying capacity of about 5000 sheep.

Joining kicks off in for the 1st Commercials in mid November. I put the teasers in for 12 days and then the rams for 39. We start mating the ewes as hoggets at 18-19 months and I want to get at least 6-7 years of consistent lambing out of them. If it's a really tough year or if there's something that hasn't been right for the 1st Commercials I might be a bit easier on them, but if the conditions are right and they didn't raise a lamb they get moved into the 2nd Commercials. I do a check at tailing and mark out all the drys.

The 2nd Commercials run a different cycle and drop their crossbred lambs in February. This works well to meet the market when prices are high in August, but it's a short-term plan as I'd prefer not to lamb in February. The crossbred lambs are better at handling the heat than merinos, but it's not ideal conditions for lambing. We have shade in the lambing paddocks from tree lines and lucerne gives them access to high protein.

Mob sizes are set at around 550 - 600, including for lambing. We preg-scan the 1st Commercials and split them into singles and twins. We don't scan the 2nd Commercials and this comes back to needing to keep the sheep operation as simple as possible. The team includes Neville, Jack, myself, plus casuals during seeding / harvest. The 2nd Commercials are due for scanning in the middle of harvest, but the rest of the team are on the machines and I am by myself when it comes to the stock work, so stock scanning in December is not possible.

Shearing is set at 8-month intervals, ideally to fall before seeding, before harvest, and then in June/July the following year. We're getting a 70-75mm staple at that interval. Shearing is becoming a bit of a problem due to the shortage of staff, and I see this as one of the major challenges for the industry moving forward.

Farm Snapshot

Location: Cascade & Coomalbidgup

Av. Annual Rainfall: 320-500mm

Enterprise Mix: 75% cropping, 25% sheep, plus engineering

Stock: Merino, self-replacing + terminal flock.

Soil: Varied over 3 farms inc. loamy sand over clay, deep sand, sand over clay, mallee, sand over gravel.

Team: Neville Welke & son Jack, Tihan Gilliomee, seasonal casuals.

Images: Left - Loré, Tihan and their daughter Alana. Right - 2nd Commercials lambing onto lucerne.





What are the main issues you come across with animal health?

The main concern is managing fly over summer during hot, muggy weather and we crutch at 6 months to reduce this risk. Worms don't tend to be a problem at the Cascade farms where it's drier but can be more of an issue on the coast. I try to only drench as needed and will get worm egg counts done for the sheep at Coomalbidgup plus keep an eye on whether they are scouring or starting to hang back a bit. Worms can be a bigger focus when we have sheep in containment.

I trialed Campyvac several years ago to see if I could increase lamb survival rates, but I didn't see a noticeable result from that in my percentages. The hoggets lambed at 95% this year which I was happy with. I count any lamb losses on paddock to keep an eye there.

Scald or Interdigital Dermatitis is something we came across last year with the very wet conditions, particularly in paddocks of vetch. It's caused by a bacterium that thrives in the wet, but when conditions dried up, they came good.

How does the cropping rotation and feedbase for livestock work in?

Cropping is about 75% of the land use: wheat, barley and canola. The livestock program takes up the remaining 25%. We've been putting RM4 Vetch in paddocks with a regenerating medic that we're phasing out. The vetch has been really paying off in Nitrogen and soil biomass. You can see from the image to the right where I'm pointing out earthworms that are moving in - not something I've seen much of before in the paddocks.

We've also been planting summer crops, like millet, either in hay paddocks, or in pasture paddocks that have not performed. We've had success with a mix of millet and tillage radish, for biomass and putting organic matter into the soil (images below right corner).

At Coolmabidgup we've worked Q31 Lucerne into the program, it's a summer dominant variety that suits the sand-over-gravel soils. It has helped with keeping the water table down as it was getting acidic. Lucerne has been a good fit as we noticed a slight build-up of glyphosate resistance, not a lot, but we could see the problem coming. With the lucerne we can use paraquat in high rates instead and that torches all the weeds, but the pasture comes back. It has been a good tool to clean up paddock competition. We're seeing good feed from it available late October / November, plus lambing into it in February, and we're also using it to make quality hay (image below left).

Over summer we supplement feed with hay and a barley / oat / lupin mix. We graze the summer crops and the crop stubbles but have to be cautious with this on our lighter country so we keep cover on the more fragile ground.

Another thing we are working on this year is integrating a confinement system into the program at Willaust. We've done this before, but only when we've had to. Moving forward the plan is to use confinement to keep the pressure off the paddocks until the vetch is good to go. All the sheep come down from the northern Cascade block before Autumn and a lot of that area goes into vetch.



Continued.

Is that where the automated feeder comes in?

Yes. The automated feeder is an idea I've come across after seeing something similar done in Victoria. We are in the process of building it. When it's ready the plan is we'll be able to fill up a silo, that feeds out on a pressure switch or timer to a long trough with an auger that will be set up in the containment area. We don't have a lot of staff and we can't spend a lot of time feeding out during seeding, so this way we should be able to manage the containment system a lot more easily.

The fixed unit will run off 240V power, but we can also build one that will work off solar. We can then make a portable system that can be moved paddock-to-paddock towed by a ute. That model will run off a timer rather than pressure switch, as we are only looking to supplement feed sheep in paddock not supply their whole diet in grain. This should avoid a lot of the wastage from trail feeding.

Next on the list is to build creep feeders for the lambs. One of the benefits we have with the engineering side of the business is that we can utilise off-cuts from silo bins, which reduces the expense of setting this kind of equipment up.



What is the plan for your containment setup?

It's going to be nearby our house on Wilaust, in small paddocks of 1.5ha. There's natural shade from trees and water fed from dams into troughs. Some sheep will remain in paddock, but by bringing in a good amount we can keep pressure off the paddock. We'll bring the young sheep in but take them out before lambing. Mob size will be 250 per pen, feeding out a grain mix plus oaten hay and lucerne bales. They'll also have access to calcium sulphur loose lick. I'll be aiming to maintain their condition. I use low-stress stock handling techniques and that will certainly come into play for containment.

Where do you see the big challenges in agriculture for the future?

Staffing is an increasing issue, getting keen young people into the industry must be a focus. I see feeding people as being one of the most important jobs in the world and we need young people coming through to take over.

Phosphate supply is also on my mind and something that I see as becoming an increasing issue over the next 20-30 years. I have heard that existing deposits are running low (about a 100-year supply) and we can't crop without it. The industry will have to find a way to work around it. An input like N is a different story given we can fix it through legumes, but Phosphate can't be generated.



Wrap up with what you love about the livestock industry?

I love working with animals and I'm passionate about genetics. The scope for improving production and management through genetic gain is fantastic.

I also have a passion for working with dogs. I've got three border collies and a kelpie. There's nothing like it.

A huge thanks from ASHEEP to Tihan for taking the time to share this interview, looking forward to hearing how that auto-feeder works out!



ASHEEP Representative Appointed to AWI Woolgrower Industry Consultation Panel

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

The Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) Woolgrower Industry Consultation Panel (WICP) has a new member, with ASHEEP's Vice Chair, David Vandenberghe, recently having been appointed. This is an opportunity for ASHEEP to voice matters important to our region to AWI and to find out how those issues are being acted on.



The purpose of the WICP is to provide avenues for AWI to formally 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.

The WICP meets four times per year, and in the course of the meetings ASHEEP is allocated time to raise issues relevant to our region, as well as put questions to AWI's Chairman, Directors and Managers.

