

## NETWORK ACTIVITIES

### FEATURED STATE – Tasmania

#### Sheep Connect Tasmania – Andrew Bailey & Cat Nicholls

- During May the Nile–Fingal high performance weaner meeting saw six producer members participate in a demonstration of e-tag and autodraft equipment. Participants discussed e-tag logistic and issues although feedback on the system was very positive overall. A feed budget workshop looked at calculations using metabolisable energy and protein tables from RIST. The tables supplied by RIST were found to have flaws, which Andrew is following up. Any similar network experiences would be welcome — please contact Andrew. Next meeting (pre-lambing) will be during August.
- Andrew recently facilitated a workshop on lamb finishing systems for the Little Swanport Productivity Group — seven enterprises were represented on the day. Participants discussed market specifications, feed bases and budgets required to meet market specifications, productivity and risk windows. The outcomes will see producers better able to produce stores for autumn finishing. Impending irrigation schemes may change options but at this stage the future needs identified included a better understanding of worms and on-farm testing for worms.
- Andrew has had two meetings with industry representatives regarding the logistics of undertaking a dual-purpose Merino wether trial that meets national protocols. He has also had a subsequent teleconference with Sally Martin (NSW DPI) to progress. A call for expressions of interest from local producers is planned for the coming Campbell Town show in early June — come and see us there if you are down in Tassie !
- Discussions and approval to redevelop the *SheepConnect* website (within UTAS/TIAR site) to act as portal for e-newsletters and linkage to other wool and sheep sites was successful. UTAS is interested in making the *SheepConnect* Tasmania approach a model for extension and engagement with producers on other subjects (cropping, soils, and vegetables).
- Andrew has carried out a survey of growers' needs and expectations for *SheepConnect* events and he is currently analysing the results for the upcoming PAP meeting

#### The Sheep's Back WA – Bob Hall

- The autumn newsletter circulated to the network. Topics included Nutrition, especially of lambing ewes, update on OJD, current gross margins and an introduction to the PAP, with the CV of our young female member, Bindi Murray. The newsletter also provided seasonal reminders for better husbandry.
- An article was provided for the Stud Merino Breeders of WA for their weekly “Merino Matters” column in the farm press. The topic was “Nutrition” especially of lambing ewes placing emphasis on feed requirements and condition scoring of sheep, with an aim to improve knowledge of nutrition at this vital time of the year.
- Early discussions with DAFWA in regard to their management of Making More from Sheep with the aim of having cooperation with them to provide a joint programme in order to provide efficient delivery to the common audience for each programme.
- Meetings on OJD publicised and attended. Organised by Pfizer Animal Health with G. Lean as major guest speaker. This gave sensible publicity and warning that OJD is spreading exactly as forecast and



provided advice on Biosecurity, the use of Animal Health Statements and Vaccines for flocks where OJD has been confirmed.

### **BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Vic – Lyndon Kubeil & Annette Taylor**

- BWBL phone seminar was held on the 19 April. The “Lucerne for Persistence” seminar featured Reg Hill from Wrightson’s Seeds and Neil James from Department of Primary Industries (DPI). Robert Suter from Animal Health within DPI and John Webb-Ware from Mackinnon Project finished off the seminar giving a summary of stock health updates from around the state. Sixty five producers registered for the seminar and asked several questions at the end of each session. As many more producers are turning to lucerne in their pasture rotation. Reg was able to give relevant species information for persistence.
- 21 Group Activities with an average of 10 farming families attending. Activities included; financial analysis, direct sowing, grain & graze, the modern merino, pasture trials, EID, wool marketing, climate change and self replacing sheep. The self directed nature of BWBL enables participants to target activities that meet their needs: strong ownership of the topics leads to increased on-farm change.
- One (1) feature article in the Stock and Land featured the coming BWBL Annual Conference in June. The article highlighted the success of past conferences and outlined the coming conference key note speakers and concurrent sessions. The BWBL breakout box, which accompanies each monthly story, advertised BWBL investment in the leadership capacity of the sheep industry by sponsoring two candidates to attend the Marcus Oldham Rural Leadership Program.
- Two (2) email newsflash’s sent to 950 sheep producers and industry representatives promoting sheep industry events and information. At least one AWI event, update or media release was featured in each addition.
- More focus group discussions were completed in April. Group members have shown they are keen to be involved with the focus groups, to meet personally the manager and chairperson of BWBL and to give their opinions of the program. All the information from the focus groups, along with baseline data from the BWBL database will feed into the Evaluation Report in July.
- Young producer and rural women’s initiative is progressing, with a forum to be held on the day before the BWBL Annual Conference (28<sup>th</sup> June, 2011).

