

## **BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Newsflash – 11/9/09**

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

An audio copy of the BWBL recent phone seminar "Control of Annual Weeds and Animal Health Issues" has been uploaded onto the BWBL Website [www.bestwoolbestlamb.com](http://www.bestwoolbestlamb.com) under Events then Phone Seminars - if you missed the seminar, try the website.

In this edition you will find

- [1. Lamb Branding Requirements](#)
- [2. NLIS \(Sheep & Goats\) Changes](#)
- [3. Towards Soil Health](#)
- [4. Cost of Production Calculator](#)
- [5. EverGraze](#)
- [6. Do You Know Victoria's Most Innovative Farmer?](#)
- [7. Review Recommends Business Improvements for AWI](#)
- [8. Effective from 9<sup>th</sup> November 2009](#)

### **Lamb Branding Requirements**

Lamb branding requirements within the Victorian *Meat Industry Regulations (2005)* will sunset on 16 June 2010. This means that after that date, new arrangements need to be in place to assist industry with ensuring both the integrity and marketing of Victorian lamb. More information, including how to participate in the process to develop appropriate arrangements, can be found in the 'Lamb Description and Identification Requirements - Options Paper' which can be found on the Department of Primary Industries website <http://new.dpi.vic.gov.au/home> then typing 'lamb branding' in the search box.

**Information can also be obtained by contacting Sue Pepper - [susan.pepper@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:susan.pepper@dpi.vic.gov.au)**

### **NLIS (Sheep & Goats) Changes** *Peter Corbet DPI Geelong*

Changes have recently been announced to the operation of the NLIS (Sheep & Goats). These changes are necessary because of the consequences for Australia's livestock industries associated with the inability of authorities to contain and promptly eradicate a major disease incursion involving sheep and/or goats in the future.

Mob-based movement recording for saleyard transactions involving sheep and goats started in Victoria on 1 July 2009. A requirement to register mob based movement information on the NLIS database is expected to be introduced nationally for movements involving abattoirs and export depots, as well as for property to property movements, during 2010.

In summary, mob based movement recording involves the registration of basic information such as the PIC of consignment, the destination PIC and the number of head on the NLIS database for each traded lot. Once this information is recorded on the NLIS database, it can be quickly retrieved in a disease emergency, avoiding the delays associated with attempting to locate paper based National Vendor Declaration (NVD) forms and associated movement records.

As part of mob based movement recording legislation, the consignor must now provide the person receiving his/her sheep/goats with a fully completed and correct NVD on which is recorded the PIC of dispatch. For

non-vendor bred sheep/goats, where the consignor has not attached pink post-breeder tags, the NVD must also list the PICs printed on all tags attached by previous owners.

**For further information on NLIS visit [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/nlis](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/nlis) or phone NLIS Helpline on 1800678 779**

### **Towards Soil Health**

A website designed to help growers manage their soil better can be accessed at

[www.soilhealthknowledge.com.au](http://www.soilhealthknowledge.com.au)

The Soil Health Knowledge Bank, developed as part of the Healthy Soils for Sustainable Farms program, contains an overview of current soil health knowledge, lists characteristics of healthy soils and 'habits' of farmers with healthy soil. It also provides tools to assess soil condition and a diagnostic tree for decisions impacting on soil health.

### **Cost of Production Calculator**

Making More from Sheep's new cost of production (CoP) calculator assists producers to measure their enterprise's performance and find areas where they can improve their on-farm efficiencies.

CoP is a key element affecting a sheep enterprise's profitability. Calculating it is an important step in understanding a flock's performance and makes a solid starting point to initiate improvements on farm.

The calculator has been designed as a 'do-it yourself tool' and is easy to operated either through a hard copy version or an online electronic adaptation.

**For information about CoP and the Making More from Sheep Manual call the AWI Helpline 1800 070 099**

### **EverGraze**

1. Bus trip to Holbrook Field Day - 8<sup>th</sup> October - the buses will visit the alternative fertiliser trial sites and the EverGraze field day in Holbrook. See integrated management of phalaris and hill country in action, comparison of methods for filling the gaps with sub clover and sorting out the good alternative fertilisers from the snake oils. Register for the bus trip with Kate Sargeant on [kate.sargeant@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:kate.sargeant@dpi.vic.gov.au)

2. Managing Steep Hills with Wisdom, Wire and Water field days at Strath Creek and Creightons Creek - 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> October. Come and see the latest at these sites with successful hilltop establishment of phalaris at Creightons Creek and hill country management of natives in full swing at Strath Creek. David Tongway is going to talk about soil movement and assessing the health of your farm on both days.

Register your interest in these field days with Ian McClaren at [ianmcclaren@bordnet.com.au](mailto:ianmcclaren@bordnet.com.au)

3. Supporting Site Field Days. Topics on the day will include:

- Cost of establishing perennial pastures - what's the payback period, and do they pay? Use of the supporting sites as real examples.
- Native pasture and weed ID activity - test out your skills and learn from others.
- The results are in - See whether the management techniques used on the supporting sites is making a difference to production and perennial grass persistence.

Taminick - 19th October, Benambra - 10th November, Tallangatta Valley - 17th November, Cudgewa - 20th November, Murrumbidgee - Date TBC, Warrenbayne - Date TBC

Register your interest for the supporting site field days with Alison Desmond - [alison.desmond@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:alison.desmond@dpi.vic.gov.au)

### **Do You Know Victoria's Most Innovative Farmer?**

Farmers and rural innovators alike have the opportunity to win a cash prize of \$10,000 to further the development of their winning initiative.