In undertaking a role on the panel, Dave is keen to hear from people involved in the wool industry about issues and ideas that they would like raised. It's a pathway for us to give opinions on where funding should be directed and speak out on what's important to our region.

For those not familiar with Dave, he and his wife Katherine operate a mixed farming enterprise (cropping and sheep) in Scaddan, Grass Patch and Gibson. Their sheep operation is predominantly merino, and includes both stud and commercial flocks focusing on fine wool. A portion of the commercial flock is mated to terminal sires.

Get in touch with Dave:

0427 786 049

wattledale@vandenberghepartners.com.au



Free: Shearing Shed Safety 36-Sign Kits

Did you know that AWI provides free shed safety signage kits for woolgrowers to use in their woolsheds? All you are up for is the cost of postage (\$25).



The kit contains **36 safety signs** that are **printed on UV-stabilised polypropylene for durability**, with pre-drilled holes for easy installation. The kit also includes guidance notes to assist in the proper location and installation of these signs.



Developed and produced by the WA Shearing Industry Association (WASIA), with support from AWI, these signs meet Australian Standards and legislative requirements in all Australian states and will help woolgrowers meet occupational health and safety obligations.

AWI has sponsored the development and production of the kit and they are available to woolgrowers at the handling and postage cost of \$25 (including GST) per kit. The Shed Safety signage kit is only available for delivery within Australia.

Order at: www.wool.com/people/shearing-sheds-and-sheep-yards/safe-sheds/



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How Much N Can You Grow? Know your pH.

Theo Oorschot, Esperance Rural Supplies, 0427 715 166

There is much talk about the costs of inputs we are facing going into 2022. One of the key drivers to how successful our cropping programme has been is fertiliser and particularly how much N is applied to drive yields. It is not uncommon these days to see the need to apply 120-150 kg/ha of N to achieve a 5 t/ha wheat yield (and sometimes with poor protein levels!) However, I have a caveat here, in that there are a lot of other important factors to be considered including the key ingredient rainfall!



What about N and how much can you grow? Photo 1 is going back about 9 year's but the basic calculations don't change. A good stand of legume, nodulating well, can be calculated to have provided roughly 1.5 times its biomass as N. Remember 1 t/ha dry biomass is approximately 20 kg/ha N.



Photo 1. Brad Nutt, Angelo Loi and Sam Guest in a stand of Bladder Clover, Grass Patch 2013.

So, for example, as reading from the chart below, 5 t/ha sub clover biomass dry, assuming good nodulation, could produce up to 172 kg/ha N, of which 30% is available for next year's crop. ($5 \times 20 \times 1.72 = 172$) That is 52 kg/ha N! Vetches 5t/ha would calculate at $5 \times 20 \times 1.47 = 147$ kg/ha N. 30% is 44 kg/ha N. How do you know how much biomass have you grown? The answer is cages! These can be constructed easily from weldmesh or old gates.

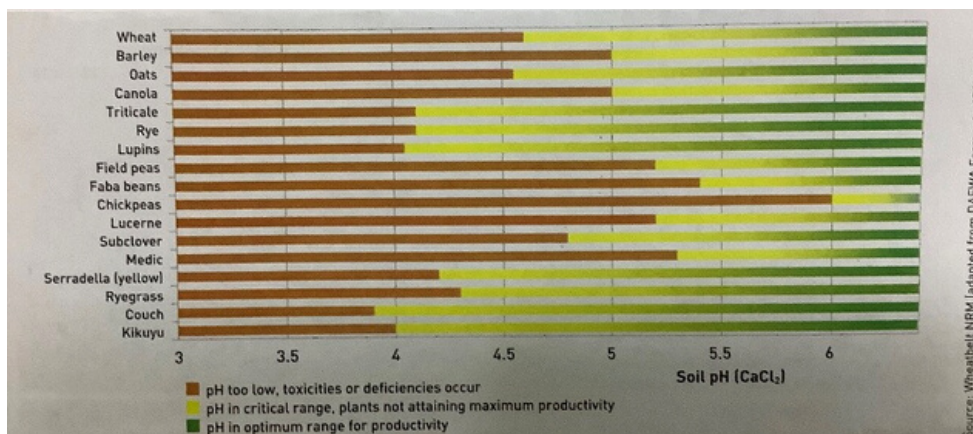
Soil Testing

Most of the emphasis on soil testing is predominantly on so called "cropping country". Why not check the nutritional status of country that is going into or staying as pasture. It is important to know the status of the big four macro elements as well as pH, particularly when selecting an appropriate legume according to soil type and pH. Chart 2 shows the optimum pH for a number of crop and pasture types. Selecting the legume to match the preferred pH, rhizobia survival would be greatly improved. Vetches, not listed prefer a pH range of 4.5 to 6. Vetches have made a mark on the sandplain, but nodulation can be poor on soil types with a pH's of 5 and below. Ron Yates and Co are promising us a more acid tolerant strain of EF. Having spoken to him recently the release date will be 2023.

Many models assume root N has moved into tops by maturity....wrong

- Studies indicate root N represents about 25 to 66% of total crop N – highest in dry years when roots are large proportion
- To include below ground N experts suggest we multiply
 - Lupin TopN x 1.33
 - Field pea and Vetch x 1.47
 - Chickpea x 1.86
 - Faba x 1.52
 - Lentil x 1.56
 - Subclover x 1.72, Medic x 1.26, Serradella x 1.4-1.8

Peoples, M.B., Swan, A.D., Goward, L., Kirkegaard, I.A., Hunt, J.R., II, G.D., Schwonke, G.D., Herridge, D.F., Moodie, M., Wilhelm, N. and Potter, T., 2017. Soil mineral nitrogen benefits derived from legumes and comparisons of the apparent recovery of legume or fertiliser nitrogen by wheat. *Soil Research*, 55(6), pp.600-615
Peoples, M.B., Brockwell, J., Hunt, J.R., Swan, A.D., Watson, L., Hayes, R.C., II, G.D., Hackney, B., Nuttall, J.G., Davies, S.L. and Fillery, I.R.P., 2013. Factors affecting the potential contributions of N2 fixation by legumes in Australian pasture systems. *Crop and Pasture Science*, 63(9), pp.759-786.



Above: Chart 1. Presented at the Grain Legume Rhizobia Workshop Esperance, March 2012.

Left: Chart 2. Preferred pH range of number of crops and pasture species.

Modern Stubble Grazing Calculator

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

"What's new at MLA?" was the kick-off for a recent conversation held with Meat & Livestock Australia's Joe Gebbels (Program Manager - Sheep and Goat Productivity). Joe gave me the wrap on a few projects that he's been involved in, one of which was a CSIRO, Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) project on the nutritive value of modern crop stubbles that has recently finished up. A key outcome of this project has been the release of a calculator for adult sheep grazing wheat stubbles.



Why is the calculator useful?

The calculator acts as a guide for producers to **estimate the number of grazing days for adult sheep on wheat stubbles in the mixed farming regions of southern Australia**. According to the project summary, "New crop cultivars, alternate crop species, modern harvesters and a reduction in the density of volunteer pasture plants have affected the nutritional value of modern crop stubbles that are grazed by sheep. Ewes typically graze stubbles during mating and early pregnancy, when access to high quality feed is critical for good reproductive performance. A recent scoping study found that modern crop stubbles are notoriously variable in quality, with the feeding value of wheat stubbles ranging between 60 and 190 DSE grazing days/ha for sheep. Non-cereal crops are usually found to be even more variable." [1]

What did the project find?

