

BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Newsflash – 28/8/09

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

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[BWBL Phone Seminar - Annual Weed Control & Animal Health Issues](#)

WHEN: Monday 7th September 2009 at 1.00pm BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB

WHO: Andrew Speirs consultant from Mike Stephens & Associates and Robert Suter, Sheep Disease Project Manager with DPI.

Some of the annual weeds have become increasingly dominant after years of short seasons - eg broadleaves, silver and barley grass. Should they be controlled now? Is it too late? Will you be left with less feed and more bare ground over summer? Andrew Speirs, agronomist with Mike Stephens & Associates will discuss how to decide whether some control can be done now and if so what the options are.

Hypocalcaemia or pregnancy toxaemia - which is it? Whilst it may be too late for many flocks - knowing what deficiencies are will help with future prevention at lambing. Robert Suter, Sheep Disease Project Manager with DPI will discuss how to diagnose the two diseases. Buying clostridial disease vaccine now days seems a bit like buying milk - so many options - with cheesy gland, selenium and/or B12? How do you decide - or does the retailer tell you what you want?

To participate in the phone seminar Register by calling 5355 0531

[Woolgrower Forum - the Business of Selling Wool](#)

WHEN: Monday 7th September at 6.30pm to 8.30pm

WHERE: National Wool Museum, Geelong

Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) invites you to join CEO Brenda McGahan and European wool processor and AWI Director, Laurence Modiano, as they outline the latest news on the global demand for Australian wool the challenges and great opportunities for the industry.

This is your opportunity to hear first hand the new way forward.

- The outlook for wool and sentiment along the global supply chain
- New initiatives to sell wool to the world, with a self funding global sales network
- A new research and investment focus in areas such as wool comfort and on-farm priorities of flies, wild dogs, lice and worms.

RSVP by calling the AWI Helpline on 1800 070 099 - light refreshments will be available at the conclusion of the forum.

Report Lamb and Kid Losses to DPI

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is encouraging producers in Western Victoria to report lamb and kid deaths to their local DPI Animal Health staff.

Each year the Victorian sheep and goat industry faces significant productivity and economical losses due to lamb and kid mortality.

The Lamb and Kid Mortality Project aims to improve understanding of the causes of lamb and kid mortality and in turn increase farm productivity and profitability. It is focussed on determining the cause of mortality in lambs and kids aged between two weeks and weaning.

Investigations are free of charge and each producer who takes part in the project will be notified of the results.

The implementation of this surveillance project will deliver a range of economic and social benefits to the industry and community, including:

- Decreased cost of production;
- Better detection and containment of emerging and exotic diseases;
- Improved access to new markets and export growth;
- A secure food chain to ensure quality and confidence; and
- Improved detection and management of endemic disease.

Farmers interested in finding out more about the cause of lamb and kid mortality on their property should contact their local DPI Animal Health Staff or call 136 186.

Merino Wool Enhances the Performance of Cotton Yarns

A major cotton apparel manufacturer has introduced Australian Merino wool into a range of cotton yarns to give its trans-seasonal garments a softer and more luxurious feel.

The new series of yarns, developed by the Hong Kong-based Esquel Group with Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) support, is indicative of a trend among cotton apparel manufacturers to give their garments a more comfortable feel by using cotton/Merino wool blends instead of 100 per cent cotton.

By blending Australian Merino wool with cotton, AWI and Esquel have created yarns that are softer to touch and more comfortable to wear than 100 per cent cotton. The yarns are also lighter in weight and have more breathability, more elasticity and better UV protection.

Esquel has blended Merino wool grown in Australia with its own extra long staple (ELS) cotton grown in China to create 90/10, 80/20, 70/30 and 45/55 cotton/wool blend yarns, known as Comerino™.

AWI's general manager key accounts and innovation Jimmy Jackson says: 'By combining Merino wool with cotton, Esquel has created a softer yarn with a better hand-feel, which is also easy care.'

Jimmy Jackson says the launch of the Comerino™ yarns this year is particularly significant because 2009 is the United Nations International Year of Natural Fibres.

'The blending of Merino wool and cotton in the Comerino™ range is yet another textile platform where Australian Merino wool demonstrates its reputation as one of the world's most versatile and technically dynamic natural fibres.'

Esquel and AWI are launching the Comerino™ range this week at the Spin Expo trade show (20-22 July) in New York. 'The yarns are being strategically unveiled at Spin Expo in New York to target buyers throughout the lucrative Americas region,' says Jimmy Jackson.

'Spin Expo is a mecca for leading knitwear designers, product developers, textile executives, retailers and merchandisers from across the USA, Canada, Central and South America.'

