

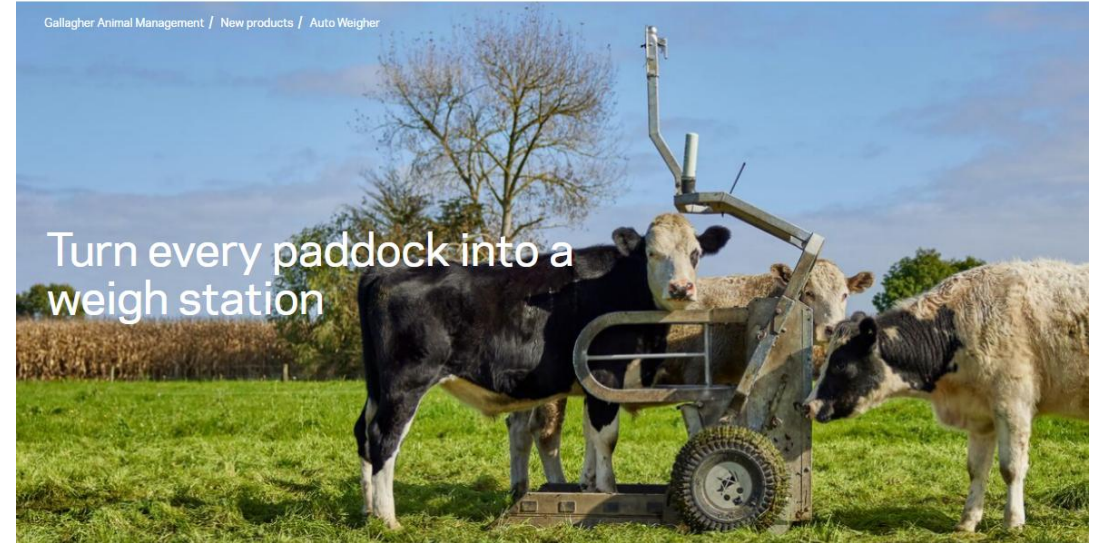


31 July 2026

Data Direct from the Paddock

Jillian Kelly
AHN Consulting

In paddock weighing & AHN



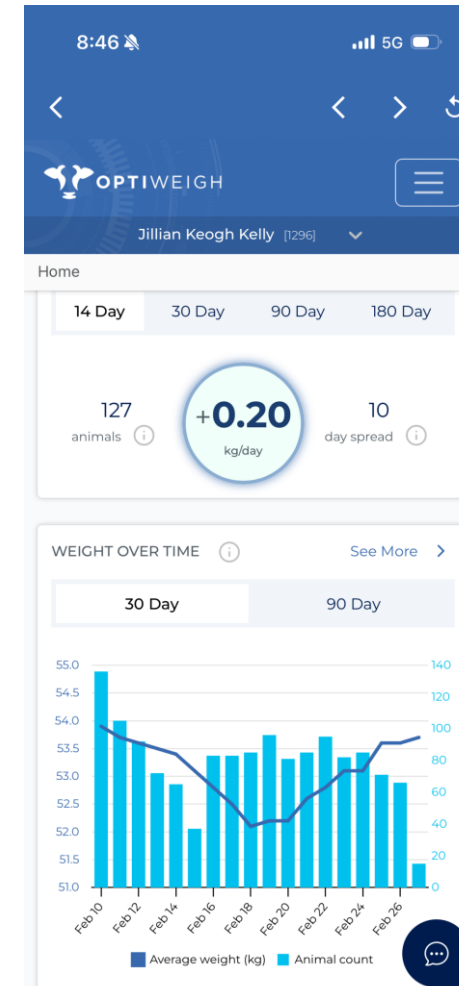
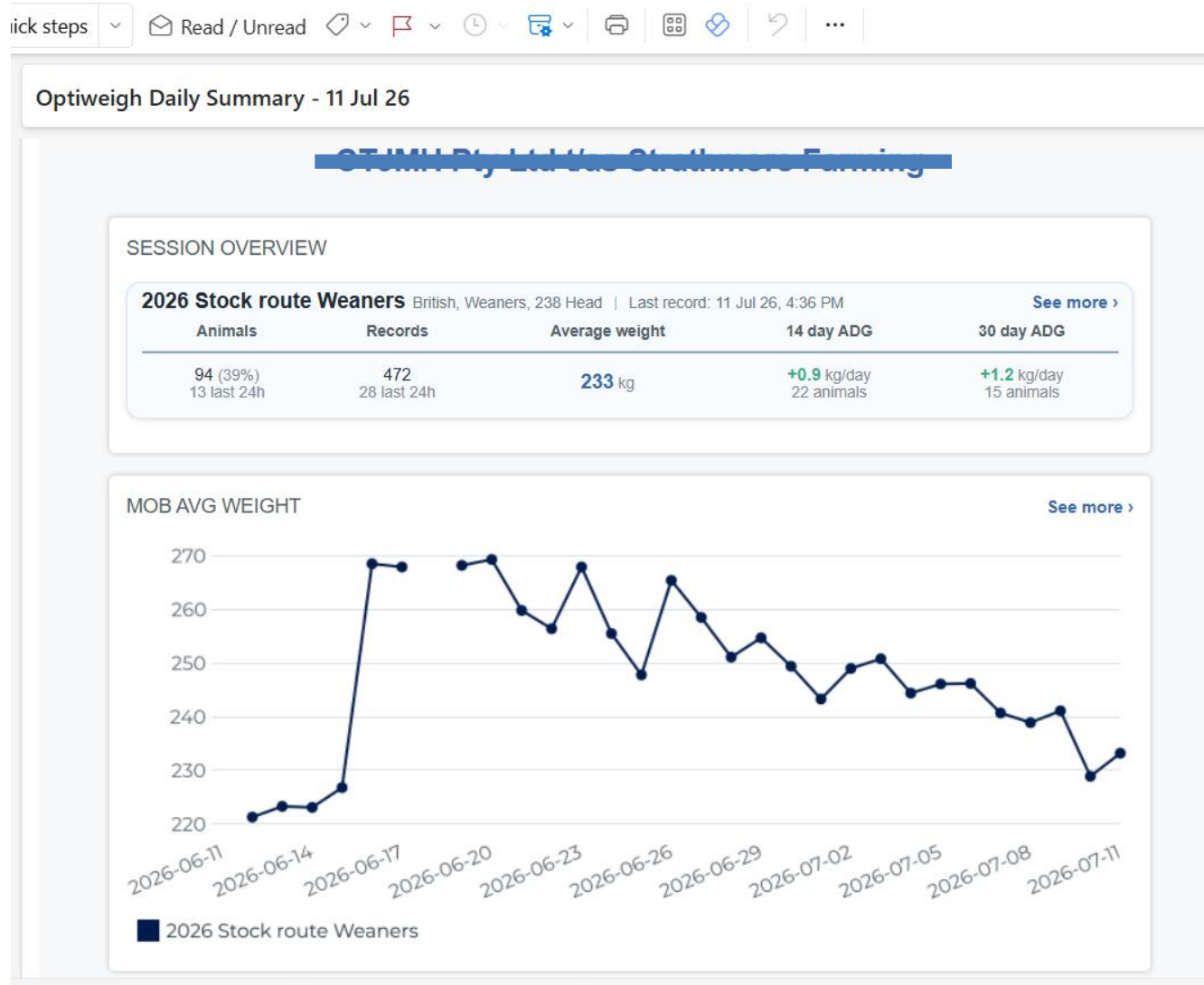
