

meatup FORUM

For the latest in red meat R&D

ALBANY
28 March 2023

Hear about locally relevant on-farm R&D

•

Hear from and network with leading producers

•

Gain insights into tools and programs to improve your business

•

Increase your productivity and profitability

About MLA

Meat & Livestock Australia Limited (MLA) delivers research, development and marketing services to Australia's cattle, sheep and goat producers. MLA has approximately 50,000 livestock producer members who have stakeholder entitlements in the company.



MeatUp Forum Program: Albany, 28 March 2023

| Time | Session | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| 8:00 am | Registration desk opens, tea and coffee available | |
| Session 1: Welcome | | |
| 9:00 am | Welcome, housekeeping and forum schedule Georgia Reid-Smith, MeatUp WA Event Coordinator, AgPro Management Matt Neild, WA Working Group Member | |
| 9:10 am | MLA welcome, market update and adoption program insights Jason Strong, Managing Director, Meat & Livestock Australia | |
| Session 2 | | |
| 9:40 am | Business and profitability: Capital investment on-farm in the current price climate John Francis, Agrista | |
| 10:30 am | Managing and monitoring your feed base with newly released Australian Feedbase Monitor Alastair Rayner, Cibo Labs | |
| 10:50 am | Morning tea | |
| Session 3 | | |
| 11:20 am | Improving artificial insemination performance: Preparing the cows Mick Clews, Herd Health Services | Shedding sheep 101: A practical look at production and profitability David Stade, 'Hounscome', Katanning, and Ed Riggall, AgPro Management |
| 11:55 pm | Increasing cattle reproduction rates: Preparing the bulls Mick Clews, Herd Health Services | Lamb growth rates: Optimising the achievable David Pethick, Murdoch University |
| 12:25 pm | Lunch | |
| Session 4: | | |
| 1:20 pm | Virtual farm tour: Jeremy Walker, 'Kilchatten', Green Range | |
| 1:40 pm | Spring sown canola and forage brassica Tim Metcalfe, Metcalfe Pastoral, Manypeaks, and James Bee, Elders Albany | |
| 2:10pm | The science of and techniques to perfecting hay and silage production Dan Parnell, Agsure, and Tom Depiazzi, Depiazzi Agri Co., Dardanup | |
| 2:55 pm | Afternoon tea | |
| Session 5: | | |
| 3:20 pm | Proactive farm business and people management Paul O'Meehan, A O'Meehan and Co, Borden | |
| 3:50 pm | BredWell FedWell – breeding and feeding to maximise profit Sarita Guy, Project Manager for Genetics Adoption, MLA | |
| 4:10 pm | Let's cut to it: Carcase demonstration showing the value of cuts, and why you might get discounts Rafael Ramirez, The Red Meat Specialist, and Rob Davidson, WAMMCO | |
| Wrap-up | | |
| 4:50 pm | Wrap-up Georgia Reid-Smith, MeatUp WA event coordinator, AgPro Management | |
| 5:00 pm | Networking drinks | |
| 6:00 pm | Event concludes | |

Poll Everywhere

For audience participation, including submission of questions during MeatUp Forums, we will use Poll Everywhere.

Join via the QR code below. You may choose to download the app 'Poll Everywhere' when prompted.



PollEv.com/pinion

1. To join a presentation, type the username: **pinion** (or via a web browser, type PollEv.com/pinion)
2. Click join
3. Insert your screen name that you would like to appear alongside your question/response
4. Throughout the event, you can return to your app, the site PollEv.com/pinion or the QR code to participate.

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Welcome

MLA's MeatUp Forums are held throughout southern Australia to give you the latest in red meat research, development and adoption (RD&A). They are developed by regional producer working groups that include members from the Southern Australian and Western Australia Livestock Research Councils, in collaboration with MLA staff and the MeatUp Coordinator, Pinion Advisory and AgPro Management, for WA Events.

MLA's MeatUp Forums have been developed to keep you informed about:

- ◆ what MLA can offer your red meat business
- ◆ new and completed R&D that is relevant to your region and enterprise
- ◆ the role and responsibilities of the livestock research councils
- ◆ opportunities to get involved in regional R&D and priority-setting
- ◆ practical tools and programs available to you
- ◆ opportunities to enhance your productivity and profitability.

Today you will be presented with clear and practical ideas, information, and tools that you can take home and put into practice on-farm. We thank all presenters for their involvement in MeatUp and encourage you to make the most of your time with them today.

Regional producer working group

We thank the MeatUp Forum regional producer working group members, past and present from WA for their contribution to MeatUp. The current working group includes:

- ◆ Jarrod Carroll, Manypeaks
- ◆ Michael Humphrey, Walebing
- ◆ Matt Nield, Augusta
- ◆ Zac Roberts, Dandaragan
- ◆ David Stade, Katanning.

In addition, we would like to thank:

- ◆ Andrew Morelli, Southern Beef and Sheep Adoption Project Manager, MLA.
- ◆ Natasha Searle, MeatUp Forum Project Manager, and project team, Dee Heinjus, Pinion Advisory.
- ◆ Georgia Reid-Smith, MeatUp Forum Event Coordinator for WA, AgPro Management.

If you are interested in joining the WA MeatUp regional producer working group, please chat to a working group member, a member of the MeatUp Forum team or contact the MeatUp Forum Project Manager.

Contact

Natasha Searle, MeatUp Project Manager, Pinion Advisory | P:1300 646 746 | E: meatup@pinionadvisory.com

Visit: mla.com.au/meatup

MeatUp forums were launched in 2021 and provide beef, sheep and goat producers with the opportunity to learn something new, stay up-to-date with the latest on-farm research and technologies and meet others in the red meat industry.

Held predominantly throughout southern Australia, these forums introduce producers to the outcomes of MLA R&D projects and the next steps to drive profitability and productivity on-farm.

Designed by producer working groups from local regions to ensure content delivered is regionally relevant, MeatUp forums demonstrate the value of implementing new practices or technologies on farm. They also create awareness around MLA activities, programs and projects which producers can get involved in to enable them to further build knowledge and skills.



2021–2022 at a glance

611
producers engaged



12
EVENTS



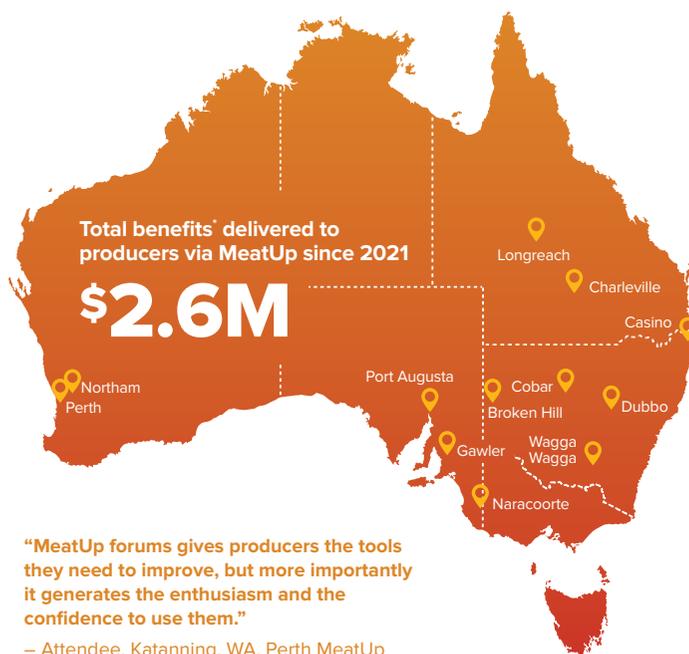
358,398
cattle impacted
by MeatUp



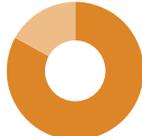
1,578,475
sheep impacted
by MeatUp



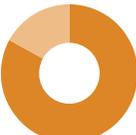
63,920
goats impacted
by MeatUp



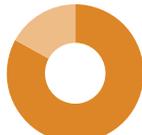

9,830,749
hectares of Australian agricultural
land influenced by MeatUp



87%
value rating



81%
of producers said their
knowledge and skills increased



87%
satisfaction
rating



**2 OUT OF 3 ATTENDEES
PLANNED TO MAKE CHANGES
FOLLOWING MEATUP**

MLA welcome and market update



Jason Strong

Managing Director Meat & Livestock Australia

About Jason

Jason Strong has more than 30 years' red meat and livestock experience, knowledge and connections from the farm through to the end consumer in both domestic and international markets. He is a well-recognised and respected senior executive with extensive skills in commercial and industry business management and administration, supply chain development, meat science and grading, genetics and marketing as well as on-farm experience. Jason Strong is Managing Director of Meat & Livestock Australia Ltd and is a director of Integrity Systems Company Limited, MLA Donor Company Limited, AUS-MEAT Limited and Red Meat Traceability Systems Pty Ltd.

Session summary

In this presentation, Jason Strong will provide an update on the latest investments and activities from Meat & Livestock Australia. He will share insights from domestic and international marketing, innovation in the supply chain, and how MLA is improving the positioning of the industry through innovation communication and marketing methods. Mr Strong will also talk through the industry's incredible sustainability journey, focusing on CN30, which is a goal that the industry has set to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Relevant tools and resources

◆ **MLA membership application**

MLA membership is free to levy-paying producers of grass or grain fed cattle, sheep, lambs and/or goats. Benefits of membership include:

- participation and voting rights at the MLA Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- discounts for a range of MLA products and services, ordered via the myMLA catalogue
- free access to the Australian Feedbase Monitor tool to help producers improve grazing management
- invitations to local MLA events
- free subscription to MLA's regular member magazine *Feedback*
- free subscriptions to MLA suite of e-newsletters
- free access to up-to-date publications and information tools
- eligibility to apply for funding via MLA's CoMarketing Program.



◆ **Market update trends and analysis**

MLA's Market Information analysts examine and interpret developments in, and prospects for, the Australian domestic market, key export markets and major competitors, producing a wide range of publications



◆ **MLA's 2020–21 *Producer Adoption Outcomes* Report**

The 2020–21 *Producer Adoption Outcomes* Report outlines the depth and breadth of adoption projects and programs that Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) delivered for the 2020–21 financial year and how red meat producers benefited from their involvement in them.



◆ **Subscribe to MLA e-newsletters**

MLA newsletters to be delivered direct to your inbox at mla.com.au/enews



◆ **MLA Producer Demonstration Sites**

Producer Demonstration Sites (PDS) are on-farm projects run by producer groups who want to validate the benefits of incorporating research findings into their businesses. MLA calls for preliminary applications for PDS projects that will help to improve the profitability, productivity and sustainability of beef and sheep meat enterprises on an annual basis.



◆ **MLA Profitable Grazing Systems program**

Profitable Grazing Systems is a group-based delivery program designed to deliver training and coaching over several months and up to a year to improve producer skills and knowledge. The aim is to achieve practice change on-farm in the areas of people, business, reproduction and genetics, value chain and feedbase.



◆ **MLA BredWell FedWell**

BredWell FedWell is a practical, one-day workshop highlighting the key production benefits of superior genetics, plus feed management for improved reproductive performance and livestock productivity. New workshops are coming soon, follow the QR code to express interest.



Business and profitability: Capital investment on-farm in the current price climate



John Francis

Director and consultant, Agrista

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About John

John Francis is the owner of Agrista, an agricultural consultancy business based in Wagga Wagga in southern NSW. Agrista provides consulting and benchmarking services to corporate and family farm asset owners and managers, the rural finance sector, government and industry bodies and the agricultural services sector. John's expertise generates value for clients via one-on-one consultancy, group consultancy, industry-driven project work, workshop content development and delivery, and public speaking engagements and industry presentations.

Session summary

How to generate value from investing in infrastructure and other capital improvements

The upside of solid commodity prices and reasonable seasons is being seen in improved operating profits of farm businesses. Business managers who have been disciplined around expenditure have seen significant increases in operating margins while others have seen smaller increases.

