

# Making More From Sheep



## case study

Friday, 25 June 2010

### Never too late to check-off on the details

Armatree sheep producer Jenny Bradley has moved her first-cross lamb marking rate up to “an exceptional” 118%, thanks to using Making More From Sheep best practice principles and targets.

As a wife and mum on a busy mixed-farming enterprise, as well as being chair of the Tooraweenah Prime Lamb Marketing Co-operative, Ms Bradley admits objectives set for her flock can get overwhelmed by day-to-day practicalities.

However, she’s an advocate of using Making More From Sheep as a management guide and auditing tool, especially at key times in the farm calendar.

“While we’re lambing now, in the lead-up we had the twinning ewes on natural pasture,” Ms Bradley said.

“But when I referred to Making More From Sheep information, I quickly saw that their condition score and quality of pasture weren’t where they should be for best results.

“I only had enough lucerne locked up for half the ewes that were carrying twins, and even though we’ve had beautiful rain, the native pasture just did not have the quality for these ewes with high feed requirements. What looks like enough feed will not always deliver the target lambing percentage.”

Making More From Sheep suggests that twinning ewes need to be condition score 3-3.3 at lambing to optimise lamb survival. So, Ms Bradley’s ewes received a mix of oats, barley and chickpea gradings to get them up to score in the final term of pregnancy.

Upcoming ‘Its ewe time!’ forums are a great way of tapping into the Making More From Sheep information; they are being held in Goondiwindi, Dubbo and Wagga in July to update producers on the latest market information, and on the latest R&D to help wean 10% more lambs/ha, achieve 10% more carcass weight and make sheep easier to manage. To register, call MLA on 1800 675 717.

“On one hand we thought we shouldn’t be supplementary feeding ewes in a good season, but when you refer to a best practice guide it makes you think about your targets and know that it’s your call to make them happen,” Ms Bradley said.

Ms Bradley runs 1,500 Merino and 220 stud Border Leicester ewes and says using Making More From Sheep as a resource has proved an invaluable management tool over the last two years.

"Years ago if you had a problem, you'd ring someone or search for an answer on the internet but you wouldn't always get the answer you wanted when you needed it.

"Now my first port of call is Making More From Sheep. There's always been lots of information about sheep production around, but there's never been anything as comprehensive and concise as this before."

Ms Bradley has used the tools in the Gain from Genetics module as a means of improving reproductive performance without compromising carcase weight, fleece weight and clip micron.

"We generally target a 105% marking rate from Merino ewes across all age groups (1½-year-olds to five-year-olds), but last year was an exceptional year and we recorded 118% lambs marked."

This year, one mob of Merino ewes selected for reproductive performance recorded 64% twin bearers and only 7% dry, a "really pleasing result".

First-cross wether lambs are turned off to dress-out at 25-26kg hot carcase weight, while ewe lambs are turned off at 45-50kg liveweight by seven months to repeat buyers who join at eight months.

"I encourage all producers to set targets and achieve them with the aid of Making More from Sheep."

'Its ewe time!' forums are full day events and will be held at key centres:

- Tuesday 13 July: Dubbo, NSW at the RSL Club
- Thursday 15 July: Goondiwindi, QLD at the RSL Memorial Club
- Tuesday 27 July: Wagga Wagga, NSW at the Country Comfort Motel

To book a seat at your closest forum call MLA on 1800 675 717.

For more information on The Making More from Sheep 2010 Forums go to [www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au](http://www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au)

*Photo caption: Jenny Bradley supplementary feeding ewes at New Armatree (image attached to email).*

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