

Media Release: Pasture information night to help landholders get ewes through to spring

While most sheep in the area have held up well throughout the current dry conditions, producers should now be thinking about feed requirements and how they will maintain the condition of their stock throughout the last trimester of pregnancy and into lactation, particularly twinning ewes.

Ewes in the first 3 months of pregnancy don't require much more than a wether of the same weight and if they are in condition score 3 or higher, feeding to maintain condition is all that is required. However the last two months of pregnancy is a crucial period for foetal growth and secondary follicle production (the most important part for wool production). Secondary follicle production develops from day 90 and continues into the first month after birth. Follicle density will not change for the entire life of the animal, therefore adequate nutrition of the ewes during this time to ensure maximum number of follicles will be repaid for the life of the lamb.

But it does not stop there. Ensuring ewes receive adequate nutrition during their last 2 months of pregnancy will increase ewe fleece weight, reduce ewe mortality, reduce pre-lambing worm burden, increase lamb survival and increase lamb birth weight – a critical factor in post-birth lamb survival at all times, but even more so during a cold snap.

By the time of lambing, a 60kg single-bearing ewe will require 1.3 times the amount of energy of a dry ewe and a twin bearing ewe will require double the energy of a dry ewe. This increases to 2.9 for the single bearing ewe and 3.7 times the amount of energy for the twin-bearing ewe during the peak of lactation (day 20).

Matching your feed supply to your livestock feed requirements is the most efficient way to maximise profits within your enterprise. Often that needs a little help through selection of pasture species better designed to suit your farming system, and / or utilising grazing cereals.

Well known for their high quality and informative field days, Central Murray BestWool/ BestLamb Group have recognised that producers may need to re-visit their pasture supply situation leading into this winter. The group expects landholders may have questions relating to which pasture species to use, which are the best grazing cereals, and how best to manage both options within their system, to ensure they are getting the right nutrition into their ewes.

Through the Western Murray Land Improvement Group, and in conjunction with Murray Local Land Services, this group have pulled in 3 highly qualified and locally relevant speakers to talk landholders through these issues and associated questions when they host a '**Turning Pasture into Profit**' information night at Murrabit sportsground on **Monday 23rd March 2015**. The night starts at 6.30pm with dinner provided.

For further information, please contact Roger Knight (0487) 455511 (roger.knight@wmlig.org) or Rick Ellis (0428) 372357 (rick.ellis@wmlig.org).

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