

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue NSW Local Land Services uniform, is examining a cow in a metal structure. The scene is outdoors under a clear blue sky. The woman is looking down at the cow, and her hands are on its side. The cow is white with brown patches. The metal structure is made of dark metal bars.

# RIVERINA LOCAL LIVESTOCK UPDATE

*March*



Local Land  
Services

# Sheep Health Monitoring Report

The following pages describe the prevalent conditions and diseases found in sheep sold over the hook across the Riverina region.

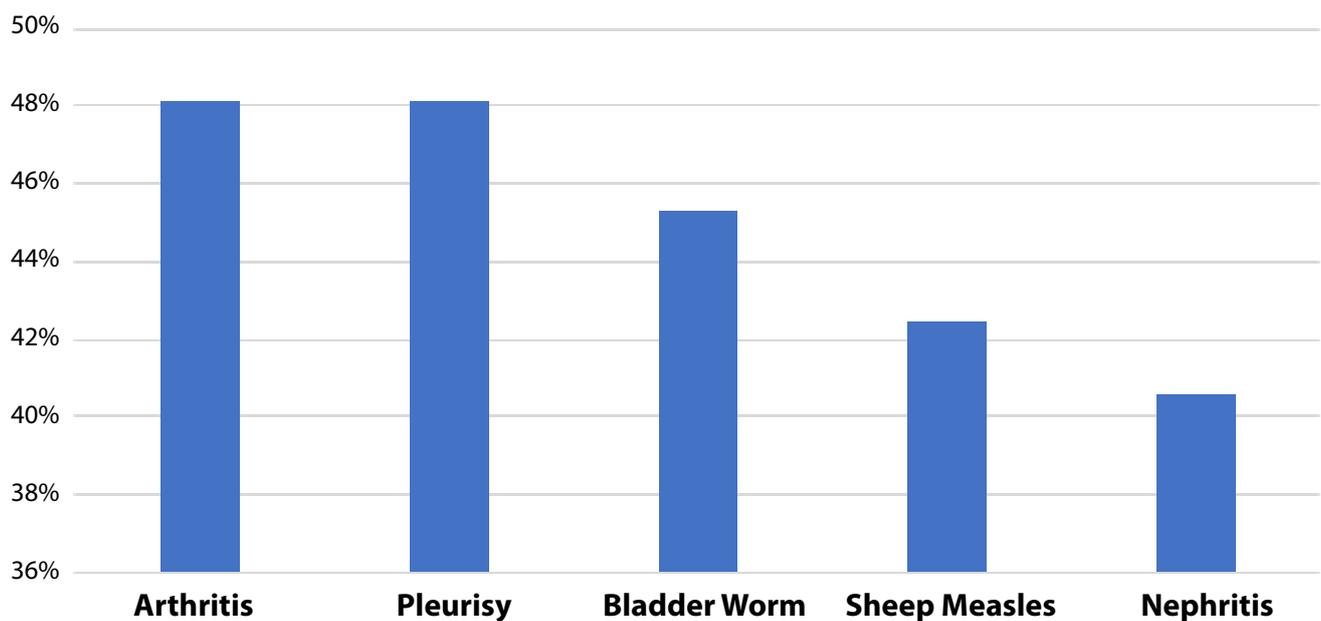
**Information is courtesy of the National Sheep Health Monitoring Program (NSHMP). The NSHMP commenced in 2007 to monitor lines of sheep in abattoirs for animal health conditions that reduce farm profit through productivity losses or increase meat processing wastage.**

## YOUNG

In the fourth quarter of 2020, 57,707 sheep were inspected, which is 12 per cent of the total NSW inspections. The most notable disease for sheep less than two years old was nephritis (a general category referring to any lesions in the kidneys being either mild or severe).

In sheep greater than two years of age, bladder worm (*Taenia hydatigena* cysts) was the most common disease. Bladder worm has been seen at an increasing rate over the monitoring periods.

### Young Region Top five conditions affecting PICs



Per cent of inspected PICs that recorded at least one positive animal for that condition.

