FRIDAY 29 JULY 2022 • LAUNCESTON

RED MEAT UPDATES

TASMANIA

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RED MEAT UPDATES
TASMANIA

PROGRAM 8.45am – 5.30pm | Friday 29 July 2022 | The Tramsheds, Launceston

8.00am Registration desk opens, tea & coffee available **8.45am** Proceedings commence

Session 1: Welcome	*Chair: Iain Bruce, Red Meat Updates Working Group*
Welcome – *Iain Bruce, Chair, Red Meat Updates Working Group*	
Welcome address – *Jason Strong, Managing Director, Meat & Livestock Australia*	

Session 2: Red Meat Champions	*Chair: Will Downie, Red Meat Updates Working Group*
Private Forests Tasmania Industry Innovator – *Ram Savana, Enable Ag*	
Coles Supermarkets Gate to Plate – *Sophie Nichols-Johnson, Littlewood Farm*	
Angus Australia Emerging Leader – *Rozzie O'Reilly, Lambpro*	

10:30am – 11.00am Morning Tea

Session 3: Irrigated Pasture Updates (Auditorium) *Chair: Jason Agars, DLF Seeds*	**Dryland Pasture Updates (Room 28)** *Chair: Rob Winter, Barenbrug*
Lessons learnt from across the ditch *Sarah Adams, Gallagher New Zealand*	**Improving legume resilience with better soil fertility** *Richard Hayes, NSW DPI*
Intensive finishing under irrigation *Lauchie Cole, Woodbourn*	**Growing red meat productivity through the selection and establishment of perennial legumes** *Dr Rowan Smith, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture*
Setting up paddocks for irrigation success *Graeme Mulligan, Gallagher Animal Management*	**Management of a dryland feedbase** *Will Bignell, Thorpe Farm, interviewed by Rowan Smith, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture*

Session 4: Rabobank Sustainable Futures	*Chair: Angus Gidley-Baird, Rabobank*
Starting the journey to carbon neutrality: Creating environmentally-sustainable businesses *Dr Richard Rawnsley, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture*	
Is the grass always greener? *John Francis, Agrista*	

1.30pm – 2.15pm Lunch

Session 5: Sheep Updates (Auditorium) *Chair: Phil Jarvie, Zoetis*	**Beef Updates (Room 28)** *Chair: Ed Archer, Landfall Angus*
Fit to Join *Dr Mary McQuillan, Charles Sturt University*	**Traceability in the beef industry** *George Basha, Integrity Systems Company*
Efficiency gains to be made through genetic selection *Rozzie O'Reilly, Lambpro*	**The potential of dairy beef for the Tasmnian beef and dairy industries** *Stephen Creese, Clovelly Tasmania*
Unlocking the keys to ewe survival *Dr Mary McQuillan, Charles Sturt University*	**Heifer development and management to increase productivity** *Jena Alexopoulos, University of Adelaide*

Session 6: Virtual Farm Tour	*Chair: Stewart Raine, Nutrien Ag Solutions*
Nutrien Ag Solutions Virtual Farm Tour – *'Connorville', Roderic and Kate O'Connor*	

Session 7: Networking Drinks	*Chair: Iain Bruce, Red Meat Updates Working Group*
Presentations, red meat raffle, networking drinks	

4.45pm Networking drinks **5:30pm** Event concludes

Red Meat Updates is proudly presented to you by the

RED MEAT UPDATES WORKING GROUP

Iain Bruce, Chair
Western Plains, Stanley

Sarah Cole
Woodbourn, Cressy

Stephen Creese
Creese North East, Bridport

Richard Ellis
Wetheron Pastoral, Bothwell

George Shea
Lyndall, Hamilton

Helen Bailie
Wesley Dale Strowan, Chudleigh

James Greenacre
Rosemount Agriculture Pty Ltd

Will Downie
Hazlewood Farm, Copping

Justin Cooper
Gallagher Animal Management

Andrew Morelli
Meat & Livestock Australia

Rowan Smith
Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture

Conference coordinator: Pinion Advisory

WELCOME

Iain Bruce, Chair
Red Meat Updates Working Group

Iain Bruce is a beef producer from the north west coast of Tasmania. Iain studied Agricultural Science at the University of Tasmania before spending eight years working as an agronomist for TP Jones & Co in the Northern Midlands of Tasmania. In 2015, Iain returned home to the family farm at Stanley and continues his agronomy work part time.

Iain manages his time between both and enjoys the challenges they both provide. Iain is a keen advocate for Tasmanian agriculture, particularly grass-fed beef, and the other high-quality produce that this state can provide.

Iain is Chair of the Red Meat Updates Working Group and a Tasmanian producer representative on the SALRC committee.

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WELCOME ADDRESS

Jason Strong, Managing Director
Meat & Livestock Australia, Brisbane QLD

Jason Strong has more than 30 years' red meat and livestock experience, knowledge and connections from the farm through to the end consumer in both domestic and international markets. He is a well-recognised and respected senior executive with experience in commercial and industry business management and administration, supply chain development, meat science and grading, genetics and marketing as well as on-farm experience.

Jason's lifelong commitment to improve consumers' beef eating experience began when he spent time learning about meat science at the University of Illinois. Jason played a key role in establishing objective carcase measurement and the world-leading Meat Standards Australia grading system – the only eating quality-based grading scheme based on consumer taste test.

Prior to this he was CEO at Smithfield Cattle Company, a feedlot business with operations at Proston and Goondiwindi in QLD. He was also Managing Director at AACo from January 2014, he led a strategy shift that saw the company become the world's largest vertically integrated branded beef producer, overseeing operations from station to plate.

Abstract

Meat & Livestock Australia's Managing Director Jason Strong has more than 30 years' red meat and livestock experience. Mr Strong is Managing Director of Meat & Livestock Australia Ltd and Chair of Integrity Systems Company Limited and MLA Donor Company Limited. Mr Strong is also a director of AUS-MEAT Limited and Red Meat Traceability Systems Pty Ltd.

