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## Producer Research Support

Eyre Peninsula producers \$20 better off with heavier lambs

Eyre Peninsula Agricultural Councils



Prime lamb producers on the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia are better targeting premium markets following the results of their Producer Research Support project to produce large lean lambs in winter.

Over the two years of the project a considerable change in the way Eyre Peninsula lamb producers approach the lamb industry was made.

### Key points

- Eyre Peninsula producers are now more aware of their marketing options, although they sometimes still choose to sell on-farm or in the live market.
- They often weigh their lambs and talk dressed weight.
- They see the lamb skin as a separate item and value it separately.
- They know more about the market requirements and how to manage their lambs to meet those requirements.

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### The project

Prime lamb producers on the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia are better targeting premium markets following the results of their Producer Research Support project to produce large lean lambs in winter.

Over the two years of the project a considerable change in the way Eyre Peninsula lamb producers approach the lamb industry was made.

"Few farmers on the Eyre Peninsula weighed their lambs in 1994." Most sold their lambs on-farm or in the live (spot) market, said Brian Ashton, Primary Industries SA livestock adviser.

"They had little idea of the carcass or skin value of their lambs. Few knew how to calculate dressing percentage."

### Objectives

1. Establish three permanent prime lamb producer groups and to assist these groups in the first two years of their operation — the groups will aim to improve the quality and marketing of prime lambs produced on Eyre Peninsula; and
2. Particular emphasis will be to encourage production of large lean lambs in June, July and August because Eyre Peninsula farmers have the ability to supply this important developing market.

### What was done

To get the program going, workshops were held in Cummins, Wudinna and Cleve.

Mr Ashton said these meetings stimulated producers in each district to improve the production and marketing of their prime lambs.

As a result of the workshops three groups formed (Lower, Eastern and Central) and ran regular meetings. Local agents were an active part of each group.

Group meetings and field days included marketing principles, participation in the development of the national Lamb Industry Strategic Plan, selling on CALM, fat scoring, calculating carcass weight, valuing skins, care in transportation, management, breeds, management and economics in lot feeding, grass seeds, health, and quality assurance.

Since then the Eyre Peninsula Lamb Marketing Group Inc. has been formed.

Membership was set at \$100 and 28 producers have joined. The group has been incorporated, has a seal, and a constitution.

## What happened?

### Discussion

Having conducted this Producer Research Support project Mr Ashton said Eyre Peninsula producers were now more aware of their marketing options although they often still choose to sell on-farm or in the live market.

"They often weigh their lambs and talk dressed weight. They see the lamb skin as a separate item and value it separately.

"They know a lot more about the market requirements and how to manage their lambs to meet those requirements."

### Quality assurance

The first step in supplying a quality assured product has been taken. Producers filled out a simple workbook detailing all management aspects that could affect the quality of their lambs.

These workbooks will be used to identify areas of management that could be improved, and to assist the group market their lambs.

### The future

All three lamb producer groups plan to continue operation on a self funding basis, Mr Ashton said.

The EP Lamb Marketing Group has an organisation structure, a committee (with sub committees) and a strong bank balance to proceed in their goal of improved marketing of their lambs.

### Agent activity

Agents have been involved in the groups from the start and given good support.

"One agent in particular, Wilbur Williams of Wesfarmers, Cummins, has been very active in developing alternative marketing streams for his clients," Mr Ashton said.

"He arranged for a number of drafts of lambs to be sold over-the-hooks at Port Pirie. This was very convenient for the producers who also achieved a good price. On two occasions Wilbur organised the clients to travel together to Port Pirie to see their lambs processed."

"This progressive, value based marketing, is an example of the change in professionalism in the lamb industry on Eyre Peninsula," Mr Ashton said.

"We believe the change is a direct result of the activities of the Prime Lamb Groups and the EP Lamb Marketing Group Inc."

## 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.

Tel (02) 9463 9245 or  
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## MLA also recommends

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