

BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Newsflash – 27/3/09

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

What's happening in the BWBL groups - check the website to read about coming activities in the groups across the state and coming events organised by the program.

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[The next BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB \(BWBL\) Phone Seminar](#) on Tuesday 7th April at 1.00pm is going to be a little different.

We have come a long way since we started with the Phone Seminar so it is time to move forward with new technology.

An **Online Webinar** to hear and see the changes to the **Sheep Genetics website** has been organised for Tuesday 7th April at 1.00pm

This seminar will give an insight into the developments recently made to the Sheep Genetics Webpage. These include upgrades made to the website and search facility, technical improvements and new indexes.

You need to have a computer with internet access and a phone line where audio is not available on the computer - **firstly register your interest with Annette Taylor on 5355 0531** and an email confirmation will be sent so that you can register with Sheep Genetics for the online presentation by Mat Dwyer.

The Webinar session will have the website live with Mat explaining the available functions.

There is no cost if the computer has audio however a local phone call will be charged if using a phone line to hear the presentation.

Remember REGISTER with Annette Taylor phone (03) 5355 0531

[BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Invests In Sheep Industry Leadership](#)

BWBL is again sponsoring two candidates for the Marcus Oldham Rural Leadership Program this year, as a way of investing in the leadership capacity within the wool and lamb industry.

The program is to be conducted from Sunday 28th June to Friday 3rd July at the Marcus Oldham College, Geelong. Participants in the program develop their skills in teamwork, future vision, communication, public speaking, negotiation, interpersonal relationships, goal setting and community leadership.

The scholarship covers all program costs including accommodation and meals. Candidates are selected on the basis of their potential to contribute as a leader in the industry and are selected by a three-member panel of the BWBL Advisory Committee. Applications close on the 30th April 2009. To find out more about the program visit the website www.marcusoldham.vic.edu.au

If you are interested in applying phone on 5355 0531 or email annette.taylor@dpi.vic.gov.au

Farm Day - May 30 & 31

Farm Day is an event that is designed to breakdown the rural urban divide in a day of "fun, friendship & understanding". In basic terms it allows insight for the city family to witness first hand what goes into producing their food and fibre.

Now in its fourth year the FarmDay Team are keen to see how far our message will reach. Growing from humble beginnings with 60 families to last year matching 300 city families we envisage matching many more than that this year. Already over 300 families are on a waiting list and as the media campaign starts rolling out it is expect to have well over 1500 on the list by May 30 & 31. However the need is to have more farmers open their gate and host a city family. As currently the stats sit at 3 city families to every 1 farming family. The Farm Day Team knows that times are tough for many farmers, but ask them to consider this opportunity in encouraging urban neighbours to buy Australian produce and help educate the younger generations some critical basics of where there food comes from.

If you would like any further information please call 1300 36 70 36. Also the website is a great source of information and if you visit the photos page you will certainly have a glimpse at the joy this program creates. www.farmday.com

RFID Field Day

The aim of the field day is to demonstrate the procedures undertaken by the de Fegely's and to present the progress results and benefits being attained. The field day will also include addresses by representatives from the companies participating in the project on the equipment and how it could improve traditional sheep farming practices.

WHEN: Thursday 2nd April

WHERE: Charlie, Lizzie and Rich de Fegely's property, RSD 19 Quamby Rd, Dobie

TIME: 9.30am to 11.30am

Register with MS&A on 5341 6100

9th Australian Fleece Competition

At the Australian Sheep & Wool Show in Bendigo on 17th to 19th July the Australian Fleece Competition winners will be announced. The competition encompasses all main wool types and is commercially orientated using current technology to assist in both the objective and subjective criteria. The competition provides educational outcomes to competitors, woolgrowers and the industry at large.

Total prize money is \$13,000 with 45 prizes and 29 sponsors.

- Fleece donation for the 2009 charity is **beyondblue**
- Free delivery of fleeces outside Victoria by Wooltrans Aust
- Fleeces must be at Landmark interstate AWH Woolstores by Friday 5th June for free delivery
- Closing date for entry forms and fleeces at AWH Woolstore Brooklyn Victoria is Friday 12th June 2009

For information and entry forms visit the website <http://www.sheepshow.com/> or contact **Athol Frederick** 0428 510 518

Next Gen Farmers Funding

Young people in primary industries are urged to apply for grants worth up to \$50,000 for projects to boost their leadership skills under the Next Gen Farmers initiative. Applications close on 9 April 2009. More information available at www.daff.gov.au/nextgenfarmers or by calling 1800 638 746.

Recognising Women Farmers Initiative

Organisations that support rural women are reminded they have until 9 April 2009 to apply for grants worth up to \$50,000 under the Recognising Women Farmers initiative. The grants will help to build the leadership of women in primary industries, to make rural and regional areas more resilient in a changing climate. Further information is available at www.daff.gov.au/womenleadingchange or by calling 1800 638 746.

Ram Fertility Impacted By February Heatwave

The February heatwave that preceded Black Saturday may now be having a negative impact on ram fertility, resulting in reduced conception rates and lambing percentages. By changing joining management this autumn, it may be possible to reduce the negative impact on lambing performance and bolster your bank balance at the end of the year.

Heat causes testicular degeneration (damage to the testicles) which reduces the ram's ability to produce sufficient quantities of quality semen. Rams should have large, firm testicles that are free of any lumps, bumps and skin abnormalities. If the testicles feel smaller, softer and flabbier than normal, it is likely that they have been damaged through heat exposure.

