

# ASHEEP & BEEF

## Quarterly



## Case Study: Shalimah Farming

*ASHEEP & BEEF interviews Shiane Lea*

Shiane Lea farms Shalimah Farming, alongside husband Matt Lea and parents Michael and Trudi Ietto. The property is located in Grass Patch, north of Esperance. The family runs a mixed cropping (70%) and sheep (30%) enterprise. Our thanks to Shiane, who has recently taken up a position on the ASHEEP & BEEF Committee, for giving insight into the Shalimah Farming system, the current season, future plans, and her contribution to industry advocacy.

Shalimah currently runs 1850 merino breeding ewes with genetics sourced through Kolindale. The family feels that the sheep program is an extremely important component of their mixed farming enterprise, with Shiane noting that the sheep "not only lower our spraying needs, they help improve soil conditions and work well with our paddock rotations."

This season's dry start meant that the farm didn't receive breaking rain until the end of May. "We started a bit later and held back on going full steam with seeding," said Shiane. "Everything seems to be looking quite good now. Our beans failed so we sprayed them out and replaced them with peas which are powering along."

"I am just coming back into working on the farm part time now that both of our kids are at school. I also do the bookwork alongside my mum. My aim is to take over the livestock side of our operation and Matt will focus on the cropping."

With WA coming out of a tough season and with the sheep live [... Cont'd]

*Image: Sheep yards at Shalimah Farming in Grass Patch.*

### Highlights

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[...] export phase out looking set to introduce changed market operating conditions, we asked Shiane about the farm's current livestock marketing strategy and whether they planned to make changes moving forward. "At the moment we are keeping things mostly the same and seeing how it all goes, as we are breeding for wool first, and because of the importance the sheep have to our whole farming system. This year however we have had to drop out our second shear, normally 6 monthly. We will reassess this decision again after January shearing. This was not just due to the costs of shearing, but also due to the dry season causing low wool growth."

"We have also decided to push back lambing from early March to April, with the thought that if we have more dry starts we won't be keeping them all confined for too long after lambing like we had to this year."

"We purchased a TePari handler last year and think it's a great addition. We are able to not only draft with ease, but we can now keep track of the weight progress of lambs and know exactly when they are ready for market. This will hopefully mean we can sell all future livestock as soon as they are ready, and target the better priced markets."

When it comes to the prospect of preparing for future dry seasons, Shiane noted, "We are always working on soil improvements and seeding practices that will help not just in dry seasons but improvements that will better our farming practices for the years to come. Some of those include clay spreading, delving, deep ripping etc. We have also set up our seeder to be able to put out wetter, which we have been doing for approximately 5 years. We have seen lots of positive growth with the use of SE14 and would highly recommend it for anyone who has non wetting sandy soils."

### Team environment

Good communication, being open minded and adaptable, and having a happy team, are all key focuses for Shiane for the successful running of the farm. We asked Shiane to expand further on how she approaches creating a good work environment.

"We hope to give our staff a good work environment by being flexible, yet challenge them to be their best selves," said Shiane. [... Cont'd]

## Farm Snapshot

**Farm:** Shalimah Farming

**Location:** Grass Patch

**Size:** 5800ha

**Av. Annual Rainfall:** 300mm

**Annual Rainfall to Date (19/8/24):** 204mm

**Enterprise Mix:** 70% cropping 30% sheep

**Stock:** 1850 Merino breeding ewes



Above: Shiane Lea with her family. Below: Aerial shot of Shalimah Farm 28th May 2024 with sheep moving through a laneway.



[...] "Giving them the space to make mistakes and learn from them, to show their initiative and think for themselves as well as in a team. We are quite happy to put them through courses and training programs to further their education and gain tickets needed in the farming industry."

*Below: Aerial shot of Shalimah Farm 15th May 2024.*

### Record keeping

"About 5 years ago we started using AgriWebb for all of our farm records. It is easy to use, and everyone on our team can have access to easily change records like paddock moves, sales, livestock treatments etc. It also means that we can have real time access to the records to be able to get the information to not only our team but our advisors as well."



### Taking on leadership roles & advocating for industry

"I recently joined the ASHEEP & BEEF Committee. I'm hoping that I can contribute some different perspectives having grown up on the family farm, taken some time away, then rejoining now that my family is growing up. I hope to learn as much as I can with the intentions of taking over the livestock side of our business. I have a lot to catch up on since taking the time to be a mother, not that that ever ends. It will definitely be a juggle but I look forward to what the future holds for our family and business." "I also attended the Rabobank Farm Managers program in NZ last year and hope I can bring some of the aspects that I learnt at the course to the team at ASHEEP & BEEF."

Shiane caught a lot of people's attention recently when she created and shared a video on social media celebrating the sheep industry and educating people on the impacts of a ban on sheep live export phase out. "Seeing that the ban on live export could completely devastate not only the future of the sheep industry but communities and businesses like our own, I had to share some parts of what our livelihood is all about. It was a very emotional video for me and I ended up with 16,000 views, way more than I could have ever hoped for. I learnt that there are way more people in our corner than we realise. I also learnt that we are a force to be reckoned with, we stand proud and strong, we are a huge community who will do anything for our neighbour. It may seem bleak at times but WE ARE NOT ALONE."

When it comes to future opportunities for industry advocacy, Shiane would like to see better education in all schools across Australia, "making sure that the next generation really knows what our industry does and how vital we are for the country, and the world." She also encouraged everyone to keep pushing support for Keep the Sheep, "they have huge things in the works that they need a lot of support for."

For those who dabble in social media, Shiane recommends following **The Livestock Collective**. "They are doing amazing things for our industry. I love watching their videos, I have even learnt quite a few things that I didn't know. We really need people like them to help better educate the general population about our industry." "And of course **Keep the Sheep**, they are doing massive things to fight for our livelihoods!"

*Below: 12th August 2024.*

### Any other plans for the future?

"I hope to announce a new business venture of ours in the coming weeks so please keep an eye out =)"

**A huge thanks to Shiane for her time and thoughts. Shiane's contact details are listed on page 36 alongside the rest of the ASHEEP & BEEF Committee.**



## Working with you to secure your fertilizer



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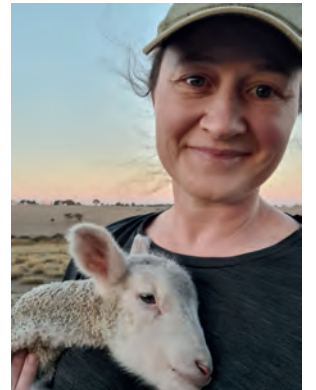


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## Executive Officer's Update

*Sarah Brown, ASHEEP & BEEF*

The season has lifted and it has been great to see a break from such dry conditions. Although, of course, whilst most have been celebrating the recent drop of rain I was glued to the weather radar for several days trying to keep sheep dry for shearing! Shearing this year went well, the team we had out was great and I'm hearing it has been a lot easier for people to get sheep shorn when needed. There is a **WhatsApp group set up for ASHEEP & BEEF farmer members to share shearing contacts, news on shearer availability, and related services**. Producers who would like to be added can let me know. There are a couple of new teams now servicing the Esperance region.



Whilst we've had good rains, challenges from the dry season are still evident. On the 21st of August we held a second **'dry season catch up'** for producers and industry in the Esperance region, thanks to funds from a Dry Season Response Outreach grant supported by the Grower Group Alliance through funding from DPIRD. There were some great take-aways from producers who shared their learnings. Some examples included the need to develop better understanding of successful systems for confinement feeding cattle, re-thinking the debate of hay vs silage by calculating the cost of production in cents per megajoule rather than \$ per tonne, putting set dates in the calendar to make key decisions including opportunities to sell less productive stock by wet/drying (including cattle) or preg-testing cattle from 6 weeks after bulls are out, the impact of changing calving date, using feed testing more regularly, what kinds of feed systems farmers can utilise in a pinch ... too many good points to capture them all here! Discussion wrapped up with a good reminder that it is always worthwhile calling people up for a chat during tough times. I have to say it was great to catch up with everyone over a meal after the talks.

I'll squeeze in one final piece of news - ASHEEP & BEEF applied for a state government grant for **eID equipment** and we have been able to purchase a Gallagher TWR-5 weigh scale reader, a handheld HR-5 eID tag reader, and a hands-free antenna panel that automatically scans eID tags as animals walk past in a race. These are **going to made available to loan out** from the Esperance DPIRD office, when they are ready for loan I'll send the details in an upcoming e-news.

## Registrations Open for MLA Updates

MLA's annual flagship event, MLA Updates, is being held in Perth on 10 October and provides industry stakeholders with a glimpse into the latest R&D, technology and insights. Register now to secure your spot. Register at: <https://updates.mla.com.au/>



## Bruce Pengilly Joins AWI Extension WA Producer Advisory Panel

Contact: Georgia Pugh, AWI Extension WA, 0408 947 488

ASHEEP & BEEF member Bruce Pengilly was recently appointed to the AWI Extension WA Producer Advisory Panel as the representative for the Esperance region.

AWI Extension WA is one of six, state-based, Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) extension and adoption programs designed to assist woolgrowers in accessing information they can use on farm to increase their skills and implement innovations appropriate to their business. AWI's extension networks are fundamental to the spread of new ideas, continuing education and the adoption of best practice. AWI Extension WA actively engages with a database of more than 1,800 woolgrowers from across the state, delivering information via newsletters, targeted content on social media and on the AWI Extension WA website, and delivers AWI-developed workshops to all interested woolgrowers across the state. All extension materials delivered by the project are tailored to match seasonal activities, with content covering industry news, on farm research and case studies.



AWI Extension WA is overseen by a Producer Advisory Panel (PAP) of woolgrowers from across the state. The panel is critical as it directly impacts what AWI extension activities are delivered for WA woolgrowers.

At the panel's next meeting in mid-September, Bruce will be relaying feedback and providing input from the region on what extension initiatives and topics AWI Extension WA should deliver.

**If you have any suggestions or feedback regarding the AWI extension activities delivered by AWI Extension WA then please contact Bruce on 0427 550 459 or at [penrose@activ8.net.au](mailto:penrose@activ8.net.au).**

In particular, Bruce would love to hear:

- Seasonal conditions and on-farm updates from the Esperance region
- Any priorities identified for extension initiatives
- What you would like to see more or less of, and when would be helpful to receive that information.



**If you are based outside the Esperance region** you can find out who your local panel member is at [www.awiextensionwa.com/contact-us/](http://www.awiextensionwa.com/contact-us/)

Another of ASHEEP & BEEF member's **Michael Campbell, who farms in Gairdner, also sits on the panel.** You can contact Michael at 0428366044 or via [coromandel6@gmail.com](mailto:coromandel6@gmail.com).

# If you missed out pre-joining, collecting BVDV blood samples at preg testing is a perfect opportunity

Dr Enoch Bergman, Swans Veterinary Services

The Cattle Subcommittee of ASHEEP & BEEF is continuing to run three Meat & Livestock Australia Producer Demonstration Sites (PDSs) and you can still be involved.