1. The results of the project confirmed that **stubbles and chaff (excluding grains) are primarily a low quality source of forage**, with an energy density of ranging from 4-8 MJ ME/kg, and typically around 6 MJ ME/kg for the edible components of chaff.
2. **Edible components of barley and lupin chaffs were mostly higher quality than wheat and canola chaffs, however all were below the maintenance requirements of sheep of 7.5-8 MJ ME in feed.**
3. **Farmers need to ensure that sheep have access to other high-quality feed such as spilled grains, supplements or green forage to maintain or grow sheep grazing stubbles and chaff.** Even the higher quality chaff components are of relatively low feeding value, and when offered ad libitum will only provide about one third to one half of the daily maintenance requirements of sheep. [1]

How does the calculator work?

The calculator is built in Excel and you can use it to estimate the number of grazing days and to budget the cost of supplementary feed. Just enter your inputs (e.g. targeted liveweight gain, condition score, liveweight, pregnancy status, paddock size, mob size, and basic details of supplementary feeding if relevant). It spits out the info you need to manage grazing and costs.

Case Study: Harry grazing 500 ewes with supplementary lupins to maintain condition

"Harry has a mob of 500 mature ewes (70 kg liveweight, average condition score 3.25) that he would like to graze on a 150 ha paddock of a recently harvested high yielding wheat crop. Harry would like to graze the paddock for as long as possible, so plans to begin supplementing 0.2 kg/hd/day of lupins (700 kg/week) after they have been on the stubble for 3 weeks. He would like to know how long it will be before the ewes return to their starting liveweight, and how much of their energy will have been from the stubble compared with the supplement. Results of the Stubble Grazing Calculator estimated that there was enough feed value in the stubble to maintain the ewes for 39 days without supplementation. However, with the provision of lupin supplement from day 22, ewes were able to maintain weight on the stubble for a total of 51 days at an estimated cost of \$2.33 per ewe for the lupins. At the end of this period, the lupins fed out accounted for 17% of the total energy intake of the ewes." [1]

Inputs	
Grazing conditions	
Liveweight gain target (g/hd/day)	0
Crop stubble type	wheat
Ewe condition score (0-5)	3.5
Ewe liveweight (kg)	70.0
Ewe months pregnant (0-5 months, single bearing)	0.0
Paddock size (ha)	150
Mob size (no. ewes)	500
Supplementary feeding	
Supplement type	lupins
Supplementary feeding begins (days from start of grazing)	22
Supplement feeding rate (kg/hd/day)	0.2
Cost of supplementary feed (\$/t)	400

Outputs	
Grazing days (unsupplemented)	
Days to liveweight gain target	18
Ewe liveweight (kg) when liveweight gain target is reached	72.8
Days until ewe liveweight returns to initial liveweight	39
With supplementary feeding	
Days until ewe liveweight returns to initial liveweight (supplemented)	51
Supplement fed (t)	2.9
Supplement cost (\$)	\$ 1,163
Daily supplement cost (\$/ewe/day)	\$ 0.08
Energy intake from stubble and supplement	
Estimated energy intake - stubble (MJ ME)	179816
Estimated energy intake - supplement (MJ ME)	37804
Proportion of total ME intake from supplementary feed (%)	17%

Case Study: Frank grazing ewes without supplementary feed to increase liveweight

"Frank has recently bought 200 Merino ewes from a neighbour. The ewes had been grazing a poor quality pasture and were between condition score 1.5 and 2, with an average weight of 53 kg. Frank is planning to graze them on a recently harvested 40 ha wheat stubble paddock to increase their liveweight prior to joining, and would like to know how long to graze the stubble before their daily weight gain drops below 50 g/hd/day, unsupplemented. The Stubble Grazing Calculator predicts that the weight gain of the ewes will fall below 50 g/hd/day after 24 days of grazing the wheat stubble, unsupplemented. The estimated weight of the ewes at this time is 58.0 kg, having gained 5 kg liveweight." [1]

Inputs	
Grazing conditions	
Liveweight gain target (g/hd/day)	50
Crop stubble type	wheat
Ewe condition score (0-5)	1.8
Ewe liveweight (kg)	53.0
Ewe months pregnant (0-5 months, single bearing)	0.0
Paddock size (ha)	40
Mob size (no. ewes)	200
Supplementary feeding	
Supplement type	no suppt
Supplementary feeding begins (days from start of grazing)	0
Supplement feeding rate (kg/hd/day)	0
Cost of supplementary feed (\$/t)	0

Outputs	
Grazing days (unsupplemented)	
Days to liveweight gain target	19
Ewe liveweight (kg) when liveweight gain target is reached	56.3
Days until ewe liveweight returns to initial liveweight	48
With supplementary feeding	
Days until ewe liveweight returns to initial liveweight (supplemented)	48
Supplement fed (t)	0.0
Supplement cost (\$)	\$ -
Daily supplement cost (\$/ewe/day)	\$ -
Energy intake from stubble and supplement	
Estimated energy intake - stubble (MJ ME)	86773
Estimated energy intake - supplement (MJ ME)	0
Proportion of total ME intake from supplementary feed (%)	0%

*Note that Lifetime Ewe Management recommends a BCS target range of 3.0-3.5 during joining, <http://www.lifetimewool.com.au>

Days to liveweight gain target - the number of days the sheep can graze the stubble until their weight gain is equal to the Liveweight gain target.

For example, a fresh wheat stubbles stocked at 3 dry ewes/ha (~50 kg and CS 2.5) would be expected to maintain the ewes (liveweight gain target = 0) for about 7 weeks without supplementation. This can be expressed in DSE grazing days as 3 ewes/ha x 1 DSE grazing days/ewe x 53 days = 159 DSE grazing days/ha.

Where can you get your hands on the calculator?

Email Sarah Brown at eo@asheep.org.au and I'll send it through (the online downloadable version is being updated).

Want more information on grazing stubbles?

Dr Dean Thomas (CSIRO), who led the modern crop stubbles project is a wealth of knowledge on the the topic and recently delivered a webinar to provide producers with up-to-date information on the feeding value of modern stubbles. Search "The nutritive value of modern crop stubbles - Dean Thomas" to view a recording of the webinar on YouTube.

Source: [1] Meat & Livestock Australia Website & Modern Stubble Grazing Calculator available at: www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/reports/2021/the-nutritive-value-of-modern-crop-stubbles/#

Stubbles as a source of summer feed for sheep

Dean Thomas, Andrew Toovey, Elizabeth Hulm and Gonzalo Mata
Modern Stubbles Project, CSIRO Agriculture and Food

mla MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA
awi Australian Wool Innovation Limited
CSIRO

Save the Date: ASHEEP Autumn Field Day

Wednesday 30th March 2022

The Autumn Field Day will deliver Sheep's Back presentations on maximising sheep profitability and understanding vaccinations, plus sessions on Workplace Health & Safety for livestock including a WASIA shearing shed inspection. It will be held at the Vandenberghe's shed in Scaddan. More info and register at www.asheep.org.au or contact: Sarah Brown, eo@asheep.org.au, 0409 335 194.



The day has been planned in consideration of the State Government's COVID-19 restrictions and health advice. You will need to wear a mask and show proof of vaccination. If restrictions change and the field day cannot be held, where possible, we plan to find alternate ways to share the information.