Mr Strong will discuss various projects MLA's research and development team are undertaking, including incorporating legumes, NEXUS, shelf-life prediction models and MSA projects. The presentation will also include a current market update, including the herd and flock. MLA's projections for future markets will be discussed to help producers make the best informed decisions for their businesses.

MLA is primarily funded by transaction levies paid on livestock sales by producers and are used to support marketing, research and development activities. The levies are charged are collected by the Australian Government on the sale of each head of cattle, sheep and goat sold under the Primary Industries (Excise) Levies Act 1999.

The Australian Government contributes a dollar for each levy dollar MLA invests in eligible research and development. MLA generates additional income through MLA Donor Company (MDC), which attracts commercial investment from individual enterprises and others that share a mutual interest to co-invest in innovation that will benefit the industry.

Relevant resources

MLA Research, development and adoption project summary

MLA resource hub

Community facing resource – Australian Good Meat

Community facing resource – Red Meat, Green Facts

E: info@mla.com.au

RED MEAT CHAMPIONS

Chair: Will Downie
Red Meat Updates Working Group

Will runs a 500ha family farming business with his daughter Sarah at Copping in south-east Tasmania.

Hazelwood Farm runs a mix of sheep, wool & cattle enterprises, with 2400 first cross ewes, finishing 2900 prime lambs under irrigation, and 100 breeding cows.

Will was brought up on the family farm, and has a diverse background, starting in accounting and finance, then expanding to General Manager roles in optometry businesses, and CEO of a national retail chain.

Will also has extensive experience as a Director on several boards, both Government and private businesses, and advisory committees, but his passion has always been farming and he is always looking for new ideas and better ways to farm.

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INDUSTRY INNOVATOR

The cost of financial freedom shouldn't be your time

Ram Savana, Founder and Principal Consultant
Enable Ag, Launceston TAS

After completing his Master's Degree in Biotechnology at the University of Melbourne, Ram worked in a medical device company as a Project Manager before going back to his true passion, farming. From a farmhand to a farm consultant and business coach, he founded Enable Ag in 2017.

Since then, Ram has dedicated his time and expertise in AgTech, MedTech, I.T., and business to customising programs and systems for Tasmanian farmers. His work includes farm visits, meetings, consultations, and training to help farmers achieve a prosperous farm while having more time for themselves and their families. He is known as the "time freedom coach."

As of today, Ram has helped 30 Tasmanian farm families and he is intending to grow his team to help farmers across the nation. In 2022, Ram was awarded the 2022 Excellence in Start-up by the Launceston Chamber of Commerce and was a State Finalist for the 2022 Telstra Best of Business Awards.

Abstract

Farmers are excellent at what they do on the farm. But unfortunately, often farmers fall into an unsustainable cycle of spending too much time on the farm, little time on the business, and even less time with their families. Just last year Farmsafe Australia reported that "clocking off can seem not to be an option".

This problem is two-fold. Not only do farmers tend to lose out on their health and wellbeing, but they also become the sole source of knowledge on their farm, making delegation – let alone succession planning – a tricky business. As farms are handed from one generation to the next, generational friction can occur between up-and-coming family members and those currently managing the business.

This scenario hits close to home for Enable Ag's Founder, Ram K Savana. Hailing from a strong farming family in India, in 2019 Ram's father suddenly passed away leaving his mother with all the farm's responsibility, and little information on how it had been run.

The growing pains associated with reaching financial sustainability, running, and scaling a profitable farm includes a whole suite of resource-sapping challenges. Ram's biggest worry for farmers is that they're not aware of the extent of the associated consequences, and that it's simply taken for granted that farmers work long hours and retire late.

As Ram says: "My job is to be farmers time-freedom coach – Enable Ag is passionate about helping farmers gain more control of their time."

Underpinning Enable Ag is the vision to enable farmers and their future generations to have more time for themselves and their families. Ram's hope is that this vision can be embraced and shared so more and more people in the farming community can enjoy a better quality of life.

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Notes

GATE TO PLATE

Diversification within the family farm

Sophie Nichols-Johnson, Owner/Manager
Littlewood Berry Farm and Littlewood Lamb, Richmond TAS

Sophie Nichols is a fifth-generation farmer, working for her family farm business, while also running 'Littlewood', situated in the Coal Valley, southern Tasmania. Sophie completed a Diploma in Agriculture at Lincoln University, New Zealand and spent time living and working in the UK before returning home to work full time at Littlewood. Sophie enjoys the variety that working in the family business and on her own business provides and likes being able to interact with visitors and supporting the local community.

Abstract

The Nichols family farm comprises of two properties in southern Tasmania, 'Anglewood' in Richmond and 'Littleworth' in Buckland. A mixed farm business with enterprises including fine wool production, fat lamb production and cropping.

At Littleworth wool production is the main enterprise with a self-replacing merino flock. Older merino ewes are then joined to southdown sires at Anglewood where fat lambs are produced. Although lamb production is the primary enterprise at Anglewood, various crops have also been produced over the years, including forage crops and vegetable seed crops such as brassicas and carrots.

In 2010, Sophie created Littlewood Berry Farm after a family trip to the United Kingdom where Sophie's parents noticed the success of 'pick your own' berry farms. Littlewood Berry Farm grows strawberries as an agro-tourism venture where the public can pick their own fruit. Over the years the scale of the berry farm has increased to become a place where people can enjoy a day out with their family, picking strawberries and include eating ice cream (made by Valhalla using Littlewood strawberries). Surplus strawberries are sold to restaurants and since 2017-2018, have also been used to create a selection of 'jam gin' and strawberry liqueurs.

Through selling surplus fruit to local restaurants, Sophie was approached to supply lamb. This process started as a few lambs a week, processed at a local abattoir to supply local restaurants. The cost to process couldn't be justified for just 2-3 lambs a week, so Sophie purchased a cri-vac machine and diversified into selling pre-packaged lambs, direct from the farm gate.