We hire out four Optiweigh units

Disclaimer: We have no financial relationship with Optiweigh!

How do they work?

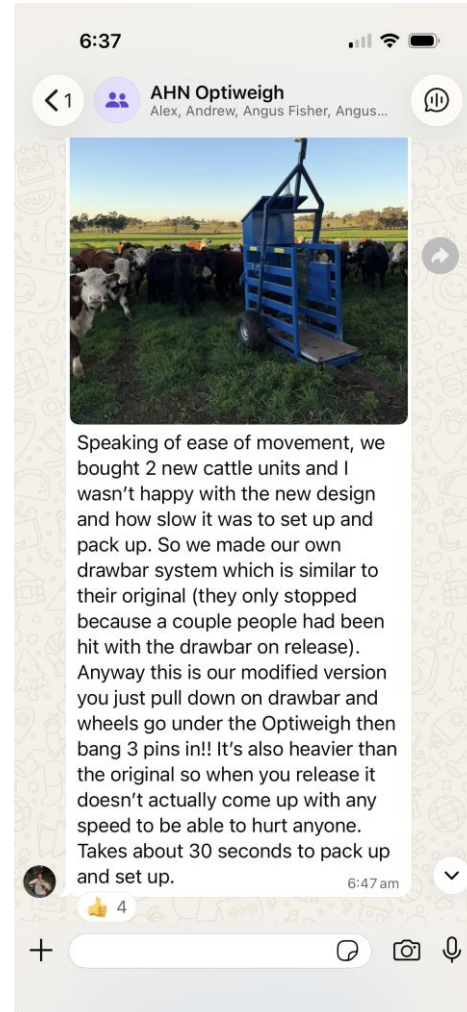
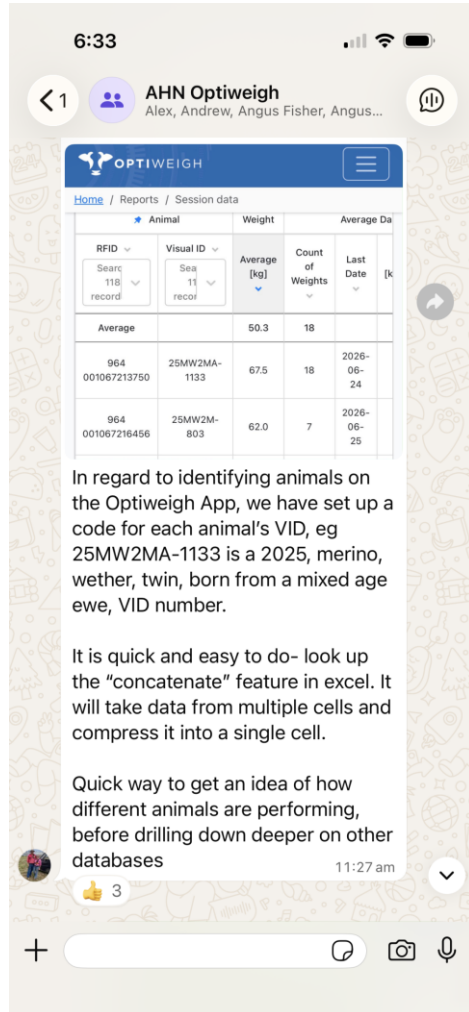


