

On-farm biosecurity planning: how are you travelling?

By Charlotte Cavanagh
District Veterinarian, Western Local
Land Services, Bourke

As you will know, all red meat producers need to have an On-Farm Biosecurity Plan in place. This is a requirement of part of Meat and Livestock Australia's Red Meat Integrity System, namely the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program, which set a deadline of 1 October 2017 for producers to prepare their plans.

Hopefully most of you completed the plan in time—but where is it now? Is it in the back of the filing cabinet, or are you actively using it and keeping all the relevant paperwork together so that you're ready for an LPA audit?

Just a few important reminders, updates and tips to help you to be audit ready:

Inputs

The single most important risk to your farm biosecurity is anything that is introduced to your farm, so don't get caught out. Although it's tempting to purchase stock or fodder 'for a bargain' or sight unseen when you're time poor, you need to know what you're getting. Make sure you ask for an Animal Health Declaration before you buy in stock or receive stock on agistment. These declarations cover all the important health issues that can affect your bottom line and potentially turn your bargain into a burden. But declarations aren't compulsory and won't always be provided freely, so it's up to you to ask

for them. Be sure to access the latest versions at www.farmbiosecurity.com.au. When you're buying fodder, ask for a Commodity Vendor Declaration. Further information can be found at <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/beef-cattle/feed/cvd-stockfeeds>.

Animal welfare

Along with biosecurity, animal welfare is one of the two new elements of the LPA program. As part of the LPA reaccreditation process, producers are required to work through a series of modules. Producers will need to be familiar with the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for their relevant livestock, both to answer the questions and in case of an audit. These guidelines are available at www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au.

New Goat National Vendor Declaration

The new version of the LPA National Vendor Declaration (NVD) for goats is now available. This version (GO517) replaces the previous version (GO413), which will continue to be accepted until 1 March 2019. Improvements for rangeland goat enterprises include the addition of definitions of 'harvested rangeland goat' and 'registered goat depot' to the explanatory notes. The Goat NVD, along with the NVDs for other livestock, is available electronically and in a printed booklet. For details see the box overleaf. While you're on the website, make your life easier by signing up to myMLA, a 'one stop shop' for all MLA systems.

Keeping all your information together

If you were able to attend one of the many Western Local Land Services biosecurity workshops last year, you may have received an 'On-Farm Biosecurity Management Folder'. These were simply ring-binder folders with dividers to separate information into sections relevant to the On-Farm Biosecurity Plan template, such as inputs and outgoing products. Producers have found this a great way to ensure that all property information, health statements, declarations, training documents and logs are kept in one place, so that if you're contacted for an audit you'll be ready to go. Because of the overwhelming success of the workshops, Western Local Land Services have run out of folders, but you can make one up for yourself and get into the habit of gathering up all that loose paperwork from the dashboard of your ute and keeping it in the folder.

Lots of 'to-do' about visitor registers

Some producers have found the Visitor Log part of the On-Farm Biosecurity Planning quite onerous and difficult to adhere to, for various reasons. The most common issue on many Western Division properties is when public roads run through properties. Producers are reminded that the On-Farm Biosecurity Plan template has been developed for producers from many and varied enterprises across the entire nation, so the relevance of the questions to the biosecurity

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www.lis.nsw.gov.au

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of your enterprise will also vary. Nevertheless, it's important to bear in mind that animal disease and weeds can be introduced via visitors' vehicles, including stock and fodder transporters.

For further help, contact your Local Land Services Biosecurity Officer or District Veterinarian or see the MLA website at www.mla.com.au.

National Vendor Declaration booklets

You need to complete your Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) reaccreditation before you can order your next booklet.

How do I do this?

- Login to the LPA Service Centre at <https://lpa.nlis.com.au/Account/Login>. Enter your PIC (Property Identification Code), LPA User ID and LPA password. (If you don't have all of this information or you need help, call 1800 683 111 to talk to an LPA staff member.)
- Make sure all your contact details are up to date.
- Complete the seven modules that are part of the LPA learning package and practise the questions at the end of each section. You can download the entire learning package as a single printable document and work through it this way.
- Answer a series of multiple choice questions and complete the declaration.
- Pay a 3-yearly fee of \$60 plus GST (This only needs to be paid when reaccreditation is due; LPA will contact you 2 months prior.)
- Order your NVD booklet, or use the free electronic NVDs on the LPA website.

Help with your Will

NSW Trustee & Guardian has over 100 years of experience in writing wills. We've got the experience, meaning that your Will is in safe hands with us.

There are five things you should consider when making or updating your Will:

- » Have you nominated a guardian to look after any of your children who are under 18 years?
- » Have you recently been married, separated or divorced?
- » Do you have a succession plan in place for your business?
- » Are you planning for retirement?
- » If you have a Will, is it up to date with your current assets, and does it provide for those you love?

If you need to make or update your Will, contact our experienced team at NSW Trustee & Guardian Broken Hill for an appointment. Phone 08 8084 3500 or email tagbrokenhill@tag.nsw.gov.au

Note that fees and charges may apply.

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- » Western Local Land Services
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- » Riverina Local Land Services
- » NSW Rural Assistance Authority
- » Murray Local Land Services

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The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (May 2018). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services or the user's independent adviser.

Are your livestock fit to load?

Western Local Land Services is calling on livestock producers to consider the welfare of their animals as the tough seasonal conditions continue in much of the Western region. With hot and dry conditions extending well beyond summer, feed sources are in short supply, and this is affecting the health and condition of livestock. In light of this, producers in the Western Division are advised to be aware of, and know, the fit-to-load criteria. Meat and Livestock Australia's fit-to-load guide outlines six key criteria that make an animal unfit to transport:

- » cannot walk normally or is not bearing weight on all legs
- » is severely emaciated (very poor body condition) or visibly dehydrated
- » is suffering from severe visible distress or injury