In 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic began, restaurant demand was significantly reduced, however private sales increased. Littlewood Farm now has a fully operational website with an online farm shop and offers two pick up days/week for lamb sales.

School groups are a regular visitor to Littlewood Farm and in the future Sophie would like to offer a more comprehensive insight into working farms and the opportunities that the agricultural industry can provide to young people.

Top take-home messages:

1. If you have an idea on how to value add to an existing farm business, do the research and have a crack.
2. Don't be afraid to ask questions of local stakeholders, peers and businesses. People who are willing to help/provide feedback or become mentors are worth their weight in gold.
3. It's important to cater to locals and focus on your community base. Support your community and they will support you!

W: www.litttlewoodfarm.com.au

EMERGING LEADER

Making the most of opportunities that come your way

Rozzie O'Reilly, Operations Manager
LAMBPRO, Holbrook NSW

Rozzie grew up on a small sheep and cattle enterprise in southern NSW. She completed a Bachelor of Animal Science at the University of New England (UNE) in 2014, and went on to work in the beef feedlot industry for two years following graduation. Rozzie now works for LAMBPRO, Australia's largest prime lamb seedstock business and has done so for the past five and half years. Her current role is Operations Manager.

Aside from work, Rozzie and her husband John operate their own livestock business on lease and agistment country. Their ultimate goal is to purchase their own farm over the coming years.

Abstract

Rozzie is the current Operations Manager of LAMBPRO. Her role involves managing the database for over 10,500 performance recorded stud ewes, coordinating staff and day to day activities for running the business, as well as providing numerous client services.

LAMBPRO provides genetics to over 350 lamb producing businesses around the country, and it is expected in 2022 that these clients will produce over 1.2 million lambs.

Rozzie will discuss her pathway into the industry and highlight her experiences of working in Australia's largest prime lamb seedstock business. She will also discuss the importance of having mentors and partaking in further study to help early-career professionals progress through their careers.

Rozzie believes that one of the most important things a young person in agriculture can do is make the most of opportunities that come their way. Recently, Rozzie was named a joint winner of the 2021 Zanda McDonald Award. An award that recognises young people working in the primary industry sectors in New Zealand and Australia and supports their future career development.

Rozzie will conclude her presentation with what her career aspirations involve. Alongside her husband John, Rozzie also owns and operates a small livestock business comprised of commercial composite sheep and stud cattle, selling black coated composite bulls. As first-generation farmers, John and Rozzie are currently running their stock on lease and agistment country, with their ultimate goal being to grow stock numbers, sell more bulls, and buy their own farm.

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IRRIGATED PASTURE UPDATES

Chair: Jason Agars, National Sales and Marketing Manager
DLF Seeds, Melbourne VIC

Jason Agars is the National Sales & Marketing Manager for DLF Seeds, a new name for the consolidated PGG Wrightson Seeds, AusWest Seeds and Stephen Pasture Seeds brands.

DLF Seeds are an R&D led, forage pasture seed business supplying leading proprietary varieties to the Australian market, with a goal of increasing the productivity of Australian livestock producers.

Jason's role includes helping our customers understand and communicate the advantages of leading proprietary pasture varieties, as well as learning what on-farm challenges could be solved through future R&D from the DLF Seeds team.

Improving productivity in agriculture is a passion of Jason's, built from an upbringing on the family farm in South Australia, studying Ag Business and over 15 years working in national roles across agriculture.

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Lessons learnt from across the ditch

Sarah Adams, Director and Shareholder
Global Strategy and New Ventures Manager, Gallagher, Waikato, New Zealand

Sarah has worked in innovation, business development and management roles within the agricultural industry for over 25 years. She has grown small start-up agricultural companies in genetics, ultrafine merino wool and arable foods into substantial, globally recognised businesses. Creating added value products and transitioning businesses from selling products to solutions has been key to the success. When not at work Sarah is a 'hands on' farmer on their hill country, sheep, and beef property on north side of the Raglan Harbour. This 'grass roots' farming experience enables her to clearly understand the problems farmers are trying to solve.

Abstract

There are a lot of regulations coming at farmers in New Zealand currently, including Farm Environment Plans, He Waka Eke Noa, Animal Welfare and Essential Freshwater Policy. Producers are going to have to learn how to adapt their farming operations to meet these. For New Zealand farmers:

"Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. It's about learning how to dance in the rain."

There are a number of things that farmers can do through management, but they are also going to have to embrace innovation and technology or diversify if they are to thrive in this new world.

History shows a number of technology innovations have enabled productivity to take the next quantum leap in farming. Can a suite of new technology innovations that are on the horizon, help transform farming to meet today's challenges?

What should Tasmanian producers be considering now to set their business up for a sustainable future and to be ahead of the game before they face these same challenges?

Relevant resources

New Zealand Ministry for the Environment: National policy statement for freshwater management

Beef and Lamb New Zealand: Essential Freshwater Consultation

He Waka Eke Noa (Primary Sector Climate Action Partnership)

Beef and Lamb New Zealand: Farm Planning

Dairy NZ: Farm Environment Plans

Intensive lamb finishing under irrigation

Lauchie Cole, Owner/Manager
Woodbourn, Cressy TAS

Lauchie is originally from a grazing and cereal property in Western Victoria. After leaving school he studied horticulture and travelled throughout Australia working in multiple agricultural roles. Upon his return to Victoria, he completed an Advanced Diploma of Farm Business Management at Marcus Oldham College (MOC). After graduating from MOC Lauchie worked in Agribusiness Recruitment, moving to Tasmania in 2005.

Lauchie manages Woodbourn, with his wife Sarah, located at the foothills of the Western Tiers, reminding him of his home the Grampians. He has various roles within the community and loves the opportunities that Tasmanian agriculture offers, as well as raising a young family in an environment such as this.