While the operating profits have been increasing, so have the value of the key assets in a livestock production system – livestock and land. In many parts of Australia agricultural land prices have more than doubled over a four-year period and some livestock classes haven't been far behind in relative value. This increase in capital value has positive and negative implications for producers.

On the positive side, asset growth creates passive wealth for farming families by increasing equity, assuming the assets are owned and everything else remains constant. On the negative side – it results in a larger value of assets from which profit is generated. This means that it can be harder to maintain high levels of farm profitability.

Profitability, at a whole farm level, is a ratio. Profitability at a whole farm level is a measure of operating profit divided by the total value of farm assets managed. A ratio typically measures efficiency. The profitability ratio measures the financial resource efficiency of the business. In other words, it measures how well the manager utilises the millions of dollars that they have invested in the resources of the business.

Table 1 shows profitability levels of 3% at asset values of \$10 million. Where asset values double, with no increase in operating profit, profitability halves. Thus, to maintain profitability, where asset values double, profits must also double.

Table 1: Profitability levels

| | Original asset values | Asset values double |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Operating profit | \$300,000 | \$300,000 |
| | ÷ | ÷ |
| Farm asset value | \$10,000,000 | \$20,000,000 |
| | = | = |
| Profitability (ROAM) | 3.0% | 1.5% |

The need for investment

As asset values rise it becomes increasingly important to identify those investments that increase farm operating profit from a low marginal cost. These are the gains that collectively contribute to maintaining profitability by increasing profit. These investment opportunities need to be continually revisited because they are sensitive to changes in investment costs and commodity prices.

There are several ways that infrastructure and other capital investments can work to increase operating profit:

1. Delivering additional production – with each productive unit having a lower marginal cost than it is in the current business model.
2. Delivering a lower cost – so that each existing productive unit delivers a lower cost of production.

The extent to which infrastructure and capital investments increase profitability depends on:

- ◆ the relative change in operating profit
- ◆ the relative change in capital value of the business.

Investments in infrastructure can also potentially deliver solutions to the current labour shortage challenge faced by many livestock businesses. Investments in livestock handling facilities, for example, can generate value beyond the lowering of labour costs per unit of production. The comfort and safety attributes of the work environment are now real factors on a potential employee's wish list. Given current circumstances, where employees are highly sought after, the livestock handling infrastructure and facilities could be the difference between attracting someone and attracting no-one.

These same investments can have the impact of widening the pool of potential employees, particularly if they diminish the physical demands of the workload or turning a job that is loathed into one that is tolerable or even enjoyable. Other benefits may be extending the longevity of the existing team.

Quantifying the value of labour-saving investments requires consideration of the cost in productivity loss should the investment not be made, or the cost in productivity loss from not attracting the labour at all.

It is desirable for an investment in infrastructure and other capital works to deliver higher profits than the status quo because the higher profits deliver the cashflow to repay the upfront cost of the investment.

Sometimes a benefit, in addition to marginal operating returns associated with investment in infrastructure or capital works, is the increased capital value associated with additional production. This doesn't necessarily generate cash in the business but it may create wealth that can be used to secure more debt to grow the business.

Investment in lime, for example, typically leads to increased livestock production due to an increase in stocking rate. The increase in production occurs due to improved pasture quality and quantity which is assumed to be utilised by additional livestock per unit area.

The application of lime delivers a small change in absolute land value due to the attribution of the lime cost to an increase in the capital value of the land. This results in a small increase (1.5%) in land value per hectare but the additional production drives a large (20%) reduction in land value per productive unit (DSE). This is demonstrated in Table 2. This results in a reduction of the denominator which leads to an improvement in profitability.

Table 2: Increasing production can lower the land value per productive unit

| Measure | Pre lime | Post lime |
|----------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Stocking rate (DSE/ha) | 15 | 18.7 |
| Land value (\$/acre) | \$7,300 | \$7,410 |
| Land value (\$/ha) | \$18,250 | \$18,530 |
| Land value (\$/DSE) | \$1,216 | \$988 |

The combination of higher operating profits and lower land value per productive unit can be a powerful combination. As land values continue to rise there is increasing incentive to pursue these gains.

Key take home messages

- ◆ People often forget you must spend money to make money.
- ◆ The profitability ratio measures the financial efficiency of the business (how well the manager utilizes finances).

Relevant tools and resources

◆ MLA BusinessEDGE

BusinessEDGE is a comprehensive two-day workshop for owners and managers of grazing enterprises. It's specifically designed to improve financial literacy and business skills.



◆ The toolbox

MLA's eLearning platform, *The toolbox*, is a collection of digital resources for red meat producers that features training courses, tips, tools, and calculators.



◆ Thinking, fast and slow

In *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Kahneman takes us on a groundbreaking tour of the mind and explains the two systems that drive the way we think and make choices. One system is fast, intuitive, and emotional; the other is slower, more deliberative, and more logical.



Managing and monitoring your feed: Australian Feedbase Monitor



Alastair Rayner

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About Alastair

Alastair operates RaynerAg – an agricultural consultancy business in NSW, servicing the red meat sector with a focus on beef production. Alastair established RaynerAg in 2013, following a 17 ½ year career with NSW DPI as a District Livestock Officer (Beef Products). Since commencing operations as an independent advisor, Alastair has established a strong client base in NSW, Queensland, and South Australia, offering a full range of on-farm services including livestock management and selection, nutrition and drought management, breeding herd performance and as a licensed Stock and Station Agent.

Alastair is well known for his skills in training and delivery and works closely with a number of organisations to deliver practical and tailored on-farm training courses and workshops.

Alastair is highly regarded for his technical skills, writing for Beef Central as the Genetics Editor and in leading the national extension strategy for the Australian Feedbase Monitor Project. This joint project between Cibo Labs and MLA offers every red meat producer real time satellite updates of pasture growth and feedbase changes, assisting in more informed grazing decisions.

Session summary

Effective grazing management decisions ensure livestock remain on predicted growth targets to meet production or market targets. Ideally decisions around feed availability, both quality and quantity achieve this aim and avoid, or at least minimise the likelihood of producers being forced into unplanned feeding programs or sales.

Most producers readily identify pasture assessment as an undertaking regularly conducted within their management framework. Responses to industry surveys conducted in 2022 highlighted over 80% of producers undertaking regular assessments, with half of these producers making assessments a weekly process.

Assessments are primarily conducted via visual assessment and rely on the experience and previous observations of the managers and business operators.

Despite the high level of assessment activity, responses indicate accuracy and reliability of these assessments is variable and often unreliable. Almost 30% (29.3%) of producers engaged in the survey had been placed in a position of making unplanned destocking decisions at least twice in five years. Within this group of respondents, 63% had to make unplanned sales, with 48% reporting lost income as a result.

While pasture assessment may not prevent a situation where destocking or unplanned sales may occur, accurate pasture assessment increases the flexibility for managers and business operators to respond earlier to changing circumstances and potentially avoid income loss through loss of options as seasons and markets tighten.

The Australian Feedbase Monitor is a joint project between Cibo Labs and MLA, funded through the MLA Donor Company. The project is the first to offer red meat producers across Australia with accurate and regular updates of ground cover (%) and total standing dry matter (TSDM/kg) for every hectare of a property engaged in red meat production.

Producers who are members of MLA can access the Australian Feedbase Monitor (AFM) through their MyMLA accounts. To initiate their account, users will need to link their existing LPA account – which are attached to a PIC within their MyMLA account. This linking allows the AFM to be set up for a specific set of land parcels associated with a PIC.

Within the AFM dashboard, users can select their location and property parcels associated with their individual PIC. Once this has been done, the AFM can be used to generate both images of the TSDM and ground cover percentage for the current month, as well as being able to review on a sliding timescale, conditions over the previous month or months going back to 2017.

This view offers managers and business operators the value of an accurate assessment of current feed levels for all parts of a property, not just those that are the most assessed due to access or convenience. The monthly comparison shows trends in the season, and the variation across a location, offering the chance for early and flexible decision making.

In addition to the map views, producers can select a particular land parcel to view comparison graphs for the high, low and medium levels of TSDM. These monthly ranges can be valuable for producers managing to a benchmark or for other strategic decisions. A second graph shows the monthly comparison of the TSDM of the current year against the previous years back to 2017.

These graphs allow producers to see their local situation and to make decisions on their own trends, and not on the more generalised information that may be generated for a region or broader district. Local individual predictions can then be more help in making strategic on-farm decisions in a timelier manner.

To date the AFM has seen significant uptake among red meat producers and business operators across the country. Most users have incorporated the trends and graphs to realign major production events such as joining and turn-off time to meet localised seasonal conditions or to reflect changing conditions over the past five years. Cibo Labs has published a webinar recording for producers seeking to start with the AFM. This recording can be found on YouTube: youtube.com/watch?v=ATHLJ73oXwI

Key take home messages

- ◆ Producers will be able to see their property (or properties) linked to their LPA account.
- ◆ They will receive an image for their farm, based on a 1ha resolution pasture biomass and ground cover. This image will be updated every five days (on a 30-day rolling median).
- ◆ Understand the trends across their property pasture base.
- ◆ Access is free to MLA members through their MyMLA account. However, it is important to ensure their MyMLA details and MLA membership details are aligned and correct.

Relevant tools and resources

◆ Australian Feedbase Monitor tool

The Australian Feedbase Monitor is a joint project between Cibo Labs and MLA, funded through the MLA Donor Company. The project is the first to offer red meat producers across Australia with accurate and regular updates of ground cover (%) and Total Standing Dry Matter (TSDM/kg) for every hectare of a property engaged in red meat production.



◆ Australian Feedbase Monitor webinar

This webinar was recorded to help producers get started with the Australian Feedbase Monitor, and provides an extensive 'how to' for all aspects of the tool.



◆ MLA membership

MLA membership is free to levy-paying producers of grass or grainfed cattle, sheep, lambs and/or goats. Benefits of membership include:

- participation and voting rights at the MLA Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- discounts for a range of MLA products and services, ordered via the myMLA catalogue
- invitations to local MLA events
- free subscription to MLA's regular member magazine *Feedback*
- free subscriptions to MLA suite of e-newsletters
- free access to up-to-date publications and information tools
- eligibility to apply for funding via MLA's CoMarketing Program.



◆ myMLA homepage login

A single login portal for your myMLA account including access to MLA's range of products and services.



Improving AI performance: Preparing the COWS



Dr Mick Clews BVSc

Herd Health Services

E: mick@herdhealthservices.com.au

About Mick

Mick runs Herd Health Services, a mobile cattle veterinary business providing predominately reproductive services to more than 200 farming clients from Dongara to Bremer Bay.

Growing up on a fifth-generation dairy farm in south east Queensland, he has a wide background in farming and veterinary practice. He ran a Brahman stud, beef breeding herd, his own dairy farm, and an embryo transfer practice as well as a veterinary consulting business in south east Asia, before moving to New Zealand working as a cattle vet and heading a clinical research team and delivering extension programs.

Mick has presented more than a dozen papers at international conferences as well as over 100 presentations to veterinarians and producer groups in New Zealand. He has a special interest in vet/client communication and has built a training program delivered to almost 100 vets, aimed at helping them better interact with their farming clients.

When he is not busy pregnancy scanning, Mick helps run the family Simmental stud.

Session summary

How do you get the best out of our Artificial Insemination (AI) program?

It has been shown that there are benefits in running synchronised AI programs, not only in genetic gain, but also in lifetime survivability and profitability in those heifers. But poor AI results can not only be costly in terms of financial outlay, but can leave you in a significantly worse position in terms of cow lifetime performance, in comparison to natural mating. In this discussion Mick will look at what a successful AI program looks like and the things producers can do both in preparation, as well as during mating, to maximise their chances of success. He will also present the findings of over 5,000 heifer AI pregnancy tests from this current season.