Esperance Quality Grains Pty Ltd can supply the following;



Sheep Finisher Pellets	\$415 ex GST
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Ph: +6148 90720055 or 0438 387 405

Email: daryl@qualitygrains.com.au

We can also supply Lupins, Wheat, Barley, Legumes 2nds or any feed grain required.

Got 50 or more poultry?

Not quite your average beef / sheep related article, but if you happen to have a flock of poultry on the side, this one's for you.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) have announced **new registration requirements for poultry owners**. Owners of poultry, emus and ostriches will soon be required to register as livestock owners, under new regulations to reinforce biosecurity measures and food safety.

The registration requirement will apply to owners of 50 or more poultry – domestic chickens, turkeys, geese, ducks, guinea fowl, quail, pigeons, pheasants and partridges – and owners of 10 more emus and/or ostriches.



The change to the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management (Identification and Movement of Stock and Apiaries) Regulations 2013 will **come into effect from 1 April 2022**. People who own less than 50 poultry and less than 10 emus or ostriches but sell these birds, their eggs or meat for human consumption are also encouraged to register to support notification and tracing in relation to biosecurity and food safety.

Owners of poultry, emus and ostriches who are not already registered with DPIRD as an owner of other livestock can register for free from 1 April until 30 September 2022 to assist with the transition to the new requirements. Once registered, owners and abattoirs will be issued a Property Identification Code (PIC) for the location at which the animals are kept.

Contact: Dr Brad McCormick, DPIRD, manager of product integrity, 08 9790 6161.



Management of Johne's disease in WA

Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development

New Johne's disease import conditions

Following the detection of Johne's disease (JD) cattle strain (C-strain) in cattle in Western Australia, the WA cattle industry have agreed JD (C-strain) was not technically feasible or economical to eradicate. Consequently, regulation of JD in WA has been reduced and in consultation with the relevant industries WA's livestock import conditions have been amended to reflect this. The new conditions came into effect on 17 January 2022.

All mandatory JD faecal testing requirements have been removed from the import conditions.

All livestock moving into WA from interstate that are not going immediately to slaughter must meet the following requirements:

- All properties the livestock have resided on must have had no suspected or confirmed JD infection in any species of livestock during the five years prior to movement of the livestock (to be moved into WA) off the property(ies).
- The livestock to be moved into WA must not have had contact with livestock suspected or known to be infected with JD.
- Cattle vaccinated for JD must be identified with a three-hole punch (preferably administered in the outer third of the right ear) and recorded in the National Livestock Identification System as JD vaccinated.

Further information can be found on the agric.wa.gov.au website on the webpage: [Forms for importing livestock into WA](#).

Biosecurity planning and resources

DPIRD encourages WA producers to review their approach to the risk of JD as part of their on-farm biosecurity planning. This review should include examining and implementing their own requirements for livestock to be introduced to their property from interstate and from within WA.

Whether you are sourcing camelids, cattle, goat or sheep from interstate or within WA, DPIRD encourages all producers to ask for a [national health declaration](#).

Resources to assist producers with biosecurity planning, including information on JD, on-farm biosecurity practices, risk reduction (including biosecurity plan templates and checklists), and information on national industry assurance programs can be found on the following webpages on the agric.wa.gov.au website:

- [JD in cattle: management in WA](#)
- [JD in cattle: frequently asked questions](#)
- [JD in cattle: regulatory controls](#)
- [JD in sheep](#)
- [JD in sheep: biosecurity practices and management options](#)

You can also watch a recorded presentation on JD and biosecurity planning via a link on the webpage: [JD in cattle: management in WA](#).

Please contact your local DPIRD field veterinary officer if you require more information:

Dr Kristine Rayner, +61 (0)8 9845 7413, kristine.rayner@dpiird.wa.gov.au



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Area Manager, Esperance (West)

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tdonkin@summitfertz.com.au

Australian Red Meat – 2022 industry outlook

Rabobank

Australia's agricultural sector is set for another profitable year ahead, with the gross value of agricultural production on track for a fourth consecutive year of growth in 2021/22, Rabobank says in a newly-released industry report.



In its flagship annual **Australian Agribusiness Outlook** for 2022, titled 'Making Hay While the Sun Shines', the specialist global agribusiness bank says a stellar 2021 – with high to record-high agricultural commodity prices and production volumes reaching record levels in some Australian commodities – represented a continued recovery from drought and had positioned Australian agriculture for a strong year ahead.

Report co-author, RaboResearch senior analyst animal protein, Angus Gidley-Baird said with recovering livestock numbers we expect livestock prices to ease. However, he said strong export markets, the ongoing limited stock numbers and favourable seasons all point towards prices remaining strong.

For the beef sector, Mr Gidley-Baird said after two years of low slaughter numbers, we expect to see a lift in 2022, reflecting an increase in calf production in 2020 and more particularly in 2021 given better seasons and growth in breeding inventory. "However limited cattle numbers and strong demand will continue to drive the market, and with favourable seasonal conditions, we expect prices, while easing, to remain strong," he said.

"Rabobank modelling suggests a 13 per cent increase in slaughter numbers in 2022. Male slaughter numbers in Q3 2021 showed the first year-on-year increase since Q1 2020 and the biggest rise since Q3 2017. The rise in male slaughter indicates an improvement in breeding and calving numbers through late 2020. Increased availability of cattle will improve productive efficiency in processing facilities and support ongoing strong feedlot numbers," Mr Gidley-Baird said.

The report says although increased cattle numbers will cause cattle prices to ease, favourable seasons, strong consumer demand, and ongoing limited supplies will keep prices strong. Cattle prices continued to defy historical trends through 2021.



Mr Gidley-Baird is anticipating a strong year ahead for lamb as the sheep flock rebuilding continues.

"With favourable seasons and firm prices, we expect sheep producers will continue to rebuild their flocks in 2022," he said.

"Sheep slaughter numbers for 2021 were down 31 per cent on the five-year average. Together with solid restocker and merino lamb prices in the latter part of 2021, this suggests producers are looking to hold and grow their flocks – a position reflected in the Rabobank Rural Confidence Survey for Q4 2021, which showed 55 per cent of sheep producer respondents are looking to increase their stock numbers."

According to Mr Gidley-Baird, with increased sheep numbers and good seasons supporting conception and lambing rates, lamb slaughter and production is expected to increase in the year ahead. "MLA's February projections forecast a 7.5 per cent increase in lamb production in 2022," he said.

To find out more about other Rabobank research, contact Rabobank's Esperance team on (08) 9076 4200 or subscribe to RaboResearch Food & Agribusiness Australia & New Zealand on your podcast app.

Left: Rabobank Senior Animal Proteins Analyst, Angus Gidley-Baird.

Give a Young Person a Go

Sarah Brown, ASHEEP

One of the core elements of ASHEEP's strategic plan is to encourage and engage with young people in the livestock industry. Mentorship, employment and work experience are key ways that we can get involved in supporting people to further their education and develop their careers. Following is a snapshot of a couple of the programs that have reached out to ASHEEP recently looking for farmers to take part.

Wongutha CAPS

Wongutha CAPS is involved in two options - a School Based Trainees (SBT) program and a Work Experience program. They are getting started as we write this, but they are still looking for placements and an employer / student can still sign up if it is not too far down the track.