The Hugh McKay Future Farming Award is awarded to a Victorian primary producer or rural resident, or team that can demonstrate practical adoption and championing of an innovative solution to an environmental, social or economic issue affecting Victoria's primary industries, communities or environment.

The Hugh McKay Future Farming Award is one of four Department of Primary Industries' (DPI) Science Awards now open for nominations. Previous recipient of the Hugh McKay award Jenny O'Sullivan, of Tarwin Lower in Gippsland won the award for the development of an environmental management system that underpins the beef brand, Enviromeat, resulting in improved on-farm environmental practices and value adding to meat products.

Nominations were also being sought for the Nancy Millis Postgraduate Award. The Nancy Millis Award for the winning graduate provides a study allowance over three years to undertake their PhD studies, worth over \$21,000. Science graduate students keen to further their scientific careers through postgraduate research in agriculture, biology, natural resources management, environmental science or earth sciences, are encouraged to apply.

Nominations for the 2009 Science Awards close on Friday, September 25 and will be presented at an official ceremony to be held in Melbourne in November 2009.

**For more information on the 2009 DPI Science Awards and how to nominate please visit the awards page at [www.dpi.vic.gov.au](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au) or email [science.awards@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:science.awards@dpi.vic.gov.au).**

### [Review Recommends Business Improvements for AWI](#) *Marius Cuming AWI Media*

An independent review of Australian Wool Innovation's performance over the last three years (1 July 2006 to June 2009) has reaffirmed what many Australian woolgrowers already knew: the wool industry's marketing, research and development organisation has room for improvement.

The review is a formal obligation under the Statutory Funding Agreement (SFA) with the Australian Government. It is part of a three-year process in the lead up to WoolPoll, where AWI shareholders decide on the company's future level of funding.

Arche Consulting conducted the review and believes AWI could be more effective in the areas of strategic planning, governance, consultation and the measurement of performance.

After conducting a comprehensive line by line assessment of the company since December last year, current AWI directors have come to many of the same conclusions. The new board and management acknowledge the governance framework of the company and its subsidiaries has been inadequate over the past three years. This has resulted in an inability to set meaningful targets and objectives and to comprehensively assess the company's performance and outcomes against those objectives.

Recognising these deficiencies, present directors have made major changes to the systems within the business this year. In January, the AWI board commissioned experienced business manager and former AWI director Ken Boundy to report on the structure of the company. This was followed by the appointment of Brenda McGahan to increase marketing activities and address the funding shortfall of AWI.

In addition to an increase in marketing activity in key markets, funded by a reduction in overhead costs, on and off farm R+D have been integrated to allow a better flow of market signals.

Under Brenda McGahan's new Strategic and Operational Plan, many of the issues raised in the Review of Performance have been or are being addressed. For example, a six-monthly review of research projects. Tendering of business to increase competition and reduce costs. Project assessments have been improved and the benefits of initiatives such as the Japanese Marketing Program are now clearly outlined. The overall result is a proactive three-year R&D and extension program at AWI which is closely aligned with Australian Government research priorities.

The risk management consultancy, Risk Management Partners, has been contracted to review and revise AWI's Fraud and Risk Plans.

The Board has engaged board performance advisors, Cameron Ralph, to work with it on key issues of corporate governance and to implement an improved governance framework.

The new board and management of AWI acknowledge that over the period of the review there had been inadequate consultation with shareholders and other key industry groups when determining strategy and direction for the company. The board has responded to this by significantly increasing AWI's communication with woolgrowers. So far this year the AWI CEO, chairman, directors or executives have attended close to 60 woolgrower and wool industry functions in 6 months. At these field days, shows, expos, conferences and forums AWI has listened to the views of the industry it serves.

In another example of this, next week AWI CEO Brenda McGahan will be joined by board member and topmaker Laurence Modiano at woolgrower meetings in WA, SA, Victoria and Tasmania to discuss the business. For more information visit [www.wool.com/events](http://www.wool.com/events). AWI's revamped website also allows feedback. The report states AWI has met its obligations through the SFA through the development and provision of plans and reports as well as regular meetings between AWI and officials of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

The review team also stated some business partners had reported an improved relationship with AWI since a more pragmatic and simpler approach to selling more wool had been adopted this year.

### Effective from 9<sup>th</sup> November 2009

From November 2009, there will be some changes to Victoria's road safety rules. The changes include amendments to the rules for using mobile phones and visual display units. Using a mobile phone or a visual display unit as you drive is distracting and creates dangerous situations that could be fatal. The risk of being involved in a crash increases by as much as four times, when using a mobile phone as you drive, and if you are texting the risk of crashing increases to 23 times.

**Using a mobile phone** to make or receive a phone call while driving is prohibited except if the phone is secured in a commercially designed holder fixed to the vehicle OR can be operated by the driver without touching any part of the phone. All other functions (including video calls, texting and emailing) are prohibited. Holding the phone (whether or not engaged in a phone call) is also prohibited. Holding includes resting the mobile on the driver's lap.

Learner and P1 drivers, are not permitted to use a mobile phone at all while driving.

**Visual display units** A driver must not drive a vehicle that has a television receiver or a visual display unit operating if any part of the screen is visible to the driver or is likely to distract another driver. A driver can use a driver's aid (such as a navigation device) but it must be an integrated part of the vehicle design, or secured in a commercially designed holder, which is fixed to the vehicle.

**Exemptions:** The rule relating to securing visual display units does not apply to motorcycles.

**What you have to do:** Don't use your mobile phone or your drivers aid when you are driving, unless it is within a commercially designed holder fixed to your vehicle.

And for some weekend surfing on the web try the CRC Invasive Animals website [www.invasiveanimals.com](http://www.invasiveanimals.com)

Have a good weekend, Annette  
BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Administrator