The Esquel Group is one of the world's leading producers of premium cotton apparel. Based in Hong Kong with production facilities in China, Malaysia, Vietnam, Mauritius and Sri Lanka, the group manufactures for some of the world's best known brands, including Tommy Hilfiger, Hugo Boss, Nike and major retailers such as Marks & Spencer.

Site Advisory Group Members for Information Nucleus Flocks

Call for expressions of interest. The Sheep CRC is running its key 'Information Nucleus Program' on eight research sites covering the main sheep producing environments in Australia. There is intensive collection of physical production and DNA information from sheep to develop new genetic outcomes for the industry. The Sheep CRC is calling for expressions of interest from sheep producers or breeders who are keen to serve on an Information Nucleus industry advisory group for the Information Nucleus Flock in their region. Three producers/breeders will be appointed to each advisory group to assist the site management team and to provide a mechanism for liaison with leading breeders and producers in the region. The advisory group will hold three or four half day meetings each year at their Information Nucleus site to review the annual management program for the flock and discuss dissemination of results most appropriate for the local sheep industry. The Sheep CRC will contribute to costs of attending meetings and site visits. The terms of reference for this site advisory group are to

- * Represent and communicate the views and requirements of the wider sheep industry to the Sheep CRC in relation to operation and management of the site
- * Act as a sounding board for site management decisions (feed, pastures, animal health etc)
- * Provide advice on extension, training needs and opportunities and on the focus and structure of site open days
- * Help communicate to the industry results from the Information Nucleus and support improved adoption of Information Nucleus and sheep CRC outcomes by the sheep industry

Enquiries about the site advisory groups can be made through the supervising scientists for each site:
Hamilton and Rutherglen, VIC:

Ralph Behrendt - ralph.behrendt@dpi.vic.gov.au - ph 03 5573 0979 - fax 03 5571 1523 - mob 0407506519

Please send your expression of interest, along with details of your farming operation, affiliations and experiences to the supervising scientist corresponding to your local site.

Electric Car Plan

Canberra will become the first Australian city and only the third in the world to support electric cars, with an international company pledging to establish recharge points in the capital's homes, workplaces and shopping centres within three years.

Sustainable transport company Better Place, which plans to facilitate electric car travel across the world through an ambitious multi-billion dollar scheme, announced yesterday it had chosen Canberra as the starting point of the technology's roll-out in Australia.

The Californian company said Jerusalem and Copenhagen would be the only cities in the world to have the electric car network in place before Canberra.

Former Victorian state MP and chief executive of Better Place's Australian arm Evan Thornley said the company would begin work on establishing plug-in points and automated battery "swap 'n' go" across Canberra in 2011, with completion of a basic network within 12 months.

From the outset there would be sufficient infrastructure in place to accommodate the early uptake of electric vehicles.

"We'll install enough public plug-in points on day one so that the first driver feels they have access to the plug-in points, but more importantly put one in their home and work," Mr Thornley said.

He said Canberra had been chosen as the starting point in Australia because of its size, high motor vehicle use, and because it had the highest proportion of garage parking and two-car households.

Evaluation of WormBoss

A couple of weeks ago an on-line survey for the evaluation of WormBoss was launched.

BWBL encourages you our members to respond to the survey.

It is on the WormBoss website home page www.wormboss.com.au and is quick and easy to do.

With a more than average response rate designers of the site will be able to refine and improve WormBoss to better meet user needs and expectations.

Australian users have been using the site at between 1500 and 2000 Australian users per month and they visit (on average) for around 5 minutes.

Spring: A Time for Shearing and Sheep Lice

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is advising all sheep producers to be on alert and monitor their sheep for the presence of sheep body lice (*Bovicola ovis*) this shearing season.

Sheep lice cause significant cost to Victorian sheep producers. A study in 1995 estimated that lice cost the Australian wool industry \$169 million annually which includes \$75 million in treatment costs. Sheep louse is a cream coloured insect about the size of a grain of sand that is found in the wool close to the skin where they feed on dead skin, secretions and bacteria normally found near the skins surface.

Signs that could indicate sheep being infested with lice include rubbing, biting and scratching and sheep will sometimes have obvious fleece derangement. It's important to confirm that the problem is sheep lice before treatment as other factors can cause sheep to rub.

All suspect sheep should be checked prior to shearing by parting the wool a number of times, at least ten partings on each side of the sheep, moving down the neck and along the side to the thigh. Effective eradication requires appropriate insecticide treatment of all sheep offshears over a short period, followed by management to prevent re-contamination.

Control measures in long wool sheep may be needed between shearing to reduce fleece damage, but these applications will not completely eradicate the lice infestation. Some lice management operations such as repairs to boundary fences, timing of shearing and use of private dip contractors, have greater success when completed in collaboration with neighbouring properties.