There is the opportunity to take on one or more students. Wongutha is seeking placements on farms each Thursday and Friday, 8 weeks in the term. Students will all be studying a Cert 2 in Agriculture at TAFE.

School Based Trainee

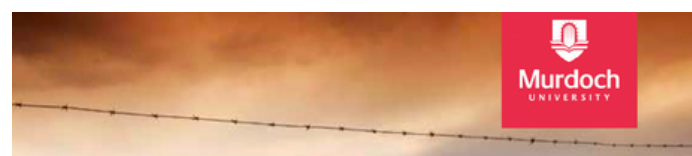
- 2 days a week work - paid
- Employer receives Government incentives to commence and complete a 12 month training program including 320 hr paid work. Employer also receives 50% wages back if signed up before March 31st.
- Contact Cher Cole at Chamber of Commerce & Industry WA, Cher.Cole@cciwa.com, OR Kelly Strange at The Apprenticeship Community kelly.strange@apprenticeshipcommunity.com.au



Scott Welke (centre) invited his vet placement student Teck (left) to the 2021 ASHEEP Winter Walk, where he received good in-paddock experience surviving torrential downpours and cold wind.

Work Experience

- 2 days a week work - unpaid
- No cost to employer
- Wongutha CAPS provide all insurance, food, transport and PPE.
- Contact Fiona Franzone, 0407 085 516, fiona@wonguthacaps.wa.edu.au



Farm Experience Scheme



College of Science, Health, Engineering & Education
Discipline of Agricultural Science and School of Veterinary Medicine



Students looking for opportunities to get real-life experience in agriculture!

Building towards a strong future for livestock industries

We are searching for farmers willing to host our university students studying animal and veterinary science for a one to two-week farm experience.

If you have a farming business with livestock and are interested to learn more about our farm experience scheme, please contact us for more information at

Murdoch University

Murdoch University has a 5 week vacation period commencing 25th June – 29th July, 2022 and they would welcome any interest from farmers who may be in a position to host their veterinary / animal science students.

Hosting can be for one or two weeks.

Murdoch would encourage two week placements due to distance and if possible hosting 2 x students (mainly due to distance, inexperienced drivers and travel is at the students own cost).

There is a small reimbursement of \$100 per week per student for full board.

For more information including a program booklet, contact:

Tanya Smith

Murdoch University

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Senior Officer

08 9360 1515

tanya.smith@murdoch.edu.au



Image: Dannii Newton spreading lime for Westwood Farms on her Agricultural Traineeship.

Farm Traineeship Program

ASHEEP interviews Scott Welke & Dannii Newton

Late last year, Dannii Newton picked up a harvest job with Westwood Farms. With no prior experience as a farm worker, she describes being fresh out of her high school graduation ceremony and two days later down in Esperance being trained up to drive a chaser. Within a few weeks she was behind the wheel of a header and she loved it. According to her employer Scott Welke, the way she took to operating machinery was "magic".

When harvest wrapped up, Dannii was left considering options for the future and decided that she was keen to explore agriculture. Scott came across an article in the SEPWA newsletter on an Agricultural Traineeship and in January they put in a call to the Apprenticeship Community to find out more. Fast forward, they have signed up to the program and Dannii is employed by the Welkes on a full-time basis. She is studying a 12 month Certificate III in Agriculture via the local TAFE, which is largely run through a combination of remote and on-farm learning. Dannii gets sent the course reading and Scott has support from TAFE's Em McDonald to sign off the modules (such as tractor operation, shearing preparation, chemical handling, etc). Scott also receives financial subsidies to deliver the traineeship, which covers 50% of Dannii's wages.

Both the Welkes and Dannii's family (who are based in Bakers Hill near Perth), have been impressed by how quickly Dannii has picked up farming skills. It's pretty incredible to meet someone who has the capability and confidence to operate a header, and do a good job of it, at such a young age. When ASHEEP went by to interview Scott and Dannii, she was in the midst of spreading lime and ducked out from the tractor between loads to have a chat. On top of the good work, she can still proudly proclaim that she has not clipped a fence or hit a post! Thanks to both for taking the time to share this story, we hope the journey continues well.

How can others get involved in an Agricultural Traineeship?

A chat with Kelly Strange from the **Apprenticeship Community** is a great place to start the conversation. Scott found them easy to deal with. It's a good idea to pick up the phone soon, because **if you sign up a Trainee before March 31st 2022 you could be eligible receive the "BAC 50% Wage Subsidy" (up to \$7,000 per quarter)**[1] plus state and federal incentives. Kelly is visiting Esperance on the 24th March and is happy to meet and discuss the traineeship. If you have someone ready to sign up it only takes 30 minutes and there's also the option to catch up via an online meeting.

Em McDonald at the South Regional **TAFE** is one of the lecturers and very helpful, if you're not based near Esperance she can connect you to your nearest TAFE. The TAFE course code is "AHC30116 Certificate III in Agriculture". Em can discuss the competency units and the TAFE fees (currently 1/2 price capped at \$1,200; or \$400 if you're aged 15–24 or eligible for a concession, plus resource fees and other fees that may apply to your course [2]). There are government subsidies towards these fees. It's a great time to study!

[1] Trainee has to have had only been working for the employer 3 months full time or 12 months casually, and they have to be placed in part or full time employment. Any prior qualifications they won't receive federal incentives only state and boosting. Must work a minimum of 15 hours a week if part time 37.5 hours full time. Must attend TAFE training days and get paid for this. Look on Fairwork under their award for the pay rates <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employment-conditions/awards/awards-summary/ma000035-summary>.

[2] TAFE Website: <https://www.southregionaltafe.wa.edu.au/courses/certificate-iii-agriculture>

Program Snapshot

Agricultural Traineeship

Deadline for Incentives: 31st March 2022 (You can still get involved in the program after that but the incentives described may not be available)

Apprenticeship Community

Kelly Strange
0417 958 400
kelly.strange@apprenticeshipcommunity.com.au

South Regional TAFE

Em McDonald
0409 107 466
em.mcdonald@srtafe.wa.edu.au



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AWI Update: Flystrike training

Ellie Bigwood, Australian Wool Innovation

New project to fight flystrike with one-on-one training for growers

Further AWI funding has been announced to combat flystrike through one-on-one training with woolgrowers. AWI is calling for expressions of interest for 15 agriculture and vet sheep consultants across the nation to be trained and accredited to deliver the training to at least 600 woolgrowers across Australia.



The new “Moving to a Non-Mulesed Merino Enterprise” project is targeted at woolgrowers who are, or are planning to, manage flystrike without mulesing and aligns with the industry’s Wool 2030 strategy and follows calls by many growers for more information about this option. It was a key finding of the June 2021 AWI and MLA Wool and Sheep Meat Survey, 42% of respondents currently mulesing said they intended to cease mulesing in the next 5 years.

The new project is the latest stage of a \$1,000,500, 6-year flystrike extension program for growers:

1. **It’s Fly Time!** focuses on tactical flystrike prevention, monitoring and treatment information
2. **SimpliFly** will help growers develop a property specific plan for flystrike control using an integrated pest management approach
3. **ClassiFly** increases awareness and skills in breeding for flystrike resistance to minimise flystrike risk, chemical resistance and reliance on crutching
4. A one-day workshop for woolgrowers looking to move to a non-mulesed Merino enterprise (**Moving to a Non-Mulesed Merino Enterprise, StrateFly**), and
5. **AmpliFly** will provide hands-on coaching and support to woolgrowers to implement their whole-of-farm flystrike plan (**AmpliFly**), developing their confidence and capacity to reduce reliance on mulesing, optimise chemical use and increase whole farm profitability.