In paddock weighing & AHN



We
monitor
22 units
daily

In paddock weighing & AHN



We have an
Optiweigh users
group with 75
members

Uses - sheep



Lamb Feedlots

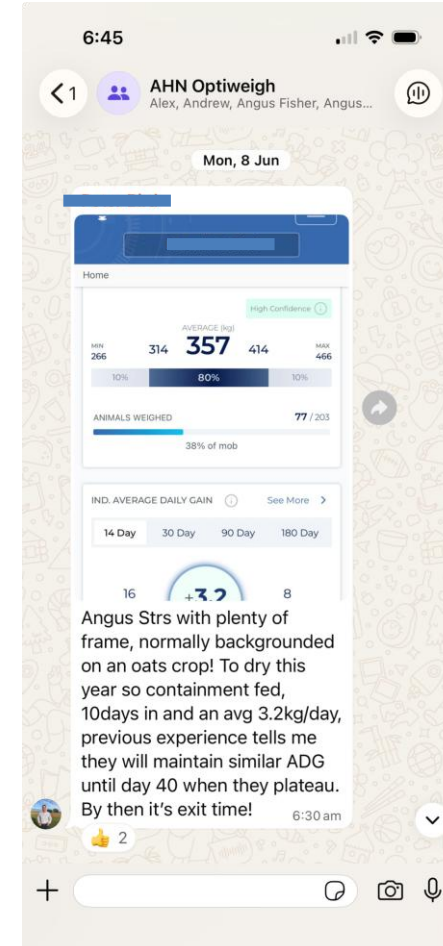


Pasture – fat lambs

Uses - cattle

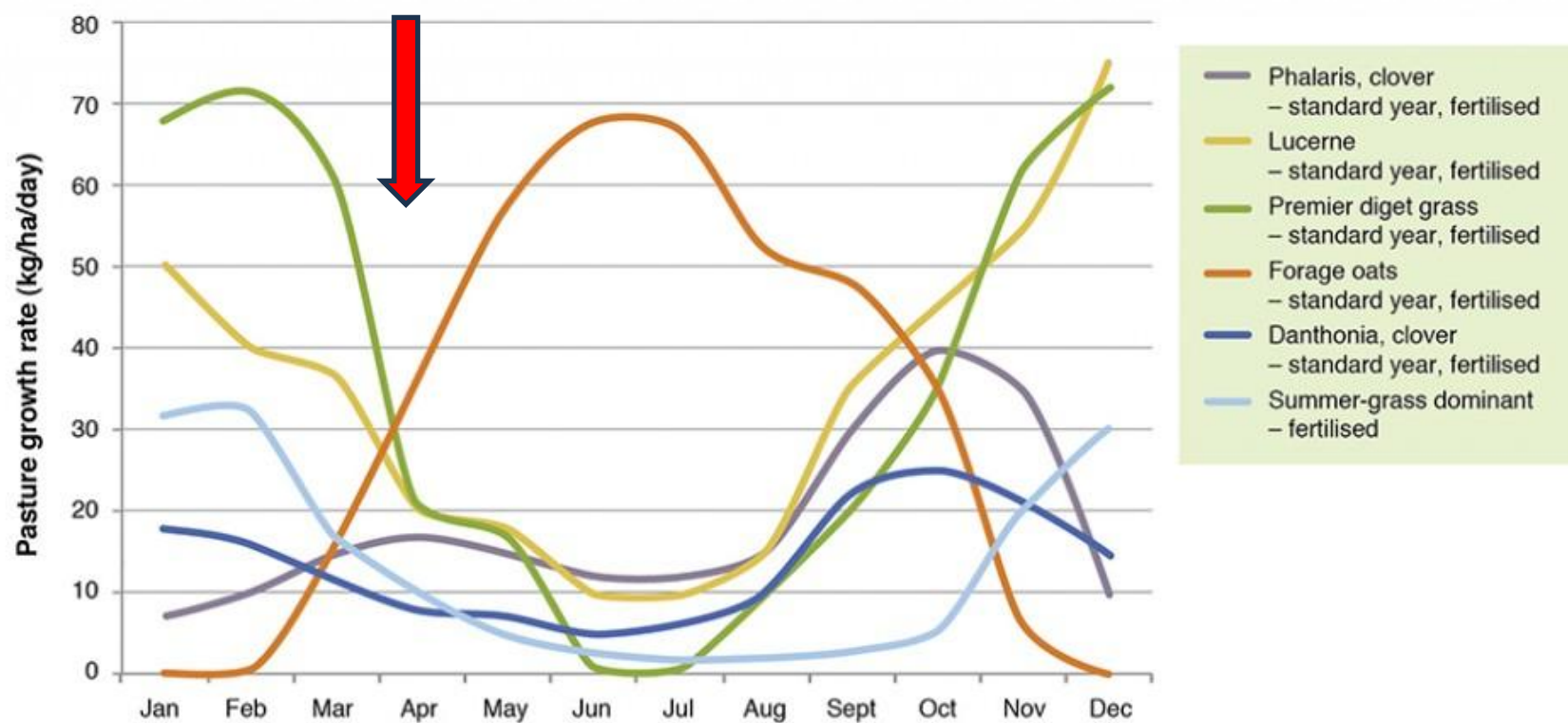


Steers on crop