Successful AI program looks like:

- ◆ Females are selected pre insemination, with good herd genetics, at a mating target weight and in good condition.
- ◆ All cows should be non-pregnant and cycling.
- ◆ Heifers have been well managed since weaning to achieve target growth rates.
- ◆ Good nutrition has been supplied for at least six weeks prior and after AI.

- ◆ Vaccination against infectious diseases should have occurred at least eight weeks prior to AI.
- ◆ Synchronisation of oestrus will save time and labour.
- ◆ Heat detection is key, AM/PM rule: On heat in morning = inseminate that afternoon. On heat in evening = inseminate next morning.
- ◆ Semen has been carefully selected and will contribute to the genetic improvement of the herd.
- ◆ Calm handling of animals into, through and out of yards.

Key take home messages

- ◆ Poor AI performance (below 80%) is normal but can be improved.
- ◆ Nutrition is key pre and post mating.
- ◆ Synchronizing heifers can significantly increase mating success.

Relevant tools and resources

- ◆ **Reproductive health and management practices for beef heifers**

This MLA Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) is designed to optimise the reproductive potential of heifers through to second calving, and improve cattle herd health, welfare, productivity and profitability.



- ◆ **MLA BredWell FedWell**

BredWell FedWell is a practical, one-day workshop highlighting the key production benefits of superior genetics, plus feed management for improved reproductive performance and livestock productivity.



- ◆ **MLA Building better breeders**

Building Better Breeders covers the A–Z of beef breeding in southern and temperate zones while supporting producers to introduce and utilise eID in their operations, which takes producers through every step to improve the performance of their cattle enterprise.



- ◆ **BREEDPLAN search**

BREEDPLAN enables producers to access and search EBV databases for specific cattle breeds.



◆ **MBfP Preparing to join beef cattle**

A webinar outlining how to maximise the reproductive success of your beef herd. This includes bull performance, nutrition and disease.



◆ **More Beef from Pastures**

The MLA More beef from pastures (MBfP) program aims to achieve a sustainable (economic and environmental) increase in kilograms of beef produced per hectare through optimal management of the feedbase. An online producer's manual is available. Each module provides tools and information to enable southern beef producers to increase productivity and profit while minimising risk.



Improving reproductive performance: Targeting bulls



Dr Mick Clews BVSc

Herd Health Services

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About Mick

Mick runs Herd Health Services, a mobile cattle veterinary business providing predominately reproductive services to more than 200 farming clients from Dongara to Bremer Bay.

Growing up on a fifth-generation dairy farm in south east Queensland, he has a wide background in farming and veterinary practice. He ran a Brahman stud, beef breeding herd, his own dairy farm, and an embryo transfer practice as well as a veterinary consulting business in south east Asia before moving to New Zealand working as a cattle vet and heading a clinical research team and delivering extension programs.

Mick has presented more than a dozen papers at international conferences as well as over 100 presentations to veterinarians and producer groups in New Zealand. He has a special interest in vet/client communication and has built a training program delivered to almost 100 vets, aimed at helping them better interact with their farming clients.

When he is not busy pregnancy scanning, Mick helps run the family Simmental stud.

Session summary

Mating Matters – discovering the ‘silver bullet’ for reproductive success

You can't change what you don't measure! What is your mating performance? Do you know if it is the bulls or cows causing any issues?

In Mating Matters, developed by Mick Clews, reproductive performance of herds was measured throughout the mating period to answer this very question.

Cows were pregnancy scanned between 30 and 110 days with calf and foetal age recorded in five-day increments. Data was then analysed to create a graph of how the cows conceived over time during the mating period.

Mick will present the full Mating Matters results from over 500 mating groups, collected over the last two seasons. Looking at factors that he has seen explain some of the differences between groups in mating performance, he will discuss the key ways you can improve reproductive success from a bull perspective, and will present his ‘silver bullet’ finding – that bull ‘power’ trumps everything else. That is to say, bull percentage is king: the failsafe way to improve your mating performance is to mate at a ratio of one bull to 20 females. Mick will discuss and compare the cost of this compared to other alternative methods of increasing reproductive rate, and how the biggest impact from this is that there is a higher percentage of cows that get in calf early.

It is known from Mick’s own experience as a vet, as well as other trials, that the cows who get in calf early in the mating period have a much greater lifetime survivability in the herd compared to those that conceive later. As well as the ‘silver bullet’ of bull percentage, Mating Matters results focuses on the timing pattern of cows getting in calf rather than just empty rate.

Key take home messages

- ◆ People often forget you must spend money to make money.
- ◆ You must measure to be able to appropriately identify and rectify reproductive issues.
- ◆ There are many ways to improve reproductive performance.
- ◆ Bull percentage is the silver bullet fail safe, at 1:20 bull to female ratio.
- ◆ The key is getting in calf early.

Relevant tools and resources

◆ **More Beef from Pastures**

The MLA More beef from pastures (MBfP) program aims to achieve a sustainable (economic and environmental) increase in kilograms of beef produced per hectare through optimal management of the feedbase. An online producer’s manual is available. Each module provides tools and information to enable southern beef producers to increase productivity and profit while minimising risk.



◆ **MLA BredWell FedWell**

BredWell FedWell is a practical, one-day workshop highlighting the key production benefits of superior genetics, plus feed management for improved reproductive performance and livestock productivity.



◆ **MLA Building better breeders**

Building Better Breeders covers the A–Z of beef breeding in southern and temperate zones while supporting producers to introduce and utilise eID in their operations, which takes producers through every step to improve the performance of their cattle enterprise.



◆ **MBfP Preparing to join beef cattle**

A webinar outlining the ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘when’ of preparing the bulls.



Shedding sheep 101: A practical look at production and profitability



David Stade

Producer, Hounsome, Katanning



Ed Riggall

Director, AgPro Management

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About Ed

Ed's passion is in designing farming systems that are aligned, work easily, and match the client's management capacity, be it for sheep systems or the whole farm and how crop and sheep interact. Prior to establishing AgPro Management, Ed worked on-farm and for consulting company, JRL Hall & Co. He has a Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting and a Diploma in Wool Production & Marketing. When not driving across the countryside visiting clients, Ed can be found out mountain biking, running and spending time with his family.

About David

David farms with his young family and brother in Katanning, on the farm where they grew up. There they crop wheat, barley, canola and lupins, while on the other 40% of the property, run Dorpers on clover pastures. After studying Business at Curtin University, David travelled, farmed elsewhere, and worked in the mining industry, before coming back to the farm at 23, where he has been farming ever since. David loves that his job means being outdoors 'working with nature...and often against nature'. However, David believes in a healthy work life balance and that 'there is more to life than growing wheat' – meaning that he gets off-farm often. He loves spending time with his family, playing golf and tennis, and being involved with his local community.

Session summary

Shedding sheep have been run in Australia for many years and with many genetic iterations. Over the past three decades, national flock numbers have had some dramatic increases, in response to low wool price, high meat price, labour shortages, a desire to simplify business models and increase the meat output. At the moment, with shearer shortages and high meat prices, there is high demand for shedding sheep as breeding ewes.

But what is the reality of running a large scale, commercially stocked operation of shedding sheep?

Let's find out from those who live and breathe it – the Stade family from Katanning, who started producing shedding sheep in 1997. Since then, they have been down several genetic pathways and sheep systems, making adaptations along the way.

In this presentation David Stade and consultant Ed Riggall will share the journey of what's worked, what hasn't worked so well, and what changes they are currently making.

They will also drill into key aspects of the system including:

- ◆ Infrastructure: fencing and sheep handlers, as well as differences in how stock are managed in paddocks and yards, including dogs.
- ◆ Pasture and paddock management: what is required to run shedders at high stocking rates.
- ◆ Feed requirement rations compared to Merinos: performance in the paddock and in confinement pens, including a discussion on how shedders eat differently and have different nutritional requirements.
- ◆ Reproductive rates and experiences with single and multiple joinings (three joinings in two years) and general management required.
- ◆ Genetic change experienced over the years including lamb weights, reproduction and shedding ability.

These key aspects combine to determine gross margin per hectare compared to Merinos run in the same area. Using local benchmarking, Ed and David will discuss what those figures mean and what might be excluded in their calculation.

Key take home messages

- ◆ Think about WHY you are interested in shedding sheep.
- ◆ Think about WHERE they will fit into your system.
- ◆ Think about HOW you will manage them, and what changes would have to be made to your existing system to make it possible.
- ◆ Then re-think: are you are still interested in shifting to shedding sheep, or just jumping on the bandwagon?

Relevant tools and resources

◆ **Cost of production for beef, lamb and goat**

Cost of production (CoP), measured in cents/kg, is an indicator of the outlay required to produce each kilogram of meat. For producers wanting to improve the performance of their meat-producing enterprise, a good understanding of the current health of the business is essential. CoP is a key factor affecting the profitability of beef, sheep and goat producing businesses. Calculating your cost of production is an important step in assessing herd and flock performance and a first step to making change.



◆ **The keys to maximising non-Merino ewe survival during lambing**

This factsheet briefly summarises the key findings from the unlocking the keys to ewe survival project. It outlines lambing ewe mortality benchmarks, the key causes of death and primary risk factors, and the management practices that sheep producers can adopt to increase ewe survival during lambing.



◆ **Lifetime Maternals**

Improved guidelines for managing non-merino ewes developed from a national research project funded by MLA.



Lamb growth rates: optimising the achievable



David Pethick

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About David

David is a university professor who teaches Veterinary and Animal Science students the great subjects of biochemistry and nutrition, with a special emphasis on meat science. With over 383 scientific publications, he has a deep understanding of his subject matter despite his claim that: 'I'm just an ordinary fella who loves understanding what makes livestock tick'.

Although he is formally retired, he still undertakes research on the meat quality of beef and lamb, plus keeps an eye on the effects of nutrition on disease expression in farm animals.

Session summary

1. Factors effecting lean meat yield – defined as muscling and fatness will be discussed with the following key points:
 - ◆ Rate of growth influences fatness i.e. faster growth = more fat deposition.
 - ◆ Growth genetics need adequate nutrition for expression.
 - ◆ Expression of muscling genetics are less effected by nutrition.
 - ◆ Lambs will show some level of compensatory growth after a period of retardation.
 - ◆ Live weight gain and carcass composition (lean meat yield) are not compromised by undernutrition at any stage when followed by improved nutrition.
 - ◆ Weaning at 20kg (nine weeks) versus 30kg (14 weeks) live weight followed by restricted or adequate nutrition does not affect final carcass composition.
2. Effects of sex, birth type, dam age and sire/dam type on lamb growth at 240 days of age

| Variable | Contrast | Live weight difference |
|-----------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Sex | Wether vs ewe | +2-3kg |
| Rear type | Twin v single | -4kg |
| Rear type | Triplet v single | -6-7kg |
| Dam age | 2 vs 6 years | -3.5kg |
| Sire type | Merino vs Maternal | -8kg |
| | Merino vs Terminal | -15kg |
| Dam breed | Merino vs Maternal x Merino | -5kg |

(Data collected from across eight Sheep CRC information nucleus sites)

3. Growth path factors effecting eating quality:

- ◆ Factors effecting the eating quality of lamb cuts as predicted by the Meat Standards Australia model include lean meat yield, intramuscular fat, aging of the meat, electrical stimulation and retail packaging method.
- ◆ Intramuscular fat expression is approximately 50% genetic.
- ◆ Expression improves with higher nutrition and advancing animal age. As lambs become older the growth of muscle slows while fat accretion continues.
- ◆ Research supports international data that lamb flavour is not greatly influenced by the type of diet (grass versus grain).
- ◆ For lamb meat undergoing chilled export and long aging periods before consumption, pH is important. This means adequate feed in the pre-slaughter period combined with stress minimisation during the consignment period to keep the glycogen bucket full.
- ◆ Vitamin E is important for lamb meat colour, meaning that supplementation is need when lambs have no access to green growing pastures.