The choice of lousicide has become more difficult as sheep lice seem to have developed resistance to some traditional products and several reliable products are no longer available. Some chemicals used in the past were diazinon based products, but since May 2009 these are no longer able to be used for jetting or dipping unless the user has a valid permit from the APVMA for cage dipping.

Sale of lousy sheep at public sale yards is illegal under the Livestock Disease Control Act but other options include sale of lousy sheep direct to abattoirs for slaughter or humane destruction on-farm.

For further information or assistance to develop lice eradication programs or lice prevention strategies please contact your local DPI Animal Health staff or contact DPI Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

The Role of Animal Health Officers at Livestock Sales

You may have noticed the presence of Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Animal Health Officers at your local saleyards. Animal Health Officers play an important role in protecting the quality and safety of livestock. But what role do they play at livestock sales?

Animal Health Officers take on the role of livestock inspectors when attending a saleyard and work under four different legislative Acts. These are the *Livestock Disease Control Act 1994* (LDCA), *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* (POCTA), *Stock (Seller Liability and Declarations) Act 1993* and the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992*.

Animal Health Officers attend saleyards to ensure people are complying with these Acts and typically look out for:

- Diseased livestock such as lousy sheep and eye cancer cows.
- Transporting of unfit livestock; heavily pregnant ewes, animals in weak condition or unable to weight bear on all legs for example.
- National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) tagging or absence of tags.
- National Vendor Declarations and the correct use of these documents.
- Declarations of any chemical exposure to livestock, for example recent drenching, Hormonal Growth Promotants (HGP) and observation and declaration of withholding periods of these chemicals.

By working with local stock agents, saleyard staff, transport operators and buying and selling vendors, DPI Animal Health Officers help ensure the risk of spreading disease is minimised and the traceability of livestock is improved. Sometimes our livestock industries also receive adverse publicity. Animal Health Officers play an important role in making sure members of the community have no reason to be concerned about the welfare of animals when they are presented at saleyards. So, if you see a DPI Animal Health Officer when next visiting your local saleyards, don't hesitate to ask them questions.

Your local animal health officer for the Swan Hill, Ouyen, Kerang, Wycheproof and Yelta saleyards is Amy Wilkinson based at the DPI office in Swan Hill.

Other officers within the North West region include Kate Ferrier at Horsham, Rebecca Keeley, Jessica Hartland and Stacey Anderson at Bendigo and Deb Morrison at Kyneton.
To contact your local Animal Health Staff please call 136 186 or phone your local DPI office.

7th Australian Controlled Traffic Farming Conference

WHAT: Emissions, Environment, Energy and Economy - cropping farms and rural communities

WHEN: 7TH and 8th September 2009

WHERE: Canberra ACT

COST: Various, depending on options selected

The Australian Controlled Traffic Farming Association's aim is to improve the profitability and sustainability of Australian agriculture through the promotion and support of controlled traffic farming systems.

This year's conference will demonstrate how improved cropping systems can reduce environmental and climate change impacts, invigorate rural communities and economies, and apply current and future technologies for the spatial information, computer and internet age in rural Australia

Contact Sally Brown by email sally.brown@uq.net.au for more information

9th International Sheep and Wool Congress

The 9th International Sheep & Wool Congress will be held in Sydney from Wednesday 7 April to Friday 9 April. The event will coincide with the Sydney Royal Easter show and associated sheep and wool events; and the Australian Wool Fashion Awards (sponsored by AWI). This will be the second time that the Congress has been held in Australia, the first being the inaugural Congress held in Tasmania in 1989.

The Congress differs from the World Merino Conference to be held in Rambouillet in May (in parallel with the IWTO Congress) in that it includes sheep breeds other than Merino.

For those interested in the Congress, more details can be obtained from

sheepandwool@quadrantaustralia.com or www.worldsheepandwoolcongress.com.

And for your weekend reading from the Animal Science Sept edition

Genetic parameters for ewe rearing performance

J. M. Everett-Hincks and N. G. Cullen - J. Anim Sci. 2009;87 2753-2758

<http://jas.fass.org/cgi/content/abstract/87/9/2753?etoc>

Phenotypic aspects of lamb survival in Australian Merino sheep

S. Hatcher, K. D. Atkins, and E. Safari - J. Anim Sci. 2009;87 2781-2790 Open Access

<http://jas.fass.org/cgi/content/abstract/87/9/2781?etoc>

Intake, digestibility, and nitrogen retention by sheep supplemented with warm-season legume haylages or soybean meal

J. L. Foster, A. T. Adesogan, J. N. Carter, A. R. Blount, R. O. Myer, and S. C. Phatak - J. Anim Sci. 2009;87 2899-2905

<http://jas.fass.org/cgi/content/abstract/87/9/2899?etoc>

Have a good weekend, Annette

BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Administrator