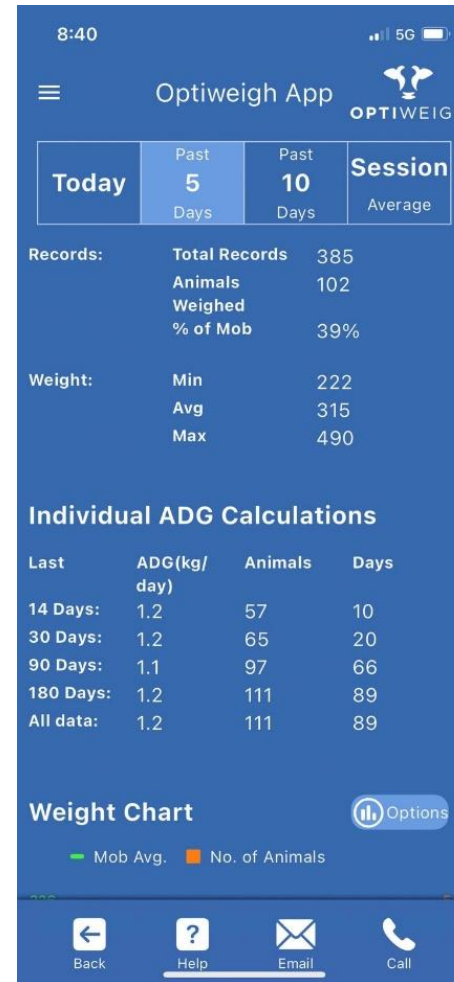
On-farm feedlotting

What we have learned: the autumn feed gap



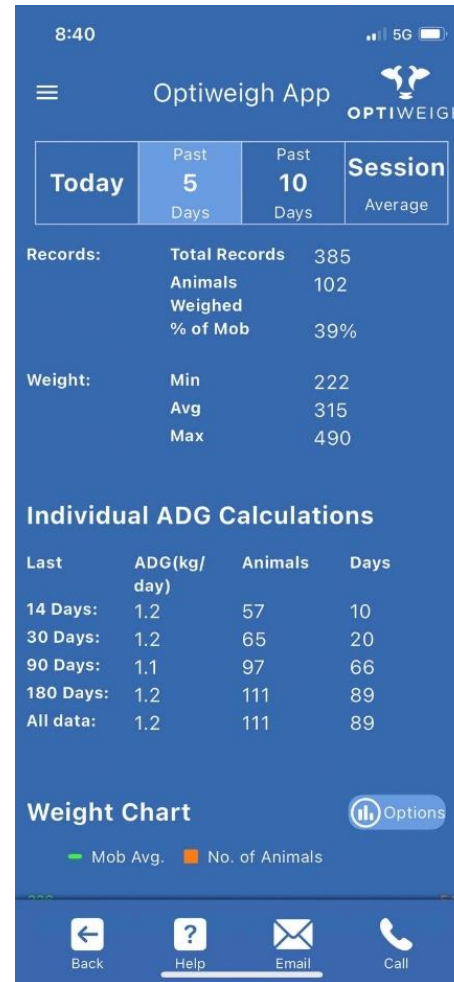
What we have learned: the autumn feed gap

- 256 Angus steers
- Average 315kg LW
- Tropical native pastures
- North west slopes of NSW
- ADG 1.2kg/day.