## Resources

- [Arthritis Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)
- [Bladder Worm Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)
- [Pleurisy Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)
- [Sheep Measles Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)

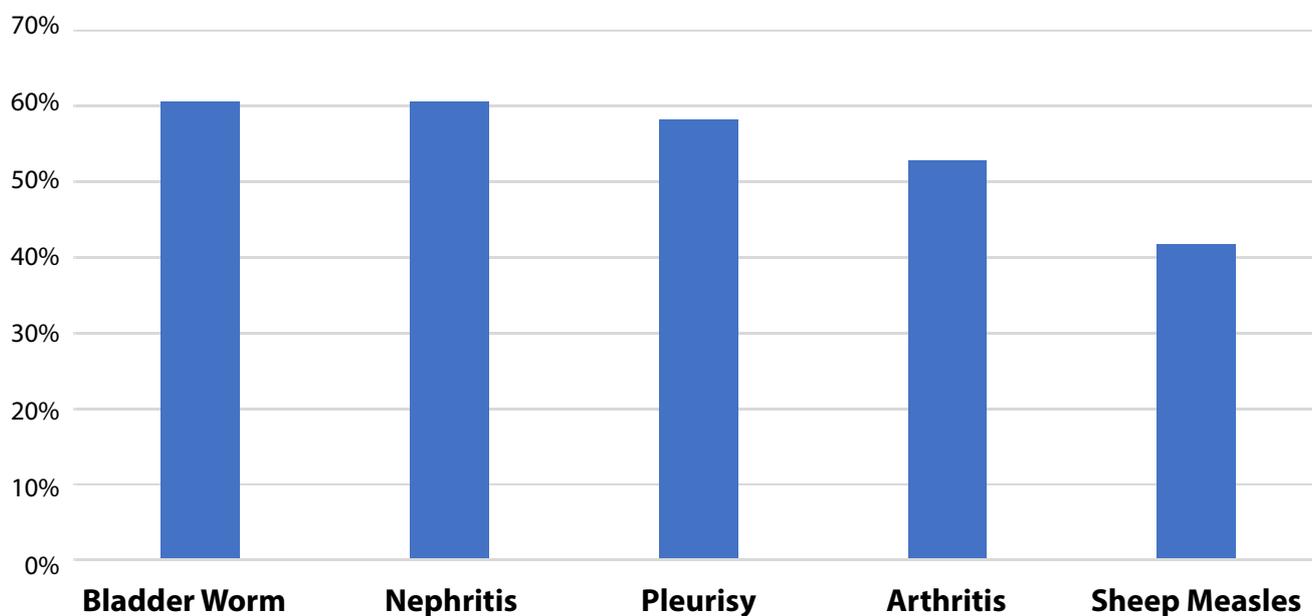
## WAGGA

Over the fourth quarter of 2020, 26,964 sheep were inspected, which is six per cent of the total inspected for NSW.

In sheep less than two years of age, nephritis (a general category referring to any lesions in the kidneys being either mild or severe) was the most reported disease, with bladder worm (*Taenia hydatigena* cysts) and vaccination lesions also identified in more than two per cent of inspected sheep.

In sheep greater than two years of age, cheesy gland, pleurisy and sheep measles were the most commonly identified diseases.

### Wagga Region Top five conditions affecting PICs



Per cent of inspected PICs that recorded at least one positive animal for that condition.

#### Resources

- [Arthritis Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)
- [Bladder Worm Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)
- [Pleurisy Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)
- [Sheep Measles Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)