**Utilising Heifer Pre-Mating Serology to Manage BVDV** is in its second year. Producers are provided free diagnostic testing to measure exposure to Bovine Viral Diarrhea (BVDV) within their heifers. Partly due to the tough season we have all been through, many producers did not retain heifers or were too busy feeding to organise blood testing. However, **if you have mated heifers this year and haven't screened yet you can still be involved.** The **project will cover blood testing your heifers at any stage up until preg testing**, and if you missed out pre-joining, collecting blood samples at preg testing is a perfect opportunity.



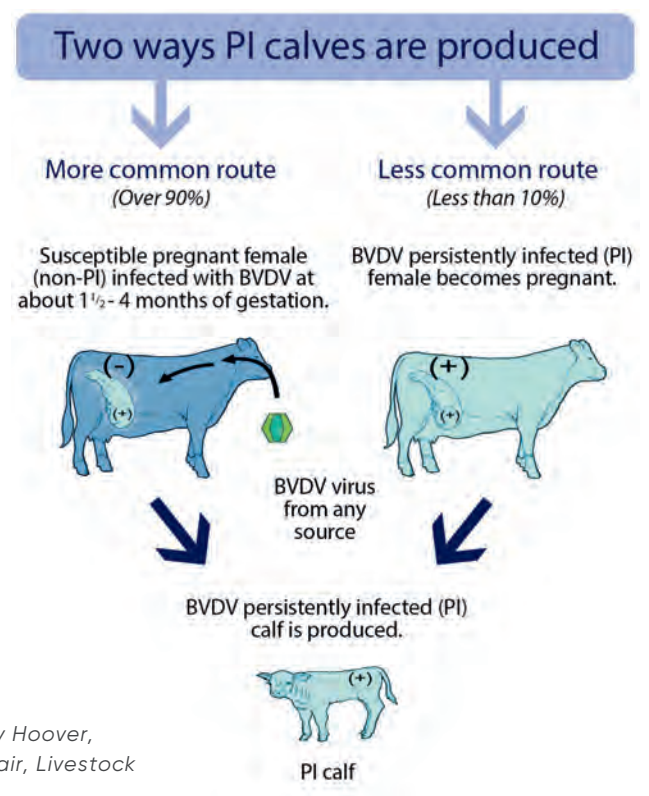
Last year we screened 5% or a minimum of six heifers from 32 different properties around Esperance for evidence of exposure to BVDV. Historically, we had shown that 3/4 local farms had evidence of BVDV exposure with this methodology when screened in the early 2000's. Remarkably, most of the properties (21 of 32) we screened last season showed zero exposure of their heifers to BVDV. That is almost two thirds of the properties surveyed! 22% (7 of the 32) had evidence of minor exposure, proving that a Persistently Infected (PI) animal was not present within the group of replacement heifers but that some of the heifers had been exposed previously (most likely from exposure from a steer or cull heifer prior to replacement selection or whilst still on their dams). Only 13% (4 of the 32) had evidence of strong exposure within the replacement heifer group, increasing our suspicion of finding a PI (Persistently Infected (Carrier) animal) within the group of replacement heifers. Three of those four properties chose to screen all of their heifers for PI's by ear notch testing each of them, and on those three farms, a PI was found two thirds of the time.

BVDV is spread almost exclusively by these PI animals, which were in turn produced from having been exposed in utero to the virus. An animal whose mother is a PI or whose mother is exposed to BVDV (by contact with a PI) between one to four months of gestation will usually be born a PI. They can then go forth and complete the cycle again.

Meeting a PI for the first time can cause reproductive losses at any stage of pregnancy and can also seriously impair an animal's immune system worsening other disease syndromes.

Some groups of heifers will contain a PI animal. That PI animal will eventually likely waste away and die, but in the meantime, she will transmit BVDV to every cow, calf, or bull she ever meets – potentially reducing their productivity. Within management groups where PIs exist, their sisters are usually highly immune by the time of joining, having already suffered the effects of exposure. However, she and any calf she produces will remain a threat to the next calf crop and to any other management group they should meet, especially if the management group they meet does not have pre-existing immunity itself. This is where Utilising Heifer Pre-Mating Serology to Manage BVDV comes in... which is the thrust of the PDS. By knowing the status of your heifers each year, you can implement the best strategy to break the PI cycle, whether that be vaccination or PI hunting.

*Continued over page.*



Graphic: Compliments of the Academy of Veterinary Consultants Mallory Hoover, Veterinary Medical Illustrator and Bob L. Larson, DVM, PhD. Coleman Chair, Livestock Production Medicine Kansas State University.

As per the PDS, by screening 5% or a minimum of six heifers from your replacement heifer group each year prior to joining, you can ensure that you do not retain a PI replacement heifer and identify mobs which would benefit from vaccination with Pestigard. A true value proposition:

- If they are already immune = there would be no benefit to vaccination, instead ear notch each heifer individually and cull any PI's.
- If they are not immune= good news... no PI... but vaccination would be worth considering!
- If each of your heifer groups annually go forward PI free and immune, you will be able to get on top of any BVDV your property may be harbouring. Without PI animals, BVDV simply doesn't propagate. By vaccinating groups without immunity, you will have insurance against the accidental reintroduction of a PI should you buy in animals or if a neighbour's animal strays onto your property.



Image: Dr Enoch Bergman taking blood samples.

What does all of this mean? Well, surprisingly the PDS is demonstrating that many groups of heifers within the Esperance region have not been reared around PI animals showing that simple biosecurity and/or vaccination programs can help our individual farmers to progress towards, or ensure ongoing BVDV freedom. If everyone became involved, we could potentially eradicate BVDV from the Esperance area! We may already be well over halfway there! Regardless, it is completely achievable to eradicate BVDV from your own production system, monitor, and maintain that freedom. The key is annual heifer pre-mating BVDV blood testing!

**If you haven't already screened your heifers, make sure to get on board at pregnancy testing! The PDS will cover all diagnostic costs and you will also score a free pack of Pestigard from Zoetis.**

Whilst we are talking about ASHEEP & BEEF PDSs...

## Bull Breakdown Investigations Covered by PDS Project

We are also in our second year of providing free vaccine to assist in Preventing Bull Preputial Breakdown by Vaccination PDS. Last year's dataset showed a 5% reduction in the incidence of penile and preputial breakdown of virgin bulls during their first mating experience, however, we saw an unusually high incidence overall. We will be contacting you after the joining season ends to find out how your bulls fared, and what pre-joining strategies you may have employed. In the meantime, whether or not you received free vaccine as part of the PDS, **if any of your bulls break down during joining and the cause is penile in nature, please contact the surgery.** Bull examinations including travel are covered by the PDS.

Some of our clients who have been employing additional tactics appear to have fared well and this year we have more clients exposing their new bulls to cull cows as well as continuing to implement pre-joining vaccination. We are looking forward to sharing any information we are able to learn from the project, however, the quality of that information is dependent upon your participation!

Please reach out to **Enoch (Swans Veterinary Services) at 0427 716 907 or Sarah Brown (ASHEEP & BEEF) at 0409 047 944** for more information.

Thank you to Meat & Livestock Australia, IDEXX laboratories, and Zoetis Animal Health for their support of these two projects.

Cheers!

Enoch, Katie, ASHEEP & BEEF, and the Swans Veterinary Services Team

**Contact Swans Veterinary Services:** 08 9071 5777, admin@swansvet.com



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# Why people who know more about red meat are eating more of it

*Meat & Livestock Australia*



New research from Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) has shown metropolitan Australians who are knowledgeable about the red meat industry are likely to be eating more red meat.

The latest Community Sentiment Research surveyed 1501 Australians aged 18 - 64 who reside in the five main capital cities in Australia. It is conducted each year to inform MLA's investments in community communication and marketing to drive better understanding of red meat production and nutritional benefits for everyday Australians.

According to Group Manager – Community Communications and Events at MLA, Samantha Jamieson, the research indicates a positive perception of the Australian beef and lamb industries by metro community members.

"Community perceptions of the industry remain steady with 63% having a positive perception of the beef industry and 60% having a similar perception of the lamb industry," Ms Jamieson said. "A further 27% – 29% have no concerns, with the remaining 16% – 18% either not knowing or having some level of concern, the lowest level over the past three years, and similar to levels over the past decade. Notably, most Australians see the red meat industry as vital to the Australian economy and job creation, especially in regional areas. 71% of those surveyed also have confidence in Australian beef and lamb producers to provide safe, nutritious and sustainable food. Nearly two-thirds of Australians also say that they trust the red meat industry to do what is right, and farmers are trusted nearly as much as engineers, teachers and scientists. The research demonstrates Australians' positive perceptions and understanding about the important role red meat producers play in feeding the nation."

The high level of trust in the red meat industry centers around education and knowledge of the Australian beef and lamb industries. While a third of Australians consider themselves knowledgeable about the industry, over half want to learn more. In addition, 73% think children should be learning about the industry in school.

"Importantly, the correlation between higher levels of industry knowledge and better perceptions about the industry have been seen again in this year's survey," Ms Jamieson said. "For Australians who have knowledge about the industry, 72% say that they believe Australian cattle are raised humanely, which compares to 55% of metro Australians without that knowledge. A similar trend applies for the environment. As understanding of the industry increases, so does the sentiment that people believe producers care for the environment."

"This demonstrates that the more you know about the industry, the more you like about it, which is encouraging to see. It highlights the importance of community engagement and educational investments through initiatives like Australian Good Meat, School educational resources, the Red Meat Ambassador program, and working with social media influencers," Ms Jamieson said.

"One of the big recent influencer trends is around health, where there is a growing understanding of the importance of protein. MLA continues to play a big role in arming social influencers with right information and language to have an engaging discussion with the community."

The community is interested in learning more about animal welfare (45%), nutrition benefits (40%), carbon neutrality (39%) and environment initiatives (35%).

Sustainability also ranked as a key consideration for metro Australians, with 91% citing it as important to them, and 56% say that they would think more positively about the red meat industry knowing that the industry has an ambition to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions to zero.

For more information and to read the complete report, please visit the community sentiment research 2024 via the QR code.



# Changing Economic Tides: Sheep and beef market outlook

Rabobank

A hive of activity is currently impacting global agricultural markets, including mixed seasonal conditions in the Northern Hemisphere, supply chain issues lingering, crude oil markets moving lower, and trade policy shifts.



Closer to home, interest rate expectations have changed, the Australian dollar is softer against the US dollar (for now), and rainfall has been mostly favourable with La Nina development emerging. And all these factors are affecting local beef and sheepmeat markets.

## Beef outlook

RaboResearch senior animal protein analyst Angus Gidley-Baird said domestic cattle slaughter continues to remain high. "National weekly slaughter sits consistently around 140,000 head, and is up 16 per cent for the year to date in late July. Western Australian weekly slaughter sits at 11 per cent higher for the year to date. We believe this higher slaughter is a reflection of higher cattle inventory rather than liquidation of cattle due to poor seasonal conditions," he said.

Mr Gidley-Baird said providing favorable seasonal conditions in the remainder of the year, "we believe these higher weekly slaughter numbers will continue through the remainder of the year to generate an increase in national slaughter in the order of a 12 per cent increase".