What we have learned: the autumn feed gap

- Shower of rain 20th Feb.
- >36°C weather after that.



What we have learned: the autumn feed gap

“The Optiweigh is Broken.”



Pasture
>60% NDF
7MJ ME/kg DM
8% CP

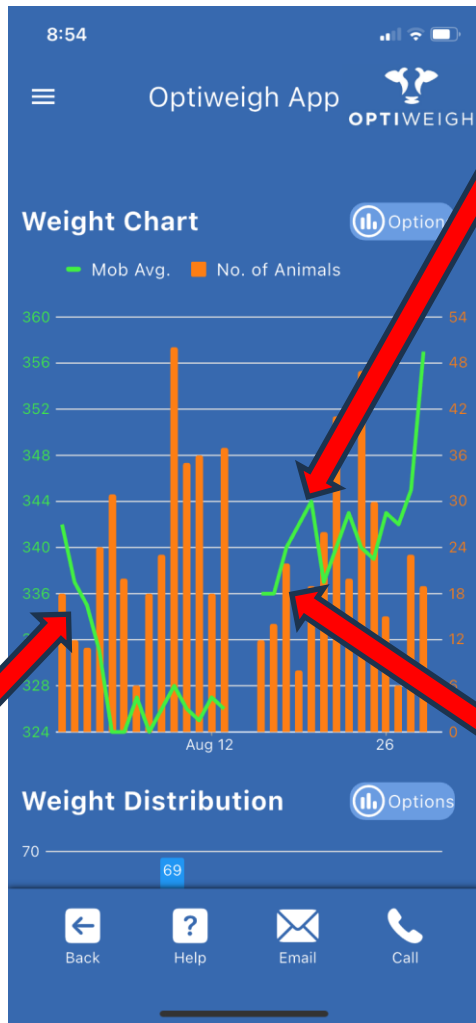
Poo like pyramids!

What we have learned: the autumn feed gap



- Addition of a dry lick.
- Then addition of barley.
- Then move to a temperate pasture.
- We worked this out within days of it occurring – saving days of lost production.

What we have learned: dirty water



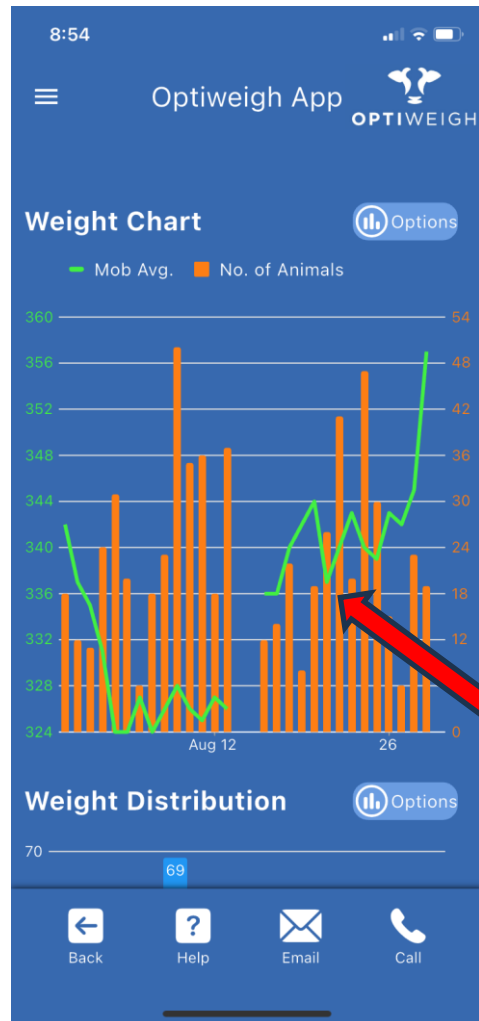
Uh Oh
Trouble

1.6kg/day

Induction

- 277 heifers
- 90 hectare oats crop
- North of Coonamble
- Timber belt with native medic
- Bloat oil in the water trough
- July 2024.