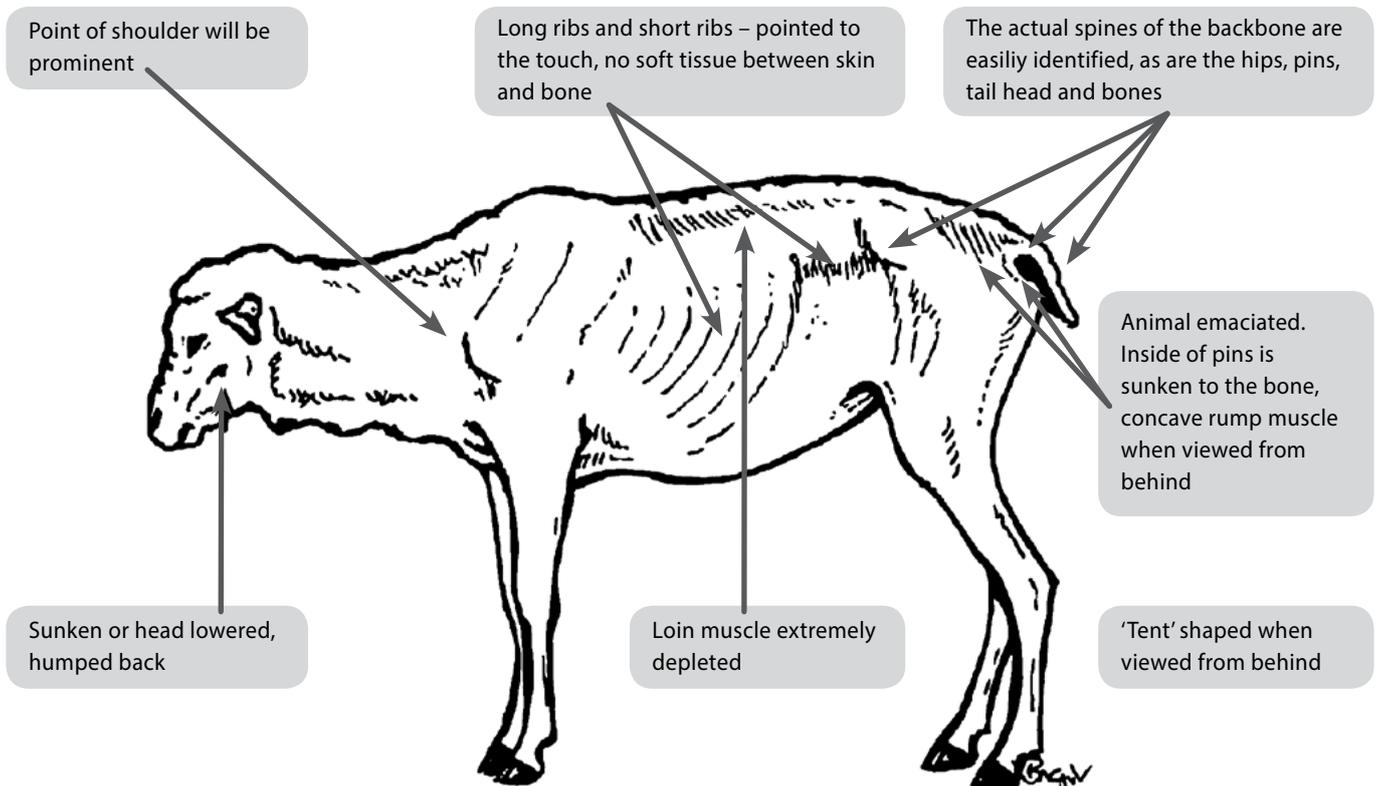
- » is in a condition that could cause it increased pain or distress during transport
- » is blind in both eyes
- » is in late pregnancy.

Western Local Land Services District Vet Charlotte Cavanagh encourages livestock owners to seek further information if they're unsure about the health of their animals. 'Even if an animal is on its feet and walking, that doesn't

mean it is fit to load', says Dr Cavanagh. 'Any animals that fall into these six categories are not to be transported and must be kept on farm and adequately fed and treated and, if they cannot be treated, humanely destroyed.' If producers have any questions about the fitness of their animals for transport they should contact one of the following Local Land Services District Veterinarians:

Bourke		
Charlotte Cavanagh	0429 773 021	charlotte.cavanagh@lls.nsw.gov.au
Broken Hill		
Felicity Wills	0409 858 901	flics.wills@lls.nsw.gov.au
Hay		
Courtney Simkin	0427 418 006	courtney.simkin@lls.nsw.gov.au

Further information is available at www.mla.com.au or www.dpi.nsw.gov.au.



This sheep is obviously NOT fit to load.

Managing land condition in increasingly dry conditions on Western Lands properties

By Jody Chinner
Rangelands Management Officer
Department of Industry – Lands
Broken Hill

While completing field inspections, Rangeland Management Officers are finding that the Far West is becoming quite arid because of unfavourable seasonal conditions.

As landholders are aware, Western Lands Lease conditions require the lessee not to overstock the land. Although many landholders have destocked or are planning to destock, others may be striving to maintain normal stock numbers. With very little rainfall in future weather forecasts and kangaroo numbers not waning, stock numbers require assessment to determine what your property can carry. In doing so, make sure you consider the limit of the amount of grazing pressure that your pasture can withstand and still be able to recover when seasonal conditions improve. Some pasture species will not recover with 'an inch

of rain' if they have been grazed to the ground; this is particularly true of bluebush, saltbush and perennial grasses. If there is no leaf matter or above-ground plant parts remaining, it's very difficult for plants to recover. Where this occurs, other undesirable plant species, such as woody weeds or other weeds, will invade.

Management strategies to conserve your pasture include feeding stock; transporting livestock away while they are in good condition ('good condition' being when the stock are greater than fat score 1); grazing paddocks with the least amount of water first; reducing watering points; and controlling goats and kangaroos.

If you're going to supply feed, isolate the stock in an area with adequate water, shade and ground cover.

In situations where supplementary feed is being brought onto your property, remember that it's important that it's clean feed that doesn't contain weeds or weed seeds. If you're unsure of this, talk to your Local Land Services Biosecurity Officer.

The Department recognises these difficulties and is always willing to work with landholders to find a mutually beneficial outcome.

Further information can be obtained from your local Rangeland Management Officers:

Cobar
Jarrod Smith
02 6883 5448

Bourke
Anthony Azevedo
02 6872 2144

Walgett
Tanya Slack-Smith
02 6828 6444

Broken Hill
Jody Chinner
08 8082 5203

Wentworth
Ian Kelly
03 5051 6205

Balranald
David Gee
03 5051 6204

Calling all sheep producers!

