

BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Newsflash – 23/4/2010

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

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[The Good, the Bad and the Ugly in Weed Control - Wednesday April 28](#)

ON day Wednesday 28th April 2010 at 1.00pm BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB will host a phone seminar about weed control, with Dean Harrington, agronomist with Rodwells with a 10 minute around the state brief report on flock health updates and alerts at the end of the session.

After a series of dry years, many pastures have opened up a new range (for some) of annual weeds which are becoming more prevalent. These include more heliotrope, paddy melons, goosefoot, as well as the trusty erodiums, silver grass and onion weed.

Dean Harrington is an agronomist with Rodwells in Boort with a breadth of experience in weed control in pastures and crops. Dean will talk about a range of different weeds in pastures - which ones to do something about, and perhaps those that are not such a problem and the how and when to do something for the best effect. You also will have the opportunity to ask questions about weeds relevant to you.

Deb Bain is the instigator of Farm Day where city families come to the country to get a sample of rural life and agriculture - Deb will give a brief outline of Farm Day and what they are looking for in farms to visit i.e. - **are you interested.**

Not to leave the animals out of the picture, we will finish the session with a quick wrap up of current and looming animal issues.

Register today and leave a message on my phone if I am not there (03) 5355 0531

[BWBL & DPI Invests in Sheep Industry Leadership](#)

BWBL and the DPI Meat & Wool program are each sponsoring two candidates again for the Marcus Oldham Rural Leadership Program this year, as a way of investing in the leadership capacity within the wool and lamb industry.

Two "Bill Easton Rural Leadership Scholarships" from the DPI Meat & Wool program are available to prime lamb producers, and in addition, two BWBL scholarships are available to members of the BWBL program.

These scholarships cover the full cost of participation in the Marcus Oldham Rural Leadership program, including all accommodation and meals.

The 2010 program will be conducted from Sunday 27th June to Friday 2nd July at the Marcus Oldham College, Geelong. Participants in the program develop their skills in teamwork, future vision, communication, public speaking, negotiation, interpersonal relationships, goal setting and community leadership.

If you are interested in applying phone on (03) 5355 0531 or email annette.taylor@dpi.vic.gov.au

[Southern Meat Profit Day](#)

WHEN: Friday 30 April at 9.30am

WHERE: Melbourne Showgrounds

Topics will include

- Implications for profitable production in a carbon constrained world
- Breaking down the costs of red meat production
- Successfully integrating livestock and cropping
- Animal welfare - let's be on the front foot
- Calf/lamb management to meet feeder market premiums

At the conclusion of the Meat Profit Day, join guest speaker Sam Kekovich, industry leaders and fellow producers for a casual red meat dinner to be held on-site.

For more information visit www.mla.com.au/events or email events@mla.com.au

[Is It Time to Update Your PIC?](#)

As most of you would be aware details of all property identification codes (PIC) are logged on a database to allow contact you easily if required.

PICs are the back bone to national traceability systems. Given some of the changes with Australia Post in the last few years we are beginning to get an increase in returned mail because of the swap from the RMB numbering system to the current address system.

If you think that your PIC details might be affected please call the NLIS helpline on 1800 678 779.

[Oxalate Toxicity in Sheep](#)

Pastures that have large numbers of plants that contain oxalates at high concentrations can lead to oxalate toxicity in sheep. The main culprits in the north-west region are soursob, sorrel, roly poly and pigweed.

Summer rains have favoured the growth of these weeds especially in crop stubbles.

Two forms of toxicity can occur - acute and chronic oxalate poisoning. The acute form develops soon after hungry stock are placed onto infested pastures. Clinical signs include muscle tremors, staggers, recumbency and finally coma and death. These signs are caused by the oxalates binding calcium and results in a very low blood calcium level. The chronic form occurs when stock has been grazing infested pastures over weeks or months. There tends to be sporadic deaths and animals generally have anaemia and ill thrift. Small amounts of oxalates are absorbed into the blood stream and these bind to calcium forming calcium oxalate. The calcium oxalate crystals are deposited in the kidneys leading to renal disease.

Generally a diagnosis of acute oxalate toxicity is made from the history and signs shown. Those animals affected by acute toxicity can be treated with calcium solution (treatment for hypocalcaemia or 'milk fever'), however many treated sheep will not respond or only partially respond. There is no treatment for chronic oxalate toxicity.

Like many disease problems prevention is the key! Removing weeds from the pasture is the ultimate aim. But to prevent acute oxalate toxicity make sure hungry stock are not placed onto heavily infested pastures.

[Wild Dog Control Field Day: Making Progress](#)

The North East Wild Dog Management Group invites you to a field day to discuss the latest developments in wild dog control, and the parameters guiding their use.

Hear about the progress that is being made around Australia in the area of wild dog control. See displays and demonstrations of the latest 'tool' that proactive farmers can use to protect their stock from wild dogs. Discuss the legislative requirements and community concerns that impact on wild dog control. Share your story, and your insights, about the impacts of wild dogs, and the methods of control.

WHEN: Thursday, 6 May 2010 from 10.00am to 3.00pm

WHERE: 'Glenhope' the property of Ewan and Lorraine Carkeek, Jeffcott & Jewell's Rd, Berrington
Cost is free, light lunch and refreshments will be available
RSVP to Brian Dowley, Project Officer - Wild Dogs (03) 5152 0476 or 0428 966 928

[Precision Sheep Management - Webinar Series](#)

You are invited to attend the Sheep CRC's Precision Sheep Management (PSM) webinar training series. The Sheep CRC and Industry & Investment NSW have developed Precision Sheep Management to increase on-farm productivity and decrease labour costs. For information on PSM click [here](#).