"National cattle saleyard prices have been relatively steady through the first half of 2024 with the rise in domestic production being supported by increased volume sales into export markets," he said. "Cattle prices started an upward trend in June, early July with heavy finished cattle and cow prices experiencing the larger rise as the global demand for beef, driven by contractions in US production, starts to flow through to the Australian domestic cattle market.

"National saleyard cow prices rose 32 per cent in the month of July to reach 337c/kg on 29 July. WA cow prices jumped earlier with a 29 per cent lift between the beginning of May to the end of June. We believe this strength is reflecting the demand from the US with US import prices up 25 per cent since the beginning of the year, sitting at USD 2.91/lb on 26 July."

Mr Gidley-Baird said the weaker restocking cattle prices reflects the softer demand from restockers given the large numbers of cattle on farm. "We don't see much change in the current situation over the next couple of months and therefore expect cattle prices to continue their trend upwards with cows and finished cattle showing stronger rises," he said.

## Sheepmeat outlook

National lamb slaughter continues at record levels, Mr Gidley-Baird said. "Weekly lamb slaughter volumes are consistently around and above 450,000 head per week with year to date at the end of July slaughter volumes up 21 per cent on the same period in 2023. WA lamb slaughter volumes are up 17 per cent for the year to date."



The Rabobank analyst said sheep slaughter numbers have also continued at high levels through the year with national numbers up 16 per cent. WA sheep slaughter, although high, is slightly (six per cent) down on last year's numbers for the first seven months of the year.

Mr Gidley-Baird said lamb and sheep numbers are the key for prices. "While export markets are taking more lamb and mutton reflecting the increased production it does not appear that prices are rising. This suggests that while demand is good, the buyers are not necessarily bidding prices up. So, it is our belief that domestic supplies need to contract to reset the balance in the market and provide longer term price upside."

He said exports to the Middle East and the US are at record levels with volumes to the Middle East double 2023 volumes. "And volumes of lamb to the US are up 45 per cent on last year. But volumes to China are down 12 per cent for the first seven months.

*Continued over page.*

"National trade and heavy lamb saleyard prices jumped over 20 per cent from the beginning of May to late July in what appeared to be a late season push with prices. The jump in prices in late July may suggest that we are close to the end of last season's lambs," Mr Gidley-Baird said. "Mutton and merino prices have also been caught in the rise, lifting, up 70 per cent and 26 per cent respectively between the beginning of May and the end of July.

"WA sheep and lamb prices have also lifted but still remain behind the east coast prices with WA trade lambs and mutton around 150-200c/kg lower than the east coast," he said. "We believe the poorer seasonal conditions, the higher exposure to Middle East and Chinese export markets and the smaller exposure to the domestic market is contributing to this price spread."

Mr Gidley-Baird said the national trade lamb indicator finished July at 825c/kg. "Our current modelling, given the numbers of lambs in the system and relatively soft export markets suggest prices at the end of July were higher than what historical relationships suggest they should be. That being the case we think lamb prices could drop a little over the coming month, towards what we believe to be a price more reflective of conditions, around 700c/kg."

"A key factor for lamb prices for the remainder of the year will be the number of lambs in the system and how big an impact the poor seasonal conditions and high sheep slaughter numbers will have," Mr Gidley-Baird said. "Conditions suggest we should see some contraction but whether it is enough to encourage prices higher we will get a better feel through August."

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

## Podcast Spot: Scott Wandel on virtual fencing for cattle



ASHEEP & BEEF member Scott Wandel, who farms north-east of Esperance, was recently interviewed by the SW WA Drought Hub podcast. He spoke about the farm's recent introduction of virtual fencing for cattle, dubbed by Scott as the "auto steer for the cattle industry". At the time of interview Scott was 10 days in to using Gallagher's eShepherd system. Joining the interview was Andrew Zipsin from Gallagher to explain how the tech works. The podcast runs for about 30min. Find it at [hub.gga.org.au/podcast/](http://hub.gga.org.au/podcast/) or via the QR code.



## 2025 AgCAREERSTART Gap-Year Applications Open

Applications for the 2025 AgCAREERSTART Gap-Year Program are open until September 29th 2024. If you know of any young people aged 17-25 years who are eager to have a gap-year, looking to kick-start their career in agriculture or simply unsure what to do next, this could be for them. The program offers:

- 10-12 month placement
- Full-time paid role
- \$4,500 training and engagement bursary
- Ongoing pastoral support
- A network of other likeminded young people



If you are interested in the gap-year program, or in employing one of the participants on your farm, visit <https://agcareerstart.com.au> or via the QR code.

Contact the AgCAREERSTART team by emailing [agcareerstart@nff.org.au](mailto:agcareerstart@nff.org.au) or phoning (02) 6269 5602.

The AgCAREERSTART pilot is funded by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.



## Vet Spot: Preg Testing

*Dr Katie Kreutz, Swans Veterinary Services*

After a winter hanging out with the studs (both Bulls and Artificial Insemination gurus Dr. Enoch and Dr. Reuben) it's time to see if the girls have kept up their end of the deal. Pregnancy testing season is upon us and we've got some tips for getting organised.

**1. Time is of the essence** – Use your AI dates or day the bull came out to schedule Preg Testing at 42 days (6 weeks). Testing at this time frame allows for better planning for feeding, managing empties, as well as being able to reliably and quickly diagnose pregnancy with ultrasound. Even when life gets in the way and schedules don't allow for 6 weeks after the bulls come out, having your AI dates on hand during the visit is very helpful in making a pregnancy diagnosis or calling a cow empty.

**2. Keep cool** – We can't control the weather but we can make things easier for the ladies on preg testing day by booking for earlier start times in summer. Hot temperatures can exacerbate symptoms in cattle that may have had previously undetectable issues such as ergot toxicity. If the weather is looking like it's going to be a hot one on the day you've scheduled for us to come, talk to us about an earlier start.

**3. Go with the flow** – getting organised with well lubricated crush mechanisms, fixing anything that's been dangerous like a dodgy handle on a kick gate, and ensuring the set up allows for easy cattle movement can make the visit flow seamlessly. Generally, about 3 sets of hands to help move cattle through the yards, race and head bale is sufficient to allow Enoch to challenge the speed of light when prepping. In November we will be facilitating the annual Murdoch University Preg Testing Prac where we will have lots of extra hands to help get the next generation of vets trained up so consider joining the bandwagon at that time!

**4. Help us, help you** – The best way to book in for a vet to come out and do your preg testing is to call or email the clinic as we will have the schedule right in front of us. When calling to arrange please note:

- how many we are checking
- roughly when you'd like to have us out
- when the bull came out

Use 08 9071 5777 or [admin@swansvet.com](mailto:admin@swansvet.com) to schedule a visit



*Image: Dr Toni Howlett Preg Testing with style*



## See ewe in Canberra, Albo!

*Keep the Sheep*

Keep the Sheep is taking the fight for our farmers and rural communities directly to Canberra. Will you stand with us at the **National Ag Rally, 12pm, 10 September at Parliament House in Canberra**? RSVP for more information at [keepthesheep.com.au/nationalrally](http://keepthesheep.com.au/nationalrally). Contact Paul Brown on 0413 779 969 if you are interested in buying flight tickets as part of the group travelling from WA.



# First Rural Vet Appointed President for the WA Division of the Australian Veterinary Association

*Dr Katie Kreutz, Swans Veterinary Services*

Hello to all ASHEEP & BEEF Members,

Usually, I'm writing vet spot articles for the newsletter, but as my role as a veterinarian entails a bit more than disease investigations or pulling calves these days I thought I'd elaborate on what else I get up to and why this community has an important and influential role on what I do. In November 2023 I took the position of President for the West Australian Division of the Australian Veterinary Association.

I was most excited about this role as it's the first time a rural vet has taken it on. My aspiration was to encourage other vets to flee the city and embrace the fulfilling role of veterinary work in rural communities. To do so I must also find ways to support them to be the best vets they can be. Clearly my time in Esperance has set the framework for this vision with good mentors and an excellent community. I greatly appreciate the time producers make to allow students that visit us for practical experience to have a go. It was these kinds of opportunities that are the reason many of us employed down here have come to work and ensures you can always have a vet when you need one. But it also gives students the insight, passion and skills to go elsewhere and help other rural communities. So thank you, and please continue to embrace our new vets.

The other part of my role as WA AVA President is advocating for legislation, funding and community support for animal and veterinary welfare. Of course, my background in Esperance means that rural communities are finally getting a bit more attention. Currently I'm working with the AVA, the Veterinary Surgeon's Board, and the Health Department to create better accessibility for veterinary medications to those might not live within a reasonable driving distance to a clinic. I do this because I see the people trying to do the right things by the animals they care for and struggling because care either isn't accessible, or veterinary hands are tied by legislation. So please know that while we do have rules we have to follow that sadly were not created with the rural vet in mind, I do hope to be part of the change to make care access fit for purpose. Anyone who's had to take on legislation knows nothing happens overnight, but anyone whose been passionate about something knows nothing changes unless people take the time to do something about it.

While my role as President means that I advocate and represent ALL vets in WA, including ones in the city, I'm glad that I'm able to use my platform, voice and connections to have more conversations around government election platforms, animal welfare, vet student education and livestock biosecurity that guarantee rural communities have a seat at the table. I encourage producers to talk to veterinarians about how we can work together for excellent production, welfare and health outcomes, and to talk to other producers throughout WA about doing the same.

Always keen for a yarn,

Dr. Katie Kreutz  
AVA WA Division President  
Swans Veterinary Service  
08 9071 5777



## Thomas & Wakefield Wool Buyers



As many of you already know, from July 1, Tristan Thomas his wife Taryn Thomas, Taila Wakefield and Sam Wakefield have joined forces in a partnership together in the wool oddment business. Together they will be trading as *Thomas and Wakefield Wool Buyers*.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Mike and Sue Smithson on all their commitment, hard work and dedication pioneering the wool business that they have established here in Esperance and the surrounding communities over the decades. We wish them all the best on a well deserved retirement and hope they enjoy a restful break.

At Thomas and Wakefield Wool Buyers, we will be dedicated to continuing the exceptional service and standards set by Smithsons. Tristan and Sam will be your trusted wool representatives based in Esperance ready to assist you with all your wool needs. With years of experiences as Mike's right hand man, Tristan is well equipped to continue the legacy.

Thank you for your continued support and we look forward to this new journey.



## Save the Date! ASHEEP & BEEF Spring Field Day 18 September 2024



Keep an eye out for registrations to be opened for ASHEEP & BEEF's Spring Field Day. This year we are heading out toward Condingup. Should be a good one! The agenda is firming up, here's a teaser for what we have in mind. For the first stop we've been chatting to Ron Yates to tee up a visit to a Harvestable Annual Legume Options trial site at Ryan Willing's in Neridup. Then head out to Chilwell where Simon Fowler is planning to take us through the farm's new eShepherd cattle virtual fencing system, vermin proof fencing, and our Pasture Variety Trial MLA producer demonstration sites. CWA will be serving up burgers for lunch. Lots of interesting speakers in the works. We'll wrap up at Epasco for a pasture trial visit and a look at their brand new shearing shed where we'll have a bonfire and the CWA catering van whipping up a delicious dinner.