Sheep producer feedback is needed for an animal health monitoring and preparedness study. This online questionnaire takes around 30 minutes and is anonymous.

It's being conducted by Charles Sturt University, the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences and CSIRO as part of a Rural Research and Development for Profit project.

By submitting a survey response, you will get the chance to enter a prize draw to win an iPad or one of twenty \$50 retail gift vouchers. Click here to complete the survey, or use the following address in your browser:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/sheep03>

Western Division Rangeland Condition Assessment Program

The vast majority of the Western Division is Crown land that is held as perpetual Western Lands Leases for pastoral or agricultural purposes. Leases are being administered under the *Western Lands Act 1901* until the *Crown Lands Management Act 2016* becomes fully functional sometime in 2018. A key objective in administering these Acts is to ensure that all Western Lands leases are managed sustainably, in accordance with lease conditions and within the provisions of the Act.

Since 2011, rangeland condition has been monitored through the Rangeland Condition Assessment Program. This is implemented by Rangeland Management Officers, who conduct property inspections to monitor overall compliance with lease conditions, as well as property improvements and pasture condition.

Every year, 70 different properties are inspected as part of this program. Some properties are purposely selected for inclusion in the program, whereas others are inspected opportunistically as part of other requirements such as lease transfers, changes of land use or cultivation consent renewals. The holders of all properties selected for inspection as part of this program are notified in advance of the inspection and are encouraged to accompany the Rangeland Management Officer to

discuss and share the information being collected.

The most commonly asked question is 'What does the inspection involve?' It involves placing a monitoring point in each different land system featured within a lease. This may be one monitoring point per property, or it could be 10—it depends on the number of leases and the size of the property. The monitoring points are simply two poles placed 10 metres apart. They provide a permanent location from which future photos can be taken to allow a pictorial analysis of landscape change and pasture condition.

In regard to pasture condition, the information collected at these annual inspections provides a general indication of the condition of rangelands and the lease as a whole, while also taking into account conditions within the local area. This information maximises the ability of Departmental staff to help landholders recognise grazing thresholds under their pasture conditions.

The three assessment areas are overall compliance, property improvement and pasture condition rating. Findings from 2017–2018 revealed that 20% of leases were excellent, 50% were good, 25% were fair, and 5% were poor or very poor. These results are a reflection of the responsible management occurring

in this fragile landscape. Where there is a score of poor or very poor, the Department works with the leaseholder to overcome the relevant issues.

Landholders appreciated the time that the Department committed to the program, and many were proud to show Departmental staff around the properties in which they have invested their lives. The Program is thus mutually beneficial in many ways.

For further information on the Western Division Range Condition Assessment Program contact your local Rangeland Management Officer. (For a list of contacts see page 4).



Western Local Land Services had a great time at the Mossgiel field day on 11 April, with our staff thoroughly enjoying catching up with landholders and stakeholders. Pictured are Ray Scott of 'Belgium Park', Balranald, and Western Local Land Services District Veterinarian Felicity Wills.

Photo by Henry Gregory



Purchasing your Western Lands Lease to obtain freehold title

By Sharon Hawke

Assistant Western Lands Commissioner
Department of Industry, Dubbo

Background

In 2012, the NSW Government began the first major review of Crown land in 25 years, prompting a comprehensive consultation process with community and other interested parties about the future management of Crown land.

This exhaustive review process culminated in the NSW Parliament passing the new **Crown Land Management Act** in November 2016 and the **Crown Land Legislation Amendment Act** in May 2017.

This new legislation will take effect in 2018 and will ensure that the Crown estate is managed efficiently and effectively and continues to support and generate social, environmental and cultural benefits for the people of NSW.

In NSW, Crown land is managed by the Department of Industry – Lands & Water. Previous Crown land legislation was complex and included eight different pieces of legislation. The new Act will:

- » reduce red tape and duplication in managing Crown land
- » improve certainty and clarity about legal requirements
- » support greater community involvement in local decisions made about Crown land
- » formalise opportunities and processes for community involvement and engagement
- » recognise and support Aboriginal involvement in the management of Crown land.

What's new?

The Act will allow leaseholders to purchase eligible Western Lands leases by converting the leasehold land into freehold title. For some time, some leaseholders in the Western Division have been able to purchase the freehold interest in their Western Lands leases; these include urban leases for business and residential purposes and a number of agricultural leases. The Act will provide new opportunities for grazing leaseholders in the Western Division to purchase land.

For those leaseholders who have existing purchase rights, these will continue under the Act. The Act includes criteria to guide the Department when it assesses applications to purchase leases.

Eligibility

The decision to purchase a lease is up to the leaseholder and is a voluntary decision. Applications will be assessed by using the

criteria set out in **Section 5.9** of the Act. The Department will refuse any application that does not meet at least one of the criteria in this section. For the majority of rural Western Lands leases, eligibility will be determined by using the Land and Soil Capability (LSC) Assessment Scheme.

Leaseholders may need to provide additional information with their applications to demonstrate their eligibility.

Consultation

When assessing a purchase application, the Department will consider any other parties that may have an interest in the land and, if appropriate, will consult with these parties before approving a purchase. Examples of third-party interests may include Travelling Stock Reserves; pumps and pipelines; and access routes to neighbouring properties.

Costs

The purchase price will be based on the value of the unimproved land. A leaseholder will be required to pay a percentage of this value, depending on the type of lease.

Holders of rural Western Lands leases that are used mainly for primary production will pay 3% of the land value. Holders of all other lease types will be required to pay 100% of the land value.

In addition to the value, other costs will be payable, including stamp duty, GST, survey costs, dealing fees (fees payable for lodgement at NSW Land Registry Services) and interest.

Payment options

There are two payment options available to leaseholders for approved applications:

- » **Option 1:** Payment of the full purchase price within 28 days once the leaseholder has accepted the purchase offer.
- » **Option 2:** Payment of the full purchase price in instalments over a 20-year period. Each year, a minimum instalment of \$2,500 will be payable. If the purchase price is less than the annual minimum instalment then the purchase price must be paid in full within 28 days once the leaseholder has accepted the purchase offer.

