

BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Newsflash – 27/2/09

This Newsflash email is funded by Australian Wool Innovation and Department of Primary Industries.

For group activities check the [BWBL website](#)

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Drought Assistance Extended

The Australian Government has extended all existing Exceptional Circumstances (EC) declarations across the state.

These include seven which have since been affected by the Victorian bushfires. Assistance has been extended in all Victorian EC-declared areas, including the seven bushfire-affected areas.

The rules will not change for anyone currently receiving Exceptional Circumstances support during this drought.

The Government has accepted the NRAC's advice to extend EC assistance in the following areas: **Extended to 31 March 2010**

- Northern Victoria Revised area (including towns of Cobram, Echuca, Kerang, Lockington, Rochester, Rushworth, Shepparton, Stanhope, Tatura and Yarrawonga)
- Central Victoria North Revised area (including towns of Bendigo and Redesdale)
- Central Victoria South Revised area (including Kinglake West and Morang)
- Mallee-Northern Wimmera Revised area (includes the town of Pimpinio)
- North-East Victoria area (includes towns of Kinglake, Murrindindi, Kilmore, Clonbinane, Yea, Buxton, Wandong)
- South Western Victoria area (includes the town of Coleraine and Grampians region)

Extended to 30 April 2010

- Central and East Gippsland area (includes towns of Heyfield, Bairnsdale, Stratford, Maffra and Orbost)
- South and West Gippsland area (includes towns of Healesville, Labertouche, Jindivick, Erica, Noojee, Warburton, Maroondah, Warragul, Drouin, Yarra Glen)

EC assistance is an Australian Government program that provides drought assistance to eligible farmers and small businesses.

Drought information for farmers and rural communities is available from the Drought Information Line on 136 186 and the [DPI drought webpages](#).

09 Winter Crop Summary at Field Days

The 2009 edition of the Victorian Winter Crop Summary will be available free from the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI) at the Wimmera Machinery Field Days next week.

As in past years the 2009 Winter Crop Summary has a short pen picture of the major attributes of each variety as well as a comprehensive set of tabulated data comparing the yield and quality performance of varieties from last year as well as longer term yield comparisons.

Most of the summarised data is sourced from the National Variety Trials (NVT). These are conducted to strict protocols and growers can reference the data sets in the knowledge they are derived from independent sources. In the case of some of the pulse crops, additional data is sourced from the breeding programs of DPI.

Last year some of the NVT trials were abandoned or the data was not sufficiently consistent to allow publication due to drought conditions. However the Winter Crop Summary remains the most comprehensive ready reference of crop variety performance in Victoria.

Visit the DPI stand, to the north west of the Field Days secretary's office, at the Field Days or contact your local DPI office to obtain a copy of the Victorian Winter Crop Summary 2009. For further information contact DPI Horsham (03) 5362 2111.

DPI Assisting Landholders with Agricultural Recovery

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is working closely with landholders across the state to assess their immediate needs relating to animal welfare, hay, fencing and livestock.

DPI Animal Health staff are assisting with livestock welfare - water, feed, euthanasia (where necessary) and treatment of injured livestock.

In areas where landholders' urgent needs have been met, DPI Rural Recovery Officers are returning to affected properties to conduct more detailed assessment of fire damage, stock, fencing and fodder losses. Landholders will be able to access advice on feed budgeting and planning to manage livestock with reduced feed supplies over the coming weeks.

DPI is also providing long-term recovery advice for the re-establishment of pasture, herd and flock rebuilding, re-establishment of horticultural and viticulture plantings, soil conservation, stock containment and weed control.

Producers who have left their properties and are now located elsewhere are urged to contact DPI so that they can be helped to assess their agricultural losses.

Affected landholders seeking recovery advice or carcass disposal assistance should call the Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667.

Rural Skills Cadetship Scheme

The Rural Skills Cadetship Program provides grants for full-time tertiary students from regional Victoria to obtain paid semester break employment in regional areas while studying.