4. Carcase shrinkage:

- ◆ Carcase shrink in lambs due to fasting is very significant.
- ◆ It is estimated that 0.1%/hour of carcase weight loss occurs after about 12 hours off-feed.

Key take home messages

- ◆ Growth restriction in lambs does not affect final carcase composition after refeeding to the same weight.
- ◆ Intramuscular fat is an important predictor of eating quality in the Meat Standards Australia prediction model.
- ◆ Manage the glycogen bucket to keep it full.
- ◆ Intramuscular fat is determined approximately 50% by genetics.
- ◆ Lambs show a high level of carcase shrink when fasted for more than 12 hours.

Relevant tools and resources

◆ Livestock Data Link (LDL)

LDL is an online program that enables the timely sharing of carcase and animal disease information between processors and their producers with the aim of optimising supply chain performance.



◆ **MSA Meat Science Course**

This course explains the scientific factors affecting the eating quality of red meat. Facilitated by Dr Graeme Martin (Murdoch University) and Dr Peter McGilchrist (University of New England) this five-day intensive is suitable for producers, lot feeders, stock agents, traders and consultants.



◆ **Meat Standards Australia (MSA)**

MSA was developed by the Australian red meat industry to improve the consistency of eating quality of beef and sheepmeat.



◆ **MLA Genetics hub**

The one-stop shop for resources to help build understanding of breeding values and applying genetic tools to improve their flock.



◆ **Lifting lamb survival**

An MLA Profitable Grazing Systems six-month training program for producers to gain greater control over lambing and reproduction outcomes.



◆ **Towards 90 (T90) program**

The Towards 90 (T90) program is an adoption program all about sheep reproduction and is funded by MLA. It aims to accelerate the adoption of sheep reproduction best-practices. The T90 brand reflects the aspirational targets of achieving 90% and beyond in lamb survival across single and twin-bearing ewes.



Intramuscular fat and eating quality

What is IMF?

Intramuscular fat (IMF), often known as marbling, is the distribution of fat within muscle. In lamb carcasses IMF measurements are currently taken from the loin and expressed as a percentage.

Intramuscular fat is a key driver of eating quality in sheepmeat. Despite being measured in the loin, IMF has a positive impact on eating across all cuts in the carcass and contributes to all factors of eating quality, including flavour and overall liking. IMF can be influenced by genetics and management, such as nutrition leading up to slaughter. It is the last fat to be deposited in the animal, with its greatest deposition evident in later stages of the growth process when nutrition supplied to the animal is above maintenance levels. It is also the first energy source to be utilised, making nutrition leading up to slaughter very important.

How does IMF affect eating quality?

Intramuscular fat has a strong influence on eating quality as indicated by consumer sensory scores of sheepmeat, when using the Meat Standards Australia (MSA) consumer sensory score protocols. It has a significant impact on the tenderness, juiciness, flavour and overall liking of the product, which ultimately determines if the product meets or fails consumer expectations. The results of untrained consumer sensory tests show that as IMF increases, so too do the predicted consumer meat quality (MQ4) scores.

Research data also shows that the average IMF of the Australian flock is approximately 4%. This average IMF percentage, when paired with a 26kg hot carcass weight and LMY above 60 results in a good everyday eating quality outcome. However, if IMF% is increased then this results in a better than everyday or premium product, as can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2 below.

What influences IMF?

IMF is predominantly influenced by management and genetics. Good management, such as ensuring a rising plane of nutrition and minimal stress leading up to slaughter, has a positive influence on IMF. In regard to genetics, Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) are available for a range of eating quality traits and indexes. These ASBVs are available to assist in making decisions when buying ewes or rams to improve IMF and overall eating quality of the end product.

There is an IMF ASBV that can be selected, however it is important that other traits and indexes are considered in any breeding objective when making purchasing and breeding decisions.

Figure 1: Higher (top) versus lower (bottom) marbling loin



Utilising ASBVs and eating quality indexes to select rams will assist in improving the eating quality of the progeny.

Click the below links for further genetics resources or visit genetics.mla.com.au or sheepgenetics.org.au:

[Eating Quality ASBVs](#)

[Terminal Indexes for buying rams](#)

[Terminal Indexes for breeding rams](#)

Figure 2: Relationship between the lean meat yield (LMY) and intramuscular fat (IMF) ASBVs in the Australian flock.

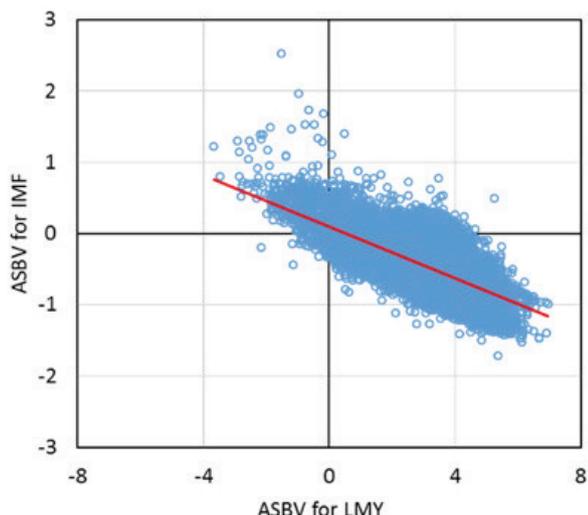
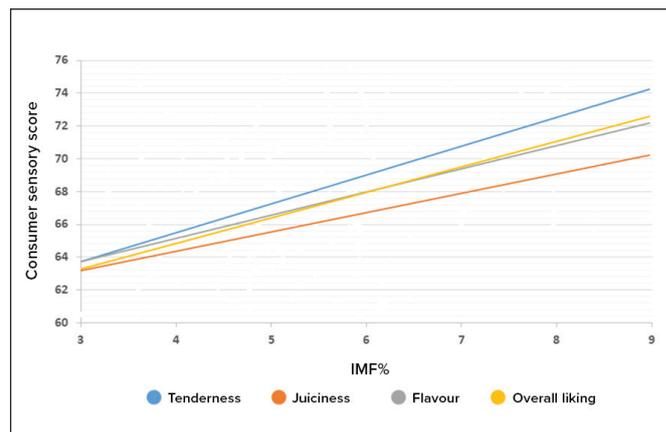


Figure 3: The relationship between intramuscular fat (IMF) and consumer sensory scores.



Consumer meat quality scores (MQ4) are a combined score of tenderness, juiciness, flavour and overall liking, and are a score out of 100. As part of the MSA program, this score is used to classify the product as fail, good everyday (3 star), better than everyday (4 star) or premium (5 star). The below tables illustrate the different consumer quality scores based on a 26kg carcass with a range of IMF and LMY values for both the loin and the topside.

Table 1: Consumer meat quality scores and MSA star rating for the loin across a range of intramuscular fat (IMF) and lean meat yield (LMY) percentages, for a 26kg carcass.

| LMY (%) | IMF (%) | | | | | | | |
|---------|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | Loin | | | | | | | |
| 50 | 61.9 | 64.6 | 67.2 | 69.9 | 72.5 | 75.2 | 77.8 | 80.5 |
| 55 | 61.4 | 64.0 | 66.7 | 69.3 | 72.0 | 74.6 | 77.3 | 79.9 |
| 60 | 60.9 | 63.5 | 66.2 | 68.8 | 71.5 | 74.1 | 76.7 | 79.4 |
| 65 | 60.3 | 63.0 | 65.6 | 68.3 | 70.9 | 73.6 | 76.2 | 78.9 |

● 3 star (good everyday)
 ● 4 star (better than everyday)
 ● 5 star (premium)

Table 2: Consumer meat quality scores and MSA star rating for the topside across a range of intramuscular fat (IMF) and lean meat yield (LMY) percentages, for a 26kg carcass.

| LMY (%) | IMF (%) | | | | | | | |
|---------|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | Topside | | | | | | | |
| 50 | 49.9 | 51.1 | 52.3 | 53.4 | 54.6 | 55.8 | 57.0 | 58.2 |
| 55 | 49.4 | 50.5 | 51.7 | 52.9 | 54.1 | 55.3 | 56.5 | 57.6 |
| 60 | 48.8 | 50.0 | 51.2 | 52.4 | 53.6 | 54.7 | 55.9 | 57.1 |
| 65 | 48.3 | 49.5 | 50.7 | 51.8 | 53.0 | 54.2 | 55.4 | 56.6 |

● 3 star (good everyday)

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Lean meat yield and eating quality

What is LMY?

Lean meat yield (LMY) is the proportion of lean meat tissue to bone and fat in a carcass and is expressed as a percentage LMY%. Lean meat yield is estimated from a combination of weight, muscle and fat dimensions and has been measured through devices such as dual energy x-ray or commercial bone outs and validated through computer tomography (CT) scanning. LMY has a relatively high genetic heritability.

How does LMY affect eating quality?

Lean meat yield and eating quality have a negative relationship, whereby as LMY increases, eating quality decreases, if it is not considered in the genetic selection decision. Eating quality is influenced by intramuscular fat (IMF), hot carcass weight (HCW) and LMY.

Lean meat yield and IMF are opposed traits and need to be balanced in genetic selection decisions. Use of the Sheep Genetics eating quality indexes, and accounting for other production traits of importance assist in decreasing adverse breeding outcomes. Generally, a high yielding carcass with lower IMF values have an increased shear force, resulting in tougher and less tender meat.

Eating quality research utilising untrained consumers scored sheepmeat samples for tenderness, juiciness, flavour and overall liking. This research confirmed that as LMY increases, eating quality decreased, though this trend was less in higher percentage IMF samples. Low IMF percentages and high yielding carcasses were found to score negatively across various cuts in the carcass for all four sensory scores.

Figure 1: The relationship between lean meat yield (LMY%) and consumer meat quality (MQ4) score for high (7%), medium (5%) and low (3%) levels of intramuscular fat (IMF%).

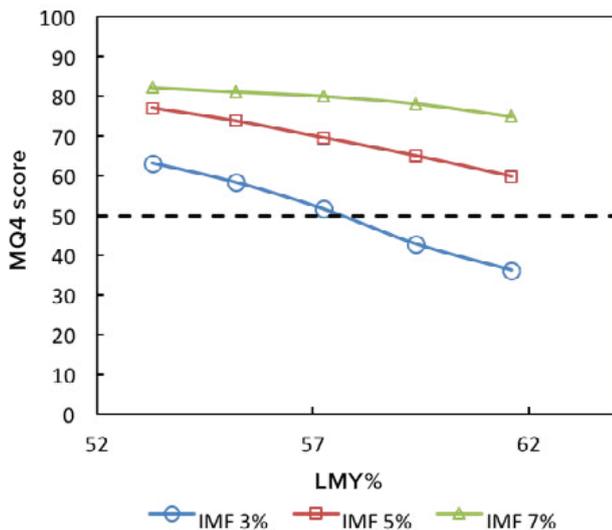
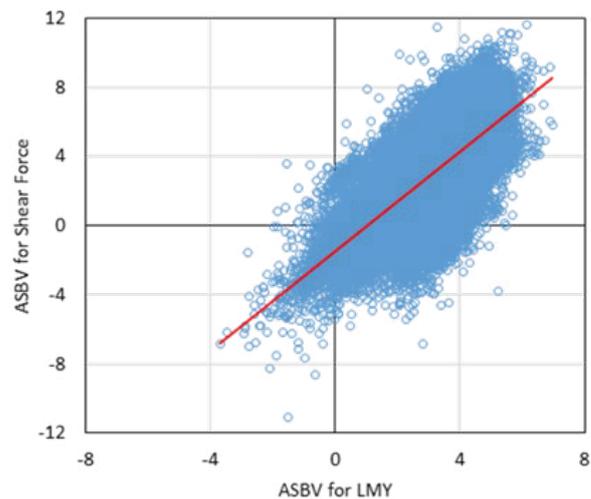


Figure 2: Relationship between the shear force and lean meat yield (LMY) Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) in the Australian flock.