Abstract
Woodbourn became two entities in 2016 when Lauchie and Sarah took over a portion of the property. They operate a mixed cropping and livestock enterprise, with the main focus being a clover-based lamb finishing system, and winter/summer cropping program. The area of Woodbourn that is now managed by Lauchie and Sarah has grown to 500ha with 320ha of fixed centre-pivot irrigation.

There has been significant irrigation development in recent years including the construction of irrigation storage (in the form of 300ML of on farm water storage) to compliment the water rights held on both the Cressy Longford Irrigation Scheme and Brumby's Creek.

Following a decision to simplify the enterprise mix, the business now consists of a lamb finishing program of 10,000 lambs traded annually under an irrigated clover-based finishing system and a cropping rotation of peas, poppies, grass seed, lease potatoes and carrots, beans, cereals (wheat and canola). The soil structure of Woodbourn is predominantly clay loam with some heavy clays and some lighter loam, a topography of slightly undulating land, with an average annual rainfall of 500 mm that is winter dominant.

Previously, the business had a breeding stock enterprise of 1100 ewes, which was challenging for many reasons:

- The property is lacking in adequate pasture cover for lambing ewes;
- Majority of Woodbourn is arable, which made it difficult to maintain ewes in optimal lambing weight, therefore having ewe losses prior to lambing;
- The enterprise wasn't of a size that was profitable, so the options were either expand the size of the enterprise or move out of it; and
- Some people just aren't built for lambing!

In removing this enterprise from the mix, it allowed Lauchie to increase his trading stock from 3,000 to 10,000 over three years.

Over the last 3 years Lauchie and Sarah worked on a rule of thumb method to increase stock numbers as pasture growth increased. This method, although effective in times of the year where there was a feed surplus, was not optimising increased capacity potential. This prompted the engagement of a consultant to start the process of paddock-based feed budgeting.

Feed budgeting has allowed the business to pre-empt purchases of store lambs a month out from when they are required, and reduce reactive buying and lag in the system. Through disciplined feed budgeting at a paddock/pivot level, management of a substantial irrigated system and enterprise has been simplified for both staff and the management team. A critical part of the feed budgeting process has been understanding the minimum and maximum pasture covers required and how to measure this.

A trading business like Lauchie and Sarah's is not for everyone. It is highly labour intensive, requiring them to be in their lamb processing facility twice weekly for either processing stock onto the farm or processing outgoing stock, sometimes these two processes can happen on the same day! The finishing enterprise is based on set-stocked grazing management, which is suited to white clover and benefits the business through reduced labour.

Woodbourn follows a simple methodology of utilising forward contracts for their trading business. These contracts are paramount for the business and provides Lauchie and Sarah with indicators of what to buy and when, and also assists with cashflow management. Processing space becomes very important when trading, and when it's not available price becomes irrelevant in a system like the one Woodbourn operates. Lauchie and Sarah rely on a high-turnover production system. Lambs that are within market specification must leave the property to allow volume to be reached, therefore increasing profitability. Understanding the article that you are producing is the most important component of trading – moving the target creates inefficiencies and backlog.

Utilising a measured feed model allows for future predictability and forward buying decisions, allows time to source stock, therefore also allowing for selling predictability and timeliness. The decision to implement a more stringent pasture budgeting system was also made to assist with meeting forward contract targets.

Key messages:

1. Engage a professional if needed and keep learning and training yourself. Take ownership of what needs to be done, timelines are tight with both grazing under irrigation and finishing trade lambs.
2. Animal health is mandatory. One wrong decision can set you back weeks and throw out the entire system.
3. Know your feed base you are growing under irrigation:
   - Ideal heights of clover for efficient feed coverage;
   - Know the feed quality of your feedbase, this influences the stocking rate; and
   - Stocking rates are made on the assumption that animals have maximum daily consumption.
4. Make appropriate and measured buying decisions.
5. Measure and monitor the feed supply and demand to ensure stocking rate matches the feed availability.

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Setting up paddocks for irrigation success

Graeme Mulligan, Business Development Manager – Fence
Gallagher Animal Management, Melbourne VIC

Graeme joined Gallagher in January 2020.

This is a national role to assist with value propositions across a range of stakeholders being guardians of the land, protecting biodiversity and business enterprises.

His experience is with the NZ State Owned Enterprise Landcorp Farming (branded Pamu Farms of NZ) where he spent over thirty years, including 20 years on the executive team. Key leadership roles involved contributing to the management of sheep, cattle, deer and goat enterprises within sensitive environments. Diversification included sheep and deer milking, large scale forestry and targeted avocado orchards.

Graeme had a role in the Wairakei Pastoral Development Project, a 45-year lease where Landcorp as developer/lessee took cut-over forestry and established dairy units with some irrigation.

Abstract

The investment producers make irrigation is significant. Hence the decisions you make at the outset of a project should determine future options and success.

A NZ experience. *A development case study.*

- Site dependent
- Investigate soil capability
- Electromagnetic Surveys
- Measure what you can
- Define the enterprise(s)
- Be agile to options and limit the cost of change
- Nitrogen Loss Management – can determine enterprise change
- Water points
- Fencing design

Key Messages

- Understand your soil resource
- Future proof your business options
- Stay agile, keep flexibility
- Therefore … fencing is last.

Notes

DRYLAND PASTURE UPDATES

Chair: Rob Winter, Agronomy Services Manager
Barenbrug, Longford TAS

Rob has over 25 years of broad experience in the temperate pasture industry and its related mixed farming systems. Until recently Rob has been representing Barenbrug (formerly Heritage Seeds) in Tasmania, developing information and content for pasture and forage information booklets, and providing technical support for the industry in temperate Australia.

This year he has been appointed as Agronomic Services Manager, overseeing the team trialling new forage cultivars and developing agronomic support information and extension tools for species and forage systems. He has a particular interest in identifying opportunities for improved pasture productivity, addressing feed gaps, and encouraging adoption of improved methods and best practice. Rob has been with Barenbrug for twelve years. Prior roles include seed production and sales agronomy within Tasmania and Victoria. He has a degree in Applied Agricultural Science from the University of Tasmania.