The program aims to assist industry in regional Victoria to meet both short and long term skill needs, by investing in potential future employees. It also provides students with the opportunity to develop practical experience in their field of study maintain connections within provincial Victoria and obtain financial support while studying.

Nature of assistance - Grants of up to \$2,500 are available to participating students towards their educational, travel and living costs. Host employers may be eligible for up to \$1,250.

Eligibility Criteria - Applications are currently being accepted from rural and regional councils on behalf of prospective cadets and host employers. Applications close 31 March 2009.

Contact Business Victoria on 13 22 15 or visit www.business.vic.gov.au to download the relevant fact sheet and Rural Skills Cadetship Program documents

Online Salinity Solutions

The new Saltland Genie website will provide farmers, agronomists and other land managers with the information they need to manage salinity.

By answering a few simple questions farmers and extension officers can determine the best management strategy for salt-affected paddocks.

The website includes research papers, case studies, videos and farmer stories as well as an interactive forum.

For more information contact Dr. Nick Edwards (08) 8762 9184 or visit the Saltland Genie website www.saltlandgenie.org.au

[Traveller's Guide to Australian Interstate Quarantine](#)

Each Australian state devotes major resources to ensuring that certain pests and diseases do not enter or leave the state through commercial trade. But the travelling public also have significant potential to transfer pests and diseases from one state to another.

To minimise this risk, all interstate travellers should be aware of an updated guide and new website produced by DPI Plant Standards and its interstate counterparts.

The Quarantine Domestic *Traveller's guide to Australian Interstate Quarantine* booklet and [website](#) inform travellers about what items can and cannot be taken from one Australian state to another. Items covered include plants and plant products, animals and animal products, food items and recreational equipment, as well as quarantine zones within each state.

The free guides have been supplied to tourist information centres around Victoria. A number of DPI and DSE centres also have copies.

[AWI Welcomes Brenda Back to the Wool Industry](#)

The Chairman of Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) Wal Merriman has announced that the former head of the Woolmark Company Brenda McGahan has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of AWI.

The appointment which takes effect from next Monday heralds the return to the wool industry for Ms McGahan after an almost two year absence.

Ms McGahan's appointment followed an extensive recruitment and selection process.

"It's a tribute to Brenda that she was selected from an impressive array of candidates for this position," Mr Merriman said.

Ms McGahan said she was very proud to be returning to the wool industry to take the helm of AWI.

"AWI is going through a major transition and is facing multiple challenges making it a privilege to help the Board during these difficult times.

"I look forward to leading the team at AWI and working with the Board to improve the future for wool globally.

Prior to joining the wool industry, Ms McGahan had an impressive track record working with retailers in Australia and overseas.

[Watch Out for Crickets NOW](#)

Black field crickets are starting to move, and early control is recommended to prevent excessive pasture damage. Crickets feed on both pasture plants and pasture seeds during summer and autumn.

Large numbers of crickets can occur wherever there are cracking soils or stony ground. The cracks and stones shelter the crickets from hot, dry weather.

A newly hatched cricket is a black ant-like insect 4 mm long and has a white stripe across its back. As the cricket develops the white stripe is lost. The adult cricket has full-length wing covers, is black or dark brown all over, and is from 20mm to 25mm long.

Crickets can be effectively baited once half the population is at least half grown, that is, 10 mm long, have begun to develop wings and when the characteristic white line across the back has nearly disappeared.

To tell whether crickets have reached numbers worth controlling, place ten folded hessian bags over cracks around each paddock. The crickets will shelter under the bags, especially when the weather is warm, sunny and windy. Check the bags at several times during the day and if you find an average of five to seven crickets under each bag, or twenty or more under one bag, then control is warranted.

The most effective way to bait crickets is by using insecticide treated grain, however ensure that you follow the directions on the chemical label and follow the withholding periods stated on the label.

And from Michelangelo "The greater danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we hit it."

Have a good weekend, Annette
BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Administrator