Further information

Email: clwestern.region@crowland.nsw.gov.au

Web: www.industry.nsw.gov.au/lands

Tel: 1300 886 235

How to apply to buy your Western Lands Lease

As a first step, interested leaseholders should contact the Crown Lands division of the NSW Department of Industry to discuss potential eligibility and the purchase process. If you call 1300 886 235 you will be transferred to experienced staff in the Dubbo office who will be able to give you information specific to your particular property that's not available on the web site.

Eligible leaseholders will need to fill out an application form and forward the form and the application fee to the Department of Industry. The form is available on the Department's web site at www.industry.nsw.gov.au/lands

An application fee of \$474 is payable with each application.

Inaugural Hay Ag & Pastoral Innovation Expo

The Inaugural Hay Ag & Pastoral Innovation Expo was held on Friday 9 March and Saturday 10 March and was a huge success for the Hay Merino Sheep Show Inc. Around 400 people attended, plus many exhibitors, with some attendees travelling from as far away as central Victoria to talk about innovative solutions in agriculture.

President of the Hay Merino Sheep Show Committee, Ian Lugsdin, said that although the daily crowds looked small because of the enormous size of the event, which spread from the Shear Outback café to the shearing shed, it was well supported.

'What started as an idea for a small Expo to raise some funds for our new shed project grew beyond our expectations when 48 exhibitors booked sites,' said Ian.

'This interest in the Expo from the agricultural industry reflects the demand for information on innovation.'

'A final figure of the funds raised is yet to be determined, but it's in the tens of thousands of dollars, which is a huge effort from our Committee. In addition, Shear Outback and many Hay businesses have benefited enormously over the two days.'

'Our main event, the Hay Merino Sheep Show, will be held on Saturday 16 June.'



Rowan Houston and Trent Fordham from Riverina Wool Testing at the Expo. Photo supplied by the Riverine Grazier



Caroline and Bill Simpson at the MerinoLink site with Rachael Gawne (right). Photo supplied by The Riverine Grazier



Chris Hinks from Practical Systems (left) and Gus Munro from Australian Food & Agriculture, 'Bonooke', with a Wanganella ram at the Hay Ag & Pastoral Innovation Expo. Photo supplied by The Weekly Times



Stacey Lugsdin (right) with Julie Walker from Tru Test at the Expo. Photo supplied by The Weekly Times

CASH PRIZES OVER \$14,000

67th Hay Merino Sheep Show

**Saturday June 16, 2018 at Hay Showgrounds
Housed, Unhoused & Flock sections**

**Visit www.haysheepshow.com.au
for entries, show schedule and more information**

Riverina Wool Australia Champion Hogget Ram

1st Prize ~ \$5000 cash

Riverina Wool Australia Best in State Hogget Ram **\$1000 per state**

Tapper Agri Services / Landmark Champion Hogget Ewe ~ **\$1500**

Elder's Champion March Shorn Ram ~ **\$1000**

Supreme Champion Pen Flock Ewes ~ **\$1200**

Lugsdin Toyota & Fabstock Supreme Champion Stud Ram or Ewe - **\$1500**

Multiple Cash Prizes

- ❖ 'Don McNeil Memorial Junior Judging
- ❖ 'Ian Munro Memorial Amateur Blade Shearing
- ❖ 2018 Fundraising Auction
- ❖ Refreshments available all day

**Secretary: Gabby Flattery - 0409 670 707
haysheepshow@gmail.com**

Looking to buy feed? Compare prices the easy way

By Genevieve Guest

Senior Land Services Officer – Livestock
Murray Local Land Services, Albury
Phone 0409 077 254

With autumn feeding under way, knowing which feed represents the best value (and is not just the cheapest per tonne) can be easier than you might think. To work it out, you'll need to know four things about the feed:

- cost per tonne landed on the farm
- dry matter (DM)
- energy (ME)
- crude protein (CP) (the importance of this depends heavily on the class of animal you are feeding).

(Skip this next bit if you know what DM, ME and CP are.)

Dry matter (DM) will be presented as a percentage and is normally the easiest to determine, as the ball-park figures are normally predictable.

The only way to know the **megajoules of energy per kilogram of DM (ME)** is to get the feed tested. Some feeds are similar across the range, whereas others vary widely. But beware: even the normally predictable feeds can still vary significantly. Barley is usually fairly predictable, but this year I've already heard of one crop coming back at a staggeringly low 4 ME (you may as well feed cardboard) and only 6% protein (not as bad, but still not enough for most classes of livestock). If someone buys this

for their stock, they'll soon be wondering why the stock are still going backwards.

Crude protein (CP) is a whole other topic, but it, too, can vary a huge amount. Unless the 'normal range' is above what you need, a test would be good.

How do we compare feeds?

The NSW DPI Drought Feed Calculator app (<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/drought-feed-calculator/id921986324?mt=8>) is the easiest method I've come across so far for comparing feeds and is available for both Apple and Android users. The NSW DPI Feed Cost Calculator is also very easy to use and is available on the NSW DPI website at:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/nutrition/costs-and-nutritive-value/feed-cost-calculator>.

The Drought Feed Calculator app uses five 'tabs': three for up to three different feed types, one for mixing the feeds, and one for livestock. Note that the livestock tab is just a rough guide and looks only at drought feeding (feeding for maintenance, not production), but you don't need this tab to compare feeds anyway.

To compare two feeds using the app:

1. Select 'Feed 1' on the taskbar and then select the feed type (barley, lucerne hay, faba beans, etc).
2. If you don't have feed test results, use the app's autofilled results. If you have test results, just select the boxes and replace the figures with your own. It's that simple (see *Sample screen 1*).

3. The results will automatically calculate.

For example, from *Sample screen 1*, you have:

- Oats: ME 11.5 and CP 10.5 at \$250/tonne
- Wheat: ME 13.0 and CP 12.0 at \$350/tonne

To work out which is the cheapest feed to buy, compare 'Cost cents per MJ' and 'Cost \$/kg protein' (see *Sample screen 2*):

In this case it would cost (per megajoule of energy supplied):

- Oats = 2.42 cents/MJ (\$250/tonne with an ME of 11.5)
- Wheat = 2.99 cents/MJ (\$350/tonne with an ME of 13.0)

For protein, it would cost (per kg):

- Oats = \$2.65/kilogram protein (\$250/tonne with a CP of 10.5%)
- Wheat = \$3.24/kilogram protein (\$350/tonne with a CP of 12%)

What if I'm mixing feeds?