SimpliFly will be available from mid-2022. ClassiFly should be available from January 2023 and Stage 4 Moving to a Non-Mulesed Merino Enterprise during 2023.

A new venture for AWI’s Ellie Bigwood

After 4 wonderful years with AWI in the wool industry, I am leaving AWI to pursue a new career opportunity with Pardoo Beef Corporation in the Pilbara.

In the last 2 years of my role based full-time back in my home state, I’ve tried my hardest to collaborate with WA woolgrowers, grower groups and other industry networks, and communicate the projects that AWI undertake on behalf of wool levy payers. Fortunately, AWI will recruit a new staff member to WA. Once this person is confirmed, the details will be announced.

From Spring Field Day pasture walks, through to the iconic ‘Wool Baa’ at the 2021 ASHEEP AGM, it has been nothing but a privilege to work with the ASHEEP team and community on so many occasions. I wish all of you the very best for the future.





New Project: ASHEEP Shearing Interval Demonstration 6 v 12 months

ASHEEP's latest project is under way - a shearing interval demonstration looking at the benefits and differences between 6 month shearing and 12 month shearing in merino ewes. The project is being overseen by ASHEEP Project Officer, Courteney Pengilly, and is being hosted at Laurina Farms by Ashley Reichstein and Megan McDowall. The 3-year demonstration will follow 800 ewes across two age groups. The ewes have been tagged (thanks to a donation from Allflex) and the project is off to a good start, as per the following overview from Courteney.

Courteney Pengilly, ASHEEP

Key data collected during the Shearing Interval Demonstration will include individual animals weights, condition scores, wool samples and pregnancy scanning results. This information will be used to evaluate the potential impact of shearing intervals between the groups, while getting a measure on the general wellbeing of the animals throughout the 3 year trial. All the animals are to be treated the same throughout the trial. There is no special feeding regime for these animals, they are run as normal on Laurina Farms.

Below is the predicted table of collection points for the trial.

Dates	Activity	Purple tags	Yellow tags
October 2021	S, Tagging, BW, CS	100%	100%
Late November 2021	Joining (35 days)	100%	0%
December 2021	Preg Scan	100%	0%
March 2022	C, BW, CS	50%	50%
	S, FW, BW, CS	50%	50%
June 2022	BW, CS – Marking	100%	100%
July 2022	BW, CS - Weaning	100%	100%
September 2022	S, MT, FW, BW, CS	100%	100% (No MT)
Late November 2022	Joining (35 days)	100%	100%
December 2022	Preg Scanning	100%	100%
March 2023	C, FW, BW, CS	50%	50%
	S, FW, BW, CS	50%	50%
June 2023	BW, CS – Marking	100%	100%
July 2023	BW, CS - Weaning	100%	100%
September 2023	S, MT, FW, BW, CS	100%	100% (No MT)
Late November 2023	Joining (3 days)	100%	100%
December 2023	Preg Scanning	100%	100%
March 2024	C, FW, BW, CS	50%	50%
	S, FW, BW, CS	50%	50%
June 2024	W, CS – Marking	100%	100%
July 2024	BW, CS - Weaning	100%	100%
September 2024	S, MT, FW, BW, CS	100%	100% (No MT)

This project has been assessed and approved by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development's Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) and we now have our official certificate to conduct the project. ASHEEP was given special permission to start the data collection process late last year (as the deciding meeting would be held after the project start date). Many thanks to ASHEEP EO Sarah for putting the time into this while I was on a chaser bin for harvest. This has been a great exercise going through the AEC application process, giving ASHEEP a better perspective of what the process involves for future projects.

Image top: Courteney Pengilly (ASHEEP) and Jake Hann (Nutrien Ag Solutions) start capturing data for the 3 year project.

Key

Shearing – S Crutching – C Fleece Weigh – FW Micron Test – MT Body Weigh – BW
Condition Score – CS

Table left: Project timetable. Source: Courteney Pengilly, Shearing interval demonstration

Continued over page.

Data collection started on the 23rd of December 2021, being for the data collection on each animal as a base for the project. This is later than where we would like to have commenced but with a shearer shortage and a wet start things got pushed back. You all know how things go, add on top a busy harvest meant things had to be flexible. Watch this space for more details as the project progresses. As you can see from the timetable, we have the first shearing in our sights. Keep your eye on the socials to stay up to date with projects between newsletters.



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Special thanks for getting the Shearing Interval Demonstration running go to:

Laurina Farms, Ashley Reichstein and Megan McDowall - project host

Chatley and Hutcheson - providing the weigh crate

Jake Hann, Nutrien Ag Solutions - bringing the weighing gear out and condition scoring.

Sinead O'Gara, South Coastal Agencies & the team at Allflex for arranging the donation of eartags for all sheep in the project.

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Monitoring Mice

Sophie Daw, Agronomist, South Coastal Agencies, 0427 013 176



Esperance – Ravensthorpe – Salmon Gums

We saw increased mice activity throughout some areas of the region in 2021. Following a great harvest in 2021, residual food availability for mice is likely to be high, which can drive mice populations to increase.

Considering this, we are planning on keeping a close eye on mice activity on the lead up to seeding this year. Mice can produce litters of up to 10 offspring and are able to fall pregnant again as soon as they've given birth, so a small mice population can explode in a very short period of time.

How to monitor mice activity, thresholds & baiting

Monitoring Activity

- Active burrow counts:
 - Walk about 30 metres in from the edge of the paddock and set a 100 metre by one metre wide transect through a crop (following the furrows).
 - Count every active mouse hole you find within this transect. Active holes can be distinguished by fresh tracks or food remnants.
 - Repeat this three or four times across a paddock in order to obtain an average burrow count.
- Mouse chew cards:
 - Alternatively, mouse chew cards, which are a grid of paper covered in canola oil, can be placed out 10 metres apart over a 100 metre transect.
 - These are left out overnight and the level of chewing on the cards indicates the amount of mice activity in the area.
 - This method of mice activity estimation is usually not as effective prior to crop establishment as counting active burrows is, since there is plenty of food available on the ground for the mice. This technique is generally better for gauging mice activity in-crop.



MOUSE CHEW CARD

INCIDENT MONITOR:

Check your chew cards – identify if mouse activity is:



Image Top: Active mouse burrows indicate mice activity. Image Bottom: The amount of chewing on a chew card corresponds to the level of mice activity

What are the thresholds?

- There is likely to be economic damage when there are more than 200 mice per hectare at sowing. This equates to two or three active holes per 100 metre transect.
- Two hundred mice per hectare can eat one per cent of the crop sown each night, or 14 per cent in two weeks. At this threshold, baiting with a zinc phosphide bait is necessary.

When should I bait?