All webinars start at 12.30pm EST

Please log in 10 minutes ahead of time. Audio is provided by telephone connection.

Please register with Cheryl Pope - Cheryl.pope@industry.new.gov.au and note that places are limited.

WEBINAR DATES

Tuesday 27 April - Merino vs Terminal Sire

For sheep producers wishing to optimise the proportion of the Merino ewe flock joined to terminal sires and review their breeding objective and rate of progress with genetic gain and service providers interested in developing PSM services.

Wednesday 28 April - Wether Calculator

Thursday 29 April - OFFM Calculator

For wool producers wishing to optimise the wether component of their flock and optimise their wool clip bale lines for sale and service providers interested in developing PSM services.

Friday 30 April - Pedigree Matrix

This software is used to process the files produced in the pedigree matching process. Three files are required - a file of lamb tabs, a file containing dam IDs and the output file from the data logger or Tru-test XR3000

[Nuffield Scholarship A Life-Changing Opportunity](#)

Primary producers with a passion for the future of their industry are urged to apply for a prestigious Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarship to investigate an issue they believe is crucial to improving agricultural performance and profitability.

Applications are now open for scholarships in 2011 and will close on 30 June, 2010. Winners will be announced in October 2010. Scholarships are for primary producers aged 28 to 40 years, although applications outside this range may be considered.

Each scholarship is valued at \$28,000, sponsored by major agribusiness and industry groups across Australia. All scholars take part in a six week Global Focus Program, with up to 10 weeks of individual travel to investigate a topic of their choice.

Nuffield Australia chairman David Brownhill says personal growth is a huge benefit of the program. Its primary aim is to improve the skills of Australian primary producers, provide a global perspective of agriculture and help scholars bring back new ideas and strategies for the benefit of both individual scholars, and their respective industries.

Recent scholars have been drawn from a wide pool of primary industries and include grain and rice growers, fishers and aquaculturist, chicken, beef, lamb, goat and pork producers, woolgrowers, dairy farmers, apiarists, orchardists, horticulturalists and vigneron. Study topics have varied from the basics of production such as soil, water, crop varieties, weeds and disease to production systems, new technologies, natural resource management, biofuels, carbon trading, supply systems, marketing and public relations. Scholars are selected for their farming and leadership capabilities, and potential to make a valuable contribution to the future of Australian agriculture. They join a growing international network of scholars, which has more than 200 members in Australia and 1300 members worldwide.

Application forms are available from Nuffield Australia on 03 5480 0755, via email, enquiries@nuffield.com.au, or from the website www.nuffield.com.au.

[CHAF Rural Women's Network - Getting the Most out of Your Financial Information](#)

WHEN: Tuesday May 4, 2010

WHERE: BRACE Education Training and Employment, 602 Urquhart St, Ballarat

TIME: Two sessions 10am to 2.00pm OR 6.00pm to 9.00pm

COST: \$22.00 per person

This workshop is ideal for women on the land wishing to improve their skills in monitoring the farm financial statements. Each session will cover:

- How to read/interpret financial statements
- How to extract relevant data from farm financial statements - what is really important
- Ascertain gross and net margin percentages, with particular emphasis on business that conduct a variety of enterprises
- Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
- The importance of cash flows
- What is the difference between a partnership and a trust? What entity is best for your needs??

Register for this course by Friday April 30 by contacting Central Highlands Agribusiness (CHAF) on 5343 2555 for a registration form .

[Consider the Cost of Alternatives to Mulesing](#) *Dr Robert Suter, Disease Surveillance Project Leader, Sheep*

The title of this article is no coincidence - anything done about breech strike in Merino sheep (besides mulesing) will cost more! Mulesing has proven to be a cheap and effective means of modifying the breech of sheep to reduce their susceptibility to flystrike, but it comes at a high welfare cost to the animal that is becoming increasingly unacceptable in modern society. Mulesing has proven to be so effective that we have continued to breed sheep with poor breech conformation and a propensity to scour and dag for the past 80 years.

Unmulesed sheep will have an incidence of breech strike of over 50%, whereas mulesing reduces the incidence to below 10%. Recent research on how mulesing works shows that it is reduction in wrinkle that is far more effective in preventing breech strike than increasing the bare area about the breech. In high rainfall areas, the degree of dag is also an important factor. Breeding for less wrinkle and dag will likely provide reasonable results within six to eight years.

Unmulesed sheep will be prone to breech strike - simply stopping mulesing and doing nothing else would be an animal welfare disaster. The alternatives to mulesing, including combinations of clips, extra crutching, and extra jetting with more paddock monitoring and treatment of struck sheep all come at a cost, but effective prevention of losses from fly-strike can be achieved.

It is necessary to consider all of the alternatives to mulesing closely to determine which would best suit your enterprise, at least cost. Ceasing mulesing in 2010 will be necessary to maintain market access of wool to the European market, and to enhance Australia's animal welfare credentials.

Phrase of Wisdom - "Experience is a wonderful thing - it enables you to recognise a mistake when you make it again".

Have a good long ANZAC weekend, Annette
BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Administrator