Utilising ASBVs and eating quality indexes to select rams will assist in improving the eating quality of the progeny.

Click the below links for further genetics resources or visit genetics.mla.com.au or sheepgenetics.org.au:

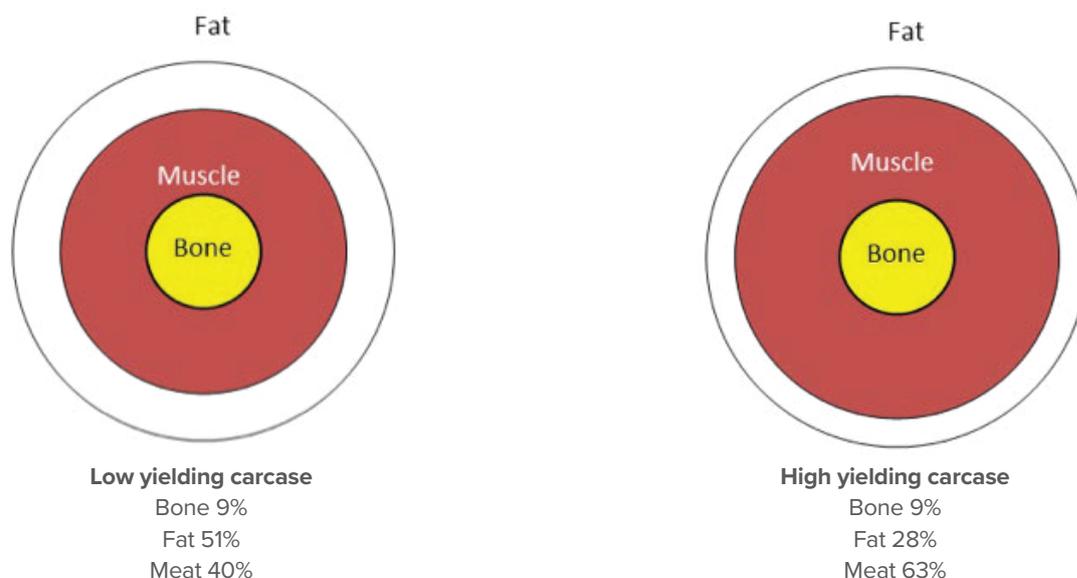
[Eating Quality ASBVs](#)

[Terminal Indexes for buying rams](#)

[Terminal Indexes for breeding rams](#)



Figure 3: A schematic representation of the relative amounts of bone, fat, and meat in carcasses with low and high LMY%. The area of each circle equals the percentage of each component of a whole carcass.



Consumer meat quality (MQ4) scores are a combined score of tenderness, juiciness, flavour and overall liking, and are a score out of 100. As part of the Meat Standards Australia (MSA) program, this score is used to classify the product as fail, good everyday (3 star), better than everyday (4 star) or premium (5 star). The below tables illustrate the different consumer quality scores based on a 26kg carcass with a range of IMF and LMY percentages for both the loin and the topside.

Table 1: Consumer meat quality scores and MSA star rating for the loin across a range of intramuscular fat (IMF) and lean meat yield (LMY) percentages, for a 26kg carcass.

| | | LMY (%) | | | | | | |
|---------|--|---------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | 50 | 52 | 54 | 56 | 58 | 60 | 62 |
| IMF (%) | | Loin | | | | | | |
| 3 | | 61.9 | 61.7 | 61.5 | 61.3 | 61.1 | 60.9 | 60.7 |
| 4 | | 64.6 | 64.4 | 64.2 | 63.9 | 63.7 | 63.5 | 63.3 |
| 5 | | 67.2 | 67.0 | 66.8 | 66.6 | 66.4 | 66.2 | 65.9 |
| 6 | | 69.9 | 69.7 | 69.4 | 69.2 | 69.0 | 68.8 | 68.6 |
| 7 | | 72.5 | 72.3 | 72.1 | 71.9 | 71.7 | 71.5 | 71.2 |

● 3 star (good everyday) ● 4 star (better than everyday)

Table 2: Consumer meat quality scores and MSA star rating for the topside across a range of intramuscular fat (IMF) and lean meat yield (LMY) percentages, for a 26kg carcass.

| | | LMY (%) | | | | | | |
|---------|--|---------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | 50 | 52 | 54 | 56 | 58 | 60 | 62 |
| IMF (%) | | Topside | | | | | | |
| 3 | | 49.9 | 49.7 | 49.5 | 49.3 | 49.0 | 48.8 | 48.6 |
| 4 | | 51.1 | 50.9 | 50.6 | 50.4 | 50.2 | 50.0 | 49.8 |
| 5 | | 52.3 | 52.0 | 51.8 | 51.6 | 51.4 | 51.2 | 51.0 |
| 6 | | 53.4 | 53.2 | 53.0 | 52.8 | 52.6 | 52.4 | 52.2 |
| 7 | | 54.6 | 54.4 | 54.2 | 54.0 | 53.8 | 53.6 | 53.3 |

● 3 star (good everyday)

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Virtual farm tour



Jeremy Walker

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About Jeremy

Jeremy Walker is a producer, husband, father and keen surfer based in WA's south, 70km north-east of Albany in Green Range. He grew up on the family farm until he was 11, when circumstances forced his family to convert the property into forestry. Since then, he has worked on a corporate sized farm in Kojonup, and has had the joy of returning the family farm to productive crop and pasture paddocks. He's the first to put his hand up to host trials, field days, or let a camera crew on-farm, and is constantly learning with and from others.

Session summary

'Kilchatten' is the Walkers' farm, at Green Range. Owned and managed by Jeremy and Caitlin Walker, the sheep and cropping enterprises experience a lot of challenging, variable weather and seasons, characteristic of the south coast.

This has shaped their approach to farming, and in response this business has seen a lot of change in the last few years. Jeremy is young, takes calculated risks, is willing to try new things, and actively seeks advice. This has led to him adapting his farming system to best utilise his environment, running an intensive, high production system with lots of moving parts, that exceeds expectations.

This virtual farm tour will outline the journey the Walkers have taken in recent years, as Jeremy transformed the farm from a tree plantation and back into productive farmland. "It's still very much a work in progress" Jeremy laughed while filming. "But it's important that other producers see an honest representation of what's going on – perhaps a farm just like theirs, and hear where the money is coming from and what we are investing in," Jeremy said.

With significant investment into irrigation, new pastures, hosting trials and bulking seed for various organisations, Jeremy has made some big changes in the last few years. The idea has been to diversify, as well as explore ways to stretch out feed to fill the feed gaps in both autumn and spring. This has led to summer crops and pastures, such as sorghum, canola and millet, as well as adding oats, ryegrass and clovers to improve winter pastures after the blue gums were removed. This, in conjunction with confinement feeding has helped lift the stocking rate drastically.

A new confinement feeding system has been a game changer for Jeremy and Caitlyn's Merino and crossbred flocks, allowing pastures to be spelled and ewes to lamb into green feed. "I did this as part of a MLA PDS with the Stirlings to Coast grower group, and what I learnt was invaluable, and unexpected. For example, we did feed testing and it turns out I'm rubbish at making decent hay, so now we don't waste our time trying, and instead buy in more feed," Jeremy said.

As you will see in the virtual farm tour, Jeremy isn't afraid to share his mistakes with others. He hopes that by sharing, he's helping others learn from his mistakes, and hopefully not repeat them. In spite of Jeremy's humble claim, there are many positive learnings to take from this presentation.

Key take home messages

- ◆ Every farm business is different, and has its own climate, challenges and strengths, so will suit a different system – trial and error will help you find it.
- ◆ Don't be afraid to take risks, experiment and keep learning.
- ◆ Knowledge has never been more accessible, so utilise it and its sources (fellow farmers, agronomists, advisors etc.).

Relevant tools and resources

◆ The toolbox

MLA's eLearning platform, *The toolbox*, is a collection of digital resources for red meat producers that features training courses, tips, tools, and calculators.



◆ MLA Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) Confinement feeding

Stirlings to Coast's hub for the Confinement feeding PDS, hosting all information and future events.



◆ MLA BusinessEDGE

BusinessEDGE is a comprehensive two-day workshop for owners and managers of grazing enterprises. It's specifically designed to improve financial literacy and business skills.

Themes available:

- Breeding
- Business
- Young Guns (business)
- Nutrition
- Grazing land management
- Grazing fundamentals.



◆ **AWI Genetics**

Woolgrowers have diverse breeding objectives for varied enterprises and environments, and AWI supports sheep breeding research and development, benchmarking and breeder tools for woolgrowers wanting to monitor, set targets and optimise the rate of genetic gain of their sheep, inclusive of all breeding philosophies.

Visit wool.com/genetics to access a range of quality genetic benchmarking tools and informed sheep selection practices for productivity and profitability, particularly in non-visual, lowly heritable traits or antagonistic relationships across fleece, growth, reproduction and animal welfare.



◆ **Livestock Data Link (LDL)**

LDL is an online program that enables the timely sharing of carcass and animal disease information between processors and their producers with the aim of optimising supply chain performance.



◆ **MLA Genetics hub**

This hub is a learning resource for producers who are keen to learn more about genetic tools, and how they can use them in their sire selection decisions. Go to genetics.mla.com.au and choose your enterprise to get targeted information on using genetics in your flock.



◆ **MLA Feedbase hubs**

Manage your pastures for optimal performance with practical resources found on MLA's feedbase hubs. These hubs bring together the latest R&D on soil, pasture and weed management to increase pasture production, quality and persistence. Featuring case studies, calculators, reference guides and training packages, the hubs offer plenty of practical information to support producer decisions throughout the season.



Spring sown canola and forage brassica



Tim Metcalfe

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About Tim

Tim farms alongside his brother and parents in Manypeaks WA, where they run cattle and sheep, as well as crop. Metcalfe Pastoral is primarily cattle focused, with a commercial herd as well as Angus and Murray Grey studs. The commercial beef enterprise is predominantly grassfed cattle to fill contracts for supermarket supply, therefore pastures are a key component of their feedbase. Since coming back to the family farm, Tim has a particular focus on pasture and fodder crops and has been trialing ways to fill summer and autumn feed gaps.

About James

James services Elders agronomy clients in Albany, Boxwood, Gairdner, Jerramungup and Borden areas. Specialising in medium to high rainfall cropping and pasture production. James studied at Curtin University – Muresk Campus gaining a Bachelor of Agribusiness. Growing up on a cropping and sheep farm at Jacup, James had an early apprenticeship into annual and perennial pasture cropping systems.

Session summary

It is known that on the South Coast, producers can grow feed in spring and winter, but increasingly the area is seeing alternative feeds being grown in autumn and summer. On the back of wet years and full soil moisture profiles, there has been several spring-sown crops being explored – first Raphano, and now the cheaper alternative, winter (dual purpose) canola.

Overall, this presentation will focus on on-farm experiences in the high rainfall zone with establishing winter canola in spring, utilising this for filling grazing feed gaps in summer and autumn with extremely high-quality feed, and then taking the crop through to grain yield.

Tim and James will be taking a practical approach to summer grazing canola, using some of Tim's experiences to discuss what does and doesn't work on the south coast, as well as James' extensive knowledge to outline how to get the best from forage brassicas.

Topics discussed will include:

- ◆ paddock preparation
- ◆ crop establishment
- ◆ insect management
- ◆ grazing management and nutrition considerations
- ◆ animal performance
- ◆ risks, including green bridge and virus/disease
- ◆ seasonal conditions and final yields.