- Apply baits six weeks prior to sowing if there is sufficient evidence of mice, then reassess prior to sowing. If you are planning on baiting only once, bait immediately after sowing.
- If baiting at sowing, apply directly after sowing. Mice forage more after sowing because of the soil disturbance, as the existing food source will be buried by the seeder. If the bait is spread on top of the buried food source, the mice will discover the bait first, and eat that in preference to digging up the planted seed. Baiting more than 24 hours after sowing will be less effective.
- Allow at least four to six weeks before reapplication of baits to minimise the chance of bait aversion. This allows mice that have previously eaten a non-lethal dose to try it again (overcome bait aversion), and targets new mice in the population that are susceptible to the bait (through immigration or a new generation of mice).
- Avoid spreading bait prior to rainfall events, as the zinc phosphide bait may become less effective. Zinc phosphide will tolerate some rain, but rain erodes the poison off the bait.
- Bait over large areas. Encourage neighbours to bait at the same time if they also have a mouse problem. The larger the area treated, the lower the chance of reinvasion
- Use the double strength zinc phosphide bait (zinc phosphide 50 gai), as this increases the chances of mice taking a lethal dose of bait and reduces the risk of bait aversion.



What else can I do?

- Control weeds and volunteer crops along fence lines, crop margins and channel banks before seed set to minimise sources of food and shelter
- On-going monitoring for mice activity is essential, as it will enable timely decision making in terms of control methods at sowing
- Minimise residual feed for mice by using sheep to graze stubbles
- Coordinate management strategies with neighbours to minimise the risk of mouse re-invasion
- Monitor paddocks post-baiting. If populations are high, mice may move back into the paddocks from adjacent, unbaited areas. If any 'hot spots' are discovered, re-bait these areas.

New WHS Laws - Need a ticket?

With new Workplace Health & Safety Laws on the go, it's a good time to consider whether your team have relevant tickets and training. Here is a list of agriculture-related courses offered by South Regional TAFE in Esperance.



Esperance Campus 2022 Short Courses

FORKLIFT SKILL SET

- 2 Day Course 8.30am - 4.30pm
- \$114.80 per person
- 18+ / must have current Australian drivers licence
- Must apply for Worksafe licence following the course (additional fee)

WORKING AT HEIGHTS

- 1 Day Course 8.30am - 4.30pm
- \$60.92 per person

WHITE CARD

- 1 Day Course 8.30am - 2:45pm
- \$44.28 per person

CONFINED SPACES

- 1 Day Course 8.30am - 4.30pm
- \$73.88 per person

CHAINSAW

- 1 Day Course 8.30am - 4.30pm
- \$81.70 per person

FIRE SUPPRESSION & FIRE WARDEN

- Can do one or both - held on same day
- Fire Suppression 8:30am - 12pm / \$34.30 per person
- Fire Warden 1pm - 4pm / \$53.80 per person

ELEVATED WORK PLATFORM (EWP)

- 2 Day Course 8.30am - 4.30pm
- \$665 per person
- 18+ / must have current Australian drivers licence

FIRST AID

- 1 Day Course 8.30am - 4.30pm
- \$54.16 per person
- Pre-reading required

AUSCHEM ACCREDITATION

- 2 Day course 8.30am - 4.30pm
- \$352.40 per person

AUSCHEM RE-ACCREDITATION

- 1 Day course 8.30am - 4.30pm
- \$305 per person

OPERATE TRACTORS

- 2 Day Course 8.30am - 4.30pm
- \$79.80 per person

5 DAY OSH REPRESENTATIVE

- 5 Day Course 8.30am - 4.30pm
- \$1277 per person

TELEHANDLER

- 1 Day course 8.30am - 4.30pm
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Get Your Podcast Fix

Seeding is on the horizon and with it plenty of tractor time, here are a few ideas for those of you who enjoy a podcast or two as the paddock rolls by.



Join Australian Wool Innovation as they explore wool's global supply chain; speaking with woolgrowers, manufacturers, designers and everyone in between, about how they're working with the world's miracle fibre.

- **The World's Biggest Sheep Experiment**
- **Wearable Tech - Keeping shearers shearing**
- **Slowing the development of flystrike resistance**



Powered by The Livestock Collective, the Livestock Leaders podcast will take you around Australia, where you will meet advocates and champions of the livestock industry. These people work everyday to share real and transparent stories, which will empower and inspire you to do share your own story.

- **Hanna Hayes - @Buffalo_Bill_**
- **Ali Quintana - Christmas on a live export vessel**
- **Barb Madden - Leadership in the Lotfeeding Industry**



Local knowledge from a paddock near you. Paddock Chat is run by the Westmidlands Group, a grower group in Dandaragan.

- **To Chickpea, or not to Chickpea**
- **Making your Farm 'Smart' - Connecting your farm to the digital world**
- **CN30 - Cleaning up cattle emissions**



Explores SA's Red Meat and Wool sector; livestock producers, technology providers and more. Showcasing success stories from the ground, and how they've benefited from changing their farm's business model with the adoption of technology, infrastructure or best practice.

- **David Cooper - Using technology to make pastoral property more productive**
- **Mark Inglis - Animal health from a processor's perspective**
- **Alex McGorman - Health considerations for feedlots buying sheep**
- **Bonnie Skinner - Individual sheep eID for biosecurity and traceability**



Rabobank's RaboResearch Food & Agribusiness team has 90 analysts working in local teams across the worldwide Rabobank network. The podcast covers their knowledge, views and insights on businesses, topics and developments in the food & agribusiness sectors across the globe.

Recent episodes include:

- **Farmers to the Emissions Rescue! But What's in It for Them?**
- **When Black Sea Wheat is Caught in Conflict: 1914 vs. Present**
- **Racking Up the Global Lamb Market for 2022**



Mark Ferguson from neXtgen Agri covers livestock, genetics, innovation and technology. Focus is on sheep and beef farming in Australia and NZ and the people in those industries. Recent episodes include:

- **A Scottish shearer, shepherd and scanner, with Ryan Maclean.**
- **Checking udders and reducing lamb wastage with Anne Ridler**
- **Winning with Wagyu. 2022 Zanda McDonald award winner (Aus)**
- **ASHEEP Members Moojepin Merinos (Badgebup) featured on the podcast in May 2021 "Drought drives determination with Moojepin Merinos"**



This one's new on the scene, presented by FutureBeef - a collaborative program between MLA and the governments of QLD, NT and WA, working for a profitable and sustainable northern beef industry.

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Water deficiency declared in the Shire of Esperance - Salmon Gums and Grass Patch

Government of Western Australia

Water Minister Dave Kelly has recently declared a water deficiency in Salmon Gums and Grass Patch in the Shire of Esperance and announced the State Government will begin carting water for eligible farmers from Tuesday March 1, 2022 for animal welfare needs.

The official declaration follows applications from the Shire of Esperance on behalf of 10 farmers in Salmon Gums and five farmers in Grass Patch. A declaration is made as a last resort after continued dry conditions have depleted on-farm and local community water supplies.



Water will be delivered to previously established tanks at the Salmon Gums quarry dam and two portable tanks in Grass Patch, reducing the distance farmers need to travel to source emergency livestock water. Water carting will commence Tuesday March 1, 2022. Water carting arrangements are being managed by Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) with support from Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and Water Corporation.

DWER is liaising with local government authorities and farmers in other dryland areas to monitor their on-farm water storage and requirements. **DWER is encouraging farmers to return their farm water surveys** and local government authorities to consider Community Water Supply Program grant applications in areas of need.

Vet Spot: Diseases that can cause neurological signs in sheep

Dr. Scott Jackson. BSc DVM, Swans Veterinary Service

As a veterinary practice, many of the significant disease syndromes we are recruited to investigate involve neurological signs in sheep. Typical scenarios may include single or multiple animals that are down, star gazing, staggering, fence walking, head pressing, separated from the mob, blind or found dead. On an optimistic note, most of the causes of neurological syndrome in sheep can be prevented if producers are made aware of the underlying disease processes and how to manage them.

