

WAMMCO *Info*

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WAMMCO *International*
A DIVISION OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MEAT MARKETING CORPORATION

COPING WITH THE DRY

CONCERNED WAMMCO members started in late May to prepare their lamb enterprises for a repeat of a year-2001-type late break.

WAMMCO's Rob Davidson said he was advising producers to consider weaning lambs earlier onto grain or pellet supplements and to either sell dry ewes, or to reduce them to maintenance rations to best utilise available feed.

"Lambs need to be fully vaccinated, trained to recognise feed supplements and become acclimatised to grain or pellets whilst they are still on the mother so that they continue to grow once weaned," Mr Davidson said.

"Early weaning works best when there has been a concentrated lamb drop and when the youngest lamb is eight weeks of age.

"Merino ewe lactation generally peaks 3-5 weeks after lambing and after week 10, lambing milk is only a small component of the lamb's diet.

"When the dry spell finally breaks it is important that pastures are allowed to become established before being grazed even if it means feeding the lambs for a month after

the new pasture appears."

Mr Davidson urged producers to spray for red legged earth mite if populations appeared to minimise pasture damage.

He said early weaning and supplementary feeding may not appear to be cost effective, but these practices should ensure the lambs would be in top condition in August/September when quality may be scarce.

Where soil temperatures and moisture levels permit, Rob encourages producers to consider seeding a 'purpose pasture' possibly consisting of serradella, biserula, ryegrass and clover from mid-August.

This would enable lambs to be weaned onto worm-free, high quality feed that can produce sound lamb growth rates.

Farmers should also give early consideration to cropping previous stubble paddocks again rather than disturbing good pasture paddocks.

"The important factor if you are having difficulty with your lambs, is to keep in touch with WAMMCO so that we can try to resolve any problems as early as possible," Mr Davidson said.

Lamb Field Days

NEW contract details, seasonal strategies and market updates will be the subject of lamb field days to be attended by Rob Davidson, Peter Krupa and Wayne Radford of WAMMCO during July.

All lamb producers are welcome to attend the following venues:
July 3 - Beacon with Landmark.
July 6 - Wongan Hills with Elders
July 27 (provisional) - Annual lamb day at Esperance with WAMMCO

3,000 More Trees

WAMMCO is planting another 3,000 trees from its own nursery to boost the number of trees growing on the Katanning plant site to more than 20,000.

Works gardener Rex Miller and works staff collect seeds from suitable local species and propagate and acclimatise them in an on-site nursery.

Mr Miller is pictured with a tray of healthy redgums due to be planted on a new site that was deep ripped last week by Woodanilling contractor, John Nixon.



Keeta Dorman was unaware that her lambs were winning the May Producer of the Month title for her and father Stan, Romilly Hills SAMM stud, Beverley, when she visited Katanning to arrange photos of SAMM carcasses for the World Merino Conference.

Win for Prime SAMM Pioneers

A WA pioneer importer of Prime SAMM bloodlines has won WAMMCO's Producer of the Month award for May with a line of 110 pure Prime SAMM lambs that averaged 27.81 kg with 94 percent score 2 and 6 percent score 3, to return \$92.81 per head.

Stan Dorman of Dale River Transplants and co-principal of Romilly Hills SAMM stud, said this week that normally breeders try to draft their lambs to fit WAMMCO specifications but for their operation this wasn't the case.

"This draft consisted of pure Prime SAMM lambs which did not reach our strict breeding criteria, so for them to win the Producer of the Month award means that we must be doing something right," Mr Dorman said.

Perceiving back in the 1980's that there would be a trend towards heavier lambs, Mr Dorman imported the first Prime SAMM embryos from a selection of South African sources in 1996.

He is still importing bloodlines to continue refining the breed in WA, most recently selecting bloodlines from the Janvos Grey stud in the summer rainfall area of South Africa.

He also believes future demand will be for even heavier lambs - of 32 kg carcase weight and more - and with that in mind, has recently imported Suffolk bloodlines from the United States and the United Kingdom.

Mr Dorman will use Suffolk sires over Prime SAMM mothers to breed heavier lambs which he perceives will be more profitable for WAMMCO, and therefore more profitable for their enterprise.

Mr Dorman's daughter Keeta who runs the Romilly stud, said feedback from WAMMCO was vital to their breeding enterprise.

"Aids like Viascan assist us to identify lambs that may have a high liveweight, but do not produce the best carcase weights, so that we can adjust the breeding program," Ms Dorman said.