Ram fertility is affected when rams are exposed to temperatures in excess of 42 degrees C for more than 45 minutes. This heat may be from an environmental source (hot summer days or fire) or from fever as a result of flystrike, acidosis or other illness. Rams exposed to short-term heat stress will have reduced semen quality, with the maximum impact occurring around 6 weeks later. Recovery from longer term heat damage (e.g. prolonged illness) could take up to 7 months.

If you suspect that your rams have sustained heat damage to their testicles, you should consider increasing the joining ratio of rams to ewes if possible, or leaving the rams in for an extended joining period. The ratio of rams to ewes could be increased via a split joining, which would have the added benefit of producing separate and more even lamb turnoffs. Other options could be to have a later 'mop-up' joining to give non-pregnant ewes a second chance at conception, or to delay joining for a few extra weeks. However, don't forget the impact that these strategies may have on your ability to grow out or finish lambs at the end of the season.

Regardless of any suspected heat damage, you should always conduct a standard pre-joining check to ensure that your rams are sound. Remember the 5T's:

Testicles - rams should have large, firm testicles that are free of any lumps, bumps and skin abnormalities.

Tossle (penis and prepuce) - check for any defects including shearing cuts and signs of pizzle rot.

Teeth - rams with no teeth will not do well and can be hard to maintain in good body condition. Monitor the age of your ram team and plan for replacements in time for the next joining.

Toes - rams that have trouble walking also have trouble serving your ewes! Take the time to trim rams' toes so that they can do their job.

Torso - Rams should be in Condition Score of at least 3.5 prior to joining. Nutrition is the key, but remember that condition score can't be increased overnight. Are there signs of past flystrike or any other defects that could affect the mating capabilities of the ram?

For more information contact Robert Suter, District Veterinary Officer, Camperdown (5557 5812); Nicky Stone, District Veterinary Officer, Ballarat (5336 6796); Samantha Clayfield, Sheep Industry Development Officer, Ballarat (5336 6868). Thanks to Samantha Clayfield and Robert Suter.

What are Victoria's Primary Production Landscapes?

An online resource has been created to help understand, explore and interpret the impact of climate change and variability on agricultural industries, management practices and soils. The primary production landscapes of Victoria tool shows the differences between the 22 sub-regions of Victoria by providing relevant future scenarios, descriptions of management practices, issues and advice on Victoria's farming systems. The landscapes were defined to highlight the potential for agricultural production, possible impacts on the displacement of land-uses and redundancy of infrastructure through a shift to drier and hotter climate conditions.

Research for this tool analysed how climate change will affect:

- the current distribution of land-use
- land-use practices
- the competition and profitability of land-uses

- soils and land management.

Visit the [DPI website](#) for more information.

http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/vrosite.nsf/pages/primary_prod_landscapes

Thanks to Nathan Robinson, Richard MacEwan, Mark Imhof, David Rees, Victor Sposito, Monique Elsley

[Agfutures Winchelsea Photo Exhibition and Forum, What's Changing in your Farming Community?](#)

AgFutures assists farmers and farming communities make sense of the changes that will affect agriculture in the future and enables better long-term decision making.

You are invited to a farm community photo exhibition by the local 5/6 primary school students and Landcare members, themed around climate change, followed by two guest speakers.

WHEN: Wednesday 1st April, 8:30am-12:30pm, Winchelsea Leisure Centre, Gosney St, Winchelsea

Hear and discuss what the future may look like and potential challenges and opportunities these changes will present. DPI Speakers include:

- Neil Barr on Social Landscape Change in the District - How people, land use and population has changed and the impact on farming.
- Tony Berrisford on Farm Commodity Performance and Future Outlook. Plus - what are the economic implications of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme?
- Displays by DPI Climate Change Policy, South West Climate Change Forum and the Upper Barwon Landcare Network.

Register with Karen Thomas on 0488 372 411 or (03) 9785 0103 by Monday 30th March. Morning tea and lunch provided.

[Advanced Spray Management and Dye Night](#)

This is a great opportunity to be part of an interactive workshop with Craig Day and Peter O'Connor who will be giving the theory and practice to ensure best practice in spray application, minimising costs and drift.

A demonstration using fluro dye and UV light to observe chemical coverage on the plant will require an afternoon/evening, followed by a small group on farm activity.

The workshop will cover - mode of action of the chemicals - drift - vapour and particle - importance of adjuvants - understanding target complexities - time of application, weather conditions including consideration of deltaT - speed, direction, temperature, inversion - buffers and chemical sensitive areas - affect of water quality on chemical - spray quality/droplet size requirements for different products and targets - machinery set up, calibration and operation including spray speed and boom height - calibration theory and practice to select the correct spray nozzle and pressure - water rates - mixing order - understanding spray application information on chemical labels - rate controllers - inter row spraying of herbicides and liquid fertilizers - chemical handling systems - personal clothing protection - Legislation including storage and handling.

WHEN: April 22nd & 23rd

WHERE: SW Tafe Campus Glenormiston

COST: \$550 per person, fully refunded through FarmReady

Contact Nickie Berrisford for registration papers which need to be completed by 17th April - Phone 5226 4075

And finally check this out this website <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2FX9rviEhw>

Have a good weekend, Annette

BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Administrator