



final report

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‘It’s Ewe Time!’ 2011 Making More from Sheep Forums

Evaluation Report

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Contents

1	Abstract.....	3
2	Executive Summary	3
3	Project Objectives	4
4	Methodology	4
4.1	Campaign theme and key messages	4
4.2	Design and provision of creatives	4
4.3	Liaise with networks and event partners.....	4
4.4	Advertising	5
4.5	Campaign media materials.....	5
4.5.1	Launch media release	5
4.5.2	Case studies.....	5
4.5.3	Fax outs.....	6
4.5.4	Speakers media release.....	6
4.5.5	Radio notices.....	6
4.5.6	Stock Journal Sheep Connect feature.....	6
4.6	Media Q&A	6
4.7	Media Engagement.....	6
4.8	Cox Inall attendance at Forums.....	7
4.9	Project management.....	7
5	Results.....	8

1 Abstract

Cox Inall Communications was contracted by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) to plan, co-ordinate and promote a series of Making More from Sheep Forums throughout regional Australia in July and August 2011.

Cox Inall developed a comprehensive outreach program utilising all available media and industry channels and networks to inform producers of the compelling need to attend the Forums. The outcome was an excellent level of attendance, with more than 900 wool and prime lamb producers attending the nine events. Evaluation indicated a very high level of satisfaction by attendees and a high level of intention to make on farm practice change as a result of attending the Forums.

2 Executive Summary

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA), in association with Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), ran a national sheep productivity stimulation campaign, under the brand of 'It's Ewe Time!' and "Making More from Sheep" (MMfS). The nine forums focused on technical information with clear take-home action oriented messages for producers, with the themes based around the MMfS learning modules.

The events were run in conjunction with event partners Elders, Landmark, Ruralco, and Sheep CRC, and, in Western Australia, the Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia.

Cox Inall Communications was contracted by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) to plan, co-ordinate and promote the series of Forums.

Cox Inall identified media, industry channels and networks and engaged them to inform producers of the compelling need to attend the Forums. Some 915 wool and prime lamb producers attended the nine events held in regional Western Australia, Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland.

The goal was to cleverly deliver the latest information on practical, efficient sheep management techniques to build individual producer capacity and knowledge to increase productivity in order to reverse the declining national flock and meet forecast market demand for Australian lamb.

Cox Inall designed, orchestrated and managed all aspects of the communication program, and assisted with logistics, presentations, audio-visual set-ups, location advice, event management, catering, and attendee registration.

3 Project Objectives

The objectives of the communication were to attract attendance of 120 producers per Forum.

To reach these target audiences and achieve optimal attendance, a broad ranging communications program was required, utilising all available key channels and tools.

4 Methodology

4.1 Campaign theme and key messages

Cox Inall participated in the initial planning meeting with MLA, AWI, Rural Solutions and Sheep CRC representatives to develop and refine the key messages for use in the delivery of the 2011 forums.

While the 'It's Ewe Time!' theme developed in 2010 was retained, key messages were adjusted to include:

- Wean 10% more lambs per hectare
- Achieve 10% more carcase weight
- Cut 10% more wool

4.2 Design and provision of creatives

Cox Inall worked with Gasoline Group, a creative service agency specialising in brand strategy, to design and print posters and flyers, and to design and produce an HTML email, advertisements and web buttons for the 2011 forums. The design was based closely on the 2010 materials, with changes to key messages, colour schemes and logos.

Seven separate versions of posters and advertisements were created due to different sponsor details for each location, and event partner variations between Western Australia and the eastern states.

Cox Inall coordinated the hosting of the HTML email on the MMfS website with the assistance of Mike Wagg, National Coordinator MMfS.

4.3 Liaise with networks and event partners

Forum specific posters and flyers and the HTML email were provided to event partners and networks, including Landmark, Elders, Ruralco, Sheep CRC, DEEDI, state farmer organisations, and Sheep Connect SA. These organisations were asked to use their website, shop fronts, and mail and email distribution lists to ensure wide distribution of the materials.

Cox Inall contacted between eight and ten Landmark, Elders and Ruralco branches for each Forum location and requested that they distribute the materials and promote the forums to customers.

A follow up call was made a month later to confirm that the branches had received the materials and to answer any questions about the forums. The response from event partners was overall very positive and the branches were pleased to promote the events to clients.

Online and printed materials were also provided to networks on request by MLA , AWI and Rural Solutions.

4.4 Advertising

Cox Inall planned, booked and oversaw advertising for all Forums. The aim was to maximise reach and use a variety of publications and mediums.