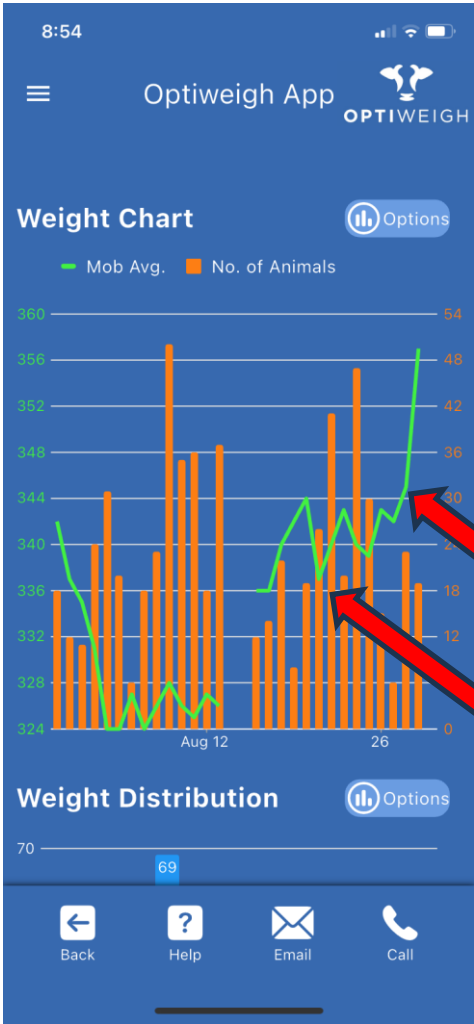
What we have learned: dirty water



Warm weather

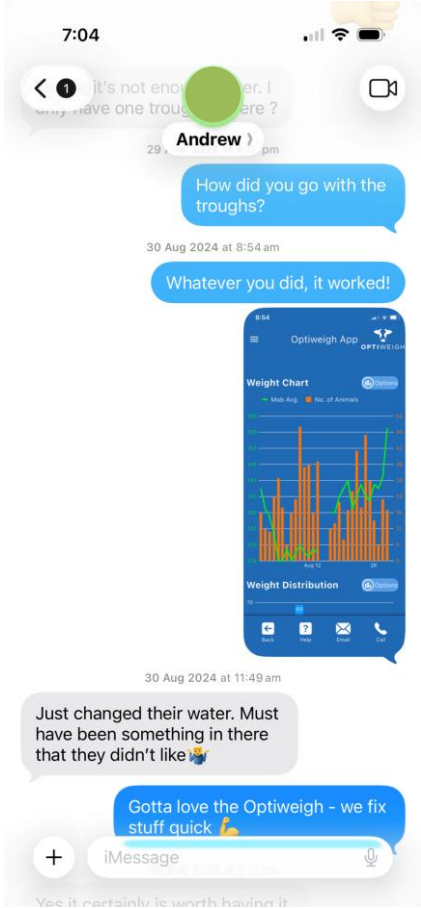
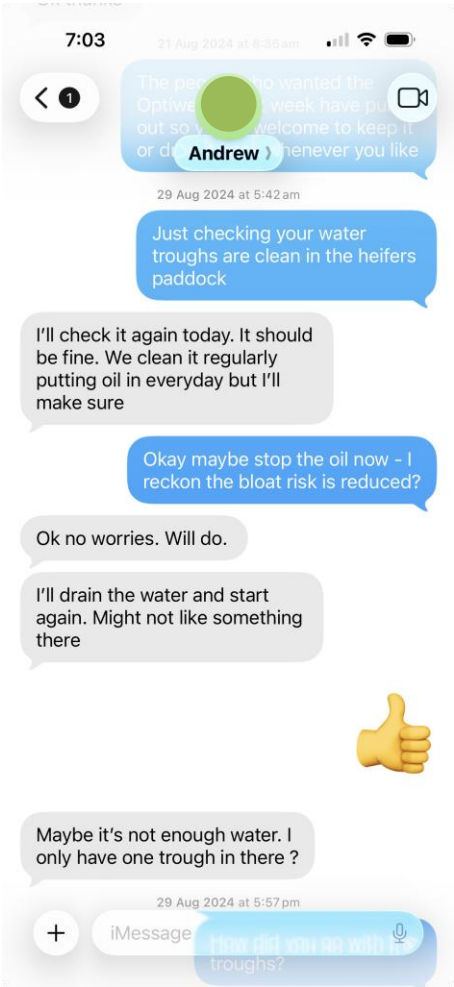
- End of August
- Few hot days
- ADG dropped to 0.2kg/day.