When looking at spring sown canola, which is essentially an 18-month crop, the first question to ask is what are producers going to achieve by utilising it? With any new system, it needs to be cut down to: what do we want from it, how are we going to do it and what are our risks?

What

- ◆ In a Great Southern mixed farming system, spring sown canola means producers can utilise and create out-of-season feed. For the Metcalfes, this means supplying grassfed beef all year round, for other businesses spring-sown forage crops can influence, rapid weight increases for stock, a less reliance on purchased supplementary feed and ability to maintain mid-winter stocking rates.

How

- ◆ Simple, effective agronomy and sheep husbandry. Treat spring-sown forage as a crop, with the input costs of seed, fertiliser and chemical. Sow it at the right time, get a good knock down and use the correct variety for your enterprise and region (Clearfield).
- ◆ Correct grazing management will ensure that feed is efficiently utilised, and can continue to grow between grazing periods.

Risks

- ◆ Risks are the same as any crop: insects, weed control, too wet, too dry Be sure to manage your pest risk such as snails, diamondback moth and weeds.
- ◆ When it comes to livestock, sheep and cattle should commence grazing once the plants pass the 'pinch and twist' test, otherwise they will be pulled from the ground. Livestock need to be introduced slowly onto forage crops – industry recommendation is over a 7–10 day introduction period (grazing 1–2 hours/day and slowly increasing access, often with a full gut of a different feed). Due to the high digestibility and low NDF (neutral detergent fibre) content, cattle grazing forage brassicas for their entire feed allocation are at risk of acidosis – as a general guide, brassicas shouldn't make up more than 70% of their feed, with other roughage supplied.
- ◆ It's also important to remember, that for dual-purpose forage crops, livestock should be removed from the paddock before the reproductive 'bud' appears if planning on harvesting grain.

Key take home messages

- ◆ Spring sown brassicas can provide quality out of season green feed, with the potential bonus of a grain crop.
- ◆ Treat forage brassicas like a normal crop and involve your agronomist, fertilise and manage pests.
- ◆ The addition of a forage brassica to fill a feed gap can provide livestock with a high-quality feed to maintain or increase live weight.

Relevant tools and resources

- ◆ **Filling the summer/autumn feed gap**

This brings together information and tools about filling the summer feed gap, with different pasture options, including brassicas.



- ◆ **Grazing crops and stubble**

A compendium of resources from Grain and Graze on grazing of crops and stubbles.



- ◆ **MLA Feedbase hubs**

Manage your pastures for optimal performance with practical resources found on MLA's Feedbase hubs.

These hubs bring together the latest R&D on soil, pasture and weed management to increase pasture production, quality and persistence. Featuring case studies, calculators, reference guides and training packages, the hubs offer plenty of practical information to support producer decisions throughout the season.



Successful hay and silage: The science and techniques



Dan Parnell

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Tom Depiazzi

Owner/Manager, Depiazzi Agri Co.

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About Tom

Tom and his wife Tracy, in partnership with his brother Rob and sister-in-law, Karen, run a beef breeding operation on 800ha across two properties, based around Dardanup and Boyup Brook in the south west of WA. The home farm has been in the family since 1932. Having previously been a dairy farm until 2005, Tom and Rob diversified the business away from dairy and into a beef herd and also work in contract seeding, spraying and fodder production. Tom has extensive experience in producing high quality fodder, gained from his contract work as well as his own farm business.

About Dan

For the past 11 years, Dan has run a part-time farm consultancy business with a focus on agronomy and business management for high-rainfall beef and dairy farm businesses. He also works part-time for Western Dairy managing the dairy effluent project which involves design and installation of dairy effluent systems and dairy shed design. In his role at Western Dairy, he also runs Feeding Pastures for Courses and has been involved in the Dairy Farm Monitor Project since its inception.

Dan has a Bachelor of Agricultural Science from The University of Western Australia and a Graduate Certificate in Business from Edith Cowan University. He worked briefly for the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development in Three Springs then for 17 years with CSBP at Lake Grace, Narrogin and Bunbury. He enjoys long distance running, plays competitive darts and has an original song on Spotify.

Session summary

Fodder production is a critical yet complex process at all levels in Western Australian high rainfall grazing systems. It is important because the state has consistent periods of summer drought and consistent periods (spring) where pasture/crop production exceeds demand by livestock and there is a feed surplus. Fodder production is all about trying to ensure excess feed is spread out over the year, and used in those times of deficit – and used all year round to maximise animals productivity.

Assuming your herd/flock structure is settled then we can ask the following question: Is the existing supplementary feed method the most cost-efficient way to match the feed demands of the livestock enterprise? Consider alternatives (i.e. grain or purchased feed). These alternatives may include grain, pellets, imported hay, irrigation etc.

If the decision has been made to produce fodder on-farm as the most cost-effective method of supplementary feeding, then the consideration should be which product provides the best value (remember, value is different to cost).

The value question is driven by two factors.

Firstly, demand. This is driven by the class of animal, and by what other feed is available at feed out time. For example, if feeding lactating or growing animals when the only other feed is dry standing feed, then reasonable silage will almost always be the best value. Likewise, if the forage is budgeted to be fed when there is a reasonable amount of fresh pasture in the diet i.e. winter or irrigation then good quality hay may be better value.

Secondly, the value of forage is driven by our ability to make, store and feed out a consistent high-quality product. This has lots of drivers including the weather (risk), farm infrastructure, labour, and scale.

One thing is consistent – poor quality homegrown hay or silage is always more expensive than the alternatives.

For both hay and silage the following step by step process applies:

FORAGE SUCCESS CHAIN STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS



Improvements in this chain can results in large differences and apply for both hay and silage

Efficient overheads

Hay/silage making machinery is expensive and over capitalising can add significant cost to forage which is often not realised until gear is traded in. Scale and labour availability drives the right balance between owning equipment versus using a contractor. If you produce less than 350–400t of dry matter, then owning significant capital equipment will likely add excessive cost.

Optimise quality

What goes in the mower largely determines quality. Fresh leafy grass will have high quality then reproductive pasture with a high proportion of stem. For pastures, cutting early will improve forage quality and post-cut quality and production. Wilting quickly to the target dry matter content is extremely important. For silage get the grass in the

stack/bale as fast as possible. Aim for 48 hours early in the season and 24 hours when things warm up a bit. For hay field losses can be significant. Aim to have hay baled within seven days.

Maximise yield for the target quality

There is a yield-quality trade off, but having reasonable yields will dilute the fixed costs of equipment and contractors. So for your target quality, ensure that you are achieving maximise yield. This means good agronomy which includes appropriate varieties, good weed control and not being frugal with fertiliser.

Store well

With silage, air is the enemy. The following equation applies to the making and storing of silage, whether it is pit or bale:

Silage + oxygen = CO₂ + heat + water

Letting any air in during the storage period will set off the above equation and result in a mouldy mess which can lead to significant waste. Well-sealed, compacted bales and pits will reduce this risk.

With hay, bales stored outside for any length of time will lead to significant waste. A good hay shed can reduce this waste significantly.

Feed-out efficiently

Poor feed out efficiency can lead to significant waste and therefore cost. Losses are typically 15% and obviously poor-quality feed can exaggerate these losses. Having a feed out system in place that reduces fouling from the herd and environmental factors is well worth exploring.

Key take home messages

- ◆ Chose the right forage system for you – is hay or silage the best fit for you? Produced or purchased?
- ◆ Get better at it.
- ◆ The only way to determine the above is to measure more and utilise feed testing.

Relevant tools and resources

◆ Top fodder manual

This manual is aimed at a very broad audience – farmers, producers, contractors, advisors and agribusinesses with specific interest in silage. It draws together information from around the world on all aspects of silage relevant to the Australian grazing industries. The aim has been to cover ‘everything you ever needed to know about silage’ from the practical to the scientific.



◆ MLA Feedbase hubs

Manage your pastures for optimal performance with practical resources found on MLA’s Feedbase hubs. These hubs bring together the latest R&D on soil, pasture and weed management to increase pasture production, quality and persistence.



Featuring case studies, calculators, reference guides and training packages, the hubs offer plenty of practical information to support producer decisions throughout the season.

◆ **How to utilise Pastures from Space™**

Pastures from Space™ estimates green feed on offer (FOO) and the pasture growth rate (PGR). FOO is the above-ground green pasture biomass expressed as kg/ha and PGR is the current rate of pasture growth in kg/ha per day.



◆ **Australian Feedbase Monitor webinar**

This webinar was recorded to help producers get started with the Australian Feedbase Monitor, and provides an extensive 'how to' for all aspects of the tool.



◆ **Pasture growth estimates**

A series of pasture growth rate (kg/ha/day) tables and graphs for regions across Australia. The data set was compiled for the MLA Feed demand calculator using validated curves from research sites, data presented in GrassGro, and with input from experienced research and extension professionals.



Proactive business and people management in mixed farming



Paul O'Meehan

A O'Meehan and Co

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Twitter: Doctor_650

About Paul

Paul O'Meehan is a producer with a motorbike and jogging addiction. A Borden boy, he came home after school to work with his father and their one workman and has built up the business in the many years since. He's proud to now have a feedlot capacity of 5,000 head and their own brand, Stirling Ranges Beef (formerly Butterfield Beef) and employs up to 13 people in the busy seasons.

He would like to add that "Twitter has dobbed him in to speak" after many have seen his proactive, hands-on approach to managing a large number of staff over seeding, as well as responses from fellow producers from his 2022 MeatUp presentation.

Session summary

Paul will be focusing on culture in the workplace, and how to manage scaling up a family farm. From a father and son set up, to taking more of a 'manager' role, Paul is outlining his family's journey through upscaling and making sure you're still 'in the trenches' and not just stuck in a 'HR or office type role and still get to jump on the tractor'.

What is taken away from this presentation is personal to you and your business, as although many aspects are applicable to all farming businesses 'not one size fits all'.

Paul will address what he identifies as three key aspects of managing a farming business as it grows:

1. Vision

Vision should be created with the involvement of the whole workforce, creating ownership by the whole team.

2. Values

Values are an internal reference for what is good or bad, desirable or undesirable in ourselves and others. Values are moral principles, so significant they drive our behaviours and our interactions with others and the world, and are just as important in the workplace as they are personally.

3. HR

HR is a critical part of our business. We believe establishing a well-functioning team is vital to the execution of a farming enterprise, so we create several opportunities throughout the year for our team to have input and receive understanding of the farm program.

Key take home messages

There are three key aspects to managing people, and managing your business as it grows:

1. Vision
2. Values
3. People.

Relevant tools and resources

◆ The toolbox

MLA's eLearning platform, *The toolbox* has a collection of resources that feature tools, calculators and training courses, such as people and business. Visit elearning.mla.com.au



◆ People in Agriculture

People in Agriculture is an initiative that provides all the latest information about working in the industry. The easy to use website features information on employment law, news, career management and professional practice. It is a free resource built for all employees and employers within the agricultural industry.



◆ Lead with certainty (PGS)

An MLA Profitable Grazing System (PGS) package which helps participants develop a better understanding of themselves and their teams, whilst learning more effective ways of creating a positive team culture through planning, goal setting and communication.



BredWell FedWell: Breeding and feeding to maximise profit



Sarita Guy

Project Manager Genetics Adoption, MLA

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About Sarita

Dr Sarita Guy is MLA's Project Manager for Genetics Adoption, based in Armidale NSW. She has a real interest in livestock breeding and genetics since her first experience with agriculture at the age of 12. In addition to her role at MLA, she is developing small scale poultry and sheep breeding enterprises.

Prior to joining MLA, Sarita was a quantitative geneticist at the Animal Genetics and Breeding Unit. Key areas of her work included development of the Sheep Genetics Data Quality Score, and breeding for carcass eating quality through consumer sensory testing and carcass yield through objective measurement technologies. She has been an invited speaker at Australian and international scientific forums and has also spent considerable time working with red meat processes to enhance carcass feedback to producers.