The family uses WAMMCO contracts to cover most of the 1500 lambs delivered to the cooperative each year.

"The contracts have worked well this year, but we are no different to most breeders in that we have had to work to meet them in some years," Ms Dorman said.

"The winning draft of 110 pure SAMM lambs had spent exactly 21 days in a feedlot before delivery to WAMMCO."

Nearly 70 percent of the consignment weighed above 26 kg to achieve the \$3.30 per kg contract premium rate.

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Ghengis Khan at Katanning

A 'GHENGIS Khan' style of cooking now sweeping Japan, and the arrival of guest workers at Katanning, is helping the producer cooperative WAMMCO to feed a growing Japanese appetite for WA lamb in the form of boneless lamb shoulder.

WAMMCO marketing manager Damien Giumelli said Japan was Australia's second largest lamb customer, but WAMMCO had managed only limited access to Japanese consumers because of the requirement for labour intensive, speciality value-added cuts.

"Until recently we have not had sufficient labour to meet the extra processing requirements of this market," Mr Giumelli said.

"However with the arrival of extra hands from China and other countries

at Katanning over the past few months, we have begun to prepare lamb as the Japanese require it, and now have the prospects of developing a regular business in Japan for boneless lamb shoulders.

"These are derived from our heavier, US market type lambs and offer WAMMCO the opportunity to generate extra revenue from each lamb.

"That is an important breakthrough with the general softening in export prices for lamb."

The Ghengis Khan style of cooking originated in the Sapporo region of Hokkaido Island and has spread to the Japanese mainland. It involves cooking thin slices of lamb shoulder on a small circular barbecue plate in the middle of the table.



□ Guest workers Guo Li Ping (left) and Zhang Xiu Yun with boning room supervisor Rod Nicholson and production coordinator Rob Panting displaying some of the new lamb cuts being prepared by WAMMCO Katanning.

Additional workers make their mark at Katanning

THE first 50 guest workers from China have not only settled in quickly to life in Katanning, they are already making a significant difference to WAMMCO's processing and marketing capacity.

WAMMCO's Katanning manager Tony Bessell said whereas workers from Christmas Island had assisted in maintaining high production ratings at Katanning since the 1980's, the new influx of people from China and other countries was now assisting the cooperative to achieve improved performance indicators.

"They have responded quickly to the environment and their skills are now assisting WAMMCO to tap into premium markets by producing extra value-added products for both new and existing markets," Mr Bessell said.

"The extra workers are not only producing a significant weekly volume of new value added product, they are also contributing to a major improvement in overall plant efficiency.

"We are now running at capacity for 52 weeks of the year and have dramatically increased our output, with less manpower hours per unit."

The additional labour had also assisted the release of long term employees for extra training to increase their skills.

Mr Bessell said WAMMCO hoped to lift the total number of guest workers to further increase production capacity at Katanning subject to further accommodation being available in the town.

The guest workers are subject to a four year contract that requires them to work in regional

Australia. Successful completion of the contract entitles them to a further two years and the opportunity to apply for permanent residency in Australia."

WAMMCO is working with the Katanning Senior High School to provide English lessons three nights a week for the new residents from China.

Mr Bessell said even with the big increase in workers from overseas, there were still good career opportunities and vacancies for local people at the Katanning plant.

An acute accommodation problem in Katanning is being addressed with the private development of new units on land adjacent to Kobeelya and initiatives by the Katanning Shire and Homeswest to make more housing available.



□ There has been an increase in bicycle traffic at Katanning with the arrival of more overseas guest workers. WAMMCO's safety officer Nigel Aitken was pictured checking the road safety gear of Xuan Lin Xu and Zhao Ming Liu.

Robotics Specialist

A POSTGRADUATE position sponsored by WAMMCO and Meat and Livestock Australia will enable Curtin engineering graduate Kelechi Anyaegbu to undertake engineering research at WAMMCO's Katanning plant.

MLA is helping to sponsor the three-year post graduate course to address a shortage of specialised engineers in the meat processing industry.

Kelechi took up his new post last month and is looking forward to the challenge of applying his skills in the meat industry.

He graduated from Curtin with a degree in Mechatronic Engineering, which he describes as specialising in robotics.

His initial work at Katanning will be on upgrades to the rendering plant.

WAMMCO is also seeking a new engineer to replace John Currie, who left the Katanning plant late in May.

Mr Currie, who was responsible for many improvements at Katanning, of most recent note, the design and commissioning of the new freezer complex, has moved across to the oil and mining industry.