

BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Newsflash – 12/3/2010

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

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[Phone Seminar - Interpreting Soil Tests - Wednesday March 17](#)

ON day Wednesday 17th March 2010 at 1.00pm BWBL will host a phone seminar about interpreting soil tests, with Jim Shovelton, agronomist with Mike Stephens & Associates with a 10 minute around the state brief report on flock health updates and alerts at the end of the session.

The next BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB phone conference will run through how to interpret a soil test to identify limitations for plant growth to help make the most cost effective decisions on topdressing pastures. It will cover how to identify whether the main nutrients of phosphorus, potassium and sulphur are limiting, whether responses will be limited by soil problems like acidity, salinity or soil structure. How do you use measures of phosphorus buffering index, organic carbon and cation exchange capacity?

Flock Health updates and alerts from around the state will also be heard at the end of the session - there will a brief report from David Rendell from David Rendell & Associates, Hamilton, Grant Richards from Para-Site Diagnostic Services, Benalla and Robert Suter, Project Leader of Disease Surveillance - Sheep, with DPI.

To participate in the phone seminar register by calling 5355 0531 OR reply to this email

[New BWBL Group - Expressions of Interest](#)

Expressions of interest are currently being sort by producers in the Kyneton, Redesdale and Heathcote areas who would be interested in joining a new BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB group based in the region. **For more information please contact Alistair Calder, Avington Stud Sidonia on 0427 260 177, or Chris Cordiner, DPI Bendigo on 0427 105 298.**

BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB groups aim to improve enterprise profitability and environmental awareness whilst developing relationships within the agricultural and greater communities.

Group members attend regular meetings and receive newsletters as well as invitations to other relevant activities including an annual conference. Meetings are focussed on increasing knowledge and communicating research and development.

Membership is open to all sheep producers who wish to increase their own knowledge whilst bolstering networks within the industry.

EverGraze - Profitable Perennial Pastures

WHEN: Tuesday 23rd March 2010 at 9.30am to 4.00pm

WHERE: Gum San Chinese Heritage Centre - Great Hall, 31 Lambert St (Western Hwy), Ararat

Guest speakers include:

- Fiona Robertson - DPI Hamilton - Role of soil carbon in productive pasture systems
- Lisa Warn - McKinnon Group - Phalaris pasture management and Making the most of phalaris
- Michael Friend - Charles Sturt University - Improving reproductive performance
- Kim Virgona - Charles Sturt University - Lessons from pasture performance in central NSW and Perennial mix or monoculture
- Andrew Speirs - MS&A - Aluminium toxicity in phalaris and other perennials and Why we really need lime to establish phalaris
- Tim Leeming - Farmer & consultant from Balmoral - Putting it on farm

Contact Rob Shea on 5352 1357 or 0438 521 357 to register by Friday 19th March

Sheep Health and Lice Day

Join Animal Health Consultant Richard Keys at a sheep health and lice day. Lice control options, eradication and resistance will be highlights of the day. The following topics will be discussed:

- Diazinon and chemical handling update
- Animal health company representatives will attend
- Weed identification and livestock toxicities
- Please bring weeds for identification purposes in a sealed bag
- Nutrition on pre lambing and weaning
- Electronic NLIS identification technology update

WHEN: Wednesday March 24 at 9.45am to 3.00pm

WHERE: Serpentine Football Oval

COST: Free - a BBQ lunch will be provided

RSVP: by March 19 to Rachael Holmes on 5430 4430

Running a High Profit Prime Lamb Flock - Seminar

WHEN: Tuesday 30th March 2010 at 9.00am

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 clients - \$88.00 per person (non clients)

Many producers are changing their farm enterprise mix, especially in view of high lamb and sheep meat prices. Interest in change from merinos has increased with the potential withdrawal of mulesing too. The trend to expanding lamb production is increasing, but like with all enterprises, benchmarking shows enormous variation in productivity and profitability. The lamb industry is no exception to this. For many producers, changing from wool production is unfamiliar territory and a good wool enterprise does not necessarily translate to a profitable lamb enterprise. Likewise, many long term prime lamb producers can fine tune their existing business to become more profitable. Changes to enterprise structure can be especially challenging with high replacement ewe prices. The seminar covers a range of important issues relating directly to prime lamb production. This includes examining the important characteristics of different prime lamb enterprises, providing information on the productivity of different breeds many producers are interested in. The seminar will provide unbiased and objective information that should allow you to make better informed decisions to improve the profitability of your wool and prime lamb enterprises.

Contact Pam Leslie on 9731 2225 to enquire and to register for this seminar

National Wool Declaration

AWEX announced during the week that the review process for the National Wool Declaration (NWD) for mulesing and chemical usage status has been finalised and signed off by the AWEX Board.

The revised form:

- Uses the definition mulesing that is expected to be adopted by Animal Health Australia, i.e. *"The removal of skin in the breech and / or tail of a sheep using mulesing shears."*
- Some minor modifications to the layout and simplification of other definitions.

The new version (NWD V3.0) will be released this month.

Sheep CRC Updates

WHEN: **Tuesday 23rd March** at Raffety's, 55 Nun St, Benalla from 8.30am to 3.30pm

Thursday 25th March at Casterton Golf Club, Penola Rd, Casterton from 8.30am to 3.30pm

The Sheep CRC updates will feature Sheep CRC research results and information that can be applied on farm now, as well as highlight the Sheep CRC's new opportunities for further training and information.

With the Sheep CRC halfway through its seven year term, there are new results, information and practices for both lamb and wool producers as well as ram breeders.

This covers:

- Optimising both reproduction and lifetime production from your ewes
- Winning the battles against the sheep industry's two greatest problems - worms and blowflies
- Producing lamb and sheep meat for increasingly discerning consumers interested in taste and nutritional qualities, while maintaining yield
- Wool production for comfort and colour
- Integrating the array of new and improved genetic tools into your selection program - including new ASBV's and indexes, and applying the knowledge on the interactions between various traits, in particular between meat, wool, reproduction and disease resistance.

Making the Most out of Animal Manures and Organic Wastes

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) in partnership with Landcare groups and councils are encouraging North-East and Goulburn Valley farmers and farming advisers to attend one of the free workshops on alternative fertilising methods this month.

Farmers are facing increasing fertiliser prices and should look at alternative inputs for their grazing and cropping systems. Organic wastes and animal manures are produced in large quantities in Australia's cropping and pasture regions and they contain nutrients, water and organic carbon that have the potential to contribute to improved soil health and plant nutrition in our farming systems. However, there is uncertainty surrounding the quality and consistency of material, agronomic and soil conditioning benefits, as well as potential environmental and health risks associated with organic wastes, and these workshops address all these issues.

The series of free workshops will run from 10am to 4pm, with lunch, morning and afternoon tea provided, at the following locations:

- Tuesday, March 16 - Kiewa Bowls Club
- Wednesday, March 17 - Savoy Club Myrtleford
- Thursday, March 18 - Senior Citizens Hall, Rutherglen
- Friday March, 19 - DPI Benalla Centre
- Saturday, March 20 - Kilmore Library

If you would like further information or to register for one of the workshops please **RSVP by contacting Kristy Youman, DPI Wodonga (02) 6043 7968 or kristy.youman@dpi.vic.gov.au**.

Phrases of Wisdom - Age is a very high price to pay for maturity.

Have a good weekend, Annette
BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Administrator