Sarita is passionate about supporting producers in the use of genetics as one of the tools to produce productive and profitable livestock. Sarita will be at MeatUp to talk about MLA's introductory workshop to breeding and feeding well, the BredWell FedWell workshop.

Session summary

Breeding and feeding to maximise profit

Genetic tools such as breeding values and selection indexes, allow you to see 'under the hood' of an animal. Combined with visual assessment of physical and structural soundness, these predictions of the genetics passed onto progeny will help with ram and bull purchasing decisions.

Your genetic investment can be maximised by feeding effectively across the production cycle. Managing the nutritional requirements of your animals requires understanding of your feed supply and demand cycle, and how to monitor body condition score.

Success in breeding and feeding are inextricably linked. MLA's BredWell FedWell workshop provides support to develop a genetics and nutrition plan suited to your enterprise, so you can maximise your profit.

The BredWell FedWell (BFWF) workshop

BFWF is a practical, one-day introductory workshop on how productivity and profitability can be improved through good breeding *and* feeding over the livestock production cycle, with a specific focus on profit drivers.

BFWF has demonstrated real impact. Between 2011 and 2020, BFWF has delivered \$17.2m* in total net benefits to participating producers. Participation in BFWF workshops resulted in average annual net benefit of \$2.48/ewe joined for sheep producers, and \$2.98/cow mated for beef producers.

After 10 years of successful delivery, BFWF has been redeveloped to reflect the evolving best practice genetics and nutrition management. The structure of the workshop will utilise the breeding and feeding production cycle, which covers pre-joining and joining, pregnancy, calving/lambing, weaning and beyond, and selection. Each 'wedge' in the cycle represents a major decision point, where consideration of both breeding (genetics) and feeding (nutrition) is required.

What will I learn at BFWF?

Workshops are hosted on-farm and aimed to improve your knowledge and skills so you can:

- ◆ Develop a customised breeding plan for your livestock enterprise aligned to your profit drivers.
- ◆ Identify sires and select animals that help you meet your objectives.
- ◆ Learn about feeding animals well to achieve your objective and maximise your genetic investment.

Key take home messages

- ◆ **Breed well** by using genetic tools, which are predictions of what genetics are passed onto an animal's progeny. Combined with visual assessment of physical and structural soundness, genetic tools help with ram and bull purchasing decisions.
- ◆ **Feed well** by understanding your feed supply and demand, and by monitoring the condition of animals. This will help to maximise your genetic investment.
- ◆ **Attend** MLA's refreshed BredWell FedWell workshop, available from April 2023. This practical, one-day introductory workshop has demonstrated real financial impact for attendees. You will be supported to develop a genetics and nutrition plan suited to your enterprise, so you can maximise your profit.

Get involved

- **Attend** a sheep, or southern beef workshop.
- **Host** a workshop on your property.
- **Deliver** a workshop.

mla.com.au/bredwellfedwell



Let's cut to it: Butcher demo, carcass discounts and MSA sheepmeat model



Rafael Ramirez

Butcher and red meat advocate

E: themeatspecialist@outlook.com

Twitter: [@themeatspecialist](https://twitter.com/themeatspecialist)



Rob Davidson

Producer Relations Manager, WAMMCO

E: rdavidson@wammco.com.au

About Rafael

Rafael has been part of the meat industry for over thirty years, and has had experience in all aspects from butchering, retailing, supermarket management, food service, business management, accredited training and marketing. This variety of experience has allowed him to relate to all industry members.

Rafael currently consults to the meat industry both in Australia and overseas and is responsible for coordinating and presenting training packages to the food service and retail sectors in overseas markets. Five-star resorts and wholesale distributors have used Rafael's services to help improve the butchery and meat preparation standards of their staff and clients. Rafael also oversees cold chain management processes, specifications, commercial performance and offers troubleshooting where required. Rafael has also been responsible for developing and introducing value added product lines for a major Malaysian retailer offering 'ready to cook' and 'ready to eat' lines in their growing butchery department.

Together with his current team, The Meat Specialist consultancy also offers key business management and commercial performance, webinar production services, customer service and staff training, sales and marketing strategies and project management to ensure client's business objectives are met.

About Rob

Rob Davidson graduated from University of Western Australia with a Bachelor in Science (Agriculture, Honours) and worked on industry based Meat Research Corporation grants at the university until 2003, looking at on-farm productivity. This included genetic Central Progeny Testing, nutritional programs to even the supply of lambs being presented to processors to 12 months/year rather than simply supplying in spring, maternal genetic evaluation especially focused on newly introduced breeds such as the Prime SAMM and East Friesian genetics, eating quality and lamb dentition research which was the precursor to the lamb definition change.

He joined the Western Australian Meat Marketing Cooperative (WAMMCO) in 2004, recently having his title altered to WAMMCO Producer Relations Manager to reflect his relationships with producers. Over the years, he has been a grower consultant to producers focusing on nutritional, genetic and any on-farm productivity issues, livestock buyers and involved in extension projects, and a number of plant related production projects.

When he's not busy with sheep and producers, he and his family are heavily involved in junior sport coaching and administration – AFL, Little Athletics and Surf Lifesaving, while he is also an avid supporter of the West Coast Eagles, and thoroughly enjoys beach fishing.

Session summary

Rafael and Rob know good meat, good carcasses, how to produce them and how to cook them. In this informal session, they invite audience questions as they break down a lamb carcass, show (pre-sourced) trimmings that cause producer discounts and talk about how to avoid them. They will also discuss what it takes on-farm and in the kitchen to ensure a good consumer experience, particularly in light of the new Meat Standards Australia (MSA) sheep model.

MSA sheepmeat cuts-based model

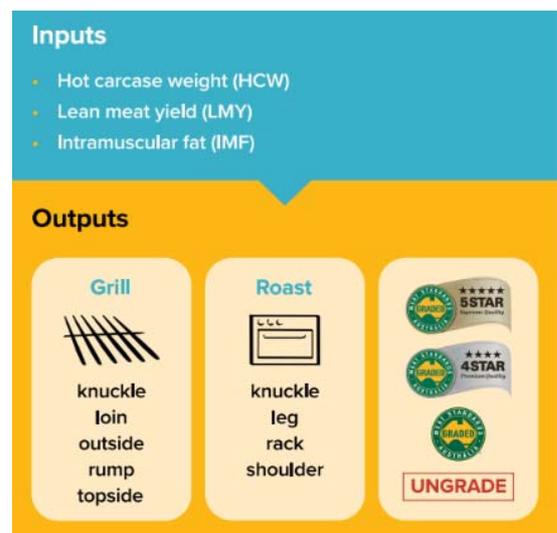
Following industry approval of the MSA sheepmeat cuts-based model, MSA took the next step towards the model's commercialisation in 2021–22, signalling a new frontier for the sheepmeat industry. Based on over a decade of research, the model uses three measurements on each carcass:

1. Hot carcass weight (HCW)
2. Lean meat yield (LMY)
3. Intramuscular fat (IMF).

The MSA model then predicts the eating quality of nine cut-by-cooking method outcomes (grill and roast) for each carcass.

Working with supply chains across Australia, MSA carried out benchmarking activities to understand the range in eating quality of the commercial flock through these supply chains. This aided in demonstrating the value proposition of the MSA sheepmeat cuts-based model, which will ultimately allow for processors and brand owners to apply sophisticated eating quality segregation within their supply chains. These engagements also provided an opportunity to discuss key areas of focus with supply chains including infrastructure and technology improvements, practical and system implications, as well as opportunities to support their suppliers towards proactive practice change through producer adoption programs.

The commercialisation of the MSA sheepmeat cuts-based model will underpin transformational change to the sheepmeat industry to capture more supply chain value. MSA's strategic goal is to commercialise the model in the 2022–23 financial year.



Key take home messages

- ◆ Carcase trimmings and their associated discounts are avoidable, and their causes all come from the farm.
- ◆ Sheepmeat eating quality is a measurable and premium trait, with some abattoirs already paying premiums for intramuscular fat.
- ◆ Lamb is a premium product, and the MSA model and cooking guide can guarantee consumer satisfaction and repeat purchases.

Relevant tools and resources

- ◆ **Meat the market**

This MLA Profitable Grazing System training package has a whole supply chain focus and trains producers in improving lamb processing compliance and lifting meat eating quality



- ◆ **Meat Standards Australia (MSA)**

MSA was developed by the Australian red meat industry to improve the consistency of eating quality of beef and sheepmeat.



- ◆ **MLA Genetics hub**

The one-stop shop for resources to help build understanding of breeding values, and applying genetic tools to improve their flock.



- ◆ **Livestock Data Link (LDL)**

LDL is an online program that enables the timely sharing of carcase and animal disease information between processors and their producers with the aim of optimising supply chain performance.



◆ **MSA Meat Science Course**

This course explains the scientific factors affecting the eating quality of red meat. Facilitated by Dr Graeme Martin (Murdoch University) and Dr Peter McGilchrist (University of New England) this five-day intensive is suitable for producers, lot feeders, stock agents, traders and consultants.



◆ **Carcass Impacts Tool: Health conditions**

The [Sheep Health Conditions – Carcass Impacts tool](#) is an interactive 3D web tool that shows the effects common health conditions can have on the quality of a sheep carcass. The tool shows what the health conditions look like on a carcass and highlights the amount of carcass loss from trim at the processor. It has some simple information on what changes can be made to farm practices to reduce and manage these conditions.



My take home messages and actions

Reflect on the presentations delivered at the MeatUp Forum. For those of relevance to you, note the session title, your key messages, and actions you can take to implement ideas.

| Session | Action – things I could do to implement ideas |
|---------|---|
| | |
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| | |
| | |



Australian Feedbase Monitor

Information for producers

The Australian Feedbase Monitor is a world-first tool to help producers improve grazing management, forage budgeting and ground cover.



The Australian Feedbase Monitor provides:

- access to farm-level rolling monthly pasture biomass estimates for every Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) account holder, updated every five days
- regionally calibrated predictions based on more than 6,000 sites, using world-leading satellite monitoring and data analysis systems
- data showing the trends in pasture growth and ground cover dating back to 2017
- support for more objective and accurate feed budgeting, leading to sustainable grazing management decisions.

How will this tool help producers?

The Australian Feedbase Monitor will offer multiple benefits to producers and the wider red meat industry including:

- supporting more objective and timely grazing decisions allowing an increase in production and the ability to meet market specifications
- avoiding environmental or welfare issues in grazing enterprises due to increased ability to monitor and report on ground cover and pasture status and trends
- increased consumer confidence in the environmental stewardship of red meat producers.

How to sign up

Want free access to the Australian Feedbase Monitor? The free subscription to this tool can only be accessed by MLA members via [myMLA](https://mymla.com.au), so make sure you've registered for [myMLA](https://mymla.com.au) and linked it to your current Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) account: mymla.com.au.



Not an MLA member?

You can still access the tool if you're not currently an MLA member:

- apply to be an MLA member (this process can take up to two weeks) at mla.com.au/membership
- sign up for a paid subscription through Cibo Labs: support@cibolabs.com.au

mla.com.au/afm

AFM news and updates: Sign up for MLA's e-newsletter, *The Weekly* (mla.com.au/enews), subscribe to *Feedback* magazine (mla.com.au/feedback) or follow MLA on social media.

Help with using the AFM: support@cibolabs.com.au

MLA membership support: membership@mla.com.au or 1800 023 100



Producer Demonstration Sites: quick start guide

Producer Demonstration Sites (PDS) are on-farm projects run by producer groups who want to validate the benefits of incorporating research findings into their businesses.

By supporting producers to use best practice management techniques and technologies that improve business performance, the PDS program aims to:

- increase the rate of R&D adoption
- encourage producers to pursue new skills and knowledge
- foster collaboration within the red meat industry.