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Improving legumes resilience with better soil fertility

Richard Hayes, Senior Research Scientist
NSW Department of Primary Industries, Wagga Wagga NSW

Dr Hayes has over 20 years' experience in agronomy research in southern NSW. He has run numerous species evaluation trials and has a keen interest in soil fertility in pastures as well as perennial agriculture, including perennial-based forages and perennial grain crops. He has recently completed a PhD at the University of Tasmania examining competition dynamics of legume/grass mixtures as it relates to the drill row at sowing. Away from work, Dr Hayes divides his spare time helping his brothers to run the Hayes family's 2000-acre sheep and beef property near Goulburn, or following his two teenage children around to various drama, circus and fire-show performances.

Abstract

Legumes drive dryland pasture productivity, through ongoing inputs of nitrogen (N) derived from biological N-fixation. However, some legume species can be highly sensitive to drought and there are relatively few viable alternative legume species for many dryland environments.

To improve legume resilience in the face of drought, we examined opportunities to improve persistence by improving soil fertility, especially on soils that are low in pH (acidic) and low in plant-available phosphorus (P). Liming acidic soils raised soil pH in the surface layers and increased the abundance of white clover or subterranean clover in mixed pasture swards. Lime was demonstrated to increase plant-available water on contrasting soil types, leading to greater legume biomass.

In other experiments, legume biomass was also increased with elevated soil test P values. In a survey of more than 60 commercial paddocks on the Northern Tablelands of NSW, white clover recovery from drought was shown to be higher in soils with higher soil test P values. Glasshouse experiments were not able to demonstrate an improvement in survival of white clover under drought, a species observed to be a profligate water user compared to the more drought-hardy lucerne.

Rather, improved persistence of white clover and annual legumes such as such as subterranean clover and serradella was linked to the increased capacity of these species to set and regenerate from seed at higher soil P fertility levels. Taken together, these results highlight the importance of elevated soil pH and P-fertility in improving the resilience of legumes in mixed pasture swards.

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Establishing and maintaining legumes in dryland mixed pastures

Dr Rowan Smith, Research Fellow – Pasture and Forage Science
Livestock Production Centre, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, Launceston TAS

Dr Rowan Smith is a Research Fellow at the Tasmania Institute of Agriculture (TIA). Rowan leads the Feedbase and Environment Cluster within the Livestock Production Centre.

His research is focussed on improving the productivity of low-medium annual rainfall grazing systems, through the use of perennial grasses and legumes. Rowan has a number of research projects focussed on pasture legumes and how to maximise their establishment and persistence in mixed pastures. He also has an interest in evaluating alternative forage species and resilient grazing systems.

Rowan supervises and co-supervises PhD, Masters and Honours students in the fields of plant physiology, pasture agronomy and agricultural systems.

Abstract

Recent spikes in fertiliser prices and growing interest for a more sustainable and diverse feedbase, has many red meat producers placing a renewed emphasis on pasture legumes. Pasture legumes can enhance feed nutritional quality, spread seasonal growth, while contributing nitrogen through the symbiotic relationship with rhizobia. Survey work in 2011 identified opportunity to significantly increase the proportion of legumes in pastures. So how to undertake this work?

This presentation will include a mix of known findings and current research focusing on establishing legumes and the factors that influence success and failure. It will focus on both re-sowing and over-sowing and how to advantage the legume in mixed pastures. It will also touch on species selection and compatibility, sowing rates, timing and rhizobia.

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Relevant resources

Project overview: Growing red meat productivity through the selection and establishment of perennial legumes – Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture

Project overview: Evaluation of strip tillage and direct drilling sowing methods for pasture renovation in low rainfall regions of Tasmania

Project overview: Serradellas for new environments

Managing a dryland feedbase

Will Bignell
Thorpe Farm, Bothwell TAS

Will grew up in a highly diversified farm business, producing a range of boutique, niche and commodity crops alongside sheep, cattle, and deer at Bothwell. Since returning fulltime to the farm in 2014 he has progressively focused on simplifying the business with a focus on irrigated cropping and prime lamb production.

Abstract

Having experienced three droughts in the last 20 years Will has watched his dryland pasture base deteriorate to annual dominated swards with high weed loadings. Using a ranking system of fence, sward and fertility, alongside professional development he has significantly increased the stocking rate of the farm and has invested heavily in drought proofing the farm and simplifying its operations. Will is enjoying seeing the changes in his business and thinks the greatest strength of Tasmanian agriculture is the cooperation and support between farmers, researchers, and our industry service providers.

During the interview, Will and Rowan will discuss which techniques have worked and which haven't. This will include sowing preparation, spraying, machinery, timing of sowing and pasture species combinations.

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Notes

SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

Chair: Angus Gidley-Baird, Senior Analyst – Animal Protein
Rabobank, Sydney NSW

Angus is a Senior Analyst in Sydney, Australia, responsible for research and analysis of the local and global animal protein sectors. In his role, Angus provides regular market updates on beef, sheepmeat, pork, poultry, and seafood markets. Angus is a regular public speaker at farmer and industry events and also produces podcasts for the RaboResearch Australia/New Zealand team.

Angus formerly held roles at NSW Farmers' Association, the peak farmer representative body in New South Wales, and at the Department of Food and Rural Affairs in the United Kingdom. He holds an Honors degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Sydney, with majors in Agricultural Economics and Marketing, and a Masters in Accounting from Curtin University in Western Australia.

Notes

Starting the journey to carbon neutrality: Creating environmentally-sustainable businesses

Dr Richard Rawnsley, Academic Lead
Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, Burnie TAS

Richard Rawnsley is the Academic Lead for the Livestock Production Centre at the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture and is also employed by Fonterra Australia as a paddock specialist. A major focus of his work is enhancing the sustainability of grass-fed dairy systems. He serves on many communities of interest groups, conference committees and is Scientific Director of the Australian Dairy Conference.

