



Chairman's Corner

One question members often ask me is "What is going to happen to the price of lamb". Like all primary products this will depend on the market and the key to producers making more profit from their prime lamb enterprise is, like any other business, **to increase their efficiency and margin**. This can be done by higher lambing percentages, increasing weight (and I mean meat not fat!) and producing what the market demands.

Having said this, members may be interested in the policy your Board has adopted in regard to setting prices for livestock. There are 4 main principles:

- The most important and underlining price strategy is to pay our members fair market value at the time of acquisition.
- In applying this strategy we must ensure the margin between buying and selling prices does not fall to a level where the viability of the Co-operative may be threatened, although at times it may be necessary to incur short term losses to maintain markets and/or a workforce.
- At the same time we remain conscious of the fact that if market levels fall to a level that makes it uneconomic for our members to produce stock the future of the industry will be in jeopardy.

Prime Merino Lamb Alliance

The PMLA offers Merino lamb producers a real alternative marketing option. Contacts are available now through to 31st August 2006 for Merino lambs producing 20.1 – 28.0kg, fat score 2 and 3 carcasses.

Contracts are only available where the date of delivery is a minimum of 4 weeks from the date of signing the contract.

Prices are the higher of a guaranteed minimum price for each month or 15c/kg less than the XB lamb schedule price.

To obtain access to the contracts, WAMMCO members must also be a member of the PMLA. Membership information is available from the PMLA Secretary Kate Ayers on 97362000.

Lambs must be fed in accordance to the PMLA Code of Practice for the last 2 weeks before delivery. Options are;

- **Macco Feeds 707 pellet** (Williams)
- **Martin's Mill PMLA pellet** (Greenough)

- We aim to prevent a boom/bust scenario by ensuring members produce in accordance with the world's demands.

If we get it right any surplus is returned to members via patronage based rebates. **To qualify for rebates members must pool their lambs**. Pooled lambs are those that are **purchased at our weekly scheduled price**. Members must also hold the required number of shares for each lamb delivered.

It is also important that members have access to an efficient processing facility. We therefore have as key objectives in the processing area:

- The development and maintenance of processing facilities that is at the forefront of international best practice.
- Ensure we maximize throughput whilst minimise costs.
- Maximise value adding to ensure members receive the best return.
- Achieving standards of quality and reliability that meet the needs of our customers.

As we await the break to the season I wish all members the best in all their farming endeavours. Rest assured your Co-operative will be doing everything to ensure you receive maximum value in return for your support.

- **Milne Feeds EasyOne pellet** (Welshpool, Dongara, Esperance, Katanning, Narrogin) or
- **a loose mix formulated by John Milton.**

Lambs should weigh at least 48kg before entering the feedlot and for best results when selling, individual lambs should be a minimum of 50kg liveweight (with a 3 hour curfew) or 52kg weighed straight out of the paddock.

Skins under 1/8" in length incur a handling fee of \$2.00/skin.

For more information contact Peter Krupa 0427810613.



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WAMMCO International makes no representation as to the accuracy of any information or advice contained in the LambLine newsletter and excludes all liability as a result by any person on such information or advice.



Improving productivity with pastures – Neil Ballard, Senior Consultant Ballard Seeds, Narrogin

Producers looking for methods of **improving overall farm efficiency** should look no further than their **pasture** base.

Recent improvements in pasture species have given producers a huge range of options to dramatically improve their farm productivity. Better productivity, higher hard seed levels, extended periods of green feed and better quality dry feed are some of the attributes in the new species. The extension of the period of green feed and moving away from the barley grass, capeweed, rye grass dominant pastures will dramatically improve productivity, grow lambs to a heavier weight faster prior to going to slaughter or onto feed lots or simply allow ewes and lambs a better chance of reaching their genetic potential. The advantage of legume pasture species to increase soil nitrogen levels for subsequent crops or pastures is an attractive option compared with the profitability of growing lupin crops or the high cost of urea.

Producers getting excellent results are growing their new pastures just as they would a crop - with high levels of input and time to plant the varieties best suited to soil type and rainfall.

Plant density is the driver of stocking rate so it is important to get the sowing rate and sowing method right. Good establishment technique is the key to successful pasture production. Sowing too deep, poor insect control, nodulation failure and incorrect variety selection are the four main reasons for failure or poor productivity.

Sowing depth (no more than 10mm) is critical. Seed should be covered and producers should not rely on livestock turning the seeds in. A sowing depth greater than 10mm can severely reduce seedling numbers and if seedlings do emerge, they rarely grow to their potential.