MLA calls for preliminary applications for PDS projects that will help to improve the profitability, productivity and sustainability of beef and sheepmeat enterprises on an annual basis.

What can I demonstrate?

Your PDS producer group could get involved in demonstrating practices that support:

- increased lamb survival
- control of regionally important weeds
- improved induction to drought rations, or
- remote measurement of carrying capacity.

What do I need to do?

The practice you plan to demonstrate must be trialled on at least:



3 different properties



with 10 core producers



with a larger producer network
keeping track of the project

Other considerations



The project duration should be a
minimum of two years and a
maximum of six years



Ensure your project includes
communication activities to
extend key learnings beyond
the core group



Implement monitoring, evaluation
and reporting processes to
demonstrate producer engagement,
practice change and benefit to the
Australian red meat industry

What are the funding opportunities?

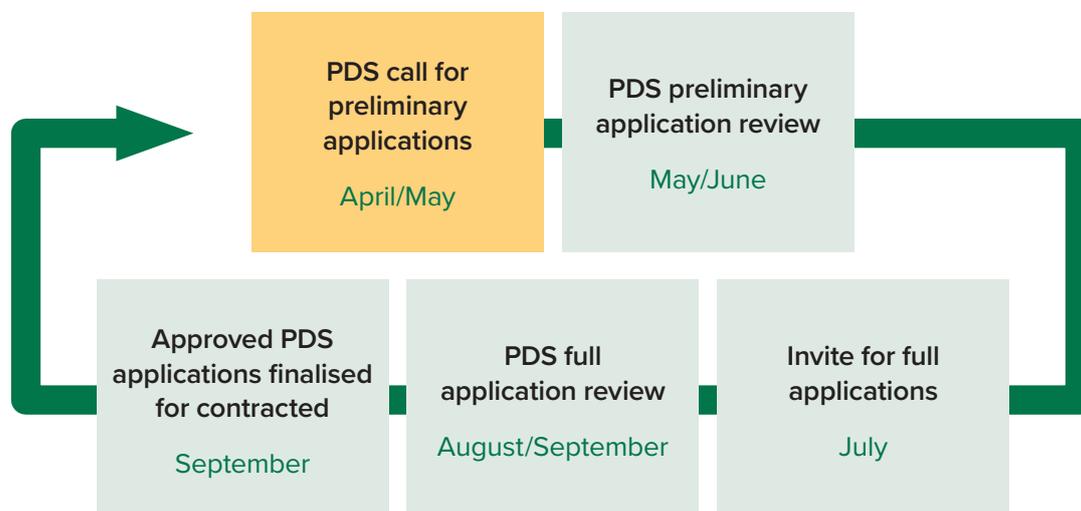
There are two primary funding streams that aim to increase the rate of adoption of on-farm management practices and technologies in PDS projects: levy and co-contributor.

What's the difference?

| Levy | Co-contributor |
|--|---|
| Producer-driven projects to address regional PDS priorities set by the Regional Research Advisory Councils (RACs)/Regional Committees | Producer-driven projects aligned with industry priorities/targets |
| Offers producer groups the opportunity to receive funding of up to \$25,000/year for the life of the project | Offers producer groups the opportunity to receive funding of up to \$50,000/year for the life of the project |
| 100% funded by producer levies | Funding consists of: 50% levies, 25% producer cash contribution, 25% MDC (matching the producer contribution), 8% access fee (of the total project value – 25% producer, 75% MLA/MDC) |

When can I apply?

Preliminary applications for the PDS program will open in April annually. See below for a full overview of the application process.



Want to know more?

► For more information contact:

| | | |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Alana McEwan | MLA Project Manager, Productivity and Market Insights | (07) 3620 5227 amcewan@mla.com.au |
| Russell Pattinson | PDS Coordinator | 0419 872 684 miracledog@bigpond.com |
| Maria Thompson | PDS Coordinator | 0411 961 545 maria@agstarprojects.com.au |

► Visit mla.com.au/pds

An introduction to Breeding and feeding to maximise profit

On the back of a decade of success, the BredWell FedWell workshops have been redeveloped to reflect evolving best practice genetics and nutrition management.

- Develop a customised breeding plan for your livestock enterprise aligned to your profit drivers
- Identify sires and select animals that help you meet your objectives
- Learn about feeding animals well to achieve your objective and maximise your genetic investment



Informative

Presentations and discussions with deliverers and peers



Interactive

Practical and written activities hosted on-farm



Individualised

Learning outcomes you can apply in your own enterprise

So far, BFWW workshops have delivered \$17.2m* in total net benefits to participating producers



1.9M

cattle influenced by the BFWW workshop

\$2.98

net benefit per cow mated

639k

breeding females



19.6M

sheep influenced by the BFWW workshop

\$2.48

net benefit per ewe joined

12.7M

breeding ewes

*Calculated as net present value of adoption to 2045, discounted at 5% annually.



New workshops are available for all sheep types, southern cattle and northern cattle production systems. Register your interest to participate or host a workshop.

mLa.com.au/bredwellfedwell



paraboss



Integrated parasite management for sheep, goats and cattle

ParaBoss is the industry's go-to resource for parasite management information, bringing together the latest R&D and practical resources all in one place.

This online resource offers regionalised and seasonal tactics to reduce the impact of flies, ticks, worms and lice in any sheep, goat or beef system.

Find information on the management, treatment and biology of parasites and the latest advice on preventing chemical resistance.

Tried and tested by producers, see how ParaBoss can benefit your business.

Visit paraboss.com.au.

flyboss

wormboss

liceboss

tickboss

ParaBoss has been developed and funded by Meat and Livestock Australia, Australian Wool Innovation, Sheep CRC, University of New England, and Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, with technical guidance and endorsement by sheep, goat and cattle parasite technical experts.

paraboss.com.au



Want to know more about how the Australian red meat industry will become carbon neutral by 2030? Here are the answers to some of the frequently asked questions MLA receives from producers, industry stakeholders and the wider community.

When was the target set?

In 2017, MLA committed to support the Red Meat Advisory Council's goal to achieve net zero emissions by 2030.

Will the CN30 target restrict productivity?

No. The CN30 target and productivity are complimentary goals. While the target is based on a herd size cap (28 million cattle, 75 million sheep) the goal can accommodate herd and flock increases through increased carbon efficiency in production.

What progress has been made to date?

The red meat sector has reduced its emissions by 59.05% from 2005 baseline levels (2022).

Why is the baseline year for the target 2005?

Emissions are compared against the baseline year of 2005 as this is the year that Australia committed to a 26–28% reduction by 2030 on a 2005 baseline under the Paris Agreement.

Will all farms have to become carbon neutral?

No, the industry goal can be achieved without every individual producer becoming carbon neutral. However, it will require significant adoption of carbon efficient practices by a large majority of industry to achieve this collective goal.

Does carbon neutrality only refer to carbon? What about other greenhouse gases like methane?

The term carbon neutral encompasses the 3 key greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrous oxide (N₂O) and methane (CH₄).

How can I lower emissions on-farm while maintaining productivity?

Focus on improving the emissions intensity of your business. Emissions intensity refers to the amount of emissions produced per kilogram of liveweight. The more efficiently we can produce meat, the better our intensity. Management decisions that improve reproduction rate, improve rate of weight gain or decrease time to turn off can all improve the emissions intensity per kilogram of liveweight of your operation, which is great for CN30 and productivity.

What carbon farming practices are eligible to earn carbon credits?

Not all methods that have a positive impact on emissions and productivity are eligible to generate carbon credits. Under the Carbon Farming Initiative, only methods approved by the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) and the Clean Energy Regulator are eligible to earn ACCUs. You can view approved methods online at the ERF website. A 5-minute survey via CSIRO's LOOC-C tool can also guide you on the most suitable methods for your business and region. Some of the most common project methods for Carbon Farming projects in livestock are revegetation, avoided clearing, soil carbon improvement and herd management.

What is a carbon credit?

A carbon credit represents 1 tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent abated or stored. In Australia, the financial product for carbon is an Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) which is issued by the Clean Energy Regulator through the Emissions Reduction Scheme.

What is carbon off-setting?

Carbon offsets refer to the purchase of carbon credits to compensate for emissions a business produces. Landholders and producers can generate credits through recognised carbon farming projects to sell as offsets to third parties

who do not have the capacity to reduce emissions within their business - like airlines or offices. Producers may also purchase offsets to achieve a carbon neutral status for their own enterprise or product.

What is carbon in-setting?

Carbon insetting refers to credits generated by a carbon farming project which are retained or "inset" against the business's carbon baseline, to cover its own emissions. Insetting is a strategy for producers to lower or neutralise their own carbon footprint with credits they generate on-farm. It may be important to maintain market access with trade partners or participate in a low carbon or carbon neutral product line.

Where should I start?

Complete a carbon account on your own or with an independent consultant to see where your emissions are coming from on farm. The Sheep-Beef Greenhouse Gas Calculator (SB-GAF) Tool and manual are free online and can assist you to put your own farm data into the model.

I want to launch a registered carbon farming project. Who do I talk to?

MLA does not provide commercial advice about carbon development companies, but we can provide high level suggestions on what to consider. For example:

- Complete a carbon account on your own or with an independent consultant, for objective advice.
- Consider your comfort lodging a project independently.
- If you choose to have a third party (aggregator) lodge on your behalf, do your due diligence. Have any contracts reviewed by a trusted legal advisor.
- Check that the company is a signatory to the Carbon Market Institute Code of Conduct.
- Understand the implications of the project and what they mean for your property, cash flow or decision autonomy over the long term.



Learn about your responsibilities as an employer.

Providing a great workplace and managing your employees is a key part of running a successful business. People in Agriculture provides you with the latest, industry specific employment information through tools, tips and examples, wherever and whenever you need it.



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Better your business



MLA offers red meat producers a range of training opportunities, resources and publications.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Profitable Grazing Systems is a group-based delivery program designed to deliver training and coaching over several months and up to a year to improve producer skills and knowledge. The aim is to achieve practice change on-farm in the areas of people, business, reproduction and genetics, value chain and feedbase.



Producer Demonstration Sites are on-farm projects run by producer groups who want to demonstrate findings from known research into their local farming system. MLA calls for Producer Demonstration Site applications that will help to improve the profitability, productivity and sustainability of red meat enterprises every April.



EDGEnetwork® workshops offer practical knowledge and skills on topics such as breeding and genetics, business management, nutrition, grazing and land management. Workshops range from one to three days.



BredWell FedWell are practical one-day workshops designed to teach producers the key benefits of superior genetics and feed management for improved flock and herd performance.



RESOURCES

The toolbox, MLA's free eLearning platform, builds knowledge in the areas of animal welfare, husbandry, feedbase and genetics. Packages take between 15 to 20 minutes to complete online, allowing users to learn at their own pace.



myMLA is a customised online dashboard that provides news, weather, events and R&D tools relevant to you, as well as a single sign-on feature for integrity systems.



Seasonal hubs provide resources, tips and tools organised by season to make it easy to find relevant information to support your business decisions.

mla.com.au/seasonal-hubs

Feedbase hubs provide tips and tools on soils, pastures, legumes and weed management alongside the latest R&D to increase pasture production, quality and persistence.

mla.com.au/feedbase-hub

PUBLICATIONS

MLA's Feedback magazine signposts producers to practical on-farm information and showcases how MLA is investing levies in research, development and marketing activities.

mla.com.au/feedback

Keep informed about the latest red meat and livestock industry news, market information, events, research and marketing with MLA's suite of e-newsletters. Mastheads include: **The Weekly** • **Integrity Matters** • **Goats on the Move** • **The Quarterly Feed** • **Global Markets Update** • **The Advisor**



Become an MLA member today

MLA membership is **free** to levy-paying producers of grass or grainfed cattle, sheep, lambs or goats. To become an MLA member call **1800 023 100**, visit mla.com.au/membership or scan the QR code.



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