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## Producer Research Support

Producer Research Support project used to start two new lamb groups in central Victoria

Bendigo Region Farm Advance Elite Lamb Group



### The project

Over the two years of this Producer Research Support project, significant advances were made in the production skills of lamb producers in central Victoria.

Two new lamb producer groups formed out of the grant - the Campaspe Prime Lamb Group and the Bridgewater Prime Lamb Group. The achievements of the project centred around skills development of producers.

### Objectives

1. Give district lamb producers the skills, contacts and support structure needed to produce, promote and market lamb which meets consumer requirements according to processor specification;
2. Increase the number of prime lambs being sold by members through the grid/ feedback system according to processor specification. The notional target is 12,500, as discussed with Associated Agents, Bendigo; and
3. Assist Department of Agriculture Victoria (DAV) staff conduct producer/retailer quality assurance workshops emphasising selling and buying based on objective description and documented codes of practice.

### What was done

Two new lamb producer groups formed out of a Producer Research Support grant - the Campaspe Prime Lamb Group and the Bridgewater Prime Lamb Group. The achievements of the project centred around skills development of producers.

These groups comprised producers who invested time and energy into developing their skills as lamb producers. It was hoped the groups would continue to play a significant role in increasing the numbers of lambs sold by specification.

Lamb producers in the region had keenly followed the progress of the Kyneton Elite Lamb Group and wanted to have access to such resources in their areas. This grant enabled them to achieve this.

Over the period of the project 18 activities were held, focusing on skill development. These included following lambs through abattoirs, a PROGRAZE course, animal health, LAMBPLAN and meetings with stock agents.

Seven activities were conducted to increase the number of prime lambs sold by members through the grid system. These activities generally involved trips to abattoirs and presentations from processors. They did not monitor the increase in lambs being sold by this method.

Over the two years of this Producer Research Support project, significant advances were made in the production skills of lamb producers in central Victoria.

### Key points

- District lamb producers now have the skills, contacts and support structure needed to produce, promote and market lamb which meets consumer requirements according to processor specification.
- Group members now monitor worm burdens in their own flocks.

### Contact details

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## Producer Research Support

MLA Producer Research Support offers support funding of up to \$15,000 over three years for groups of producers keen to be active in on-farm research and demonstration trials.

These activities include:

- Producer Initiated Research and Development
- More Beef from Pastures demonstration trials
- Prime Time Wean More Lambs demonstration trials
- Sustainable and productive grazing grants.

Contact Stephen Feighan - MLA Project Manager, Producer Delivery and Adoption.

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Prior to gaining the grant, producers in the Bridgewater area had formed the Bridgewater Lamb Producer Group and developed a list of objectives for the group to pursue. Included in the plan for the year was a retail butchers' night.

### What happened?

Luke Nevins, a local stock agent from FP Nevins & Co, Inglewood was guest speaker at the initial meeting of the group and had been a keen and active supporter of the group since it formed.

Similarly, the Campaspe Lamb Producer Group was formed to cater for producers in the Elmore, Rochester and Colbinabbin area.

On the Bendigo side of Maryborough in the Moolort-Laaneecoorie area, producers were also working to improve their skills in marketing lamb.

The highlight of a range of group activities was the Modern Lamb Retailing Seminar. Guest speakers were Gerald Martin, Chairman National Lamb Strategic Planning Committee, Ian Ross, Market Development Officer, Agriculture Victoria and Neil McDonald, Hayes Tuckerbag, Bendigo.

The evening centred around the need for greater co-operation and discussion between all segments of the lamb industry. As a result of the evening it was decided to investigate direct marketing of product to local supermarket chains and butchers. The possibility of marketing branded lamb will also be considered.

In the second year of the project the focus was on further developing producer skills in producing and marketing lamb and built on an initial meeting held in regard to group direct selling to processors.

"Group activities have been designed to give district lamb producers the skills, contacts and support structure needed to produce, promote and market lamb which meets consumer requirements according to processor specification," Ms Wall said.

### Wormplan focus farms

The Campaspe Lamb Producer Group, Lanecooree and Bridgewater Lamb Groups established Wormplan Focus Farms. The Wormplan Focus Farm Project was set up to allow farmer groups to monitor worm control on a focus farm within the group. The groups had access to a private vet who advised on worm control practices and management over a 12-month period.

As part of the project, group members monitored worm burdens in their own flocks. Group meetings covered issues such as summer drenching, drench resistance, and selecting drenches.

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## **MLA also recommends**

### **Sheep Genetics Australia**

Sheep Genetics Australia (SGA) is the national genetic evaluation service for the Australian sheep industry. It is built around the world's most comprehensive sheep genetics database, and will deliver genetic information on a fee-for-service basis.

Tel (02) 6773 2493 or  
[www.sheepgenetics.org.au](http://www.sheepgenetics.org.au)

### **EDGEnetwork**

EDGEnetwork offers practical field-based workshops to improve productivity and profitability for the long-term.

Workshops cover breeding, nutrition, grazing management, marketing and selling.

Call MLA on 1800 993 343 or  
[www.edgenetwork.com.au](http://www.edgenetwork.com.au)

### **Meat and Livestock Australia**

Level 1, 165 Walker Street  
North Sydney NSW 2060  
Tel (02) 9463 9333  
Fax (02) 9463 9393  
Free Phone 1800 023 100 (Australia only)  
[www.mla.com.au](http://www.mla.com.au)

## **PROGRAZE course**

When the Campaspe Lamb Producer Group formed, one of the aims of the group was to improve skills in pasture management. When the PROGRAZE concept was introduced the group felt that the course would be the ideal way to develop their skills in pasture management.

In March the Campaspe Lamb Producer Group had an introductory meeting with Martin Dunstan, Statewide PROGRAZE Co-ordinator. As a result of the meeting the group has decided to do a PROGRAZE course.

A second set of activities was designed to increase the number of prime lambs sold through the grid-feedback system. It was agreed to explore the possibility of direct marketing on a trial basis. See project report 96/N05 for developments in the alliance with Festival Supermarkets.

## **Discussion**

The highlight of the three-year project was the modern lamb retailing seminar held in Bendigo.

"Overall the Producer Research Support grant has contributed significantly to the formation of new lamb groups in the region," said Penny Wall, of the now defunct Farm Advance organisation.

"The grant gave us the motivation and drive to get things going."