The app will also allow you to mix up to three feeds. In the example in *Sample screen 3*, I have mixed oats and lucerne hay. You can play around with the percentages and it will warn you if the total is not 100%.

It will then tell you the total ME and CP, as well as the cost of both as made up in whatever percentages you choose.

Then ask yourself: Is this feed enough for whatever I'm feeding? That's a topic for another day.

Drought Feed Calculator	
Oats	
Warning	
On farm cost (\$/t)	250
Dry Matter (%)	90
Energy (MJ/kg DM)	11.5
Crude Protein (% DM)	10.5
Results	
MJ per tonne 'as fed'	10350
Cost cents per MJ	2.42
Cost \$/Kg protein	2.65
Cost \$/tonne Dry Matter	277.78

Sample screen 1, Drought Feed Calculator

Drought Feed Calculator	
Wheat	
On farm cost (\$/t)	350
Dry Matter (%)	90
Energy (MJ/kg DM)	13.0
Crude Protein (% DM)	12.0
Results	
MJ per tonne 'as fed'	11700
Cost cents per MJ	2.99
Cost \$/Kg protein	3.24
Cost \$/tonne Dry Matter	388.89

Sample screen 2, Drought Feed Calculator

Drought Feed Calculator	
Oats	70 % as-fed
Lucerne hay	30 % as-fed
The mix must add to 100%. Total: 100	
Results	
Energy (MJ/kg DM)	10.9
Crude Protein % DM	12.75
Cost cents per MJ	2.86
Cost \$/kg Crude Protein	2.44
Cost \$ per tonne 'as fed'	280.24

Sample screen 3, Drought Feed Calculator

Baiting workshops popular

Western Local Land Services is helping landholders, community members and the next generation to tackle pest animals through its 1080 Pindone and Canid Pest Ejector workshops.

With pest animals continuing to be an issue in the Western region, as they are throughout much of the state, Western Local Land Services has held workshops across the region in Bourke, Pooncarie, Buronga and Broken Hill since the start of the year.

Through these workshops and other smaller sessions, about 100 people have been upskilled and are now accredited to purchase baits from Western Local Land Services for the next 5 years. And it hasn't just been landholders that have attended the workshops: 21 teenagers participating in the Western Landcare Youth Network in Broken Hill receiving training. Western Local Land Services Senior Biosecurity Officer Grant Davis, who delivered the training to the Landcare students, was pleased with the level of interest shown.

'It was great to see the Landcare students take such an interest in pest animals and the management techniques that we promote,' said Grant.

'They all took a lot away from the workshop, and it's pleasing to know they now have these skills to apply on a daily basis.



Western Local Land Services Senior Biosecurity Officer Grant Davis demonstrates how to operate a Canid Pest Ejector to the Landcare students in Broken Hill. Photo by Martha Gouniai

'It doesn't matter if you're a part of the Landcare Youth Network or have been on a property for 50 years, getting the most up-to-date training and ensuring you have the appropriate accreditation is vitally important and will help you get the best

possible outcomes from pest animal management.'

If you'd like further information on pest animal management and training, contact your nearest Western Local Land Services office or Tim Wall on 0428 915 070.

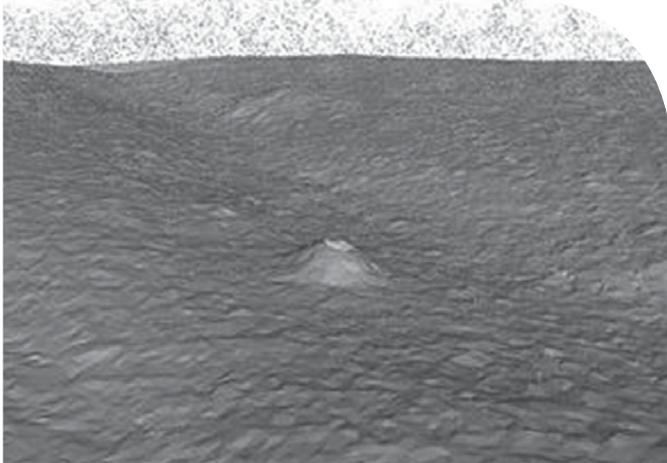
Riverina Local Land Services' new recruit Phil Price and Biosecurity Officer Suzie Holbery (pictured at right with a load of carrots) have been busy meeting the demand for poison baiting of rabbits. Landholders in the Hay and Carrathool Local Government Areas have taken advantage of the dry times with some strategic rabbit baiting and follow-up warren ripping. Suzie says that they've had some great coordination between landholders this season, and as a result thousands of hectares will benefit. Fox baiting in the region has also increased over previous years, with over 16,000 baits issued from Hay since the launch of the Feral Fighter campaign on 20 February 2018. According to Suzie, Local Land Services has been able to offer more training opportunities this year, and this has enabled more properties to join their local fox baiting groups and coordinate effective baiting programs.

If you require 1080 user training to join a pest animal program in your area, contact your nearest Local Land Services office to register your interest.



Malleefowl in the Riverina

By David Kellett
Land Services Officer
Riverina Local Land Services
West Wyalong



LiDAR imagery of a Malleefowl mound. Photo supplied by David Kellett



Malleefowl inspecting their mound after a mob of feral pigs spent the night destroying it! Photo supplied by David Kellett



Up close and personal, David keeps a close eye on the malleefowl through the breeding season. Photo by David Kellett

Another malleefowl breeding season has come to an end, and hopefully with good results across most of the Riverina sites. We've seen an increase in fox numbers this year, and at one of our sites a mound has been completely destroyed by feral pigs. I know I harp on a bit in regards to feral animal control, but it's really the first step in helping out our threatened species such as the malleefowl. As malleefowl are ground-dwelling birds, they, their chicks, and their mounds are very vulnerable to predation from feral cats, foxes and pigs. Over the past 4 years Riverina Local Land Services has been monitoring malleefowl mounds with motion detection cameras throughout the breeding season, and it's been really amazing to see the number of feral animals that regularly visit the mounds. The malleefowl chick has a huge battle as soon as it hatches, having to dig its way out of the mound (up to 1.5 metres of dirt and sand) and then having absolutely no help from its parents. With a survival rate of around 2% for these chicks, it's vital for them that we try to remove all feral animals from their habitat to give them the best possible start.