Images: Virtual fencing at Chilwell.



# Australian shorn wool production estimate of 318 Mkg greasy in 2023/24 and forecast 285 Mkg greasy for 2024/25



## Australian Wool Innovation

The Australian Wool Production Forecasting Committee's (AWPFC) estimate of shorn wool production for the 2023/24 season is 318 million kilograms (Mkg) greasy. This is 3.1% lower than the 2022/23 estimate and a 6 Mkg greasy downward revision of the April forecast.

Committee Chairman, Stephen Hill said that "the deterioration in seasonal conditions in western Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and southwest New South Wales since the April meeting prompted the downward revision of the April forecast". Held over lambs and older breeding ewes that were retained in the flock at the beginning of the season have now been turned off prompted by the recovery of sheepmeat prices in recent months. "Sheep shorn numbers were comparable to the 2022/23 season at 71.6 million head, up 0.1%. However, the relatively poorer seasonal conditions in 2023/24 reduced average cut per head to 4.44 kg greasy, down 3.3%. This is close to the long-term average following historically high per head production in 2022/23".

AWTA key test data for the 2023/24 season show a 0.1 micron decrease in mean fibre diameter to 20.7 microns, a 1.9 mm decrease in staple length to 86.9 mm, 0.6% lower yield to 65.3% and 0.1% less VM (2.3%). Staple strength increased to 35.2N/ktex (up 0.5 N/ktex). The weighted average fibre diameter of firsthand Merino wool auctioned in 2023/24 was 18.8 microns (down 0.2 microns on the 2022/23 season).

New South Wales continues to have the largest sheep flock, shearing 26.6 million head (up 2.7%) and producing 119.5 Mkg greasy wool (up 0.4%). Victoria shored 15.6 million sheep (down 3.1%) and produced 65.6 Mkg greasy (down 6.3%) with Western Australia producing 55.0 Mkg greasy (down 9.3%) from 12.5 million sheep shorn (down 4.2%).

AWTA wool test volume for the 2023/24 season (334.5 Mkg greasy) was down by 3.8% on a year-on-year basis. Firsthand offered wool at auction during 2023/24 was not different to the amount offered in 2022/23 at 298 Mkg greasy.

The August AWPFC estimate includes a clean wool estimate for average cut per head and shorn wool production. For the 2023/24 season the yield (%), Schlumberger dry top and noil yield) from the AWTA key test data was used to calculate the clean average cut per head and clean shorn wool production (Table 1).

Poor seasonal conditions in western Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia have prompted the AWPFC to revise its second forecast of shorn wool production for the 2024/25 season down to 285 Mkg greasy, a 10.1% decrease on the 2023/24 estimate. The May 2024 Sheep Producer Intentions Survey (SPIS) indicated a reduction in producer sentiment regarding both the wool and sheepmeat sectors compared to sentiment in May 2023. Seasonal conditions, feed availability, input costs, availability of labour as well as sheep and wool prices are the key factors impacting on-farm decision making.

The Bureau of Meteorology is forecasting average to above average median rainfall in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania from September to November, but below average rainfall is expected in South Australia and Western Australia. Producers in most states will reassess their stocking rate if feed availability remains limiting in spring. On-farm stock water availability leading into summer is another key consideration.

The AWPFC will review its 2024/25 forecast in December when the seasonal and market outlook becomes clearer. The National Committee drew on advice from the six State Committees, each of which includes growers, brokers, private treaty merchants, sheep pregnancy scanners, representatives from State Departments of Agriculture and the Australian Wool Testing Authority. Data and input were also drawn from AWEX, wool exporters, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, ABARES, and Meat and Livestock Australia. The full forecast report will be available on the AWI website at [www.wool.com/forecasts](http://www.wool.com/forecasts) from 23rd August 2024.

Table 1: Summary of Australian wool production.

	2022/23 Estimate	2023/24 Estimate	Change y-o-y (%)	2024/25 Second forecast	Change y-o-y (%)
<b>Sheep numbers shorn</b> (million head)	71.5	71.6	0.1%	64.2	-10.3%
<b>Average cut per head</b> (greasy kg/head)	4.59	4.44	-3.3%	4.45	0.2%
<b>Shorn wool production</b> (Mkg greasy)	328	318	-3.1%	285	-10.1%

<b>Yield</b> (%, Sch dry)	65.9	65.3	-0.9%
<b>Average cut per head</b> (clean kg/head)	2.93	3.02	3.1%
<b>Shorn wool production</b> (Mkg clean)	210	216	2.9%

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

Table 2: Total shorn wool production by state.

Season	NSW	VIC	WA	SA	TAS	QLD	AUSTRALIA
<b>2022/23</b> (Mkg greasy)	119.0	70.0	60.6	56.7	10.2	11.3	328
<b>2023/24</b> (Mkg greasy)	119.5	65.6	55.0	58.0	9.3	10.1	318
<b>Change y-o-y (%)</b>	0.4%	-6.3%	-9.3%	2.3%	-8.8%	-10.6%	-3.1%
<b>2024/25 Second Forecast</b> (Mkg greasy)	111.4	55.9	44.7	55.1	8.3	10.1	285
<b>Change y-o-y (%)</b>	-6.6%	-14.8%	-18.8%	-5.0%	-10.8%	0.0%	-10.1%

Table 3: AWTA key test data for 2022/23 and 2023/24.

	2022/23	2023/24	Change y-o-y
<b>Mean fibre diameter</b> (µm)	20.8	20.7	-0.1
<b>Staple length</b> (mm)	88.8	86.9	- 1.9
<b>Staple strength</b> (N/ktex)	34.7	35.2	+ 0.5
<b>Yield</b> (%)	65.9	65.3	- 0.6
<b>Vegetable Matter</b> (%)	2.4	2.3	-0.1

## Agro Spot: Growing pasture seed

ASHEEP & BEEF interviews Daniel Bell

Daniel Bell is an agronomist servicing the Esperance region, who has worked with local growers over many years with pasture production for livestock feed and also seed production. Recently he obtained a licence via DPIRD for the production and distribution of a newly released Serradella variety named SerraMax. ASHEEP & BEEF visited Daniel's SerraMax stand at our 2022 Winter Field Walk, which was located at the letto's in Grass Patch. Daniel is now in his third year of growing the variety.

ASHEEP & BEEF took an opportunity to get Daniel's thoughts on growing pasture seed and varieties that have a fit in the Esperance region. Our thanks to Daniel for his time.

### What are the latest varieties / species that you think have a solid place in the Esperance region?

Serradella varieties such as SerraMax still have a good fit with good virus, disease and insect tolerance. I'm interested in the new Clearfield Oat varieties Kingbale and Archer which allow the use of a particular herbicide for Bromegrass, Barleygrass and Silvergrass control.



Image: Daniel Bell in an oat/vetch mix.

### Is there anything that has stood out to you as performing well or very poorly over the past dry season?

Vetch is performing well as an alternative legume species for grazing and/or hay and silage production. Good biomass production and quality as a monoculture or in a blend with other pasture species.

### How is the current season going for pasture seed production?

Pasture seed production should be good this year. This year there has been some supply shortages of particular varieties but I would expect this to improve in preparation for next year. The key for growers is to plan early and get orders in to their distributors as early as possible.

### What are the opportunities for farmers to get involved in growing and selling pasture seed?

I'm not aware of many options available for growers to be involved in commercial seed production. Many varieties are free to trade which allows growers to sell seed amongst themselves without violating any Plant Breeders legislation. Growers should always check to see if certain varieties are still under PBR if they intend to sell seed.

Growing your own seed is worth considering because it is very economical. Clean paddocks are best in order to restrict weeds from spreading to other parts of the farm. The types of weeds expected or present in the designated production site should be considered to determine if herbicide options exist for their control in the pasture. Smooth paddocks without rocks may also be considered if the pasture is short and requires harvesting close to the ground. In some cases rolling the paddock after seeding may be necessary.

### Any particular equipment or processes that you recommend?

Harvesters with flex-fronts can be advantageous. Clean storage free of insects is essential, sometimes good ventilation is required also.

### How do farmers do it well? Are there mistakes you see people make that reduce their success?

Farmers with experience do it well generally. They are the ones who have done it before and learnt from their mistakes. I think a common mistake growers make is not giving pasture seed production for themselves a try. It can provide a huge cost saving. Not having adequate herbicide options available to their situation or poor paddock selection is often a downfall.

### Are there pasture varieties / species out there currently that you think are being underutilised?

The biggest improvement growers can make to their overall farm pasture productivity is to diversify. Growing feed over summer by sowing Millet, Sorghum, Lucerne and Perennials is by far the best thing a grower can do to [...]

Continued over page.



[...] ensure that early season feed is available when it is most needed. It is also cheaper and requires less labour than cutting silage and hay as a supplementary feed source, however some of this will still be required.

### Where do you see the best opportunities are for future pasture seed development research to increase productivity, profitability, better utilisation of land?

We need options for areas on the farm that aren't being utilised. These areas include saline soils, light sand and low rainfall areas. Salt tolerant and/or drought tolerant species are the key.

#### Contact:

Daniel Bell, South Coastal Agencies, 0428 955 033, [daniel.bell@nutrien.com.au](mailto:daniel.bell@nutrien.com.au)

## Reminder: Preparing rams for joining 2 months prior

Information sourced from Meat & Livestock Australia

[www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/Genetics-and-breeding/sheep/reproduction/rams/](http://www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/Genetics-and-breeding/sheep/reproduction/rams/)

Reproductive success of rams is the ability to sire a large number of offspring each mating season. **Rams should be selected and prepared at least two months prior to joining.** This will ensure they are not stressed and are settled when joined.

#### Ram Soundness

Rams should not be lame. Testicles should be firm and springy on palpitation with no lumps. Scrotal circumference should be greater than 28cm. If abnormal lumps appear on the testicles a blood test should be undertaken to check for ovine brucellosis. Prepuce and penis should be examined for evidence of inflammation and damage.

#### Shearing or crutching

Shear or crutch rams at least eight weeks prior to joining. Shearing cuts and resulting fever or change in body temperature may affect semen quality.

#### Ram condition, health and nutrition

- Allow eight weeks for newly introduced rams to acclimatise if they have been brought in from outside the district. Housed rams may need more time to become accustomed to paddock feed prior to joining commencing.
- Body condition score should be around 3.5 at joining.



- Ideally feed a high protein ration, such as lupins or faba beans, for 50 days prior to joining to ensure maximum testes size and sperm output. Feed at a rate of 750g/ram/day.
- Rams should be vaccinated with 6-in1 and jetted on the poll and body to avoid flystrike.
- Any ram that has been sick with a fever in the last eight weeks should not be used for mating as high temperature disrupts semen production.
- If ewes are being supplementary fed during joining, rams should be introduced to the same feed prior to joining to avoid rumen acidosis.