Abstract

Greenhouse gas emissions – what do you need to know and what can you do?

As global food demand grows, there is an increasing awareness of the need to improve agricultural production while minimising environmental impacts. Livestock accounts for over 60% of Tasmania's farm-gate value and will undoubtedly play a significant role in achieving the state's AgriVision goal of $10 billion of farm-gate value by 2050.

While the growth of a sector is to be applauded, the connection between production and Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG), and GHG emissions from ruminant production systems are receiving a growing amount of public attention. The result is both a need and an opportunity. With its advanced grass-fed production system, the Tasmanian livestock sector is considered one of the most environmentally friendly and resource-efficient livestock production systems in the world. Even so, if we are to achieve our goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, our most efficient production systems must continue to adopt technologies to reduce their emissions.

The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of the importance of understanding global GHG emissions, the global carbon budget, and the global methane pledge. It will also highlight emerging international policy drivers and supply chain initiatives, whereas at the farm level, it will identify the win-win abatement strategies that producers can adopt now and the emerging technologies that can assist in decoupling production from emissions.

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Is the grass always greener?

John Francis, Director
Agrista, Wagga Wagga NSW

John Francis is the owner of Agrista, an agricultural consultancy business based in Wagga Wagga in southern NSW. Agrista provides consulting and benchmarking services to corporate and family farm asset owners and managers, the rural finance sector, government and industry bodies and the agricultural services sector. John's expertise generates value for clients via one-on-one consultancy, group consultancy, industry-driven project work, workshop content development and delivery and public speaking engagements and industry presentations.

Abstract

A great starting point for farm business managers to improve their understanding of their requirements to meet government and consumer demands to lower greenhouse gas emissions is to conduct an emissions audit. This can be done using the free online tools such as the Sheep-Beef Greenhouse Accounting Framework (SB GAF). This process not only identifies the source and magnitude of the contribution of different emissions, it also shows sequestration, net emissions and emissions intensity.

The use of the tool can deliver an improvement in understanding of:

- The emissions of specific livestock systems
- The extent to which management actions will change farm emissions
- The sensitivity of emissions to different operational factors.

It could be argued that highly productive and profitable livestock businesses have a greater challenge than others in achieving emissions reductions targets. The reason for this is that they typically start with higher net emissions due primarily to their higher feed utilisation (stocking rate). This means that each tonne of CO2-e offset or abated represents a smaller proportion of the total emissions when compared with less productive farms.

These producers face a further emissions-related dilemma. The dilemma is that efficiency gains deliver marginal increases in production, and these emit more emissions despite the increased efficiency. For example, an improvement in genetics, delivering an increased rate of gain, will see the productivity-focused manager increase stocking rate to maintain feed utilisation at the same level prior to the introduction of the improved genetics. The dilemma occurs because the increase in stocking rate delivers increased net emissions but lower emissions intensity (less emissions per kilogram of meat produced).

The good news is that the business case for improving productivity is still very strong. Returns are solid even after accounting for the marginal cost of net emissions at current carbon market values, despite this cost not being imposed on farm businesses currently.

While emissions may be higher from more productive businesses (higher red meat production per hectare), the processing sector has demonstrated that it values relationships with businesses who have lower emissions intensity.

It is a new era where on farm investment analyses are including not only the financial costs and benefits but also the environmental costs and benefits to the business (as emissions). Such analyses can only be conducted with solid knowledge of the production system, financial performance, and farm emissions. This suggests that an understanding of farm emissions will be a necessary addition to the knowledge and skills required for the modern farm manager.

The target is not to be increasing emissions, but the reality is that increased emissions are an output of a more productive business and market pricing signals have a long way to go before there is a financial imperative to stop chasing productivity gains.

In other good news there is considerable scientific investment into reducing emissions beyond trees and soil carbon. Methane reducing technology through feed supplements and genetic solutions are potentially game-changing, but these technologies are still in their infancy. This suggests that future productivity gains may not come with the same emissions outputs as they do today.

This presentation will give examples of how easy it is to be deceived by the numbers. It will build a case for improving your own financial literacy to avoid deception and maintain a focus on the things that matter in a commodity livestock production business.

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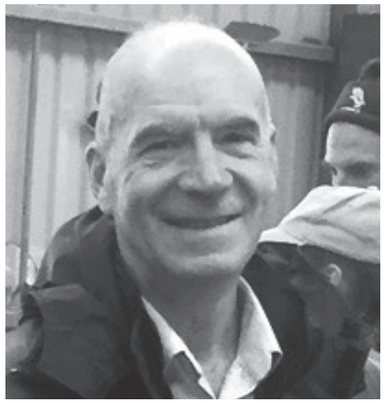
SHEEP UPDATES



Chair: Phil Jarvie, Professional Sales Representative
Zoetis, Hobart TAS

Phil is the Tasmanian representative for leading animal health company Zoetis. He has almost 25 years' experience in livestock industries, having started with a leading Tasmanian rural supplier in Hobart before taking the opportunity to represent CSL in Victoria then progressing to National Sales Manager for Dairy, Feedlot and Pigs with Pfizer Animal Health.

Since talking the opportunity to return to Tasmania in 2005, he has focused on providing evidence-based advice to producers based upon information gathered from local projects such as abattoir disease surveillance, cattle and sheep drench resistance trials, BVD monitoring and parasite management in lambs under irrigation.

He has particular interest and expertise in livestock vaccines and is available for farm visits at any time to discuss disease prevention and management projects.

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Fit to Join

Dr Mary McQuillan, Researcher and Doctoral Candidate
Charles Sturt University, Adelaide SA

Dr Mary McQuillan graduated from the University of Adelaide in 2016 with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Degree. Mary is a production animal veterinarian and was the principal investigator on the 2019-2021 "Unlocking the keys to ewe survival" Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) funded project. Mary is also a research associate with Charles Sturt University (CSU) and is currently undertaking a Doctor of Veterinary Studies at CSU with expected completion in 2023.