Riverina Local Land Services has funding available right now to help in feral animal control, whether it be 1080 baits, 1080 training or pig traps we can lend to you. You don't have to have malleefowl on your property—you might have had malleefowl in days gone by, or you might live in an area very close to malleefowl habitat. Either way, Riverina Local Land Services would love to hear from you and help you where we can.

On a brighter note, we currently have a LiDAR survey under way. For those of you who don't know what LiDAR is, I'll explain. LiDAR is a surveying method that measures the distance to a target by illuminating the target with pulsed laser light and measuring the reflected pulses with a sensor. Differences in laser return times and wavelengths can then be used to make digital 3-D representations of the target. The malleefowl mounds detected by LiDAR look like small craters (see photo at top left). GPS points are also recorded to make ground truthing easy. Riverina Local Land Services will be working with the National Malleefowl Recovery Team to locate all mounds recorded. We will also be offering malleefowl mound monitoring training to interested landholders and volunteers.

Call David Kellett on 02 6970 1201 or 0428 693 990 if you'd like more information on help with feral animal control, becoming a volunteer to monitor malleefowl mounds annually, or future projects.

Plains-wanderer benefits from fox baiting

A large-scale fox baiting program is currently under way in the western Riverina to help the survival of the plains-wanderer, a critically endangered native bird species. Foxes have been identified as one of the biggest threats to their survival. Landholders are working together with Local Land Services and the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) to help protect this small ground-dwelling bird found in the native grasslands of the western Riverina.

The first round of the baiting program began in January 2018, incorporating areas of primary plains-wanderer habitat in the Murray Local Land Services region south of Hay. Four properties were involved ('Nyangay', 'Warwillah', 'Elmsleigh' and 'Wargam'), with 800 bait stations set up over 38,200 hectares.

Bill Hooke of 'Wargam' said that he was happy to be involved in the program. 'It's nice to see some of the Saving our Species funds spent in the local area', he said.

The second round of fox baiting was done in February 2018, targeting the same properties in the Murray Local Land Services region, with both rounds of baiting seeing a bait uptake of about 75%. Across the two rounds a total of 1178 baits have been taken by foxes, resulting in approximately 800 fox deaths in the area.

Owner Bill Hooke said that he was keen to be part of the coordinated baiting across his properties. 'We're already seeing a noticeable decrease in foxes around the property. It's also great to know that you're helping to protect a bird that has been an iconic part of this area for such a long time', he added.

The third round in March 2018 saw a significant drop in the number of baits taken, with around a 50% uptake. The local contractors doing the baiting say it's very pleasing to see that some impact on fox numbers is now occurring. Spotlight surveys of foxes are also indicating a large drop in numbers.

This large-scale baiting is just the beginning as the 'Paddocks for Plains-wanderers' project gathers momentum. More landscapes are currently being identified to extend the program and widen the impact, with the fox campaign complementing the habitat stewardship program developed with local landholders who have significant areas of primary habitat on their properties.

The project is in response to OEH monitoring that shows that plains-wanderer numbers have decreased by more than 90% over the past 15 years. As few as 300 birds are thought to be left in NSW, with the western



A female plains-wanderer. Photo by Rowan Mott



A male plains-wanderer on 'Warwillah'. This photo, taken by a landholder with his mobile phone, shows how difficult it is to sight the bird. Photo by Bill Hooke

Riverina plains now their global hotspot. There are two project officers working to save the plains-wanderer: Claire Gannon at Jerilderie and Megan Purvis at Griffith/Hay. Any interested landholder can contact them at the Jerilderie or Griffith offices of Local Land Services.

Electronic NLIS tags in Victoria for sheep and goats: how could they affect me in NSW?

By Courtney Simkin

District Veterinarian
Riverina Local Land Services, Hay

All sheep and goats born in Victoria on or after 1 January 2017 require an electronic National Livestock Identification Scheme (NLIS) (Sheep) identification tag before they can be dispatched from their property of birth. This ruling raises many questions as to how this requirement affects NSW producers moving stock in and out of Victoria. The points below will help answer some of these questions.

Shows/events in Victoria

Sheep or goats from NSW attending shows and similar events in Victoria can be identified with a current visually readable NLIS (Sheep) ear tag.

Sheep/goats going to Victoria

Sheep or goats consigned from a NSW property direct to a saleyard, show or abattoir in Victoria are exempt from having to be identified by the consignor with an electronic NLIS (Sheep) tag, provided that they are identified at entry into Victoria in accordance with the NSW legal requirements for sheep identification (e.g. a visual mob-based PIC tag).

Victorian sheep or goats entering NSW

Any purchased NSW sheep and goats born after 1 January 2019 and residing on a Victorian property will require an electronic NLIS ear tag before they leave that Victorian property. NSW producers may choose to identify sheep with electronic NLIS ear tags, especially if they are planning to sell to Victoria and they perceive a marketing advantage.

Lambs born to Victorian sheep on agistment in NSW can be tagged with a visual NLIS tag. However, if they return to a Victorian property from NSW, they will need to be tagged with an electronic NLIS ear tag to meet current Victorian requirements.

The options would be:

- » for the NSW property to purchase electronic Breeder NLIS tags for use on Victorian-born sheep
- » once the lambs are returned to Victoria, for them to be retagged with a post-breeder electronic tag from the Victorian property.

Lambs born in NSW would not be eligible to get subsidised Victorian tags with a NSW PIC.

Producers need to remember that sheep moving into NSW need to be recorded on the NLIS database

within 48 hours of movement. This can be done as a mob-based movement (MBM) for sheep arriving in NSW, as per NSW requirements, or otherwise producers can use electronic identification tags if they choose.

Victorian producers returning sheep to Victoria will be required to submit an individual identification transfer as per Victorian law within 48 hours of the movement.