Insects, particularly red mite, can have devastating effects on newly emerging cotyledons and in fact many don't even emerge. Although not visible from the farm ute, the damage created by Red Mite can be the equivalent to an additional 6 DSE. Lucerne flea and other mites are very damaging at times, and application of broad spectrum insecticides post sowing, pre-emergence is a must.

Root nodulation bacteria, or rhizobia, are the means by which nitrogen from the air is taken in by the legume plant and converted to a plant available form of nitrogen. Legume plants that are not nodulating correctly don't grow and seed to their potential. A new product developed in WA has revolutionised the inoculation process, thus removing the need for peat slurries and immediate sowings to ensure that the rhizobia survive. **Alosca®** is a dry flowable product that can be mixed with the seed or fertiliser, has a long shelf life and can withstand high temperatures without rhizobia death, making dry sowing possible for all legume species.

Insecticide and fungicide can be applied to the seed without affecting the rhizobia survival, unlike the peat method where this isn't possible. It also is the only way to introduce fresh inoculum to existing pasture.



Species and variety selection needs thought. Soil type, pH, future cropping rotations, weed management and stocking capacity need consideration before purchase of seed.

Some options are;

Italian ryegrass: Two types, tetraploid and diploid. Tetraploid's have twice the number of chromosomes as diploids and this gives them more early vigour, higher sugar levels, higher palatability and digestibility. The tetraploid's have a wider leaf, produce more dry matter and flower considerably later than Wimmera ryegrass providing higher productivity and a lower risk of Annual Rye Grass Toxicity.

Yellow serradella: Only choice for poor sands but grows better on loams, gravels and anything but tight clays. Very hard seeded, deep rooted, good quality green and dry feed, suits tight cropping rotation. Indeterminate (grows for as long as it has access to moisture). Protected against false breaks.

Pink serradella: Soft seeded Cadiz and hard seeded Erica and Margurita, are deep rooted, indeterminate, high dry matter production, suitable for forage and grazing. Erica and Margurita are protected against false breaks.

Crimson clover: Deep rooted, fast growing, good forage and grazing. Excellent early feed but lacks long term persistence.

Prima Gland clover: Totally resistant to red mite and aphids, protected against false breaks, tolerant of waterlogging.

Casbah and Mauro Biserrula: Deep rooted, indeterminate, prolific seeder, top quality dry feed. Unpalatable during flowering helps manage resistant weeds. Good tolerance of all insects except aphids protected against false breaks.

Continued on page 4.



Editorial

Whilst cyclonic rain has allowed some producers to commence their 2006 seeding programs, the widespread rains have caused many pastures to germinate and without follow up rains, then senesce thus reducing the size of the seed bank available for the 2006 season. This situation provides an ideal chance to improve some pasture paddocks and Neil Ballard outlines some of the **new pastures** available and important steps in establishing a highly productive pasture in this issue.

The **2006 National Lamb Industry Convention** will be held in Melbourne from 28th – 30th August. The three day convention will showcase the industries latest innovations, outline market trends, future consumer specifications, emerging issues and high tech on-farm technologies. For more information log onto www.lamb2006.com

Co-op comment

Marketing

Traditional high volume chilled lamb sales have been recorded for Easter in the northern hemisphere. However this year a higher proportion of legs were sent to the USA compared with Europe where prices and demand are lower this year.

While European sales would normally provide a boost to returns during the period, this year EU sales have been considerably lower. Explanations of the current market conditions are varied, though it seems that a combination of resistance from markets to the high prices seen over the past 2 years, along with strong supplies out of Australia and NZ is serving to put downward pressure on selling prices.

Customer visits

The Australian summer proves popular for **visitors from Europe with several customers visiting from the UK, Belgium and France.**

This included a visit from a prominent UK Supermarket taking in a tour of the WAMMCO processing plant in Katanning as well as a tour of Dawson Bradford's farm in Popanyinning. The group were impressed with the style and quality of

We remind members to check the **Export Slaughter Interval** (ESI) for all veterinary and herbicide chemicals used in conjunction with their prime lamb enterprise. The ESI is the required time period between the administration of a chemical to animals and their slaughter for export. As many chemical companies don't state ESIs on packaging, please consult the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority website www.apvma.gov.au for the latest information.

Producers that experienced an **Ovis** problem last season are reminded to be vigilant in worming their dogs every 2 months and not offering raw sheep meat in order to break the life cycle of the tapeworm.

Finally we wish you a successful start to the growing season.

operations, though were keen to mention their requirements for **audited on-farm QA systems to be implemented in WA.**

Customers from Indonesia were also recent visitors to the plant. Indonesia remains a strong frozen market with monthly sales of legs, racks and whole carcase.



Pictured (from left) are Shipping Coordinator Jason Satherley with Indonesian Customers Maya Djohari, Angela Lijaya and Martini Darmadi, along with Marketing Executive Albert Baker and Production Coordinator Ron Whyte.

