

BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Newsflash – 8/5/2009

This Newsflash email is funded by [Australian Wool Innovation](#) and [Department of Primary Industries](#).

Have you visited the **Events Tab** on the [BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB website](#)? View the video of last years FEWETURE Farming Conference it's great.

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[BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Industry Update Conference](#)

Building on the success of last years FEWETure Farming Conference - BWBL Industry Update Conference is on again.

The conference will be at the Bendigo Exhibition Centre on 18th June it will be preceded by a dinner on th 17th June to cater for those who have a long way to travel and don't want to miss any of the proceedings the next day.

The Conference will include key note speakers and concurrent practical sessions. **Put the date in your diaries it is going to be a great day.**

[Calling all Farmers Who Want to Take the Next Step to a More Profitable Business.](#)

DPI is seeking farmers to volunteer to pilot a new innovative way of managing and effecting change in their businesses in the face of climate change and global economic downturns. The project 'A coach approach to achieving practice change' uses coaches from the small business sector to work with farmers to help them take the next steps towards building a more profitable business.

In particular DPI is seeking farmers who have participated in programs such as BeefCheque/LambCheque, Prograze, EDGenetwork courses, Storelink, BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB etc but feel as though they are *yet to experience* the benefits these programs offered (especially improved profit) for what ever reason.

Farmers who participate in this pilot will be expected to participate in 4-8 coaching sessions (1-2 hours each session) with an experienced small business coach either face to face or by phone. This program may require follow-up activities via electronic communication (email and web) so access to the internet is an advantage. If this sounds like you or you would like more information, please contact Dr Kristy Howard 0427 141689 or kristy.howard@dpi.vic.gov.au

BWBL Barwon Prime Lamb Group Open Day - Wednesday 20th May

The BWBL Barwon Prime Lamb Group is holding an Open Day with guest speaker Simon Falkiner, Agricultural Consultant, at Murdeduke Agriculture, 730 Cressy Rd, Winchelsea.

Mr Falkiner will discuss options for grazing cereals, minimum till tips, use of lucerne including inter-row sowing with cereal, managing the rumen of lambs on high quality pasture with supplements.

Here's your chance to have a look around Murdeduke and see how Murdeduke integrates feed supply and the lamb operation.

The event starts at 9 am to 12 noon, followed by complimentary lunch. **If you are interested in attending, please contact Raquel Waller, DPI, for catering purposes by Thursday 14th May on 5226 4071.**

Farm Day - May 30 & 31

An apology must be made for the mistake in the BWBL newsletter "Information Exchange" where the wrong phone number was quoted. The number below is the correct number to ring if interest in hosting a family.

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. **If you would like to host a family call 1300 36 70 36**

Right Plant, Right Place, Right Purpose - Evergraze - Field Day

The Evergraze project is holding its 4th Annual Field Day on May 14th at DPI Hamilton. The day will commence with a series of presentations in the morning. Following a free BBQ lunch the Evergraze Research site will be open between 1.30pm - 4pm for participants to undertake a self guided tour of the site.

Seminar sessions start at 10am and include

- overview and key results from the first two years
- results during the last year 2008/2009
 - Soils and Climate
 - Pasture Performance
 - Animal Production: Coopworth prime lamb vs Merino prime lamb.

To assist with catering please register your attendance with Sandra Greenaway 5573 0971

Seminar on Risk Management - Livestock and Cropping Systems

WHEN: Thursday 4th June at 9.30am

WHERE: University of Melbourne Faculty of Veterinary Science, Large Lecture Theatre, 250 Princes Hwy, Werribee (Melways Map Ref: 206 G5)

COST: \$55.00 per person Mackinnon client or \$88.00 per person non clients

Changing commodity prices, changing seasonal conditions, new technology and rising input costs are constantly causing producers to re-evaluate their enterprise mix and management strategies. There is always a huge range in profitability. The potentially higher returns for cropping compared with livestock has seen a shift towards more cropping across Victoria. Phasing out of mulesing is also concerning producers about the viability of their wool enterprise. While average gross margins for crops can be higher than livestock enterprises, returns are more volatile due to the greater production risk. This seminar will focus on how to get the right balance between cropping and livestock to optimise overall farm profitability and manage risk. The seminar aims to provide participants with objective information and tools they can use to make better decisions about enterprise mix and business risk management. **Enquiries call 9731 2225**

One-On-One Opportunity Offered

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is urging growers to utilise their services to ensure they make the most out of their Professional Advice and Planning Grant from the Federal Government.

Grants of up to \$5,500 (funded through Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)) is available for any farmer in an Exceptional Circumstances (EC) area with less than \$750,000 of off-farm assets.

In response to this funding, DPI is offering free kitchen table discussions with trained staff from DPI, Birchip Cropping Group (BCG) and Mallee Sustainable Farming (MSF) to assist farmers with making the most of the grant.

There are currently 30 places available to farming families in the Mallee, Wimmera and Central Victoria regions to take up this opportunity.

DPI are offering growers an independent, honest and open ear to listen and assist growers work through complex questions and situations.

The closing date for the grants is June 12 2009 and places are limited, so if you would like to take part in a one-on-one session or would like **more information, please contact De-Anne Price at DPI in Horsham on (03) 5362 2111.**

2009 Science and Innovation Awards for Young People in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Calling all young innovators, this one is for you...