For more information on joining rate and time, and using Australian Sheep Breeding Values to select rams for low birth weight and higher lambing ease, visit the link in the article header.

Image: Dr David Swan delivering a Ramping Up Repro Workshop in 2020 for producers in the Esperance region, demonstrating how to conduct pre-joining soundness checks on rams.



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# Growing Merino Weaners

Danny Roberts, DPIRD, [danny.roberts@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:danny.roberts@dpird.wa.gov.au), 08 9892 8535



Weaning should take place 12-14 weeks from the start of lambing, with timely weaning critical to the ewe's recovery for the following seasons mating. A short lambing window (5 weeks) produces a more uniform group of lambs which are easier to manage and decreases the number of discounted lambs not fitting market specifications.

## Targets for growth in Merino weaners

There are three key management targets to ensure good weaner survival:

- weight of at least 20kg and 45% of adult weight by pasture senescence
- growth rate of at least 1kg/month after weaning for weaners weighing 20-30kg
- growth rate of at least 2kg/month for weaners weighing <20kg.
- Draft weaned lambs into two groups based on critical liveweight to better meet their nutritional requirements

## Feeding

Lambs need a diet of **14-16% crude protein** and **at least 70% dry matter digestibility**.

**Worm burden** should be monitored to achieve potential growth rate. An effective drench is required at weaning and again in early summer.

The digestibility and energy value of pasture species fall dramatically following seed set and 'drying off', therefore, it is important to **monitor body condition** throughout.

Supplementation with quality feed increases the intake and digestion of paddock feed. Starting lupin supplementation as the paddock feed begins to decline gives better utilisation of dry pasture for minimal cost by grazing. Cereal grains will reduce/substitute the intake of dry pasture and will not provide enough protein for growing weaners. Typical feeding rates to maintain weaners are 25g/hd/day lupins starting at pasture wilting (50% of clover is dead) and increasing to 50g/hd/day after 21 days.

Weaned lambs (25-45kg) are unable to consume enough feed to maintain liveweight once the feed is below a digestibility of 55% and crude protein content of 12% or the amount of dry pasture is less than 1500kg/ha. This time is referred to as the 'crunch'. The 'crunch' for weaned lambs generally occurs during November at Newdegate and around mid-December at Mount Barker. Small scale lupin supplementation is no longer useful after the pasture quality and quantity are below critical levels.

Weaned lambs should get the first choice of all crop stubble and be rotational grazed through each stubble paddock. A three-week rotation is required when grazing cereal and canola stubbles as the weaned lambs would have consumed the better nutritive components (leaf) of the dry crop residues. They tend to concentrate their grazing within 800 metres of water points.

Managing and monitoring weaner growth rates will aid in meeting liveweight targets for sale sheep or maiden ewes for the following mating. By improving the condition score from 2 to 3 in hogget ewes at joining, it will potentially increase the percentage of lambs born.



Further detailed information, plus production targets in prime lambs, is available on the Growing Weaner Sheep webpage:

[www.agric.wa.gov.au/management-reproduction/growing-weaner-sheep](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/management-reproduction/growing-weaner-sheep)



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# Australian Wool Innovation Update

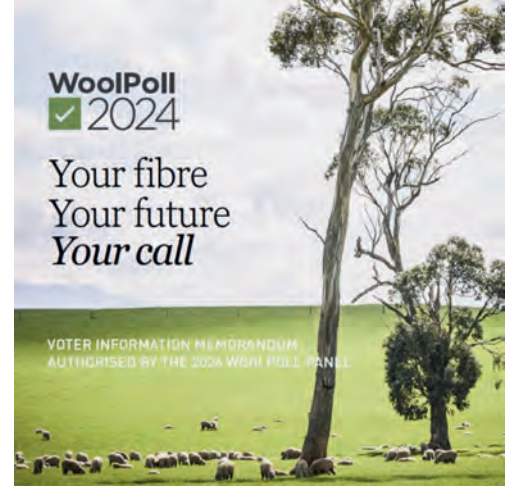
Kevin Wilde, General Manager, Consultation and Engagement, AWI



Following are some snapshots of resources and news from Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) for wool producers.

## WoolPoll 2024

- WoolPoll is a poll of eligible wool levy payers, conducted every three years, to determine the levy rate paid to AWI for industry R&D and marketing. Currently the levy rate is 1.5% (of the sale price woolgrowers receive for their shorn greasy wool).
- At WoolPoll, eligible woolgrowers are asked to consider up to five levy rate options. They can vote for one or more levy rates in order of preference.
- The levy rate that receives the highest number of votes will be paid by all woolgrowers for the next three years (2025/26 – 2027/28). The levy rate takes effect from 1 July 2025.



Visit [www.wool.com/woolpoll](http://www.wool.com/woolpoll) via the QR code above for the Voter Information Memorandum which has a snapshot of finances and also what programs could be delivered at different levy rates.

## Opportunities to get involved in research projects

Visit [www.wool.com/on-farm-research/getinvolved/](http://www.wool.com/on-farm-research/getinvolved/) via the QR code to the right for details on which research programs growers can be involved in.



## Handheld device to measure wool micron on-farm in real-time

Adelaide-based technology company Woven Optics has developed a hand-held device that will provide woolgrowers with a reliable tool to measure wool micron on-farm in real-time. The image on the left shows Ben Pullen (Woven Optics) demonstrating the device to IWTO Congress delegates on-farm at Collinsville Stud Merinos.

If you would like to know more or get involved in the Woven Optics **Early Adopter program**, visit [www.wovenoptics.com](http://www.wovenoptics.com).

View the full story on Woven Optics from AWI at [www.wool.com/news-events/news/woven-optics/](http://www.wool.com/news-events/news/woven-optics/) via the QR code to the right.



## Flystrike research update

AWI-funded research has demonstrated proof of concept that the Australian sheep blowfly *Lucilia cuprina* can be transfected with a natural bacterium, *Wolbachia*, which could potentially spread itself through and suppress sheep blowfly populations. However, infection rates in the recently completed project were variable and relatively low, and a long-term project would be needed to establish infection success. [www.wool.com/news-events/news/wolbachia/](http://www.wool.com/news-events/news/wolbachia/)

### Contact:

Kevin Wilde, General Manager, Consultation and Engagement  
02 8295 4117  
[kevin.wilde@wool.com](mailto:kevin.wilde@wool.com)



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M +61 (0)419 200 802

# Elders / Epasco Farms Pasture Trial 2024



Adelaide Hagan, Agronomist, Elders Esperance  
 Contact: 0400 204 381, [adelaide.hagan@elders.com.au](mailto:adelaide.hagan@elders.com.au)

The 2024 Elders Esperance Pasture Trial is located east of Esperance at Epasco farms. This year we have decided to try out some brassica grazing plants including Kale, Pallaton Raphno and Clean Crop Leafy Turnip. Illabo wheat and the ryegrass mix Stingermax have also been included in the trial. The trial is in a 44ha paddock with 3 ha dedicated to each species. The remaining 32 ha are seed to Kale.

Forage brassicas can provide quick and abundant feed, with high digestibility, energy, and protein. The crude protein content of brassica leaves ranges from 15 – 25%. The metabolizable energy content ranges from 11 – 14MJ ME/kg DM. Forage brassicas can produce excellent livestock weight gains.

Cleancrop Leafy Turnip is a fast establishing, high quality feed. It has excellent plant persistence after multiple grazings. Grazing maturity is achieved in 42 -> 70 days. The Cleancrop brassica systems are bred to be tolerant to sulfonylurea herbicides. Telar, the old Glean, is a residual herbicide which contains 750 g/kg Chlorsulfuron and controls 42 different weeds species including some very hard to control weeds such as double gee, cape tulip, dock and onion grass.

Pallaton Raphno brassica is a hybrid between Kale and Radish. At 56 days to grazing, it has high palatability for liveweight production. It has high water use efficiency, high yield, and aphid tolerance. There is strong persistence under multiple grazing.

The tried and tested Stingermax ryegrass and clover blend has also been included for comparison. It includes an Ascend tetraploid annual ryegrass, Astro tetraploid annual ryegrass, Bindoon sub clover and Taipan Balansa.

Regal Kale takes up the remain 32 ha. Including a kale in this pasture trial is something different as it is not usually grown in the Esperance region. It has very good winter hardiness and excellent pest and disease tolerance. It is a very slow growing pasture species with 24 weeks, 168 days to grazing.

In this dry start it has been incredible to see the quick production of biomass produced by the seeded pastures. First biomass cuts were taken on the 22nd of July. Dry matter of all species sits well above what would be expected mid-winter with dry matter typically sitting around 1000 – 1500 kg/DM/ha.



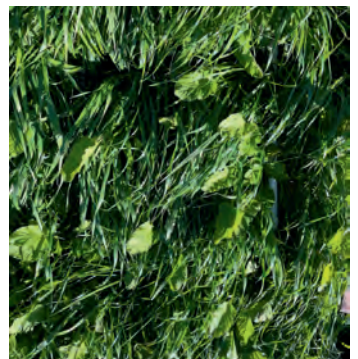
**Stingermax**  
 2270 kg/DM/ha



**Cleancrop leafy Turnip**  
 1890 kg/DM/ha

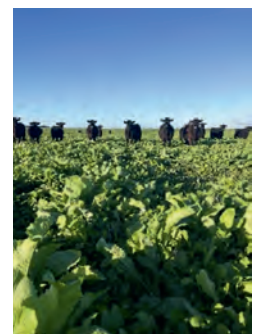
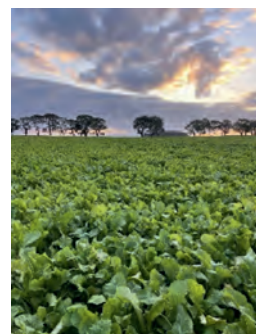


**Pallaton Raphno**  
 2570 kg/dm/ha



**Illabo wheat**  
 2590 kg/DM/ha

Blue tag heifers were introduced following the biomass cuts on the 23rd of July. They were weighed prior to introduction and have been weighed at pregnancy testing on the 12th of August. They have gained an average of 28 kg over the 20 days which equates to 1.40 kg/day. The Kale has not yet been grazed or had dry matter cuts taken due to the slow growth habits. It will provide an abundance of feed come spring.



For enquiries regarding pasture seeds for 2025, contact Neill Liddle 0429 342 080 or Taylor Crane 0473 639 755.

# September Livestock Management from Farm and General

## *Farm and General*

As September rolls around, it marks a critical period for livestock management, with key activities like weaning and spring shearing coming into full swing. Ensuring the health and well-being of your animals during this busy time is paramount, and Farm and General is here to support you every step of the way with our extensive range of animal health products.

## Expert Advice for the Season

Rory, our trusted animal health expert, emphasises the importance of vigilance during this period. "Weaning and shearing can be stressful for livestock, and it's essential to monitor their health closely. One crucial area to focus on is worm control," Rory advises. Regular worm egg counts are vital to keep on top of parasite loads, and at Farm and General, we offer services to assist with this. Monitoring worm egg counts allows you to make informed decisions about deworming, helping to maintain the health and productivity of your flock.