What we have learned: dirty water

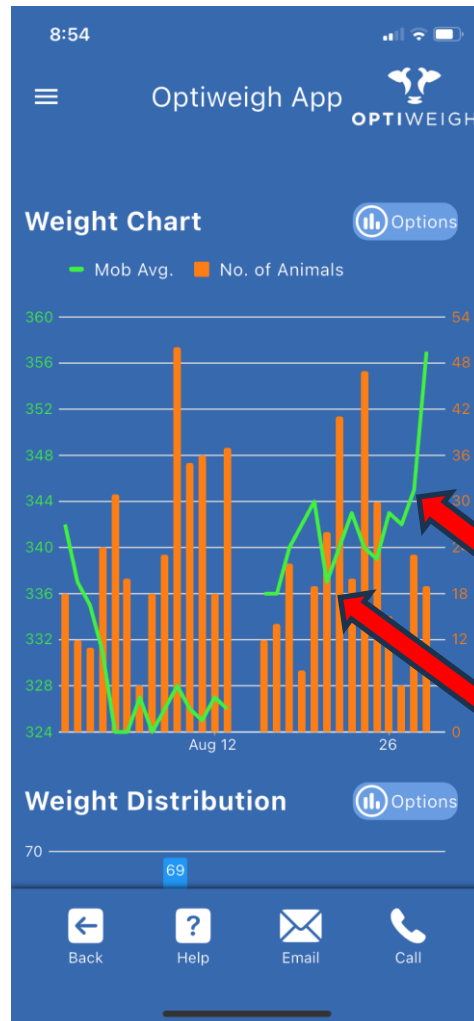


Clean
water!

Warm
weather



What we have learned: dirty water

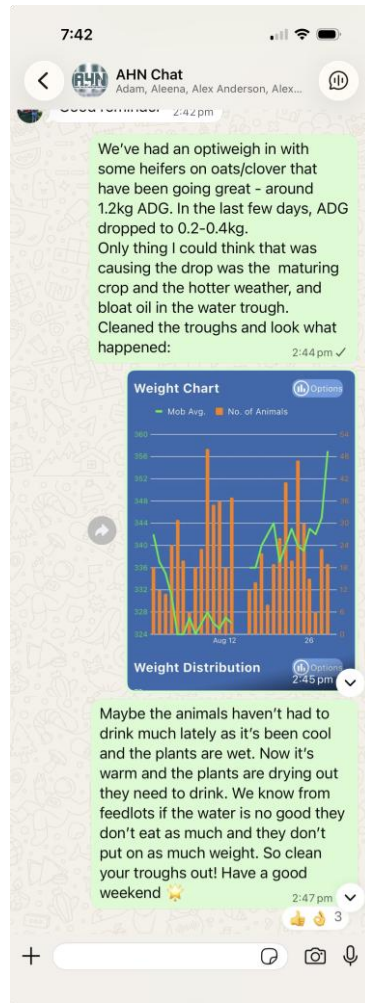


Clean
water!

Warm
weather

- Clean troughs: ADG back up to 2kg/day
- ADG lost = 1.4kg/day
- $1.4\text{kg} \times \$3/\text{kg} \times 277 \text{ heifers} = \$1200/\text{day}$
- Or \$1939/day at today's \$5/kg!
- We worked it out in 5 days.

What we have learned: dirty water



Communal learning!

What we have learned: barometric pressure



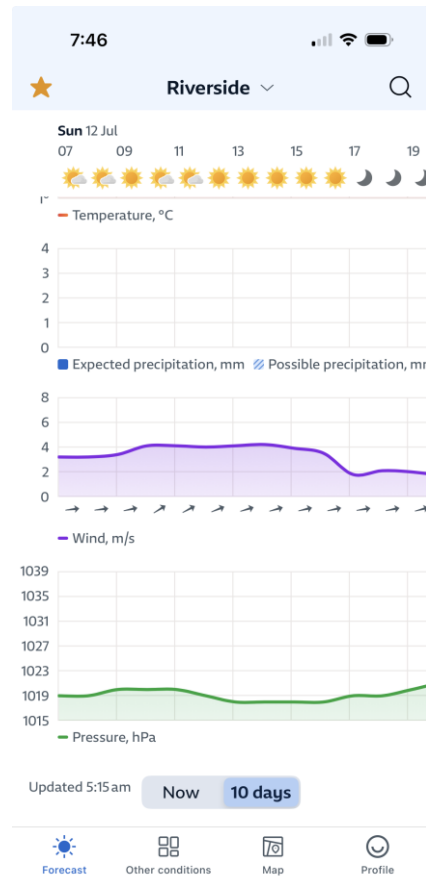
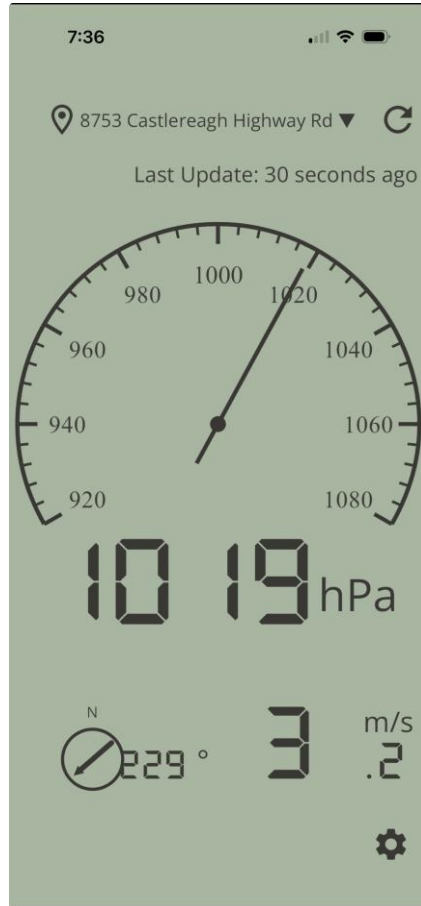
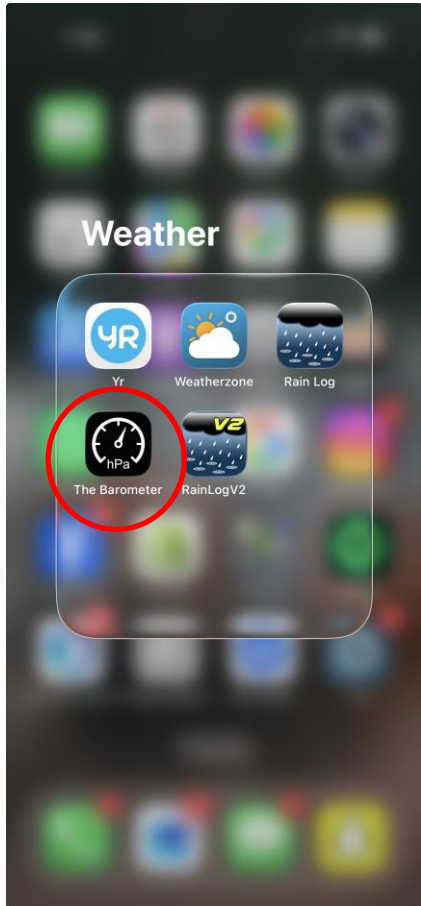
- When the barometric pressure drops, animals eat less.
- When the barometric pressure returns to normal, animals are hungry and eat more.