Four of the most common diseases we have diagnosed upon conducting significant disease investigations (SDI's) are Polioencephalomalacia (PEM), hypocalcaemia, enterotoxaemia and annual rye grass toxicity (ARGT).

Polioencephalomalacia or PEM, is a disease caused by low vitamin B1 (or thiamine) circulating in the blood. Typically, mobs affected with PEM will have multiple animals that are down, blind and have a signature arched neck posture allusive of "star gazing". If the symptoms are missed, animals may simply be found dead in that posture with marks in the dirt suggestive of limb paddling. Rather than a primary dietary deficiency, destruction of thiamine by bacteria in the rumen of cereal supplemented sheep is a common cause in feed lots or in scenarios where naïve sheep gorge on grain. These cases can be prevented by careful induction onto high grain diets and feeding adequate roughage. Symptomatic animals may respond to intravenous or intramuscular injections of vitamin B1, however once recumbence and star gazing sets in, the outlook is poor even with treatment.

Hypocalcaemia is a metabolic disease with neurological symptoms that can occur in multiple physiological groups (both in young weaners and pregnant/lactating ewes). Critically low blood calcium levels may result in staggers, tremors, recumbence, bloat, vaginal prolapse and death. In ewes, hypocalcaemia is caused by the high calcium demands of late pregnancy and early lactation, while young sheep may suffer from a dietary deficiency when grazing green oats, oxalate containing plants or if they are on cereal only diets. Subclinical hypocalcaemia will often be exacerbated by stressful events in high risk groups such as moving, yarding, shearing, crutching or transport. Disease and death can be prevented by ensuring pregnant and lactating ewes are on a rising plane of nutrition, minimizing stress in at risk groups (i.e. no yarding pregnant/lactating ewes for long periods off feed), supplementing cereal grain fed sheep with calcium carbonate and grazing high risk crops (green oat crops) for only short periods.

Enterotoxaemia (also known as "pulpy kidney" or "over eating disease"), is one of the more easily prevented neurological diseases when vaccine protocols are correctly implemented. It is caused by a bacteria (*Clostridium perfringens* type D) that is a normal commensal of the intestine, though can rapidly multiply when naïve sheep are moved on to lush pasture/cereal crops or inadequately inducted onto high grain diets. A flock outbreak of pulpy kidney will most often present as multiple sudden deaths in well conditioned weaner lambs. Preceding symptoms are usually missed though may include convulsions and diarrhoea soon followed by a coma and death.

Enterotoxaemia can be easily prevented with vaccination. It is recommended that lambs receive their first dose of vaccine containing *Cl.perfringens* (i.e. 3in1/6in1) at marking followed by a booster 4-6 weeks later at weaning. Ewes should be boosted annually thereafter.

Annual rye grass toxicity (or ARGT) is a primary neurological disease that we see locally most commonly north of Gibson and west of Esperance. It is caused by infection of rye grass seed heads at flowering with a nematode worm harboring a toxin producing bacteria. Classically in the early stages of disease, sheep may be seen skipping, staggering and falling when stimulated to move. Outbreaks will often emerge sporadically, whereby a paddock that has even been cropped for a number of years may see cases arise from stubble grazing with scant rye grass. Only 5 infected rye grass plants per square meter of crop is necessary to cause toxicity. Prevention revolves around limiting the prevalence of toxic seed heads in pasture and crops and may be achieved with the following strategies:

1. Topping, hard grazing or mowing before seed set to prevent toxic gaul production
2. Burning affected crops
3. Spray topping before seed set to reduce rye grass populations in crops the following year
4. Post emergent herbicides to control annual rye grass in crops
5. Introduction of ARGT resistant rye grass strains such as Safeguard.

Your local veterinary service provider can assist with investigating cases of neurological disease and enacting management plans for treatment and prevention. Any investigations involving multiple affected individuals or deaths will also be subsidized by the department of primary industries and regional development.

Dr. Scott Jackson
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Bronwyn Clarke to take the reigns at WALRC

WA Livestock Research Council

The WA Livestock Research Council has appointed respected sheep geneticist Dr Bronwyn Clarke to the role of chair and the responsibility of leading the organisation through its next phase. She replaces outgoing chair, Pingelly farmer and Veterinarian, Tim Watts.



Image: Dr Bronwyn Clarke

Whilst a quantitative geneticist by training, Dr Clarke has a strong consulting and leadership background in a career that has spanned consulting roles with MLA and AWI, the New Zealand Merino Company, Murdoch University and DPIRD.

She is currently president of the Association for the Advancement of Animal Breeding and Genetics (AAABG) and outside of agriculture, Dr Clarke holds a range of chairing and governance roles in the education and training sector.

"I am delighted to take over the mantle from Tim and be the person leading the next stage of what is still an emerging organisation," Dr Clarke said.

"I have a long-term interest in seeing investment in livestock research being wisely spent on projects that are well developed in partnership with industry and a particular passion for advancing what is a comparatively small yet impressive livestock research community here in WA.

"WALRC provides a unique forum for connecting producers with researchers to ground-truth and enrichen our research endeavours and I look forward to progressing that culture even more during my tenure."

WALRC is an initiative of MLA and its primary purpose is to ensure the research and extension needs of the WA red meat sector are progressed and funded. Dr Clarke commences in the role this week and can be contacted on chair@walrc.com.au or 0418 957 293.

Consultation on acts of veterinary medicine in WA

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)

DPIRD are seeking feedback from veterinarians, livestock owners, and industry stakeholders in WA on which veterinary activities should be included as 'acts of veterinary medicine' in the new Veterinary Practice Regulations which will sit under the new Veterinary Practice Act 2021. Two key topics are the regulatory options for the pregnancy testing and spaying of cattle.

DPIRD Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer Peter Gray said the procedures proposed in the consultation paper had been developed based on existing regulations, comparison with other jurisdictional veterinary legislation and Australian Veterinary Association policy. "The consultation provides a great opportunity for stakeholders to provide contemporary views on what should be considered in the new regulations," Dr Gray said. "Two key options which we are seeking feedback on are how to control pregnancy testing and spaying of cattle."

- "We are asking for stakeholder **input on regulatory and non-regulatory options for pregnancy testing of cattle.**"
- "Spaying of cattle is not currently regulated in Western Australia which means that it is a procedure that can be undertaken by anyone. The Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Cattle, adopted by WA require controls around the spaying of cattle that need to be included in the new regulations. Through the consultation, **we are asking if spaying should be undertaken only by veterinarians** or whether suitably trained operators can be authorised to undertake this activity."

Have your say before 25th March 2022: <https://talkingbiosecurity.dpird.wa.gov.au/consultation-acts-of-vet-medicine>

Upcoming ASHEEP Events

Autumn Field Day is planned for 30th March 2022

Register at www.asheep.org.au or contact Sarah Brown at eo@asheep.org.au or on mobile 0409 335 194. Masks & vaccination certificates please.

We look forward to bringing you a line up of field days and workshops throughout the year.

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Members

Enoch Bergman
Amy Forrester
Simon Fowler
Wes Graham
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Nicholas Ruddenklau
Matthew Ryan

WALRC Newsletter



Subscribe to the WA Livestock Research Council newsletter.



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APRIL

Next ASHEEP Committee Meeting is scheduled for April 2022.

Contact a committee or staff member to raise an item.

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