With the recent rains, Rory also highlights the need to be proactive in managing lice and fly infestations. "Wet weather creates ideal conditions for lice and flies to thrive, which can lead to significant discomfort and health issues for your livestock," he notes. Farm and General stocks a wide range of effective lice and fly control products to help you tackle these problems head-on.

## Products to Consider

As you prepare for the busy months ahead, consider stocking up on essential animal health products. Our range includes high-quality lice treatments, designed to protect your stock from the irritation and potential health risks posed by these persistent pests. Additionally, our selection of fly control products ensures that you can keep your animals comfortable and free from the distress and disease that flies can cause.

For those focusing on worm management, Farm and General offers a variety of wormers suitable for different types of livestock. Regular use of these products, combined with worm egg count monitoring, can help you maintain a healthy, productive flock throughout the year.

## Why Choose Farm and General?

At Farm and General, we understand the demands of livestock farming, especially during busy seasons like spring. That's why we stock a comprehensive range of animal health products tailored to meet the specific needs of your stock. Whether you're dealing with worms, lice, or flies, we have the solutions to keep your animals in peak condition.



Moreover, our knowledgeable team, is always on hand to provide expert advice and support. We're committed to helping you achieve the best outcomes for your livestock, ensuring they remain healthy and productive.

Visit Farm and General today to explore our range of animal health products and take advantage of our expert services. We're here to help you make this busy season a successful one for your farm.

Contact: (08) 9072 0888





# Join the Mastering Merino Genetics Project to learn how you can change your genetics to meet the changing sheep markets

Jan Clawson, ASHEEP & BEEF

With the changing sheep markets just four years away, now is a good time to think about making some strategic changes to your flock's genetics to meet the new markets.

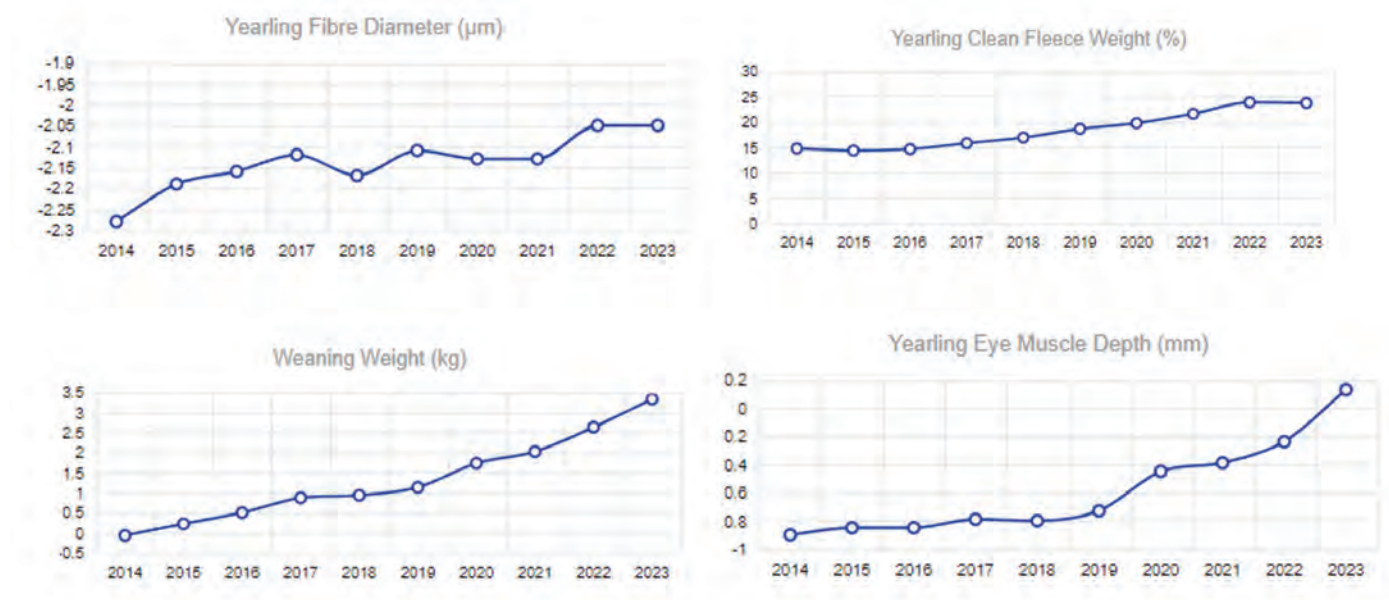
ASHEEP & BEEF has been running a project which focuses on targeting traits for genetic gain to meet a breeding objective, since 2018. Originally it was facilitated by MerinoLink and University of New England (UNE) and called the DNA Stimulation Project.

Following its success and with ongoing interest from the project participants we decided to continue the project, now called Mastering Merino Genetics.

The current 15 farm business members in the project, made up of both ram breeders and buyers, feel there is an opportunity for more people to join, especially in these changing times.

The project uses Genetic Flock Profile testing to firstly benchmark your flock, so you know your starting point. Then each year, before ram buying season, we meet for a half day workshop where, using Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBV's) and the RamSelect program, we identify the genetic traits required to meet your breeding objectives and how to identify the rams in the sale catalogue that will facilitate that change.

We have learnt that if we focus on a trait, we can move it, but it will take between 5 to 7 years to see the change across the whole flock, hence now is a good time to start.



## How to join the group

If this is of interest, please contact Jan Clawson on email or phone for more information. We will organise to genetic test 20 of your youngest ewe lambs for your flock profile and get you set up with a RamSelect account. Caris Cornwall from Orion Ag Consulting or Sally Martin from SheepMetriX deliver the workshops each year, they are also available through the year if you have questions. The **next workshop will be late July-August 2025**.

## How much will this cost

The project is fully self-funded so cost depends on the number of participants, it has been between \$300-\$400 each year, paid at the beginning of each year. There will also be the cost of the flock profile test, estimated to be \$850 and the project officer's time and travel of about \$300. The only other expense will be the RamSelect program subscription which is \$27.50 per year.

We look forward to welcoming any interested new members to the project.

# Understanding Ovine Johnes Disease (OJD)



Zoetis

Ovine Johne's Disease (OJD) is a serious bacterial infection in sheep that results in inflammation and thickening of the intestines, severely reducing nutrient absorption, leading to wasting and death. The OJD bacteria is extremely tough and can persist in the environment for up to 55 weeks[1], and by the time clinical signs are visible, the property has likely been infected for over two years.

## How OJD spreads

OJD is primarily spread through the faeces of infected sheep. Infected sheep can shed 80 billion OJD bacteria daily[2]. It only takes a small number of bacteria to infect other sheep. The bacteria grow slowly in the gut, meaning sheep can shed bacteria and contaminate pasture for years before showing symptoms. The disease can be introduced to your farm through infected sheep purchases, agisting, strays, or contaminated waterways.



## Signs of OJD infection

Even in the absence of clear clinical signs, infected sheep may exhibit:

- Reduced wool production and tensile strength due to reduced nutrient absorption.
- Decreased condition scores and feed conversion efficiency.
- Increased numbers of weaker animals in the flock, weight loss despite adequate feeding, and sometimes scouring

## Impact of OJD on your farm

**On-farm losses:** Infected flocks see an average of 6.2% mortality annually, with higher levels in heavily infected flocks[3]. This results in significant production losses and increased costs associated with finding replacement stock.

**Economic burden:** The cost of losing sheep to OJD far outweighs the cost of vaccination. If newly purchased ewes cost \$200 each, the breakeven point for vaccination is a 2% mortality loss, whereas typical OJD infection rates result in an average death rate of 6.2%[3].



Photo courtesy of Dr Tristan Jubb, Bendigo Sheep Vets

## Benefits of Gudair vaccination

- **Reduces shedding and contamination:** Gudair vaccination reduces the shedding of OJD bacteria by 90%, significantly reducing pasture contamination and the risk of infection to other sheep[4]. It also delays shedding in carrier animals by around 12 months[4].
- **Reduces deaths from OJD by 90%**[4].
- **Long-term control:** Continued vaccination, along with biosecurity measures, effectively manages and reduces the spread of OJD over time.
- **Market advantages:** Buyers often pay a premium for vaccinated sheep, recognizing the reduced risk of disease transmission.
- **A SINGLE 1mL Gudair dose provides lifetime protection.** Vaccinate lambs at 4–16 weeks to be "approved vaccinate" as they have very low risk of prior infection.



## Consequences of stopping vaccination

- **Rapid re-infection:** Without vaccination, the 10% of sheep that can still shed bacteria (even when vaccinated) will contaminate the pasture and infect other sheep.
- **Increased mortality and costs:** Stopping vaccination would likely lead to a return of high mortality rates, substantial economic losses, and increased stress due to the need for frequent replacement of stock.
- Shedding of the OJD bacteria was still detected in over 80% of flocks even after five years of consistent vaccination[5].

Continued over page.

In conclusion, the continued use of the Gudair vaccine is essential, not only for protecting your flock from the damaging impacts of OJD, but also for ensuring the economic viability of your farming operation. The long-term benefits, both in terms of animal health and financial returns, make the investment in Gudair a sensible choice.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any further questions or concerns.

**REMEMBER - ALWAYS USE A GUDAIR SAFETY VACCINATOR**

For Gudair best practice instructional videos, visit:  
[www2.zoetis.com.au/livestock-solutions/videos/sheep/gudair](http://www2.zoetis.com.au/livestock-solutions/videos/sheep/gudair)



*References:*

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2. Whittington, R. J., et al. (2000). "Temporal patterns and quantification of excretion of Mycobacterium avium subsp paratuberculosis in sheep with Johne's disease." Australian Veterinary Journal 78(1): 34-37.
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## Sheep Reproduction RD&A Alert

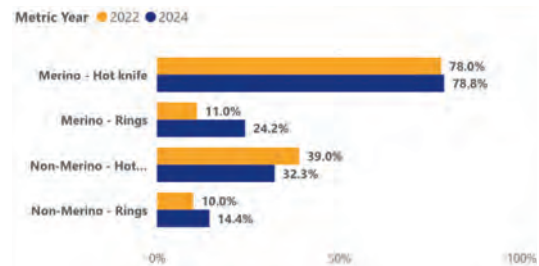
Sarah Brown, ASHEEP & BEEF

The Sheep Reproduction RD&A Alert (Research, Development & Adoption) is an initiative of the Sheep Reproduction Strategic Partnership (SRSP). The SRSP aims to help sheep producers to profitability and sustainably increase lamb production through increasing lamb survival and weaning rates, and coordinates a national approach to improving sheep reproductive performance. Their RD&A alert comes out monthly via email, giving updates on research underway, findings, and industry resources. Following is a couple of snapshots showcasing information sourced via the July edition (see the QR code). If you would like to subscribe, email program coordinator Dr Sue Hatcher at [sue@makinoutcomes.com.au](mailto:sue@makinoutcomes.com.au) or call 0407 006 454.