Abstract

This presentation is an overview of the recommendations from the recent fit to join MLA project and includes:

- The key fitness indicators to look for when breeding your ewe for joining, including:
  - Age
  - Condition score
  - Udder health
  - Teeth
  - Lameness
  - Previous performance
- An overview of the classing system for determining whether a ewe is fit to join with case study examples
- An overview of the relevant tools and resources for producers

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Notes

Efficiency gains to be made through genetic selection

Rozzie O'Reilly, Operations Manager
LAMBPRO, Holbrook NSW

Rozzie grew up on a small sheep and cattle enterprise in southern NSW. She completed a Bachelor of Animal Science at the University of New England (UNE) in 2014, and went on to work in the beef feedlot industry for two years following. Rozzie now works for LAMBPRO, Australia's largest prime lamb seedstock business and has done so for the past five and half years. Her current role is Operations Manager. This involves managing the database for over 10,500 performance recorded stud ewes, coordinating staff and day to day activities for running the business, as well as providing numerous client services. LAMBPRO provides genetics to over 350 lamb producing businesses around the country, and it is expected in 2022 that these clients will produce over 1.2 million lambs.

Aside from work, Rozzie and her husband John operate their own livestock business on lease and agistment country. Their ultimate goal is to purchase their own farm over the coming years

Abstract

'50% of future productivity improvements in sheep farming will come from genetics'

LAMBPRO is Australia's largest prime lamb seedstock business, operating numerous breeding programs, targeted at various markets and production systems. The breeding objective for all breeds is the same:

'High performing trade lambs with shape (muscle) and consistency that will marble off grain at export weights'.

Data is core to the LAMBPRO business; all breeding programs are run through rigorous, annual progeny test programs, with carcase data collected, to assist in achieving the breeding objective. It is through this rigorous performance-recorded data collection process, that LAMBPRO clients can select better genetics capitalising on greater efficiency gains. Such efficiency gains in which Rozzie will discuss are outlined.

Efficiency gains targeted:

- More lambs
- Less drenching
- Quicker turn-offs
- No change in ewe weight
- Change in body composition (more fat reserves for dry times)
- Labour reduction (drenching, feet, feeding, quick turn off, shedding)
- Market gains targeted:
- Marbling delivering point of difference
- Branded opportunities
- Selection for increased rack and loin (eye muscle)

Rozzie will provide attendees with an overview of how genetic selection, genomic testing and rigorous record keeping is crucial to producing high quality product for both LAMBPRO and their clients.

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Unlocking the keys to ewe survival

Dr Mary McQuillan, Researcher and Doctoral Candidate
Charles Sturt University, Adelaide SA

Dr Mary McQuillan graduated from the University of Adelaide in 2016 with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Degree. Mary is a production animal veterinarian and was the principal investigator on the 2019-2021 "Unlocking the keys to ewe survival" Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) funded project. Mary is also a research associate with Charles Sturt University (CSU) and is currently undertaking a Doctor of Veterinary Studies at CSU with expected completion in 2023.

Abstract

This presentation is to provide an overview of the recent, MLA funded research project 'unlocking the keys to ewe survival' and will include the following:

- Overview of the industry benchmarks for ewe mortality
- Overview of the key causes and risk factors for ewe mortality
- Precision pregnancy management for maximising ewe survival

Relevant resource

Final report: Unlocking the keys to ewe survival

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Notes

BEEF UPDATES

Chair: Ed Archer, Director and Co-Principal
Property Manager Greenhythe Pastoral, Tamar Valley TAS

Ed is Co-Principal and Director of Landfall Angus a large Tasmanian Angus seedstock operation supplying genetics to the eastern states of Australia. Since 2003, Ed has managed Greenhythe, one of the families' grazing properties located in the Tamar Valley of Tasmania.

Ed's role sees him responsible for the day-to-day operation of Greenhythe, which runs an Angus cow herd and a self-replacing composite ewe flock, producing ewe and store lambs.

In 1998, Ed obtained an Advanced Diploma in Agribusiness Administration through Marcus Oldham College in Geelong. Ed continues to gain valuable knowledge from industry mentors and peers to further improve his grazing management and animal production skills.

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Traceability in the beef industry

George Basha, Operations Analyst
Integrity Systems Company, Sydney NSW

When the NLIS first came into play in 1999, George was employed to set up a Helpdesk to ensure all participants could meet their new obligations with traceability.

Georges' skills and experience as a high school teacher were used to set up and deliver training courses for all sectors of the red meat supply chain.

In 2004, George undertook to implement a Quality Assurance Program via ISO9001 within Integrity Systems Company (ISC).

His current role is working with members of ISC and all of industry to improve traceability of livestock.

Abstract

George will provide attendees with an overview of the current traceability process for beef cattle in Tasmania, including transferring between properties and through processing. There are three pillars that currently make up livestock traceability – PIC numbers, eID/visual ear tags and the central database. Traceability is compulsory across all sectors of the beef cattle industry and over recent years new technology and software such as EID tag readers and electronic National Vendor Declaration (eNVD) have assisted producers in streamlining the traceability process of their animals.

George will explain how Tasmanian beef producers can expect this traceability process to change in the future, including the development of on-farm software programs and technology and expected changes to the eNVD and Livestock Production Assurance program (LPA) which will allow producers greater flexibility to control on-farm records and improve desktop auditing.

Notes

The potential of dairy beef for the Tasmanian beef and dairy industries

Stephen Creese, Farm Owner/Farming Company Managing Director, *Creese North East and Ingleby Farms & Forests, Bridport TAS*

Stephen is the owner of the mixed grazing business Creese North East at Tomahawk in North East Tasmania running an angus beef herd and self-replacing composite sheep flock.