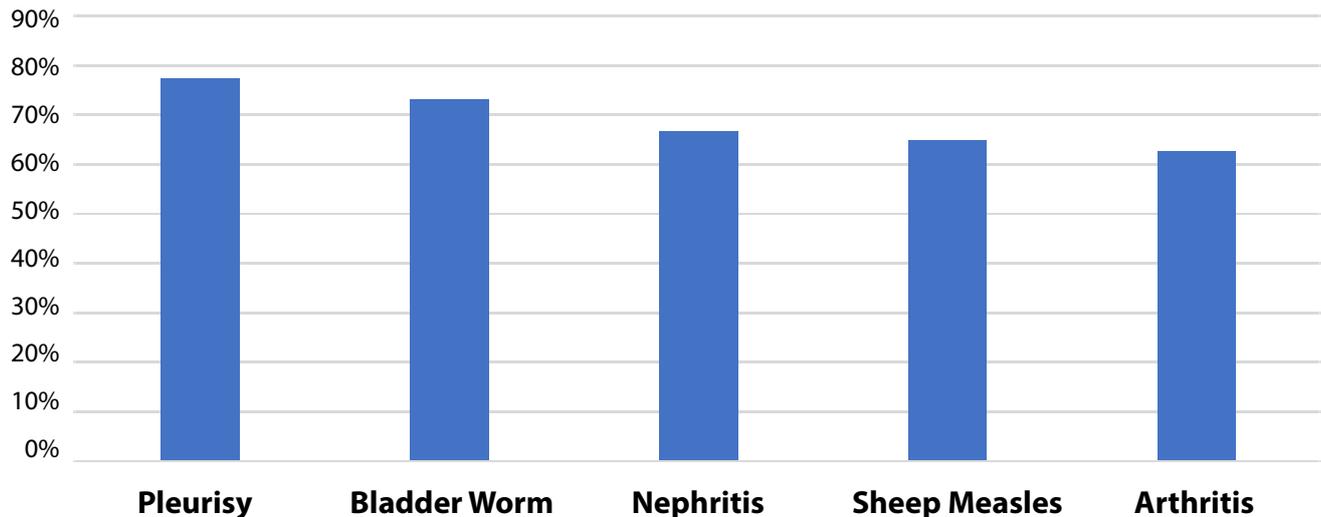
## GUNDAGAI

Over the fourth quarter of 2020, 41,809 sheep were inspected, which is nine per cent of the total inspected in NSW. In sheep less than two years of age, bladder worm (*Taenia hydatigena* cysts), nephritis (a general category referring to any lesions in the kidneys being either mild or severe), pneumonia and vaccination lesions were the most common diseases identified.

Bladder worm (*Taenia hydatigena* cysts) appears to be widespread throughout the region, with a higher number of PICs affected. This disease was decreasing in occurrence over the monitoring periods (except for nephritis).

In sheep greater than two years of age, bladder worm is by far the most significant disease identified. Cheesy gland, liver fluke and pleurisy were also identified in this age group.

### Gundagai Region Top five conditions affecting PICs



Per cent of inspected PICs that recorded at least one positive animal for that condition.

#### Resources

- [Arthritis Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)
- [Bladder Worm Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)
- [Pleurisy Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)
- [Sheep Measles Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)

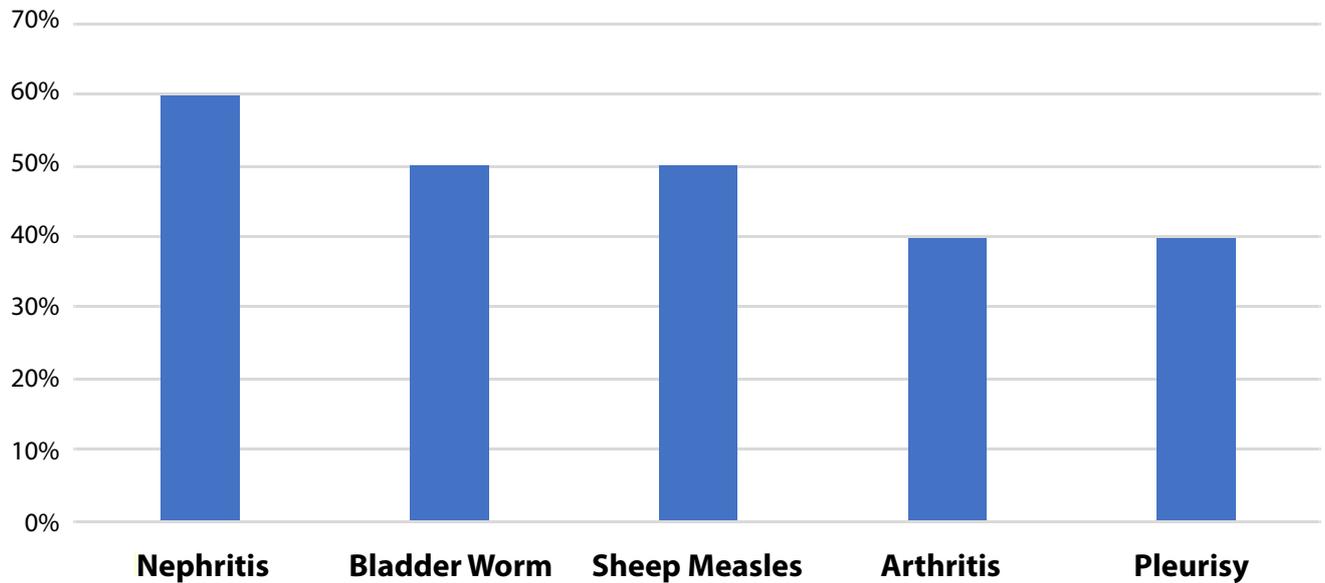
## NARRANDERA

Over the fourth quarter of 2020, 5,817 sheep were inspected, which is one per cent of the total sheep inspected for NSW.