### Sheep Sustainability Framework

Have you seen the Sheep Sustainability Framework's (SSF) Digital Data Dashboard? The dashboard showcases current and historical data across the four themes of the SSF: 1) Caring for our sheep, 2) Enhancing the environment and climate, 3) Looking after our people, our customers and the community, 4) Ensuring a financially resilient industry. You can easily flick through slides with interesting stats, an example is shown to the right.



Graphic: Percentage of producers who use appropriate pain management at tail docking.

### Quantifying and improving reproductive performance of shedding sheep

Research is progressing that aims to quantify and improve reproductive performance of shedding sheep. Twenty-seven core and 30 self-reporting sites have been selected and enrolled in the project, with sites split across 6 states, representing the most common breeds, and covering 560,500 hectares and 137,326 breeding ewes. Contact: Assoc. Prof. Will van Wettere at [william.vanwettere@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:william.vanwettere@adelaide.edu.au).

### Sheep producers report docking tails shorter than recommended, knowledge-practice gap, and inconsistent length descriptions: an Australian survey

A research paper has been released covering the above topic. "Context: In Australia, it is a common practice to dock sheep tails, to reduce breech soiling and flystrike. According to research, for docking to provide the optimal benefit, tails should be left at a length that covers the vulva in ewes and to an equivalent length in males. Docking tails shorter than recommended increases the risk of perineal cancers, arthritis and prolapse. Research indicates that some producers dock tails shorter than recommended, up to 57% in surveys and up to 86% in on-farm data." "Conclusion: These results indicated that short tail docking remains a sheep-welfare issue for Australian sheep, and that a knowledge-practice gap exists for some producers."

## WASIA Update: Keep the Sheep

Valerie Pretzel, WA Shearing Industry Association



The Keep the Sheep campaign is having a **Canberra Rally on September 10** and is calling on us all to stand as part of the Farmy Army at the National Ag Rally at Parliament House. Visit [www.keepthesheep.com.au/nationalrally](http://www.keepthesheep.com.au/nationalrally). WASIA will attend and if you are thinking about attending it might be interesting to read about the very busy two days we spent as part of the Canberra delegation in July.

WASIA is a seed funder of the Keep the Sheep campaign. We are on the Steering Committee and provide shearing industry perspective and support. In Canberra in July, Darren Spencer (President) and I joined delegates from WA Farmers, Livestock Transport, Local Governments such as Katanning, Albany and Broomehill-Tambellup, Holly Ludeman and Paul Brown from Keep The Sheep and Bindi Murray from Sheep Producers. Once in Canberra we joined up with reps from National bodies such as Wool Producers Australia, Sheep Producers, ALEC.

Our job was to explain why the trade is integral to WA's farming systems, the supply chain, rural communities, animal welfare, and Australia's trade relationships.

Our objective was to talk to as many crossbenchers as possible to get them to support the Coalition motion to have a full Senate Inquiry. Rick Wilson (MP) was great and organised a large meeting room next to his Parliamentary Office for our use. Because we were walking (sometimes almost running!) around the corridors from one meeting to another we had to have official pass-holders with us at all times as we were in non-public areas.



Darren and I had set ourselves to meet with Senator Lidia Thorpe, an Aboriginal Independent from Victoria. We wanted to give her information about the effect this Bill would have on our workforce and ongoing training of young people entering the workforce. I had sent her various emails and case stories of some of our workers and training schools. We managed a good 20 minutes with her and were pleased that she ended up voting with us on the issue. One down.

The Government guillotined debate on the Bill which meant that regardless of the debate the Bill would be put forward for division (vote). A sign that they were concerned that the longer we were there talking to everyone, the higher the chance it would be blocked. We had a call from Murray Watt asking to meet. We met and had robust discussions for 30 minutes that ultimately didn't change his mind or ours. He said "this Bill will go through so we want you to work with us on implementing it and moving forward"... the position of Keep The Sheep is "if we can't change the Bill, we will work to change the Government".

We had another productive meeting with Peter Dutton, Leader of the Opposition who reiterated that they will reinstate the live sheep export industry when they come to power.

In another sign that we were getting dangerously close to blocking the Bill, the delegation received an invitation to meet with the Prime Minister. We met with Anthony Albanese for over 30 minutes and whilst the meeting was respectful, it was clear that he did not fully understand the issues and the consequences. He kept repeating "we were elected with a mandate" and "the industry is in decline so we are actually helping you to transition to a better market". We strongly advised both the allocated funds and timeframes fell far short to deliver a [...] [Cont'd]



[...] transition that leaves 'No one worse off, no one left behind' for the impacted families, businesses and communities.

Monday night saw us sitting in the gallery in the Senate listening to the debate. Gritting our teeth listening to the rubbish and outright lies dished up by The Greens and Labor Senators and wanting to cheer and applaud the speeches from the Coalition Senators and crossbenchers on our side. Except you have to just sit quietly and listen. Many of the Coalition speeches included quotes from WASIA's submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry.

As all know, Labor got their ban passed in the Senate but we made the Labor Senate whip (Penny Wong) and Murray Watt work hard, seeing them having urgent conversations with crossbenchers. We made Watt sweat and he certainly would have had to offer up some sweeteners to get some of those crossbenchers to vote for the Bill. At the end of day one I checked my watch and found I had walked 10kms for the day - all within the corridors of Parliament House!

Day 2 we took part in the main press conference that went live across Australia and met with Coalition MPs and Senators to thank them for their support. David Littleproud and Peter Dutton held a joint press conference to reiterate their support for the industry and their commitment to overturn the Ban. Essential to have this on the public record.



We met with Senators Bridget Mackenzie, Michaelia Cash and of course Slade Brockman who is such a great advocate for us and our industry. We sat in the gallery of the House of Reps where Rick Wilson acknowledged our delegation all proudly wearing our Keep The Sheep merino t-shirts.

Whilst this delegation didn't achieve our goals of blocking the Bill or getting a Senate Inquiry, we spoke to the Prime Minister, the Minister for Agriculture, the leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Nationals and many Senators and MPs and we made lots of friends and connections along the way.

Thanks to ASHEEP & BEEF, by supporting our industry through your membership of WASIA we had the opportunity to put our case in Canberra. We are proud that our Association is fighting and representing the interests of our industry and rest assured we will continue to do so.





Department of  
Primary Industries and  
Regional Development



# FEED365 spring field day 2024

## Forage systems for year-round grazing

**Tuesday 17 September 2024**

### **Katanning Research Station**

453 Katanning-Nyabing Road, Katanning

- **9:30 am: arrive and registrations**
- **10 am – 12 pm: Site 1 (B1)**
- **12 pm – 1 pm: Lunch provided**
- **1 pm – 3 pm: Site 2 (B14)**

Take a guided tour of the multiple pasture types and mixes in their peak growth and hear from project leads who will discuss:

- ✓ pasture management
- ✓ grazing management
- ✓ best forage systems in a drying climate.

Brought to you by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and Meat & Livestock Australia's SheepLinks Program, in collaboration with the Grower Group Alliance.

### **More information**

To register to attend the FEED365 spring field day, scan the QR code or email [claire.payne@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:claire.payne@dpird.wa.gov.au)

RSVP by Friday 13 September, for catering and transport purposes.



**Register today**



[dpird.wa.gov.au](http://dpird.wa.gov.au)

## Safety Spot: Reporting an Injury or Illness to Worksafe

Jan Clawson, ASHEEP & BEEF

So, when do you need to report an injury or illness to Worksafe?

A serious illness or injury that required immediate medical treatment, must be reported to the Worksafe immediately by calling 1800 678 198.

Where the dangerous incident is not currently life-threatening, the notifiable incident can be lodged online via the WorkSafe website.

### The types of injuries that must be reported are:

- a fracture of the skull, spine or pelvis
- a fracture of any bone in the arm (other than in the wrists or hand) or in the leg (other than a bone in the ankle or foot)
- an amputation of an arm, a hand, finger, finger joint, leg, foot, toe or toe joint
- the loss of sight of an eye; and
- any injury that is likely to prevent the employee from being able to work within 10 days of the day on which the injury occurred.

### The types of diseases that must be reported are:

- infectious diseases: tuberculosis, viral hepatitis, Legionnaires' disease and HIV, where these diseases are contracted during work.
- occupational zoonoses: Q fever, anthrax, leptospiroses and brucellosis, where these diseases are contracted during work.

Psychological injuries must be notified where the psychological injury is a result of sexual assault or harassment.

It's also a good idea to undertake your own investigation into the incident, take photos, ask all staff to complete an incident report with their own version of the event. This is important because people's versions of the event may change over time. Keep a log of activities after the event including dates.

I recently had to report an incident to Worksafe when it became obvious the staff member would be off work for more than 10 days. I contacted Worksafe and completed the online form. I went through what had happened, the immediate action to prevent the incident from happening again and the long-term solution. Once all actions had been completed, I completed a report which included injury details, contributing factors, corrective actions, and a safety review. I also included photos from the time of the incident and after the corrective actions had been completed.

While I was nervous calling Worksafe I found the person to be fair, understanding and helpful. Like us, they have a job to do too, which is to ensure everyone is safe at work.

Ref: [www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/types-serious-illness-or-injury](http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/types-serious-illness-or-injury)

The screenshot shows the 'Notification of Injury or Illness' form on the WorkSafe website. The form is titled 'Details of the injured or ill person' and includes the following fields:

- First name: [Text input field]
- Last name: [Text input field]
- Gender: Radio buttons for Male and Female.
- Occupation: [Text input field]
- Date of birth: [Date picker] with an example 'e.g. ddMM/yyyy' below it.
- Days unable to perform normal work: [Text input field] with a checkbox for 'Unknown'.

At the bottom right of the form is a blue 'Next' button. The footer of the page includes 'wa.gov.au' and copyright information: 'All contents copyright © Government of Western Australia. All rights reserved. June 1999, December 2009, Copyright'.

## Digital Ag Program - calls for input

Esther Price, WA Livestock Research Council

With the swathe of new digital technologies coming our way, MLA's digital ag project manager John McGuren has commissioned a review to ensure MLA is focused on bringing forward technologies that are practical, accessible and make economic sense for producers to adopt. If all things digital and tech is an area of interest to you, then we'd welcome your participation in the review, which will take place via a series of virtual workshops in early September. If you'd like to be part of this, please email [eo@walrc.com.au](mailto:eo@walrc.com.au) and we will get you an invite!

# Mid-Season Update: Pasture Variety Trials PDS

*Tyneal Callus, South Coastal Agencies*

ASHEEP & BEEF's Pasture Variety Trials, a Meat & Livestock Australia Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) project, has entered its final and possibly most challenging year in 2024. This trial was designed to identify the most suitable pasture varieties for the Esperance region by initially running plot scale trials and then in subsequent years monitoring commercial-scale demonstration sites, each located across various rainfall zones and soil types. These sites were strategically selected to reflect the diverse environmental conditions of the Esperance region, providing valuable insights into how different pasture varieties perform under real-world conditions.

## 2024 Trial Adjustments

To better represent the areas where livestock farming remains a key component of agricultural enterprises, we have merged the low and medium rainfall zones for the 2024 season. The demonstration sites and pasture varieties currently being monitored are as follows.