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Pneumonia and Pleurisy

Pneumonia is an inflammation of the lungs. Pleurisy is a more severe form of lung disease causing inflammation of the membranes that surround the lungs and line the chest cavity.

Cause

Pneumonia & pleurisy may result from viruses, bacteria, fungi, worms, grass seeds, allergic reactions, injuries and poisons. Most cases develop from organisms that are either breathed into the lungs or that are moving in the bloodstream.

Stress will increase the likelihood of an animal developing pneumonia and pleurisy. Lambs are more susceptible than adult sheep, particularly after severe weather events.

What it looks like

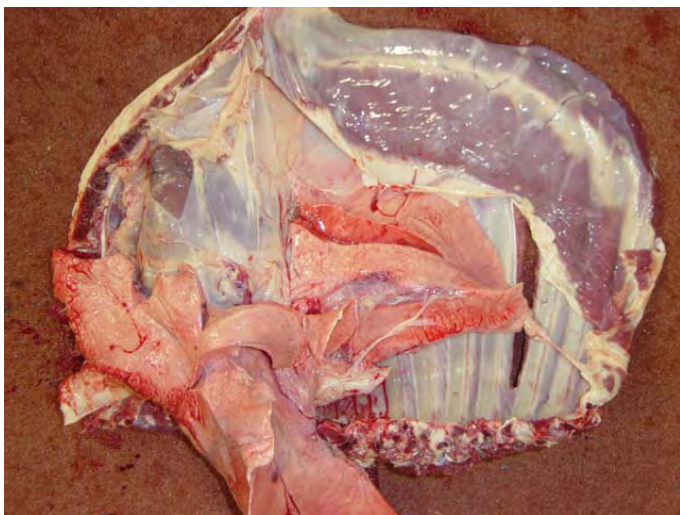
Symptoms include coughing, open-mouthed breathing, nasal discharge, loss of appetite and fever. Mildly affected animals may show only slightly lowered body weight gains and lower wool production. Some animals may die if more than 70 per cent of the lungs are diseased and non-functional.

Cost

Pneumonia & pleurisy will reduce wool and meat production, and increase the flock's susceptibility to other diseases. Carcasses are not normally condemned for this condition, but with pleurisy the chest cavity usually has to be boned out causing severe loss of value.

How to prevent it

Reducing stress will decrease the risk of pneumonia or pleurisy. Maintaining good hygiene, good nutrition, avoiding over crowding, exposure to extremes of weather or dust and mixing of different lines of sheep will also help.



Chest cavity removed from carcase affected with pleurisy

Kondinin lambs win March award

102 SAMP cross lambs won WAMMCO's March Producer of the Month plus a \$250 voucher from Farm Works for Stewart and Heather Garlick, "Killawarra," Kondinin.

Stewart began developing an interest in SAMP with his brother Warren before taking over Killawarra from his father three years ago. Warren runs the successful **Capolinga SAMP stud**, from which Stewart selects his rams.

Stewart said the award winning lambs consisted of second and third cross SAMP lambs, weighed 26.3kg, and averaged \$85.76/hd, with more than 78 percent achieving the premium 22-28 kg range. These lambs came off lupin stubbles and crop regrowth from frequent summer rains.

Stewart has more lambs in a small feedlot, on rations to reach WAMMCO's premium weight. **"All of our lambs go to the Co-operative," he said. "I just wish we had a few more of them."**

Past winners:

January: Greg Sewell Family Trust, Pingelly

February: Ferndale Grazing Company, Beverley



Clayton and Stewart Garlick pictured with Kondinin Farm Works agent Gary Ilich. Photo: Courtesy of Farm Weekly

Pastures options *(continued from page 2)*

Hykon Rose clover: Good choice for sands and gravels, excellent insect tolerance and good dry matter production.

Arrowleaf clover: Deep rooted, hard seeded, indeterminate clover with excellent late spring, early summer growth. Over perched water table will provide green feed into January, handy for finishing lambs.

Medics: Herald, Caliph, Cavalier, Orion, and Treador have unique traits to suit the heavier soils with reasonable tolerance to aphids. Match the variety to pH and rainfall.

Sub clover: Dalkeith, Nungarin, Geraldton, Daliak, Seaton Park and Dinninup make up the bulk of existing clover stands. New varieties such as Dalsa (Dalkeith replacement), Urana (York replacement), and Coolamon (Junee replacement) add new options. Susceptible to false breaks.

Balansa and Persian clover: Good DM production, tolerant of water logging and mild salinity, good quality dry feed. Can be conserved as forage. Big range of both types to suit rainfall and soil types.

For more information contact Neil Ballard 98815711