Stephen is also Country Manager/Director of Danish based Ingleby Farms & Forests, and his role sees him responsible for its diverse agricultural operations in Tas/Vic/Qld and New Zealand.

Abstract

Clovelly Tasmania in Bridport Tasmania has successfully developed a dairy beef enterprise to compliment and run in conjunction with their current 3800 cow dairy operation. The decision to produce dairy beef was made with the aim to value add to the current operation and utilise all calves produced.

Stephen's presentation will discuss the main components of Clovelly Tasmania's dairy beef enterprise and will include the following aspects:

- The importance of genetic selection in the current breeding program.
- The importance of calf health and how this is focused on, with an intensive calf rearing process commencing form birth and continuing until the calf is successfully transferred to a full pasture diet.
- How specific weight gain models are used to maximise financial return. These weight gain models include agistment/profit share, and weight gain agreements with other producers.
- The production of F1 cows suitable for the wider beef industry in Australia.

This presentation will showcase an example of how Clovelly Tasmania have developed a 400 cow, self-replacing beef herd, using dairy beef calves to produce F1 an F2 cows.

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Notes

Heifer development and management to increase productivity

Jena Alexopoulos, PhD candidate
University of Adelaide, King Island TAS

Jena is currently in the final year of her PhD with the university of Adelaide, the focus of her study is heifer development and management and includes increasing re-breeding success in the lactating heifer.

Jena completed her Bachelors Degree in Animal Science in 2015 and went on to complete honours in 2016 at Mussleroe Bay, Tasmania, looking at puberty in angus and hereford x angus heifers. From here, Jena worked in Adelaide on a science team in the pig industry for three years before moving to King Island, Tasmania to pursue her passion of beef production.

After hours and on weekends, Jena and her partner's time is spent running a small cattle and sheep operation they have on the island.

Abstract

The re-breeding success of a first calf, lactating heifer has a significant economic impact on beef production systems. First calf heifers have a longer post-partum anoestrus interval than older cows due to the increased energy requirements associated with maintenance, lactation and growth.

The primary regulator of fertility is energy, therefore increased feed or energy supply to those animals that conceive late in the breeding season can improve the likelihood of subsequent re-breeding success. The current research project looking at heifer management, involves 1200 angus heifers in temperate Australia.

These heifers were pregnancy scanned and fetal aged (1st, 2nd and 3rd cycles) in February 2020. Cycle groups were split into three mobs or management groups until they had their first calf in spring 2020. Heifers were then re-bred for a six week joining season.

Subsequent conception for 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycle heifers was 89, 90 and 88% respectively. Heifers in the 1st cycle were significantly heavier (~20kg) than 2nd and 3rd cycle heifers at initial joining however, by the subsequent joining the 3rd cycle heifers were significantly heavier (~20kg), fatter (~1.5mm) and in better body condition than the 1st and 2nd cycles.

1st and 2nd cycle heifers lost weight, fat and body condition between calving and second joining. Whilst the 3rd cycle heifers maintained body composition during this crucial period, because of increased feed availability.

Results conclude that by managing late calving heifers (3rd cycles) separately and increasing feed availability, ensures that heifers spend minimal time in a state of negative energy balance, and adequate energy reserves are available for maintenance, lactation, growth and additionally to resume oestrus cycling and become pregnant.

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VIRTUAL FARM TOUR

Chair: Stewart Raine, State Wool Manager
Nutrien Ag Solutions, Launceston TAS

Stewart Raine is the Nutrien Wool State Manager based in Launceston. Stewart specialises in all areas of the wool supply chain from fibre to fabric. With over 32 years' experience as a qualified wool classer, and having lived and worked extensively in major wool growing states of Australia, and wool consuming countries overseas (including China and Europe), he brings this unique skill set to benefit Tasmanian farmers.

Stewart firmly believes the Tasmanian brand and all that implies, partnered with traceability and provenance, sets Tasmanian producers apart from all others, and must be fully utilised to ensure market access and price premiums/differentials for our products.

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Notes

Roderic and Kate O'Connor
Connorville Station, Cressy TAS

Connorville Station, located in Cressy, northern Tasmania is one of the oldest farming operations in the state. Continuously farmed by the O'Connor family since it's establishment in 1824. Seventh generation producer, Roderic O'Connor and his wife, Kate taken a pragmatic approach to farm management decisions, looking long-term to ensure the business' resilience and sustainability.

The property spans 17,200 hectares and covers numerous land classes, from flat, fertile ground through to undulating country and steep areas utilised for vegetation. Rather than applying a blanket approach to management practices across the property, Roderic has adopted practices suited to each land class, integrating each into a dynamic system that maximises efficiency of inputs such as fertiliser and water, and what is produced, whether it's wool, meat, crops, or trees. Keeping track of such a dynamic business is made possible with clear and detailed records managed in a central system that supports decision making.

Roderic and Kate's experiences, both from an agricultural perspective and their involvement in other industries have helped to shape the business. Thinking outside the box and considering new opportunities while maintaining sustainable practices that care for their environment has seen Connorville continually evolve to keep up with markets. There has also been a significant emphasis placed on creating an environment for workers based on needs that extend beyond remuneration to attract and maintain staff. This approach is being passed on to the next generation and will see Connorville operating for many more generations to come.

Connorville Station property statistics

Total property size: 17,500 ha
Native bush, covenant, carbon forest and plantations: 10,500 ha
Pivot irrigation: 585 ha
Cropping: 180 ha
Total sheep: 24,000 hd
Ewes: 14,000 hd
Total cattle: 2,000 hd

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MLA resource hubs

MLA has compiled this series of hubs containing relevant resources on a range of on-farm topics:

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- **Sustainability:** Carbon neutral by 2030, dung beetles
- **Climate:** Climate, disaster recovery
- **Other resources:** Seasonal resources, COVID-19 resources and market insights hub, mental health, MLA's e-newsletters

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- pain relief use in sheep
- introduction to MateSel
- soil testing
- visual indicators of soil condition

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