For sheep of all ages, bladder worm (*Taenia hydatigena* cysts) and nephritis (a general category referring to any lesions in the kidneys being either mild or severe) were the main reported diseases.

Both of these diseases appear to be declining over the reporting periods.

### Narandera Region Top five conditions affecting PICs



Per cent of inspected PICs that recorded at least one positive animal for that condition.

#### Resources

- [Arthritis Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)
- [Bladder Worm Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)
- [Pleurisy Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)
- [Sheep Measles Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)

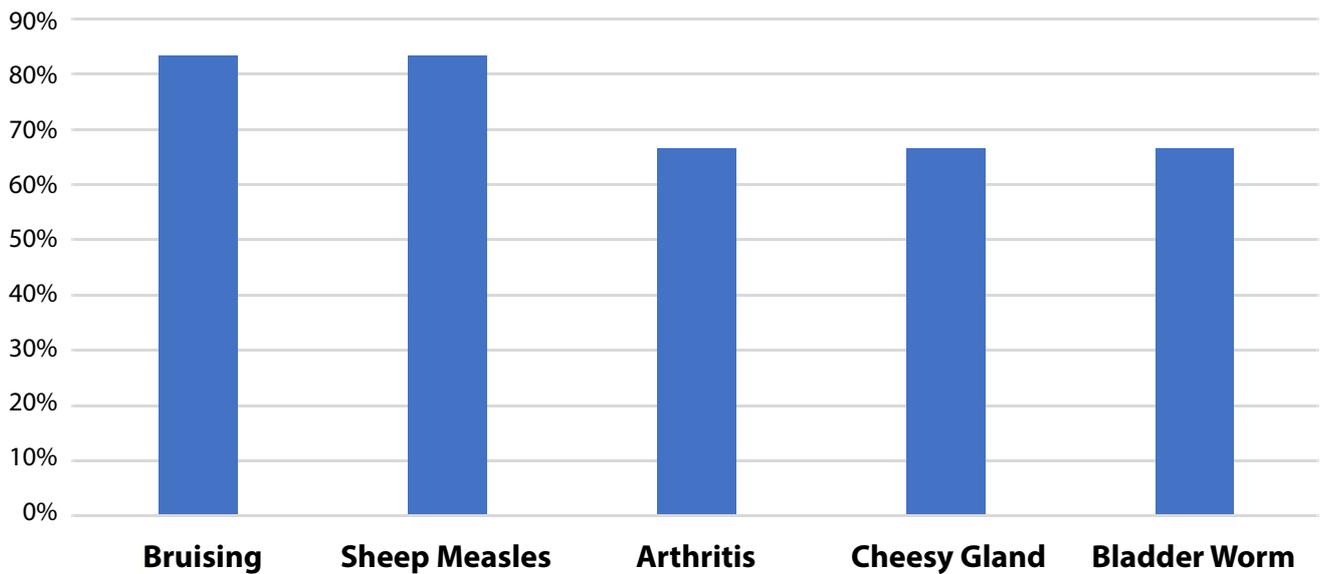
## HAY

Over the fourth quarter of 2020, 3,399 sheep were inspected which is less than one per cent of the total number of sheep inspected over NSW.

Significantly fewer sheep were inspected compared to previous years, and the small number of sheep less than two years old were not affected by any of the inspected conditions to a significant level.

In sheep older than two years of age, cheesy gland, bladder worm (*Taenia hydatigena* cysts) and sheep measles were the most commonly identified diseases.

### Hay Region Top five conditions affecting PICs inspected



Per cent of inspected PICs that recorded at least one positive animal for that condition.

#### Resources

- [Arthritis Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)
- [Cheesy Gland \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)
- [Bladder Worm Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)
- [Sheep Measles Factsheet \(Animal Health Australia\)](#)

# Quiz: Autumn lambing check-up

## **Breeding flock management and nutrition during gestation are major contributors to lamb survival and flock productivity.**

Whether you're about to start lambing, yet to scan or planning for spring lambing, test yourself on the following questions and check the answers on [page 11](#) to see how you're tracking!