### **Bestprac – The Pastoral Zone – Carlyn Sherriff**

- Planning is underway for the National Bestprac Forum (11 and 12 August). With the rangelands currently entering a period of renewal and reinvigoration, this 2 day forum will showcase and discuss a wide range of industry issues to build on this momentum. The Forum is for all Bestprac members and rangeland producers. This will be the main project focus for the coming months. Target participation is 60 producers. Strategies to increase participation are being developed as distance between groups/members is the greatest challenge / barrier to participation.
- The new Bestprac project is now underway: the Operations Plan has been signed-off by PAP and will be communicated to facilitators in the coming weeks. Activities for the members will be delivered in partnership with organisations such as Sheep CRC, MLA and Invasive Animal CRC.



### Sheep Connect NSW – Shelley Anderson

- Planning meeting for NSW I&I Sheep and Wool extension team held at Cowra on 3 & 4<sup>th</sup> May. Sheep Connect activities discussed and planned for 2011/2012 season. Focus on provision of remaining Fly & Lice Workshops to areas in Northern and Western NSW as well as Sheep Health & Welfare workshops focusing on seasonal health issues.
- First draft of program for Sheep Connect Industry Update at Yass on 17<sup>th</sup> August. Program to be based around showcasing current research into climate change and the sheep industry, on-farm strategies to deal with soil carbon concerns and strategies to manage seasonal sheep health issues in the region such as pregnancy toxemia and foot abscess.
- Draft proposal for Sheep Connect NSW BLOG initiated. This aim of this blog will be to provide a mechanism for the delivering general industry news and information to Sheep Connect NSW members as well as providing an open discussion forum for producers and industry service providers.

### Leading Sheep QLD – Tony Hamilton

- Final Report preparation. Getting Evaluation collated for the Reports.
- Final Milestone Report submitted and approval granted from AWI.
- Organise PAP Meeting for 3<sup>1st</sup> May. Terms of Reference, Develop Strategic Plan. Roles and new appointments to PAP. Final Report Discussion and evaluation to be considered for the shaping of the new project.
- Organise LS3 Project planning Meeting 8<sup>th</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> June, to develop Operational, Communication, Evaluation Plans. Develop up new contracts for coordinators. Advertise for roles where needed.
- Organising face to face Worms workshops to be delivered in conjunction with Making More from Sheep across 3-4 centres at the end of May early June.

### Sheep Connect SA – Ian McFarland

- Communications:
  - 2 x Stock Journal Technical columns - 'Watch out for worms' & 'Questions to ask your seed merchant'
  - SheepConnect feature in Stock Journal
- Field days not held due to early season.
- Meeting held with NRM Boards to discuss collaborative funding opportunities.



### SEASONAL CONDITIONS

#### FEATURED STATE – Tasmania

##### Sheep Connect Tasmania – Andrew Bailey & Cat Nicholls

- Autumn rainfall has continued and has been well spaced to provide an extended green season, although the sudden onset of winter conditions (including snow) has seen pasture growth all but stop completely.
- Localised flooding has been an issue for some but it subsided quickly with most damage occurring in cropping situations — very few stock losses were reported.

##### The Sheep's Back – WA – Bob Hall

- Still dry in most of the State other than the SW corner. Everyone looking for the break to the season. Hand feeding very much the order of the day.
- Feed supplies appear to be adequate and woolgrowers, having been schooled in nutritional requirements are ensuring that they have adequate supplies on hand

##### BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Vic – Lyndon Kubeil & Annette Taylor

- Quite an autumnal month with showers and cooler nights. Mice numbers are increasing with the onset of cooler weather. Flood waters lingering in the North West of the state.

##### Leading Sheep QLD – Tony Hamilton

- Drying off across the state but still plenty of feed reported in most sheep areas except for a few districts region on the border west of Goondiwindi.

