

## **BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Newsflash – 29/1/2010**

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

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In this edition you will find:

[1. Sheep CRC Updates](#)

[2. Making More from Sheep](#)

[3. Nifty Navigation – Controlled Traffic & GPS](#)

[4. Realising the Potential of Summer Active Tall Fescue – Seminar](#)

[5. Applications are Now Open for The Churchill Fellowship](#)

[6. Shelter Study for Reduced Lamb Mortality – Project](#)

[7. New ASBV for Sheep Wrinkle](#)

[8. Heat Stress](#)

### [Sheep CRC Updates](#)

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

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> 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 More from Sheep](#)

**WHEN:** Wednesday 17 Feb at 5.00pm

**WHERE:** Maryborough Highland Society, Maryborough

The Maryborough Regional BWBL group is hosting an open meeting with the theme 'Making more from sheep' with guest speaker John Webb-Ware from the Melbourne University, Veterinary School, McKinnon Project. The late afternoon meeting will start at 5pm on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> Feb at the Maryborough Highland Society in Maryborough. John will present information on the profitability of sheep enterprise alternatives. This will be followed by dinner and further discussions on the topic of increasing sheep profitability. Non members are invited to this meeting. Cost for non-members is \$20 plus the meal.

Contact Kieran Ransom at DPI Bendigo 54 304 451 to register your interest.

### [Nifty Navigation – Controlled Traffic & GPS](#)

WHEN: Wednesday 10 February

TIME: 4.30pm to 9.00pm

WHERE: Cross Roads Fire Station, Eurambeen Streatham Rd, Beaufort – *Dinner provided*

Find out about the latest in satellite navigation, satellite navigation options for cropping and GPSnet.

Guest speakers will be Martin Hale from DSE, Andrew Whitlock from Whitlock Ag Services and Pat Milliar local producer.

**Register by Friday 5 February with the Pyrenees Shire on 5349 1100**

### [Realising the Potential of Summer Active Tall Fescue – Seminar](#)

WHEN: 9.30am to 3pm, Friday, February 5, 2010

WHERE: Department of Primary Industries, Hamilton

Capable of high growth rates, tall fescue is also persistent, can produce large amounts of high quality feed and persists well into the summer period, so why aren't more Australian farmers growing it?

Tall fescue is the second most commonly sown temperate perennial pasture grass in the world after perennial ryegrass. Summer-active tall fescue is extremely tolerant of hot conditions and tolerates water logging and mild salinity. International speaker Gavin Milne, PGG Seeds, will give the keynote address at the tall fescue seminar to be held on February 5. He will share experiences gained from a lifetime researching, understanding and introducing the world to tall fescue.

Mr Milne will also join a panel of experts to answer questions on where summer-active tall fescue fits into a grazing system

and how to use it to increase pasture production and flexibility.

"If you have high rainfall (700 mm or above) and heavy soils, summer-active tall fescue can provide a large amount of feed annually and flexibility over the summer when it responds to summer rain," Mr Milne said. "As rainfall becomes more unreliable with climate change, this flexibility will become even more important.

DPI Hamilton has one of the key EverGraze trials sites in the high rainfall zone of southern Australia. For the past four years the 70 hectare trial has been comparing different pastures matched to landscape.

EverGraze Hamilton Proof Site Leader, Ralph Behrendt, said summer-active perennial pastures add flexibility to a production system by extending the growing season and have the potential to reduce supplementary feed costs.

The Hamilton seminar will feature tips from three years research on establishment and management of summer-active tall fescue, productivity data from the EverGraze site and a site visit. There will also be guidance on assessing the cost and economic value of improving pastures.

**The seminar is free and lunch will be provided. To register or for more information contact South West EverGraze Extension Officer Anita Morant, on (03) 5573 0732**

### [Applications are Now Open for The Churchill Fellowship](#)

The Churchill Trust is now taking applications for the 2010 round of overseas study fellowships. There are over 40 fellowships on offer, with some for specific disciplines or designated states. The fellowships provide about \$25,000 to cover overseas travel and living expenses for Australian citizens who are passionate about their work and would benefit in conducting some study/research overseas and then bringing their findings back to Australia for sharing and applying to benefit Australia.