- Do you have an innovative idea that will boost Australia's rural industries?
- Do you need up to \$50 000 to make your idea reality?
- Do you want to kick start your career and build professional networks?
- Do you want media training to help promote your ideas?

If so, then apply for the 2009 Science and Innovation Awards now! The awards are open to young people aged 18 to 35 who want to make a real difference to Australia's rural industries. Applications close 5 pm Friday 3 July 2009. For more information and to download an application form, visit

www.daff.gov.au/scienceawards or call the Science Awards Manager on 02 6272 5039.

How Wet is Your Soil?

Joint research work conducted by CSIRO and Department of Primary Industries (DPI) staff has been carried out across various soil types in the Wimmera trying to determine drained upper limit (DUL) and crop lower limit (CLL) and relating this to crop yield and water use efficiency (WUE).

DUL is the amount of water that a soil is able to hold after drainage has ceased. It is the water held against gravity and may be removed by plants, crops or weeds or through direct evaporation.

CLL measures the extent to which a particular crop can extract water from a particular soil type.

DPI Healthy Soils Officer Bernard Noonan said soil moisture is a very complex issue as soil type and texture affect water storage capacity and crops vary in their ability to extract water from a given soil.

Plants can extract water much easier from lighter, sandier soils. Clay soils hold onto the water much more tightly and require more rainfall to store enough water to have water that is available to plants.

Groundcover has an effect on soil water storage by reducing evaporation, and high bulk density (compacted) soils have limited infiltration, all having an effect on plant available water capacity (PAWC).

Knowing the PAWC allows the farmer or researcher to place in context the amount of water stored prior to sowing a particular crop, this enables more realistic setting of yield targets and fertiliser strategies.

An example of a rainfall event, such as last week around Anzac day on a dry grey cracking clay that has zero moisture in the top 10cm is; 20mm of rainfall will penetrate about 10cm.

That same 20mm of rain on a lighter/sandy soil will penetrate about 18cm and will not evaporate as quickly, especially with good ground cover and most of it will be plant available.

This means that light falls of rain on clay soils may evaporate more easily because the water is held close to the surface.

For more information, please contact Bernard Noonan at Department of Primary Industries in Horsham on (03) 5362 2111.

FarmReady Reimbursement Grants

Climate Change - everyone's talking about it but are you FarmReady?

FarmReady has hit the ground running with **145 registered courses from 65 training providers** now available. Additional courses are on the way.

More than 1000 primary producers have received FarmReady support to attend training since February. Eligible fishers, farmers, foresters, eligible family members and management staff could all receive a reimbursement grant of up to \$1500 each financial year to attend FarmReady endorsed training. FarmReady Reimbursement Grants are also available to eligible Indigenous land managers.

FarmReady, a part of the Australian Government's Australia's Farming Future initiative, offers support to primary producers to learn skills and strategies to help combat the impacts of climate change. FarmReady focuses on issues such as understanding the implications of climate change, whole-farm planning and business and risk management.

To see what courses are available, confirm that you are eligible and claim your reimbursement, visit www.farmready.gov.au or phone **1800 087 670**.

Leader Launches Clips

A new alternative for controlling flystrike is now on the market in time for the 2009 lambing season. Leader Products have been licensed by AWI to produce the Anti-flystrike Clips, which are now available through Leader Products and accredited contractors.

The management of flystrike requires a systems approach, tapping in to all the available tools such as crutching, jetting, pasture management and monitoring.

The 2009 clips are made from conventional polypropylene (plastic) and can be removed between 8 and 14 days after application. Clips can be re-used at least once, thereby significantly reducing the cost per lamb.

R&D continues to develop a "bio-degradable" clip. The first prototypes were field-tested in 2008, with a number of improvements adopted for testing on 2009 drop lambs. It is hoped that a biodegradable clip will be on the market in 2010.

AWEX CEO Mark Grave said "Wool from sheep treated with clips is eligible to be declared as 'Non-Mulesed' (NM) on the National Wool Declaration (NWD). If clips are applied to all lambs on a property, and the grower intends to continue this as a routine practice, then the wool from other sheep (eg ewes previously mulesed) on the property are eligible to be declared as 'Ceased Mulesing' (CM) on the NWD.

Clips are simple technology and will be suitable for some, but not all producers and sheep. AWI encourages woolgrowers to see if they are effective on their sheep in their environment.

Treating sheep with clips requires skill. Leader Products requires the use of contractors who have been accredited to apply them correctly.

Leader Products in conjunction with the Livestock Contractors Association will be conducting training courses for people who want to become accredited Clip operators.

For Clip orders, contractor and training details, Leader Products can be contacted on (03) 9308 2355 or www.leaderproducts.com.au

'Typical' Worm Control Costed

The case for sheep producers to improve their worm management procedures has just become a lot stronger. New work funded by the Sheep CRC has found a host of long-term productivity and profitability benefits come from adopting integrated approaches. While the study centres on the New England area of NSW, the implications are national.

Visit the CRC website and read the full news release

20 Years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you did **not** do than by the things you did do -
Mark Twain

Have a good weekend, Annette
BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Administrator