##### Sheep Connect SA – Ian McFarland

- Good subsoil moisture (from early rain) with good follow-up rains on Eyre Peninsula and South East (in particular). Seeding preparation & seeding has been in full swing over the last 3-4 weeks. There has however generally been below average rainfall over last month.
- 'Best season' ever on Kangaroo Island.

## INDUSTRY ACTIVITY/HIGHLIGHTS/TRENDS

### FEATURED STATE – Tasmania

#### Sheep Connect Tasmania – Andrew Bailey & Cat Nicholls

- Flystrike was an issue for some sheep this season and increased worm numbers were seen compared with average seasons.

#### The Sheep's Back – WA – Bob Hall

- Pregnancy scanning has really taken off and is becoming a vital feature of modern good management. Twinners will receive special treatment and this should result in a higher lambing %.
- Life Time Ewe principles have been well applied and the observation is that sheep have never been better looked after in an adverse season.
- Sheep prices maintain at record highs also wool prices with some slight wavering at the peak of price. Some woolgrowers are considering forward cover for wool price.
- There is a general agreement that sheep are important in a mixed farming system and many are considering increasing their flocks for the future.

#### BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Vic – Lyndon Kubeil & Annette Taylor

- Worm burden still a major problem in some districts with unusual levels of Barbers Pole detected.

#### Sheep Connect SA – Ian McFarland

- Sheep are in good condition. Early lambers reporting good percentages.

## OTHER COMMENTARY OR QUESTIONS TO THE NETWORK

#### The Sheep's Back – WA – Bob Hall

- Our final report, due 15 June, is in final draft form.
- We are awaiting our new contract for extension into 2011-2014.

#### Leading Sheep QLD – Tony Hamilton

- As the new project will not be funded until July 1 activities have been reduced to keep within budget.
- Regional coordinators are currently not contracted, so contact with committees is also minimal.



- Finalisation of the LS 2 project is the highest priority at the moment so activities will be held over until early June.
- Advertising for new staff member at Longreach.
- Nicole Sallur has returned after maternity leave.

### NETWORK CONTACT DETAILS

Network	Contact	Email	Telephone	Mobile
<b>BESTWOOL /BESTLAMB</b>	Lyndon Kubeil	<a href="mailto:lyndon.kubeil@dpi.vic.gov.au">lyndon.kubeil@dpi.vic.gov.au</a>	(03) 5761 1649	0418 532 085
<b>SheepConnect Tasmania</b>	Andrew Bailey Cat Nicholls	<a href="mailto:andrew.bailey@utas.edu.au">andrew.bailey@utas.edu.au</a> <a href="mailto:cat.hot.tin.roof@bigpond.com">cat.hot.tin.roof@bigpond.com</a>	(03) 6336-5385	0408 129 373 0427 571 199
<b>The Sheep's Back (WA)</b>	Bob Hall	<a href="mailto:bobh@hallandco.com.au">bobh@hallandco.com.au</a>	(08) 9736 1055	0428 361 055
<b>Bestprac</b>	Carlyn Sherriff Stuart Mitchell	<a href="mailto:csherriff@ruraldirections.com">csherriff@ruraldirections.com</a> <a href="mailto:smitchell@bigpond.com">smitchell@bigpond.com</a>	(08) 8842 1103 (07) 4625 6198	0417 808 557 0427 256 198
<b>SheepConnect SA</b>	Ian McFarland Tarsha McGregor	<a href="mailto:ian.mcfarland@sa.gov.au">ian.mcfarland@sa.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:tarsha.mcgregor@sa.gov.au">tarsha.mcgregor@sa.gov.au</a>	(08) 8226 0428 (08) 8389 8806	0437 659 353
<b>SheepConnect NSW</b>	Michelle Anderson Alex Russel	<a href="mailto:michelle.anderson@industry.nsw.gov.au">michelle.anderson@industry.nsw.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:alex.russell@industry.nsw.gov.au">alex.russell@industry.nsw.gov.au</a>	(02) 6391-3954 (02) 6881 1212	0429 335 152 0417 492 614
<b>Leading Sheep (Qld)</b>	Tony Hamilton	<a href="mailto:anthony.hamilton@deedi.qld.gov.au">anthony.hamilton@deedi.qld.gov.au</a>	(07) 4688 1270	0429 879 458