1. Identifying multiple pregnancies through the use of pregnancy \_\_\_ is the most effective way to manage ewe nutrition during pregnancy.
2. Ewe condition score should be maintained at \_\_\_/5 throughout pregnancy. Twin bearing ewes can be up to condition score \_\_\_/5 at lambing to optimise lamb survival.
3. If gestation is 150 days, placental growth occurs rapidly from day 40 to day \_\_, and accelerated foetal development from day \_\_ to lambing.
4. Supplementary feeding in late pregnancy to increase ewe live weight can cause an increase in lamb birth \_\_\_ and dystocia may become a problem.
5. Which mineral should ewes be provided for lamb bone development and milk production?
6. Changes occur in the immune response of the pregnant ewe, which can lead to an increase in susceptibility to \_\_\_ infection.
7. Lamb survival is related to birth weight. Optimum birth weight for lamb survival is \_\_\_.
8. A decrease in ewe condition score during pregnancy can reduce lamb birthweight by \_\_\_.
9. Handling ewes in the last \_\_\_ weeks of pregnancy increases the risk of toxæmia or hypocalcaemia. Manage husbandry practices to minimise stress on ewes and lower the risk of these diseases occurring.
10. The peak, duration and total amount of milk produced by a ewe during lactation is greatly affected by nutrition. Milk production peaks approximately \_\_\_ weeks after lambing.

To discuss how this check-up relates to your enterprise, please contact your [local district veterinarian](#).

# Case study:

## Theileriosis in Cattle - a very unusual and rare case to see in Riverina!

By Georgia Rusconi and Jade Conolly (CSU Final year veterinary students)

### 🔍 Cattle

#### **CASE HISTORY:**

In January of 2021 the District Vet was called to investigate the death of four cows near Young and two sick cows. The herd consisted of 30 head, 15 which had been on farm for three years and 15 head of cattle that were purchased from coastal sale yards six months prior. Only cows from the original herd were affected.

The first death was not investigated as it was thought to be an individual cow issue. The second cow died with similar signs before death. Following this second death, the District Veterinarian was called to investigate. The cows were up-to-date with a 7 in 1 vaccination and drenched on arrival at the property. The cows were grazing pasture consisting of different grasses and there were no significant weeds present. There were some batteries present on the property which may pose a threat of toxicosis to the cattle, however lead toxicity and residue was ruled out during the investigation.

#### **CLINICAL EXAMINATION:**

On first inspection, the cows were not yarded and so were examined from a distance. Both sick cows were isolated from the herd and were only able to move away very slowly with frequent stopping. Her head and neck were stretched out. One cow died that evening while being walked slowly to the yards.

The second cow progressed to sternal recumbency the next morning and did not make an effort to move away when examined. She had a temperature of 37 degrees Celcius (hypothermic) despite being a hot day and sitting in the sun, pale gums and dry orange coloured faeces. She died the evening following examination.

#### **POST-MORTEM FINDINGS:**

Both cows were post-mortemed following their death. The consistent findings across both animals were:

- marked jaundice (see image 1)
- enlarged gall bladders
- lesions in the liver (abnormal mottling and colour change).

#### **DIAGNOSIS:**

After post mortem and blood samples were tested, the cows showed very low red blood cell counts (anaemia) and damage to internal organs including the liver consistent with poor oxygenation as a result of inadequate blood flow.

Blood samples were looked at under the microscope and the organism *Theileria* was identified.

Theileriosis was diagnosed as the cause of death in both cows.



Image 1: Marked jaundice

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Theileria is a blood parasite spread by ticks. It is found mostly in coastal regions including QLD, Victoria and NSW.

Most adult cattle in these areas are immune to Theileria, so show no signs of disease. Cattle can show signs of disease if they are immunocompromised from stress, poor nutrition, or other parasites.

Disease is also seen in cattle that have not had previous exposure to ticks which act as vectors of the parasite. These cattle are usually found outside of coastal regions, and are very susceptible to disease. Introduction of coastal cattle to inland cattle, or vice versa can lead to clinical disease in the unexposed herd.

The disease is serious with a death rate of 98-100 per cent of those affected. There is no treatment for the disease, and relies on treatment of symptoms. A blood transfusion can help but is not practical or cost effective in herds.

Keeping cattle still, with access to adequate food and water is essential.

The use of an acaricide (tick treatment) will not do anything for animals already infected, however it will reduce the risk of transmission of the parasite to other animals.



*Image 2: Lesions in the liver (abnormal mottling and colour change).*

# Announcements and additional warnings

## **KICKING OFF THE SEASON WITH HEALTHY, FERTILE SOILS**

Meat and Livestock Australia has launched a new soil resource hub for beef and sheep producers in southern Australia. The hub is a go-to for tips, tools and practical resources to get your soils into shape in preparation for a successful season.