Breeds of goats exempt from electronic ear tagging in Victoria

Sannen, British Alpine, Toggenburg, Anglo Nubian, Melaan, Australian Brown, Alpine, La Mancha and Nigerian Dwarf dairy goat breeds are all exempt from the tagging requirement, as are miniature goats of the Elf ear type.

Note that all sheep entering Victoria must meet the legal requirements of the jurisdiction from which they were dispatched. For NSW, the current identification requirement is a visual NLIS tag. Electronic NLIS tags are recognised as an optional form of NLIS tagging in NSW.

Welcome to all new readers of the Western Newsletter.

The Newsletter has been produced over many years by various state agricultural agencies and distributed to landholders in western NSW. With an increased readership distribution, the Newsletter is now also being mailed to landholders in areas other than the far west. If you do not wish to receive the Newsletter or you need to update your details, please complete the following and return it to:

Sally Ware, Editor, Western Newsletter, PO Box 21, Hay, NSW 2711 or fax to (02) 6993 3497 or email sally.ware@lls.nsw.gov.au

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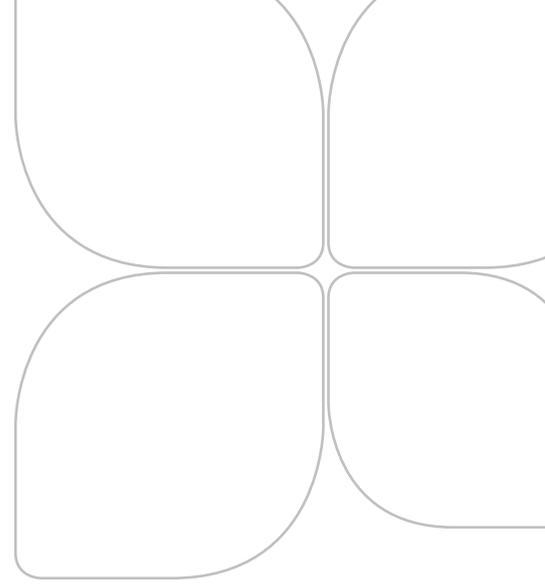
Do you have pigs – even a pet pig?

By Courtney Simkin

District Veterinarian
Riverina Local Land Services, Hay

Eliz Braddon

Regional Veterinarian
Riverina Local Land Services, Young



From 1 February 2018, new NLIS arrangements have been put in place for the identification and traceability of pigs across Australia. This includes pet pigs.

What are the new requirements?

1. All pigs under 25 kilograms must now be permanently identified with a breeder or post-breeder ear tag before they are sold off the property they were born on. Note that:
 - » Breeder tags are yellow.
 - » Post-breeder tags are orange.
 - » All tags must be approved NLIS tags for pigs and must contain the NLIS logo and the letter 'P' in a circle, as well as the PIC (Property Identification Code) of the property the tags are registered to.
 - » Tags can be ordered through tag providers such as Allflex, Datamars or Leader Products.
2. Pigs weighing 25 kilograms or more can also be tagged with an NLIS-approved ear tag as per above, or they can be branded or tattooed in accordance with current Regulations (the preferred method) before they are sold. If slap brands are being used:
 - » Animals bred on the property should be branded on the left shoulder (e.g. by the breeder)
 - » Animals that are of unknown origin or are no longer on the property of birth should be branded on the right shoulder (e.g. post-breeder).

3. Movements of pigs off a property must be recorded on the PigPass database as mob-based movements.
 - » Saleyards and abattoirs will record this movement on the producer's behalf when selling through these systems.
 - » In the case of private sales the movement recording is the responsibility of the new pig owner.
 - » Movement must be recorded within 2 days of it occurring.
 - » All movements must be accompanied by a PigPass NVD (National Vendor Declaration)

What do pig producers need to do?

Pig producers need to:

- » Get a Property Identification Code (PIC) for your property if you have one or more pigs (including pet pigs).
- » Identify your pigs with a registered swine brand or ear tag linked to your PIC before you move them.
- » Fill in your movement document (PigPass NVD).
- » Report pig movements with 48 hours to the Pig Pass database.
- » Keep PigPass NVDs for a minimum of 3 years.

To register for a PIC contact your Local Land Services office. The number for the Hay Local Land Services office is 02 6990 1300.

To register for PigPass NVDs contact the PigPass Helpdesk on 1800 001 458 or www.pigpass.com.au

To order ear tags contact your local rural supplier to place your order from any of the approved tag suppliers (Allflex, Datamars, and Leader Products).

To order a registered brand contact your Local Land Services office to register the brand and obtain details of brand manufacturers.

News from SAMRC

By Gus Whyte

Regional Chair
Southern Australia Meat Research
Council
Wyndham Station, Wentworth

The NSW Central West, Rangelands and Queensland Sheep Regional Committee meeting of the Southern Australia Meat Research Council (SAMRC) was held at Trangie from 20 to 21 February.

SAMRC was re-formed in mid-2015 to gather feedback on the research, development and adoption (RD&A) needs of sheep and grassfed-cattle producers across NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania, as well as the needs of Queensland sheep producers.

SAMRC members include sheep and grassfed-cattle producers, Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA), CSIRO, and agencies and universities from each SAMRC state.

For more information on SAMRC, visit www.samrc.com.au.

Seven regional committees, each chaired by a local producer, support SAMRC. The regional committees gather input from local producers and producer networks on local RD&A needs. SAMRC then considers the RD&A priorities from each regional committee, which inform the national priorities for sheep meat and grassfed beef RD&A recommended by MLA's Red Meat Panel.

In February, the NSW Central West, Rangelands and Queensland Sheep Committee met at the NSW DPI Trangie Agricultural Research Centre. This regional group covers central and western NSW and central and western Queensland. The regional committee is chaired by Angus Whyte of 'Wyndham Station', Wentworth, NSW. It

has seven producer committee members and four non-producer committee members, who are located in different areas throughout the region. The group meets at least twice a year to formulate regional research and development priorities.

Day one of the Trangie meeting

The Trangie meeting began on Tuesday 20 February 2018 with an update from our producer members on issues associated with red meat production since our last meeting in June 2017. Attendees heard from the four members present, including newest member Doug Godwin from just north of Dubbo, as well as from Phil Holmden, who contributed via phone.