### Low to Medium Rainfall Zone <500mm

- RM4 Vetch (hosted by Mark & Liv Walter)
- Diaman2ti Bladder Clover (hosted by Leigh & Karina West)
- Barenbrug Annual & Perennial Pasture Mix / Rasina Vetch / Ryecorn (hosted by Thomas Pengilly)
- Morava Vetch / Pallinup Oats Mix (hosted by David & Katherine Vandenberghe)

### High Rainfall Zone >500mm

- RM4 Vetch (Hosted by Simon Fowler)
- Ryegrass / RM4 Vetch Mix (hosted by Simon Fowler)

## Comments on 2024 Pasture Varieties

### RM4 Vetch:

Over the course of this trial, Vetch, and specifically the RM4 variety, has established itself as a valuable component in crop-pasture rotations within the Esperance region. RM4 has been tested annually, both as a monoculture and within pasture mixes, across all three rainfall zones and through diverse seasonal conditions. This year, we are gathering further data on RM4's adaptability and performance in both low and high-rainfall zones, offering a clear view of how this resilient plant thrives under varying conditions.

### Diaman2ti Bladder Clover:

A recent addition to our trial, Diaman2ti Bladder Clover, has shown promising results, particularly in medium rainfall zones with sandy loam soils. Past trials have highlighted its impressive biomass and seed production capabilities. The challenging seasonal conditions of 2024 are expected to provide further insights into this variety's resilience and its true potential to boost pasture productivity in the region.

### Annual & Perennial Pasture Mix / Vetch / Ryecorn:

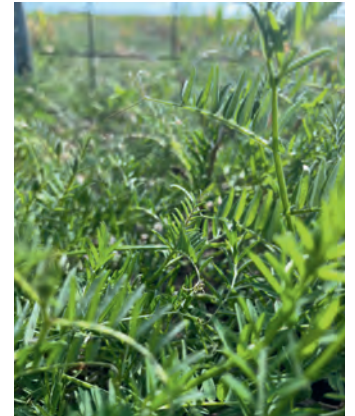
This mix from Barenbrug includes Santorini Serradella, Arrowleaf Clover, Megamix Panic, Splenda Setaria Grass, Howlong Cocksfoot, and the grower also added Rasina Vetch and Ryecorn. These diverse pasture mixes are crucial for identifying varieties that can endure different soil types and environmental stresses. In a year with suboptimal conditions for pasture establishment and growth, these trials offer valuable information on which varieties exhibit the best drought resistance and persistence. Survival of the fittest if you will.

## The 2024 Season: A Unique Challenge

The 2024 season has thrown some serious curveballs our way, making it a tough year for pasture producers and for the Pasture Variety Trials PDS. The conditions have given us a unique opportunity to observe how the selected pasture varieties handle stress and recover once the season improves. These valuable insights could be key in adding resilient varieties to diversify pasture mixes.

With seeding dates at our six demonstration sites ranging from March 10th to June 17th, and with early rain being hit-or-miss, each site is at a different stage of growth. As the season continues, we're interested to see how the later-sown pastures perform and to track how the nutritional quality of the earlier-sown sites develop. This data will be key as we wrap up this long-term trial.

*Below: Mark & Liv Walter's RM4 Vetch, 10 Week Cut, 27/05/2024*



*Above & below: Fowlers' Dargo Ryegrass & RM4 Vetch, 10 week cut, 26/03/2024*





## Winter Field Walk Wrap

*Sarah Brown, ASHEEP & BEEF*

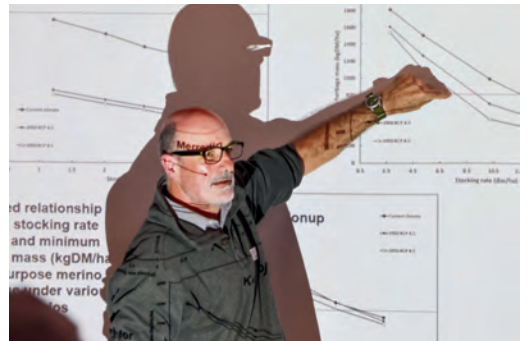
ASHEEP & BEEF's Winter Field Walk was held on 31st July, with sunny skies and light winds: perfect spraying weather! Whilst we lost a few producers to the all-too-tempting purr of a sprayer's engine, those who managed to get away joined around 40 people for an afternoon touring three farms before wrapping up at the Gibson Soak Hotel.

**Harry Davies and Roslyn Cowell** hosted our first stop and took us through a system of synchronising heifers to be mated with bulls, with benefits including a tighter calving window and better condition for following joining. Harry then spoke alongside Nick Ruddenklau (Epasco) and Dr Enoch Bergman (Swans Veterinary Services) about the results to date of ASHEEP & BEEF's Optimising Age of Weaning Meat & Livestock Australia Producer Demonstration Site, where producers experienced lighter calf weights for those earlier weaned but dams in better condition. Re-preg data is now being collected before undertaking an assessment of results to put a value on the benefits to cow and feed efficiency gains vs the lower weight of calves. It was noted that those selling calves directly post weaning crystallise the loss at that point, whereas those retaining calves may have more opportunity to benefit from a system of weaning earlier. Watch this space when we are able to release results later this year. We then had a livestock market update from Jake Hann (Chatley Livestock) and heard from David Howey (Elanco) about a new supplement for cattle MultiBoost with B12.

At the second stop **Josh Sullivan** took us through the demonstration site he is hosting in the DPIRD / Meat & Livestock Australia FEED365 project at Esperance Downs Research Station in Gibson; a mix of triticale, rye corn and balansa clover. Balansa was included as a back-up as the site is subject to water-logging. A measured grazing of this site has recently commenced with weights, conditions scores and pasture cuts. Also speaking was Giles McMeikan (Farm & General) for a local agronomist's perspective and Paul Sanford (DPIRD) who gave background on the broader FEED365 trials at Katanning. Paul also spoke about the FutureSheep project where he has been using a CSIRO program to model pasture production in the south west of WA in 2050. A big thanks to Chris Matthews and the Esperance DPIRD team for making us welcome in the research station's barn for presentations and morning tea.

Final stop was a visit to **Leigh & Karina West's** Diaman2ti Bladder Clover, a variety that became commercially available late last year. This site is being followed in ASHEEP & BEEF's Pasture Variety Trial Meat & Livestock Australia PDS project. We heard from Leigh (Karleigh Farms) alongside Tyneal Callus & Hayley Hill (South Coastal Agencies) who have been monitoring the site. It was sown 10 April @ 10kg p/ha, with the season break in mid-May. The variety is known for high harvestability, upright growing habits, reducing disease risk, 95 days to flowering (10 days shorter than Bartolo Bladder Clover), high biological nitrogen fixing potential, and high feed value (particularly late in the season). It also maintains relatively high nutritional value and digestibility through plant senescence. We then made our way back to the Gibson Soak Hotel for drinks and a meal, with our thanks going to David Howey (Elanco) for topping up the bar tab!

*Below: Leigh & Karina West's Diaman2ti Bladder Clover. Photos by ASHEEP & BEEF.*



*Top to bottom: Harry Davies and Nick Ruddenklau; the Feed365 Demonstration Site in Gibson; researcher Paul Sanford. Photo credit to Jordan Davies.*



# Are You eID Ready?

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development



The State is set to begin a phased transition to a sheep and goat electronic identification (eID) system starting on January 1, 2025. This move aims to enhance the traceability of livestock throughout their entire lifespan, significantly aiding the management of any emergency disease outbreaks.

Livestock diseases can easily spread through animal movements, person-to-animal contact, and animal-to-animal contact. In our globalized market, the threat of these diseases is always looming. Without proper checks, balances, and tracing systems, an outbreak in Western Australia could have devastating effects on the industry. To mitigate this risk, all Agriculture Ministers in Australia have agreed on a National Plan to implement eID for sheep and goats by 2025. An investment of \$25.6 million has been allocated to assist producers and downstream operators in transitioning to the eID system across the State. This funding ensures that Western Australian sheep and goat producers and operators can easily access the new technologies required for the eID system.

eID devices, or 'eID tags,' contain microchips providing unique identification for each animal, which can be scanned. This system will electronically record each animal's journey from birth to processing, enabling quicker and more accurate tracing of sheep and goat movements. This significantly enhances our ability to swiftly respond to disease outbreaks and resume trade as soon as possible. Beyond biosecurity benefits, eID tagging offers numerous advantages for producers. In an era where data is crucial for industry insights, eID tagging provides invaluable information that producers can use to optimize their operations. These benefits include utilising weight records and individual growth rates to meet market specifications, improving genetics, and using carcass feedback to enhance meat quality and inform management decisions.

Implementing eID tagging on this scale, from technological infrastructure installation to adept data management, requires a collaborative effort involving farmers, processors, technology providers, and policymakers. To support this transition, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is rolling out education and engagement initiatives, ensuring stakeholders have the knowledge and skills to fully leverage the benefits of eID tagging. This effort will continue over the next few years.

DPIRD is also continuing to roll out an infrastructure grants program to support supply chain upgrades. To date, over 90 funding grants totalling \$2.3 million have been awarded. An **eID tag rebate scheme, reducing the cost of year-of-birth eID tags by 75 cents each, will continue until December 31, 2024.** Over 3.77 million eID tags have been subsidised since April 2023, representing an investment of over \$3 million to WA sheep and goat producers. These initiatives encourage early adoption of eID and aim to ensure that industry is ready when eIDs replace visual tags.



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



## Webinar: Farm Data Safety

National Farmer Federation (NFF) recently ran a webinar on "Safeguarding your farm in the digital age", the recording is now available on YouTube via the QR code below. The webinar covers::

- Basics of staying safe online
  - Securely using IoT & smart farming tech
  - Importance of Australian Farm Data Code
- NFF would also like to hear if there are any service providers or research projects that you would like to see certified under the [Australian Farm Data Code](https://www.australianfarmdatacode.com.au), find it at [nff.org.au/programs/australian-farm-data-code/](https://nff.org.au/programs/australian-farm-data-code/)



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Newdegate Machinery Field Days**, 4-5 Sept
- Better Hay & Silage Workshop** (Western Beef), 4 Sept Albany, 5 Sept Borden
- Keep the Sheep Rally @ Parliament House**, 10 Sept, Canberra
- FEED365 Spring Field Day** (DPIRD), 17 Sep, Katanning
- ASHEEP & BEEF Spring Field Day**, 18 Sep, Esperance region
- MLA Updates 2024**, 10 Oct, Perth, [updates.mla.com.au](http://updates.mla.com.au)
- BeefEx** (Australian Lot Feeders Assoc), 17 Oct, Brisbane, [www.beefex.com.au](http://www.beefex.com.au)
- Australian Agronomy Conference**, 21-24 Oct, Albany, [agronomyconference.com](http://agronomyconference.com)
- Australian Wool Innovation AGM**, 15 Nov, online

### • SEPTEMBER •

**Next ASHEEP & BEEF  
Committee Meeting is  
scheduled for  
SEPTEMBER 2024**

Contact a committee or staff member to raise an item.

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