Visit [mla.com.au/healthy-soils](https://mla.com.au/healthy-soils) to find out more.

## **MAGGOT SAMPLES NEEDED**

A team of researchers from the University of Melbourne are calling for volunteers to provide maggot samples from flystruck sheep that will be used as part of their study into the genetic variation present in sheep blowfly populations from across the country.

There has been great support so far, however the more samples they have to incorporate into the study, the more accurate their findings will be. If you are coming up to crutching for example you might spot some struck sheep. The university would be happy to send through collection kits in advance to any growers willing to try and collect a few maggots!

If you would like to help, please contact them at: [blowfly-collection@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:blowfly-collection@unimelb.edu.au).

## **MUTTON & OFFAL HAVE A ROLE IN AUSTRALIA'S FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY**

Seeking participants!

Kate Wingett, a PhD candidate at the University of Sydney would like to invite you to join a group discussion for sheep producers on current feedback in the sheep meat supply chain and ways to improve feedback in the future.

Participation is voluntary and you will only need to answer as many questions as you are comfortable with. The discussions will be recorded, transcribed and de-identified, so no-one will know who gave which answers.

Kate is working with Professor Robyn Alders and Professor Margaret Allman-Farinelli. Their research project is called *Mutton and sheep offal have a role to play in Australia's food and nutrition security*.

The project is looking at feedback in the sheep meat value chain. They have approval from the human research ethics committee (HREC 2016/753) at the University of Sydney.

The project aims to assist all stakeholders in the sheep meat supply chain, by making the chain more sustainable into the future. For further information on the discussion group please email [kwin5980@uni.sydney.edu.au](mailto:kwin5980@uni.sydney.edu.au)

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Autumn Series 2021 Joining - Online Webinar**

1 pm, 11 March 2021

Nathan Scott shares his expertise on the topic of Autumn joining in NSW.

[Register here on the Sheep Connect website.](#)

### **Autumn Series 2021 Lambing - Online Webinar**

1 pm, 18 March 2021

Nathan Scott again shares his expertise on Autumn lambing in NSW and will explore the challenges that growers may face as well as the advantages.

[Register here on the Sheep Connect website.](#)

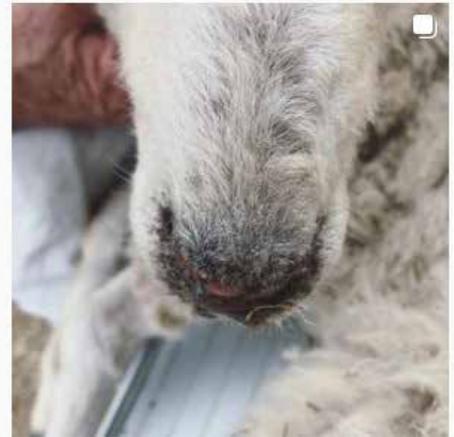
### **Autumn Series 2021 Grazing Crops - Online Webinar**

1 pm, 25 March 2021

A webinar designed to look at optimising grazing crops this season.

[Register here on the Sheep Connect website.](#)

Follow us at [@locallivestockvets](https://www.instagram.com/locallivestockvets) on Instagram to see photos and videos direct from the paddock!



#### CONTACT YOUR CLOSEST DISTRICT VETERINARIAN

##### WAGGA

Emily Stearman - 0437 644 714 or 6923 6300

Dione Howard - 0428 115 134 or 6923 6300

##### YOUNG

Evie Duggan - 0427 147 939 or 6381 4700

##### NARRANDERA/GRIFFITH

Georgia Grimmond - 0427 418 006

##### HAY

Georgia Grimmond - 0427 418 006

##### GUNDAGAI

Kristy Stone - 6940 6900

#### QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Scanning
2. 3, 3.3
3. 95, 90 – why does this matter? [Managing pregnancy in ewes \(WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development\)](#)
4. Weight
5. Calcium. Adding limestone to grain rations or supplementing with a loose lick that contains calcium can help prevent hypocalcaemia.
6. Worm. Conduct a pre-lambing Worm Egg Count and provide low work-risk paddocks for lambing ewes to as to reduce exposure to worm infection. [Immunity loss at lambing and kidding \(wormboss.com.au\)](http://wormboss.com.au)
7. 4.5-5.5kg
8. 0.4-0.5 kg
9. 4-6
10. 2-3