The main points of discussion were:

- » the poor and rapidly deteriorating seasonal conditions across the region
- » producers' access to drought- and production-feeding advice
- » the frequency and location of wild dog sightings
- » observations of kangaroo mortalities due to the poor seasonal conditions.

After hearing from the producer members, attendees heard from agency members and listened to

perspectives from MLA regarding the current status of the RD&A Annual Call, as well as current projects that are pertinent to the Southern Rangelands.

Warwick Badgery spoke about what NSW DPI is doing in rangelands research. NSW DPI is the largest provider of rural R&D in Australia. Five people dedicated to the rangelands zone sit in the pasture group, plus there are contributions from some of the other areas, such as climate and soils. The Rangelands group is based in Trangie.

This discussion was followed by a tour of the Trangie Research station, where producers were shown the team's valuable research into sheep, cattle and pastures.

After the tour, the group returned to the conference room and heard about the Livestock Productivity Partnership project, and particularly about how rangeland producers can be involved. This led into the last presentation of the day, from Gordon Refshauge (NSW DPI), in which he spoke about lamb survival, which is a big issue for all sheep producers – not just those in the rangelands. Certainly, Gordon's presentation showed that more information from the rangelands is required so that pertinent outcomes can be delivered.

“ SAMRC was re-formed in mid-2015 to gather feedback on the research, development and adoption (RD&A) needs of sheep and grassfed-cattle producers across NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania, as well as the needs of Queensland sheep producers. ”



Dr Warwick Badgery (Research Leader – Rangelands and Tropical Pastures, NSW DPI, Orange) (far right) discussing some of his perennial grass plots at Trangie at the SAMRC meeting. Photo by Trudie Atkinson

Day two

Day two (21 February) began with a brief run-down from Mike Stephens (SAMRC Secretariat) on where SAMRC was up to and how some member positions (including that of Chairman) would be up for renewal at the end of this financial year. The group then heard about Profitable Grazing Systems and how this new MLA-funded training module is going to be rolled out around Australia. This included details of how it will operate in the rangelands, where distances are large and there are few consultants.

Attendees then heard about the two MLA-funded Total Grazing Pressure projects being conducted by NSW DPI. These projects are gathering valuable information that will inform a future strategy for management of Total Grazing Pressure.

Ben Allen from the University of Southern Queensland was present at the meeting and gave the group a thorough run-down of where wild dog research is up to and on opportunities for the future.

The last presentation was from Bec Austin (Integrity Systems Company). Bec talked about how MLA is connecting NLIS and the LPA (Livestock Production Assurance) program together through the myMLA online platform. She also explained how the data can be utilised to give valuable, real-time and easily used feedback to producers.

The meeting finished at lunchtime. The next meeting was set for the 14 and 15 June in Sydney; we hope that attendees will be able to visit the robotics section at the University of Sydney.

More information

To find out more about your region, or to provide feedback on sheep and grass-fed cattle RD&A issues that you would like SAMRC to consider in its

recommendations to MLA, contact your regional chair:

Angus Whyte
Email: wyndham3@bigpond.com

The producer members of SAMRC are:

David Watt, Trundle NSW
 David Counsell, Barcaldine QLD
 Doug Godwin, Dubbo NSW
 Duncan Banks, Dirranbandi QLD
 Phil Holmden, White Cliffs NSW
 Tony Thompson, Bourke NSW.

Drought assistance available from the NSW Rural Assistance Authority

Farm Business Skills Professional Development Program

Farmers can receive a subsidy of up to 50% of eligible costs for vocational training, farm business planning and risk management skills, up to a maximum of \$500 per farmer or \$9000 per farming business.

Support and advice

The **Rural Financial Counselling Service** is a free and confidential service that provides financial options and support to help farmers make the right decisions for their businesses. Rural financial counsellors can help farmers with their financial positions and budgets and tell them how to submit applications for support programs.

The **NSW Rural Resilience Program** has a team dedicated to building the personal and business resilience of farming communities. The Program includes Rural Resilience Officers and Rural Support Workers that cover the state.

Drought Feed Calculator is a mobile app to help farmers make decisions and save money by determining the minimum feed requirements for different livestock. You can also use it to compare the values of different feeds or a mixed ration.

For more information on drought assistance contact the NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593, or visit droughthub.nsw.gov.au

Funds for water-monitoring kit save time and protect stock

With a grant of just \$5,000, Riverina Local Land Services has helped a landowner near Hay cut his travelling by more than 500 kilometres a week and given him peace of mind that his stock have access to water.

During the peak of summer, Jono Clark made the 260-kilometre round trip from his home at Jerilderie to his property near Hay two or three times a week to check on the welfare of his stock.

Thanks to Riverina Local Land Services, Jono now has access to equipment to remotely monitor the water levels in his tank and troughs, saving him at least one trip a week.

Jono received a grant under the Innovation in Rangelands program, which has been delivered by Local Land Services through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

It helped him install an Observant tank level kit with ultrasonic depth sensors and three trough camera kits on his property, Narringa East, which is 50 kilometres south-east of Hay.

Now he can check the tank and trough levels without leaving home by viewing images from a web-based monitoring app; if the tank drops below its normal range, he receives an SMS alert.

'It's been a very worthwhile project for my business,' says Jono.

'Last December, before I installed the telemetry equipment, a trough ran dry because a solar bore played up and 40 rams ran out of water for a short time.

'I don't want that to happen again, and this monitoring equipment will ensure it doesn't.'

Senior Land Services Officer (Rangelands Grazing) Sally Ware said that the Innovation in Rangelands program aimed to encourage pastoral livestock



Jono Clark with the camera he uses to remotely check the water levels on the troughs at his property, Narringa East, near Hay. Photo by Sally Ware

production landholders in the rangelands to adopt innovative, sustainable agriculture practices and technologies.

'We've supported 20 landholders in the Hay and Carrathool local government areas with funding through this project,' says Sally.

'It's given them the opportunity to incorporate new ideas and tools into their properties, with the aim of improving long-term pastoral management practices.

'We've funded everything from water telemetry systems to electronic stock identification technology, sheep lick feeders and solar water pumps.'

All the applicants had to contribute half the overall cost of their projects, including an in-kind contribution.