WEATHER REGULATED CATTLE BEHAVIOUR ON RANGELAND

HALASZ, A.^{1*} – NAGY, G.² – TASI, J.¹ – BAJNOK, M.¹ – MIKONE, J. E.³

Abstract. Cattle behaviour depends both on internal factors (breed, age, oestrus, hierarchy, body homeostasis) and external factors (air temperature, humidity, wind speed, paddock size, grass quality and quantity). In our study we present how weather conditions modify behaviour and daily walked distance. Direct observations of Hungarian grey cows and calves were carried out in Eastern Hungary on a rangeland called Hortobagy. Meteorological, spatial and behavioural data were collected using weather stations, GPS collars and ethogram recordings. Data showed a positive correlation between daily walked distance and atmospheric pressure ($r=0.389$, $P<0.05$). Animals consistently used the same daily routes and resting sites. Moreover, frequency of metabolic behaviour (grazing, rumination, drinking, defecation, and urination) depended significantly on type of weather fronts experienced on the day following the examined day ($r=0.445$, $P<0.05$). These weather fronts were classified according to the system developed by Peczeley. In summary, our study suggests that Hungarian grey cattle show specific behavioural patterns during low-pressure conditions. Therefore, understanding their behavioural responses to different environmental factors may help to improve the handling techniques of extensively farmed beef cattle. As behavioural adaptation is usually driven by the neuroendocrine system, we suggest that this type of regulation could also depend on environmental changes, therefore, this relationship needs further research.

What we have learned: barometric pressure



- When the barometric pressure drops, animals eat less.
- When the barometric pressure returns to normal, animals are hungry and eat more.

What we have learned: barometric pressure

- Predict acidosis events or at least assess risk.
- I wonder about conception/AI dates on these dips.
- Tie animal behaviour to hpa (e.g. camped up at 9am).



Cool things we have learned

- Can ask it to weigh animals below or above a weight (e.g. below 30kg in a mob of ewes & lambs).
- Can upload a bucket file with traits (e.g. sire, twin/single, origin) and sort ADG based on this.
- Better uptake if placed away from high pressure areas.
- We've never broken one.
- Great customer service.
- Really accurate.

Any issues?

- Cost?
- Overinterpretation
- They can get “stale” on it
- Cattle lick/rub everything
- Lift vs tow.



Top three take home messages

1. In-paddock weighing is a great investment.
2. You can jump at shadows (learn to read the tealeaves).
3. The power of looking at collective data within our business is immense.

Tools, resources & training

- <https://am.gallagher.com/en-AU/new-products/auto-weigher>
- www.optiweigh.com.au/
- www.ahnconsulting.com.au

If we spend it on crops, why can't we spend it on grass!!!

- It's easy to calculate what we return on crop's.
- It can also be easy to calculate our return on grass now we have access to thing's like opti weigh's and Jill Kelly!!



Col Hogan – St George QLD

Case Study – Managing Buffel Grass





Data Direct from the Paddock

Jillian Kelly

AHN Consulting

0408331166

jillian@ahnconsulting.com.au