There are some specialist agriculture fellowships, for details visit [www.churchilltrust.com.au](http://www.churchilltrust.com.au). Applications close February 26, 2010.

### [Shelter Study for Reduced Lamb Mortality – Project](#)

Edible shelter for lambing ewes will be examined in a bid to reduce the annual sheep industry production loss caused by lamb mortality in the first days of life.

Multiple-born lambs are particularly susceptible to cold weather conditions, thus the project will focus on twin lambing ewes.

The high nutritional quality, erect form and active winter growth of irrigated cereal crops, such as wheat or oats, provide highly valuable feed for late pregnant and lactating winter lambing ewes, while potentially

supplying shelter for new-born lambs. Reducing the wind velocity and therefore the wind chill significantly reduces the rate of heat loss.

The project will compare lamb survival and growth rates to weaning for twin-bearing ewes of three breeds - Merinos, Border Leicester - Merino cross and Coopworths - on both winter cereals and pasture.

The development of an effective edible shelter system would not only give producers another winter feeding option but improved survival could also enhance continuity of lamb meat supply.

**More information contact Dr. Dale Miller, Tas DPIW**

### [New ASBV for Sheep Wrinkle](#)

Australia's Merino industry has a new tool to help identify and breed genetically plainer animals, with less breech wrinkle, that will accelerate the elimination of mulesing practices.

MerinoSelect's first breech strike Australian Sheep Breeding Value (ASBV) to be released is known as Early breech Wrinkle (EBWR).

It will be followed by other breeding values for additional indicators of breech fly strike.

Breech wrinkle had a major effect on the level of breech strike in a flock. If it could be genetically held at score one or two, sheep would be plainer and coupled with other management tools - there would be no requirement for mulesing.

The EBWR demonstrates Australia's Merino sector is achieving big breakthroughs in its quest to negate the need for mulesing.

**More information Sam Gill, 02 6773 4296**

### [Heat Stress](#) *Farming Ahead, Jan 2010*

Working in the heat of summer is not only uncomfortable, it can be dangerous with the risk of heat stress and dehydration a real threat. Working outdoors, working with machinery that generates radiant heat and working in hot vehicles can lead to heat-related illness, which in rare cases can be life threatening.

Heat stress, if left untreated can cause heatstroke, which is a serious medical condition that can lead to brain damage and death. People suffering from heatstroke need immediate medical treatment.

Where possible, reschedule tasks to early mornings or late afternoons when temperatures are cooler and check weather forecasts to plan future activities.

Early signs of heat-related discomfort include heat rashes and cramps. Rashes result from sweaty clothing that doesn't sweat as effectively, causing the body temperature to rise. Cramps result when body loses excess water and electrolytes, such as sodium and potassium, leading to cramps in arms, legs and the torso. The warning signs of heat stress include: headache, nausea, tiredness, irritability, loss of concentration, muscle cramps, dizziness, weakness, blurred vision, clammy pale skin, rapid weak pulse, rapid and shallow breathing and a body temperature of more than 37°C.

If rescheduling is not possible, limit the amount of time spent on labour-intensive tasks, work at a comfortable pace and take regular short breaks in a cool shady place.

Other ways to avoid heat stress include:

Drink lots of water, wear cool protective clothing, wear a broad brimmed hat, apply SPF 30+ sunscreen, wear sunglasses with UV protection, consider window tinting and glare control in vehicles, if possible work in shaded areas between high risk times of 11.00am - 3.00pm, don't work near reflective surfaces, rotate jobs so that 'hot' jobs are rotated with 'cooler' tasks, eat regular light meals, use a wetted scarf, take regular rests.

What do you call a cow that plays the violin? "Fiddler on the Hoof".

Have a good weekend, Annette

BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Administrator