Cox Inall developed a database of relevant newspapers and radio stations that reached target audiences within several hours driving time of the selected venue and obtained local press advertising quotes. A costed media advertising schedule was also developed and recommended for review by the project team.

A ¼ page ad was placed in a range of papers one month prior and a ½ page ad placed two weeks prior to Forums as this approach worked well for the 2010 Forums.

Advertisements were also placed in MLA publications 'Prograzier' and 'Feedback' and AWI's Beyond the Bale

4.5 Campaign media materials

4.5.1 Launch media release

An official launch media release was drafted and segmented into eastern states and Western Australian versions. This release urged people to record the date of their relevant Forum and consider it as a key event to attend in their calendar.

The release focused on the Forums' value proposition to growers and also included venues, times, registration details.

4.5.2 Case studies

Cox Inall undertook to identify six suitable producers who had attended one of the 2010 Forums in each state, to develop case studies about how participating had benefited their management practices and profitability. The case studies explored the range of measures that had been used on-farm and the proponents and their locations were as follows:

- David Thompson - Western Australia
- John Hickson - (Tamworth) Northern NSW

- Charles Hood - (Cooma) Southern NSW
- David Fysh - (Longreach) Queensland
- Steve Harrison - (Bairnsdale) Victoria
- Joe Keynes - South Australia

The case studies were pitched to local and state media prior to the Forums. They were also supplied to MMfS for use on the website and to MLA for potential use in feedback.

4.5.3 Fax outs

Cox Inall liaised with MLA to design and distribute a localised fax out notice to MLA members within a 200km range of each Forum location one week prior to the event.

The fax out system was very effective in 2010 in reminding producers about the forum and urging them to register.

4.5.4 Speakers media release

A media release announcing the speakers and topics at each Forum was provided to local and state media two weeks before the event.

This media release also acted as a reminder that registrations were closing soon and urged producers to register using the 1800 service.

4.5.5 Radio notices

Short radio notices were tailored to each Forum and provided to ABC local radio rural reporters two weeks before the event.

Cox Inall made contact with relevant rural reporters to urge them to include the Forum in local notices and to invite them to attend their nearest Forum.

4.5.6 Article for Stock Journal Sheep Connect feature

An article was drafted and provided to Rural Press' weekly publication Stock Journal in South Australia for the Sheep Connect column.

4.6 Media Q&A

A Q&A document was prepared and supplied to MLA, AWI and DAFWA on 30 June 2011.

4.7 Media Engagement

Cox Inall engaged with the journalists and editors at local and state publications prior to the events to indicate that an advertising spend would be occurring in order to leverage associated editorial contributions. Key journalists were also contacted again prior to the events and encouraged to attend their local Forum.

4.8 Cox Inall attendance at Forums

A Cox Inall consultant attended each of the Forums to coordinate the registration process with assistance from event partners and to assist with all logistics and activities.

Cox Inall liaised with attending media to ensure they had access to speakers for interviews and to provide any background information. Attendance by media was excellent with ABC rural reporters, state rural weekly newspapers and local media covering every Forum.

All presentations were collated at the end of each Forum and provided to MMfS National Coordinator in PDF format to be placed on the MMfS website.

4.9 Project management

Cox Inall was instrumental in coordinating a fortnightly project management teleconference with the project team of MLA, AWI, Rural Solutions and DAFWA, increasing in frequency to weekly in the build-up to the Forums.

Cox Inall maintained a 'work in progress' document to track tasks to be completed for each Forum, to report on items completed and to monitor registrations.

5 Results

Forum	Date	Media materials delivered					Approximate attendance	Media attendance	
		Launch media release	Case study	Speakers release	media	Radio alert			Fax out notice
Katanning	5 July	1 June	10 June	27 June		21 June	27 June	190	ABC Rural; Great Southern Herald; Farm Weekly; Countryman
Northam	6 July							105	Countryman; Farm Weekly; Avon Valley Advocate
Dandaragan	7 July							45	ABC Rural; The Midwest Times
Tamworth	12 July	1 June	27 June	30 June		28 June	1 July	130	ABC Rural; The Land; WIN TV; Tamworth Country Leader
Longreach	15 July		6 July	30 June		1 July	4 July	90	ABC Rural; Longreach Leader
Bairnsdale	26 July		12 July	11 July		12 July	15 July	55	The Weekly Times; Stock & Land; ABC Rural
Cooma	28 July		4 July	11 July		14 July	15 July	130	Cooma Monaro Express
Wudinna	23 August		21 July	8 August		9 August	12 August	70	West Coast Sentinel
Lameroo	25 August		21 July	8 August		11 August	12 August	100	ABC Rural; The Stock Journal

